

## “Help! What Works?” Methods for Dealing with Challenging Behavior – Part I

### NEED Statements

- All behavior continues because it is reinforced or rewarded in some way, i.e., by a word, an action, etc.
- If you can control the reinforcement or reward, you can control the behavior.
- Reinforcement or reward for a behavior can be either positive or negative.
- If the child cannot get positive reinforcement or rewards, they will settle for negative reinforcement or rewards. A child will do whatever they need to do to get attention. It is a survival mechanism.
- Children are cause and effect learners
- It is important to tell a child what is expected of them and their behavior in a given situation. An effective way to do so is to give a **NEED STATEMENT**. The format of a **NEED STATEMENT** is:

***I need you to*** \_\_\_\_\_ .@ filling in the blank with a behavioral descriptor, words that create a picture for the child It s like creating a video in their minds. Avoid using the word “good” as it does not create a picture.

- Keep from “over talking” to the child when using **NEED STATEMENTS** or choices. Too much discussion or explanation of “why” the child needs to do something negatively reinforces the inappropriate behavior. It also can lead to more attention getting behaviors or power struggles between the child and the adult.
- A clear **NEED STATEMENT** will reduce the number of choices you will have to give.