

## Mistaken Goal Chart The First Three Years (How Adults May Contribute)

Jane Nelsen

[www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The child's goal is:	If the parent/teacher feels:	And tends to react by:	And if the child's response is:	The Belief behind child's behavior is:	How adults may contribute:	Coded messages	Parent/teacher proactive and empowering responses include:
<b>Undue Attention</b>  (to keep others busy or get special service)	Annoyed Irritated Worried Guilty	Reminding Coaxing Doing things for the child he/she could do for him/herself	Stops temporarily, but later resumes same or another disturbing behavior. Stops when given one-on-one attention.	I count (belong) only when I'm being noticed or getting special service. I'm only important when I'm keeping you busy with me.	"I'm afraid you will be traumatized for life if I don't give you constant attention." "I feel guilty if you aren't happy." "I will clap and cheer for every little thing you do." "It is easier to do things for you than to watch you struggle."	<b>Notice Me. Involve Me Usefully.</b>	Have faith in child to deal with feelings (provide energetic support without fixing or rescuing). Stop cheering every move your child makes so he or she can enjoy inner sense of capability instead of depending on approval. Redirect by involving child in ways to gain useful attention. Avoid special service. Plan special time: "I'm busy now and look forward to our special time later." Set up routines. Be patient. (Teach without expecting child to learn right away.) Set up nonverbal signals.
<b>Misguided Power</b>  (to be boss)	Angry Challenged Threatened Defeated	Fighting Giving in Thinking "You can't get away with it" or "I'll make you"	Intensifies behavior "Me do it." Has temper tantrum when can't have his or her way.	I want to use my power. I don't understand give and take. I belong only when I'm boss, in control, or proving no one can boss me. You can't make me.	"It is easier to let you have what you want than to listen to your tantrums." "I don't know when it is okay to let you express your power."	<b>Let Me Help. Give Me Choices.</b>	Redirect to positive power by asking for help. Offer a limited choice. (Add, "You decide.") Withdraw from conflict and calm down. Be firm and kind. Act, don't talk. (Take child by hand and lead to what needs to be done.) Decide what you will do. (I will read a story after you are in your pajamas.) Let routines be the boss. (What is next on your routine chart?) Model mutual respect. Allow child to make decisions and learn from mistakes Practice follow-through. (If you say it, mean it and follow through.)
<b>Revenge</b>  (to get even)	Hurt Disappointed Disbelieving Embarrassed	Retaliating with punishment Thinking "How could you do this?" Worrying about what others will think Taking behavior personally	Retaliates Hurt others Damages property Gets even Intensifies Escalates the same behavior or chooses another weapon	I don't understand that you can love more than just me. I don't think I belong so I'll hurt others as I feel hurt. I can't be liked or loved.	"I punish when you bite or hit because I don't understand age typical behavior." "I'm more worried about what others think than teaching you skills."	<b>Teach Me Skills. Help Me Make Amends.</b>	Understand age typical behavior. Validate frustration. Invite child to notice other child's hurt and to help other child feel better (get ice). Ask curiosity question: "Do you think the other child will feel better if you say you are sorry?" Don't take behavior personally. Avoid punishment and retaliation. Apologize if you have hurt child. Make amends (teach by example). Act, don't talk.
<b>Assumed Inadequacy</b>  (to give up and be left alone)	Despair Hopeless Helpless Inadequate	Giving up Doing for Over helping Showing a lack of faith	Retreats further Passive No improvement No response Avoid trying	I don't believe I can belong, so I'll convince others not to expect anything of me; I am helpless and unable; It's no use trying because I won't do it right.	"I thought it was my job to do things for you." "I expect you to live up to my high expectations."	<b>Don't Give Up On Me. Show Me A Small Step.</b>	Teach skills/show how, but don't do for. Break task down to small steps. Make task easier until child experiences success. Set up opportunities for success. Take time for training. Stop all criticism. Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small. Show faith in child's abilities. Focus on strengths. Don't pity. Don't give up. Enjoy the child. Build on interests.