

Goals of Misbehavior Case Studies

Read the following case studies. Try to identify the child's goal. Discuss ways to reduce the problem behavior.

1. You have outlawed your 15-year-old son from getting his ear pierced. Last night, at the dinner table, you noticed a hole in his left ear lobe.
What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

2. You receive a telephone call from a business associate. You have talked less than 30 seconds before your 4-year-old is tugging on your shirt, asking you to get something from the refrigerator. You cover the phone and ask the child to wait until you are through, but the child begins to whine.
What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

3. You have just told your 8-year-old that he cannot go to the movie with his friends because you don't think it is appropriate for his age. He yells at you, "I hate you! You never let me do anything I want to do!"
What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change his behavior?

4. Your child is climbing a tree in your yard. You are concerned about safety and ask her to come down. She ignores you and continues to climb higher.
What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

5. Your son, Brad, has brought home his second straight F in math on his report card. You have tried to help him bring his grades up by grounding him from any extracurricular activities until the grades improve and by checking his work for mistakes each night. When you confront him about this second F, he says that he just doesn't understand math and that he cannot do it.

What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

6. You have not been able to get a thing done all morning because 3-year-old Beth has constantly needed something, asked for help and stayed pretty well under your feet. She spilled her juice this morning and cried when you put her down for a nap. You have felt neglectful of 6-month-old Ben because you have been so busy with Beth.

What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

7. You did not allow Johnny to go swimming with his friends yesterday because he had not cleaned his room as you had asked. This morning you find two of your potted plants broken on the back porch. It appears to be deliberate rather than accidental.

What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

8. You have encouraged 8-year-old Joey to join the neighborhood soccer league. You have told him how much fun he will have and how proud you would be if he played. He watched one practice, but he refuses to play. He says he doesn't like running after a ball. Joey is small for his age and isn't very active athletically.

What is the child's goal?

What can you do to change this behavior?

Goals of Misbehavior Case Studies Key

Read the following case studies. Try to identify the child's goal. Discuss ways to reduce the problem behavior.

1. You have outlawed your 15-year-old son from getting his ear pierced. Last night, at the dinner table, you noticed a hole in his left ear lobe.

What is the child's goal? **Power/rebellion**

What can you do to change this behavior? The behavior has happened already so it can't be changed. However, you can reduce your son's need to rebel by acknowledging his behavior, stating that you do not like it but that you still love him and want to have an open relationship with him. Don't make a scene and don't make a big issue out of it. With teens it is important to pick your battles. Only confront them about important things. Though you may not like the earring, his ear can grow back together if he decides to get rid of the earring and no permanent harm will have come to him by this action.

2. You receive a telephone call from a business associate. You have talked less than 30 seconds before your 4-year-old is tugging on your shirt, asking you to get something from the refrigerator. You cover the phone and ask the child to wait until you are through, but the child begins to whine.

What is the child's goal? **Attention**

What can you do to change this behavior? Excuse yourself from the phone for a moment. Get down on your child's eye level. Explain that this is a very important call and that you need him to help you by playing quietly in his room until you are finished. Tell him you will talk to him as soon as you finish the phone call. Be sure to go to your child when the call is finished.

3. You have just told your 8-year-old that he cannot go to the movie with his friends because you don't think it is appropriate for his age. He yells at you, "I hate you! You never let me do anything I want to do!"

What is the child's goal? **Revenge**

What can you do to change his behavior? Use reflective listening — "You sound really angry with me", or use an "I" message — "It hurts my feelings when you say you hate me, because I only make the rules I do to protect you." Let him know that you love him regardless of how he feels toward you. Do not give in and let him go to the movie.

4. Your child is climbing a tree in your yard. You are concerned about safety and ask her to come down. She ignores you and continues to climb higher.

What is the child's goal? **Power/rebellion**

What can you do to change this behavior? Your best strategy is to appear unconcerned, difficult as that might be. After requesting that the child come down, go back in the house out of sight. If you are able to see the tree without being seen, watch to make sure she gets down safely. When she comes in the house, use reflective listening and "I" messages to let her know how her behavior made you feel. Say something like, "Climbing trees is fun. But I get worried when you climb so high without having an adult nearby because I am afraid you might be hurt. I would like you never to climb trees without asking me first."

5. Your son, Brad, has brought home his second straight F in math on his report card. You have tried to help him bring his grades up by grounding him from any extracurricular activities until the grades improve and by checking his work for mistakes each night. When you confront him about this second F, he says that he just doesn't understand math and that he cannot do it.

What is the child's goal? **Giving Up**

What can you do to change this behavior? Brad needs encouragement. Looking for mistakes and grounding him will discourage him. Instead, look for the things he does correctly on his math work. Praise his efforts. Notice and reward any improvements. Give him opportunities to use math in everyday activities at home such as counting change or helping you double a recipe. Check with his teacher to see if there are things that you can do to help him or see if there might be a tutor who could work with Brad. Let him know that your love does not depend on his grades.

6. You have not been able to get a thing done all morning because 3-year-old Beth has constantly needed something, asked for help and stayed pretty well under your feet. She spilled her juice this morning and cried when you put her down for a nap. You have felt neglectful of 6-month-old Ben because you have been so busy with Beth.

What is the child's goal? **Attention**

What can you do to change this behavior? Beth is used to getting more attention than she gets now that she has a baby brother. You can show her you understand how she feels by saying "It's hard for you when Mommy seems to spend all her time with Ben." Explain that Ben takes more care because he is little and helpless. Encourage her to help you with her baby brother by bringing you diapers, singing to him, getting his favorite toy. This will help her to feel important. Be sure that you set aside time each day to spend just with Beth. Let her know that you love her just as much as you did before Ben came along.

7. You did not allow Johnny to go swimming with his friends yesterday because he had not cleaned his room as you had asked. This morning you find two of your potted plants broken on the back porch. It appears to be deliberate rather than accidental.

What is the child's goal? **Revenge**

What can you do to change this behavior? Use an "I" message to tell Johnny that you were disappointed and hurt when you found your plants broken. Remind him that he had agreed to clean his room. He could not go swimming as a consequence of failing to do what he said he would do. Ask him what he thinks should happen because the plants were broken. Work out a method of repayment – take the cost from his allowance if he receives one, or allow him to do some extra chores for you to repay his debt. Don't bring the incident up again once the debt is paid. Be sure he knows that you love him, but you do not like what he did.

8. You have encouraged 8-year-old Joey to join the neighborhood soccer league. You have told him how much fun he will have and how proud you would be if he played. He watched one practice, but he refuses to play. He says he doesn't like running after a ball. Joey is small for his age and isn't very active athletically.

What is the child's goal? **Giving Up**

What can you do to change this behavior? Spend time with Joey playing soccer or another active game of his choice just for fun. Don't keep score. Encourage Joey by praising his efforts and noticing when he improves or does things well. Let him choose an activity that he might enjoy. He might prefer individual activities like karate rather than team sports. Or, he may prefer things like reading or working with computers. Encourage him to do what he likes and focus on what he does well. Often remind him how much you love him.

Goals of Misbehavior Chart

Goal	Child Behavior	Parent Response	Recommended Actions
Attention	Positive: Trying to please parent by being obedient, pointing out things done to be helpful, making good grades	Feels pleased.	Acknowledge the child's positive actions. Give a verbal compliment, pat on the back, or small reward.
	Negative: Whining, interrupting, making noise, or doing things that are disruptive or improper.	Feels annoyed, irritated or guilty.	Ignore improper behavior if it is not dangerous or disturbing to others. Notice positive behaviors. Keep promises to child
Power	Positive: Wants to do things for him/herself. Proudly shows-off skills or strengths.	Feels proud but may also feel a little bit unneeded.	Encourage independence and try to refrain from taking over things that the child is able to do him/herself. Give up being a perfectionist.
	Negative: Talking back, being willfully disobedient, taking dangerous risks.	Feels like proving who is boss or winning the fight.	Give child limited choices that are acceptable to you. Let the rule be the boss. Don't fight and don't give in.
Revenge	Negative: Being destructive to other persons or property, hurting others' feelings.	Feels hurt, disappointed, or shocked.	Find out what has caused the child to be so hurt or angry (use reflective listening.) Let the child know you love and care for him or her. Tell your child how the actions made you feel ("I" messages.) Encourage child to apologize and pay back if the action hurt someone else.
Giving Up	Negative: Child indicates inability to do what is asked. Child does task in an unacceptable manner so that he or she will not be asked to do it again. Child will not try new things	Feels helpless, or has no idea what to do.	Show faith in your child and avoid criticizing the child. Encourage all efforts. Don't pity the child. Don't give up. Work with the child to teach skills, but don't take over.

Eighteen Reasons Why I Don't Want to Be Here!

On the lines below, list 18 reasons why you don't want to be in class today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

