

## Power of Attention

What we focus on we get more of. That is a very powerful statement. It can be very easy to focus on the things that are going wrong in our lives, the toys need to be picked up, there is a stack of dirty dishes in the sink waiting for us, and the children are bickering back and forth. These can be pretty stressful daily events if we let them, and the more we look around and focus on them the more stress and the more negatives we begin to see... the trash that needs to be taken out, the dust accumulating on the ceiling fan, etc. But what if we started to focus on what is right and good in our lives? What if we gave thanks for the toys that the children have to play with to help them grow and develop? What if we thought about the delicious meal that was served on those dishes that made us feel good and provided good nutrition for our family. What if we saw taking out the trash as an opportunity to walk outside to the trash can and enjoy the warm sunshine? What if instead of beating ourselves up for the dust accumulation you thought about how you were building memories by playing and interacting with your family?

What we focus on we get more of. When we start to focus on the positives in our lives we begin to see more positive. This is called the Power of Attention. We give value to what we focus our attention on. This month we are going to take a look at using the Power of Attention and couple it with our assertive voice to help children be successful and understand the expectations we have for them. Remember we focus on the adult behavior first and the child second. We practice focusing on what we want and what is positive and then we can help our children do the same.





Taken from the Conscious Discipline Parent Education Curriculum. To read more about the Power of Attention and the Skill of Assertiveness go to [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)

## Assertiveness

"Let's brush your teeth, okay?" "If you are good at the store, I'll get you some candy at the checkout." "You never listen, I'm done wasting time repeating myself!" "Put those shoes on now or I'm leaving without you!" Do any of these sound somewhat familiar to you? If so, how well did they work out for you? The first two statements are passive. When we attempt to give a command and say it in a passive voice, we do not sound in control and children pick up on that. They hear that there may be some wiggle room and they might not have to brush their teeth. In the sample example we are bribing our children to be good instead of teaching them how we expect them to act in the store. The last two examples are aggressive and are either an over exaggeration, they do listen some of the time, or an idle threat, are you really going to leave the house without them? What we need is a happy medium and to use our assertive voice. When we use our assertive voices we are teaching others how to treat us. Assertiveness enables adults and children to set limits and resolve conflict respectfully. It teaches children that their words have power. We must model and be assertive with our children in order for them to be assertive with each other.

Assertiveness requires the following:

1. Focusing on the behavior you want to see. 
2. The intention of helping children be successful. (A n opportunity to teach)
3. A tone of voice that has no doubt. (A matter-of-fact tone) 
4. Descriptive language and motions that clearly communicate the desired goal.

Examples of assertive commands:

Instead of saying: "No pushing!"

Say in an assertive voice: "When you want his attention, tap him on the arm like this."

Instead of saying: "No splashing!"

Say in an assertive voice: "Keep the water in the bathtub."

Instead of saying: "Stop running around with food in your mouth."

Say in an assertive voice: "Sit down until you chew and swallow your food."

Being assertive does not come easy for everyone and takes practice. But the more you practice the more natural it will become!

Taken from the Conscious Discipline Parent Education Curriculum. To read more about the Power of Attention and the Skill of Assertiveness go to [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)

## Tell and Show

### (For children who resist your assertive commands)

Children who do not follow your assertive commands are communicating to you that they need additional support. One strategy to use is called Tell and Show. It involves telling the child what you want them to do, showing them what to do and then encouraging them along the way.

**Step 1:** Give an assertive command. If the child complies say, "You did it!"

**Step 2:** Notice and download calm. If the child ignores your command he/she has likely slipped into an emotional state. It's easy for the adult to feel frustrated here, so compose yourself by taking a deep breath and then walk towards the child, noticing his/her body language and describe it out loud. "Your head is down and your hand is going like this (model what the child is doing). When the child looks up, be a S.T.A.R. (Smile Take a deep breath And Relax) to download calm to the child.

**Step 3:** Say, "There you are! I am going to show you how to get started." Gently touch the child and physically guide him/her. If the child is cooperative, encourage the behavior by saying, "That's it! You're doing it!" If the child pulls away, it is a survival state signal and move to Step 4.

**Step 4:** Notice and download calm, followed by two positive choices. Repeat Step 2 and wait until you see the child's body relax. Remind the child that he/she is safe and he can do this. Be patient. Next offer two positive choices. "(Name of child) you have a choice. You can (choice one) or you can (choice two), which is better for you?" If the child cooperates say, "There you go. You're doing it! You are (describe the action)." If the child still resists go to Step 5.

**Step 5:** Repeat the choices in a calm and confident voice, regardless of what the child says or does. Your job here is to stay calm. Calmly repeat the choices up to four times, then if necessary walk away. If you can remain calm the child will often comply but may also stomp or roll his/her eyes. Ignore these behaviors, this is just the body getting rid of excess adrenaline. Once the child complies, walk to him/her and say, "I know it was tough, but you did it. Good for you!"

Persistent resistance is often a sign to refocus your intent and/or rebuild a connection with the child. Take a deep, keep calm and practice!!

Taken from Conscious Discipline Building Resilient Classrooms, Dr. Becky A. Bailey, 2015. To read more about the Power of Attention and the Skill of Assertiveness and offering choices go to [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)



## Resource Spotlight:



Does your child have a disability, struggle with learning, behavior, or social issues at school; or currently receive special education services? If so, Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) may be able to help. MPACT is a federally-funded, statewide parent training and information center. MPACT offers families free training, resources, and support throughout the special education process.

MPACT's staff and volunteers consist mostly of parents and family members of children with disabilities who have experience advocating for their own children through the special education process. In addition to personal experience, our staff and volunteers are trained in the special education process, IEP process, disagreement resolution, and effective advocacy.

MPACT's free services for parents includes direct services to support parents in the special education process, information on how to work with schools and communities, and over 30 trainings for parents, school staff, professionals, and youth. Additionally, we have over 150 fact sheets, sample forms, and sample letters that parents can access on line. Information is also provided in our monthly newsletter and on social media.

MPACT also provides Regional Transition Networks (RTN's) throughout the state. These collaborative networks assist youth with disabilities, and their families, with the post-secondary transition process. There are over 20 networks in the state that provide networking, summits, job fairs, and information and referral.

MPACT also prides itself on volunteers. Our mentor program offers parents the opportunities to become leaders in their community. Through our mentor program, parents are trained to help other parents successfully navigate the special education journey. Our mentor program not only offers the opportunity to help others but provides experiences that help our mentors feel more confident as they advocate for their own children.

Contact MPACT today at [info@missouriparentsact.org](mailto:info@missouriparentsact.org) or at 800.743.7634. You can find us online at [www.missouriparentsact.org](http://www.missouriparentsact.org).

## Join us for

### Conscious Parenting

**You MUST RSVP for child care and there are limited spots, so get signed up today!**

You do not have to attend all sessions. You will gain information to use immediately by attending any of the sessions individually. We would love to have you attend the full series but that is not necessary in order for you to benefit.

[Original Series](#)

**Conscious Parenting: From Chaos to Calm**  
Join us to learn about Conscious Discipline, where parents will learn life-changing skills that decrease problem behavior, power struggles and aggression, while increasing resilience, emotional health and achievement. Conscious Discipline means families where they are and empowers them to experience success. Child care is provided at no charge, but parents must call to register.

**Encouragement: Noticing, Accepting and Connecting with Children**  
• Saturday, July 13, 10-11:30 a.m. in the Library Center auditorium, 4653 S. Campbell Ave. Registration begins June 28. Call 887-3545.  
• Tuesday, August 27, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Lighthouse Child and Family Development Center at 11630 Fairbanks, 1128 N. Broadway Ave. Dinner provided at 5:30 p.m. Call 887-3545, ext. 230 to register.

**Choices: Building Self-Esteem and Willpower**  
• Tuesday, October 8, 6-7:30 p.m. at OTC Early Childhood Education Center, 938 N. Hampton Ave. Dinner provided at 5:30 p.m. Call 887-3545, ext. 230 to register.  
• Saturday, November 9, 10-11:30 a.m. at the Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell Ave. Registration begins October 25. Call 887-3545.

Presented by the Springfield-Ozarks County Library District in partnership with The One Stop for Early Childhood, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, LightHouse Child and Family Development Center and OTC Early Childhood Center.

## Connecting Grounds

**September 25**  
5:30 - 7:30 pm

**Conscious Parenting**  
From Chaos to Calm

Join us for this third session of Conscious Discipline, where parents will learn life-changing skills that decrease problem behavior, power struggles and aggression, while increasing resilience, emotional health and achievement. Conscious Discipline means families where they are and empowers them to experience success. Child care is limited; there is no charge, but parents must call to register. Dinner will be provided from 5:30-6pm.

**Encouragement: Noticing, Accepting, and Connecting with Children**

Call (417)-887-3545 Ext. 230 to Register  
On Connecting Grounds - 500 E. Commercial  
In the shopping center next to Sava-A-Lot

## Parents Needed:

[Parent Leadership Training Institute](#)

**Springfield Parent Leadership Training Institute**

Are you interested in making a difference in our community? Feel like you can't because you are JUST a parent? Parent Leadership Training Institute may be right for you! Join us on a 20-week journey to learn how to advocate for your children and the community they live in. You will learn skills and confidence to sit at tables where decisions are being made that impact your family.

**Training**  
Parents are offered three phases of training:  
• A retreat to develop group cohesion and define mission.  
• 10 week course on parent leadership, understanding personal history and its impact on perception.  
• 10 week study of politics, policy and media with a Community Project to practice your new skills within a community framework.

**Selection**  
• Parents will be selected for each class with consideration given regarding how their participation will enhance diversity, strength and learning for the group as a whole.

**Who should Attend?**  
• Parents, grandparents or other adults who wish to improve the lives of children, families and communities.

If you are interested, please contact Diamond at 417-888-2800 or [diamond@parentleadership.org](mailto:diamond@parentleadership.org) by August 31st.

\*\*Childcare and transportation assistance available to those who need it.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**  
Springfield Parent Leadership Institute

## Connect with Staff

417-887-3545 or 800-743-8497

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