

Eliciting cooperative behaviour from children who are being uncooperative

NLP Modelling Project for John Seymour Associates Practitioner Training

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Abstract

Eliciting cooperative behaviour from children who are being uncooperative focuses on bringing about cooperative behaviours in children aged between two and twelve. The carer can be anyone with such a responsibility; for example, a parent, a teacher or a nanny.

This cooperation is brought about in a manner which emphasizes the building of a communicative and enjoyable relationship between the child and carer. The focus is on bringing about this cooperation in a manner in which the long term benefits to the child are foremost. By following the practices described to facilitate cooperation in the child you will be providing the right environment and conditions that will encourage the child to spontaneously choose to cooperate. The child's behaviour will become more and more self-directed over time.

The children of today are the adults of tomorrow. How we care for and mould them has an enormous impact on the child's future and the future of society.

I would very much welcome any feedback that would enrich this model. Please email any feedback to childcare@akwa.co.uk.

Methodology

I chose Karen who has over 15 years of experience as a teacher and nanny.

The initial information gathering was spread over three interviews totalling approximately three hours. The primary mechanism used was The Experiential Array¹. This was supplemented with Multi-Level Modelling Questions², SCORE Modelling Questions³ and TOTE Strategy Analysis⁴ for the primary strategy. The results of these supplementary modelling techniques were fed into the array. We also role played some scenarios and I future paced using the ability to ‘try it on’.

We reviewed over a dozen examples of the ability before selecting three to focus on that are excellent examples of the ability. The three chosen varied from minor uncooperation lasting for a few minutes to very serious degrees of uncooperation lasting for hours. Where further clarifications were required to identify consistent elements needed to reproduce the skill we pulled on further examples.

We conducted two follow up interviews totalling approximately two and a half hours to review and refine the model. We focused on simplifying the model, repeatedly asking if an element was essential.

¹ ‘Expanding Your World’ by David Gordon and Graham Dawes (2005)

² ‘Modeling with NLP’ by Robert Dilts (1998) pages 102-104

³ ‘Modeling with NLP’ by Robert Dilts (1998) pages 106-109 and 167-168

⁴ ‘The User’s Manual for the Brain’ by Bob G Bodenhamer and L Michael Hall (chapter 15)

Results

The results are presented in the experiential array presented on the following two pages.

<p>Enabling Cause-Effect</p> <p>Have to be clear about the acceptable boundaries for the child's behaviour.</p>	<p>Criterion</p> <p>Life is more enjoyable (in the long term, for both the child and the carer).</p>	<p>Motivating Cause-Effect</p> <p>Both the child and the carer win. The focus can be on creating a fulfilling relationship.</p>
<p>Definition</p> <p>Life runs more smoothly.</p>		
<p>Evidence</p> <p>Carer feels calm. Carer not being a disciplinarian. Child is engaged in the moment in the activity. Child is complying with what is asked of them.</p>		

Supporting Beliefs

You must be consistent with children from day to day in what you say and what you do.
Know that the carer is always in control of the situation.
Mutual respect must be maintained between the child and the carer. Shouting, verbal abuse or physical abuse demonstrates a lack of respect.
View the child as a 'little' person.
The carer is responsible for teaching the child the dynamics of cooperation (as described here).
You can never allow the child's uncooperative behaviour to succeed.
Children need boundaries, that is clear definitions of what behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate; boundaries ensure that the child feels safe and that their emotional life is more stable.
You must always be clear that you are commenting on

<p>Primary Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that you are asking the child to do something they are capable of doing. Picture the child carrying out the request (V^{ic}) then ask yourself if this is something they can do (A^{id}). 2. Ensure you are on the same level as the child and make eye contact (V^e). [If no eye contact is made then say something to the child or touch their hand (A^e / K^e).]. 3. Say what needs to be done and explain why it needs to be done (A^e). 4. Ensure that the child has heard you and that they understand what has been asked and that you have confirmation from them (that they have understood the request). Hear or see the confirmation (A^e / V^e). <p style="text-align: center;">$V^{ic} \rightarrow A^{id} \rightarrow V^e \rightarrow [A^e / K^e] \rightarrow A^e \rightarrow A^e / V^e$</p>
<p>Secondary Strategies</p> <p>Something wrong? 2nd position the child. Is there something wrong? Are they unwell, over tired or upset (by something else)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. If 'no' then move to persuasion. B. If 'yes' then listen to what the child is saying and show understanding and empathy. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If the request is still reasonable move to persuasion. b. If elements of request are unrealistic modify the request so that it is possible, explain why the request is modified. c. If the request is not realistic drop the request and explain why. <p>Persuasion Try any of these approaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Redirect their attention to what they have been asked to do. B. Attempt to engage child in what is being requested; involve them in making choices about the activity (within boundaries). C. Reframe to make the activity more appealing. D. Focus on a future benefit. E. Explain what will happen if they do not cooperate. <p>Be patient when persuading. For a 2 to 4 year old you might spend 5 to 10 minutes; for a 12 year old, 2 to 4 minutes.</p>

External Behaviour

Steady eye contact.
Be at the same level.

If primary strategy is not working – use a firmer voice tone and adopt a more serious look (less eye movement, slight frown).

Ability

Eliciting cooperative behaviour from children who are being uncooperative.

Contributing Factors

Be kind, caring and loving.
Love the child unconditionally.
You are preparing the child for the future by helping them to reach their full potential.
Children are the future.
Children sometimes don't realise they have choices so you have to teach them that they do. Giving a child choice means they are more likely to cooperate.
The family unit is a team.
The behaviour you display is what is reflected back in the child's behaviour.
Fun activities promotes bonding with the

the child's behaviour and not their identity.
You must teach children about cause and effect – that their actions have consequences.
It is imperative that any verbal warning, punishment or consequence given to the child is followed through. Praise the child wherever possible and ensure you do so when they cooperate.
Think in the long term, not eliciting cooperation today is inconsistent and leaves boundaries unclear which results in a lessening of cooperation from the child over time.

Warning

Have used persuasion.

1. Tell them what behaviour is unacceptable.
2. Make the warning - 'I have asked you twice...'

Time out

Two (usually) warnings have been issued.

3. Put child on 'time out': sit quietly; designated place; 1 minute per year.
4. Explain what about their behaviour is unacceptable.
5. Tell them to sit quietly and to think about their behaviour and why they have been put on time out. (Sit with them if necessary but avoid engaging them in conversation.)
6. At the end of the time out re-state why they were put on time out.
7. Ensure that the child apologies for their behaviour to whomever the apology should be directed towards.

Any subsequent failures to cooperate will result in an immediate time out.

Consequences

At any time if the child's lack of cooperation has an effect that needs to be corrected (for example, a spilt drink that needs mopping) the child must take action (with assistance as appropriate) to correct their action.

Re-establishing calm

At any time, should the child become too distressed to respond to the carer's requests, assist the child in becoming calm. This can be done by asking the child to take three slow deep breaths in through the nose and out through their mouth; or, by giving the child a glass of water to sip. Then return to eliciting their cooperation.

child; and the stronger the bond the more willing the child will be to cooperate.

Sustaining Emotion

Remain calm.

Practical Application

When you are engaged in the activity of eliciting cooperation from a child it is essential to keep in mind the long term benefits to both you and the child. Follow the practices described below and your life will be more enjoyable and your relationship with the child more fulfilling.

There are a number of things that are absolutely necessary to enable you to effectively elicit the child's cooperation.

- You must be consistent with children from day to day in what you say and what you do.
- Know that the carer is always in control of the situation.
- Mutual respect must be maintained between the child and the carer. Shouting, verbal abuse or physical abuse demonstrates a lack of respect.
- View the child as a 'little' person.
- The carer is responsible for teaching the child the dynamics of cooperation (as described here).
- You can never allow the child's uncooperative behaviour to succeed.
- Children need boundaries, that is clear definitions of what behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate; boundaries ensure that the child feels safe and that their emotional life is more stable.
- You must always be clear that you are commenting on the child's behaviour and then and not their identity.
- You must teach children about cause and effect – that their actions have consequences.
- It is imperative that any warning, punishment or consequence verbally given to the child is followed through on.
- Praise the child wherever possible and ensure you do so when they cooperate.
- Think in the long term, not eliciting cooperation today is inconsistent and leaves boundaries unclear which results in a lessening of cooperation from the child over time.

And, although not absolutely necessary, the following will significantly contribute in helping to elicit cooperation from children.

- Be kind, caring and loving.
- Love the child unconditionally.
- You are preparing the child for the future by helping them to reach their full potential.
- Children are the future.
- Children sometimes don't realise they have choices so you have to teach them that they do. Giving a child choice means they are more likely to cooperate.
- The family unit is a team.
- The behaviour you display is what is reflected back in the child's behaviour.

- Fun activities promotes bonding with the child; and the stronger the bond the more willing the child will be to cooperate.

As you follow the guidelines below it is vital that you remain calm. You may, or may not, already have the ability to stay calm in such situations.

So; if you have asked a child to do something, and they aren't cooperating, what do you do?

Firstly; ensure that you are asking the child to do something they are capable of doing. Picture the child carrying out the request and then ask yourself if this is something they are able to do. Ensure you are on the same level as the child and make eye contact. (If eye contact is not readily made then say something to the child or touch their hand). Say what needs to be done and explain why it needs to be done. Ensure that the child has heard you and that they understand what has been asked and that you have confirmation from them (that they have understood the request). You might receive verbal or non-verbal confirmation that they have understood.

And, if this doesn't work, proceed through the following steps to elicit cooperation; and, as you do, make your voice firmer and adopt a more serious look (less eye movement, slight frown) as required.

Something wrong?

Ask yourself if there is something wrong with the child - are they unwell, over tired or upset by something other than what is being asked of them?

- A. If there is nothing wrong then simply move on to persuasion below.
- B. If there is something wrong then listen to what the child is saying and show understanding and empathy. Then ask yourself if whatever is wrong impacts their ability to cooperate.
 - a. If the request is still considered to be reasonable then move to persuasion.
 - b. If elements of request are unrealistic then modify the request so that it is possible, explain why the request is modified.
 - c. If the request is not realistic drop the request and explain why.

Persuasion

Try any of these approaches:

- A. Redirect the child's attention to what they have been asked to do.
- B. Attempt to engage the child in what is being requested; involve them in making choices about the activity (within boundaries).
- C. Find ways of making the activity more appealing (want to play rather than having a bath, play in the bath!).
- D. Focus on a future benefit (when you have done this then you can...).
- E. Explain what will happen if they do not cooperate (if we don't have a bath now there will be less time for reading later).

Be patient when persuading. For a 2 to 4 year old you might spend 5 to 10 minutes; for a 12 year old, 2 to 4 minutes.

Warning

If persuasion on this occasion hasn't given the desired result then tell the child what it is about their behaviour (not them!) that you are not happy with. And be clear that this is a warning ('I have asked you twice...').

Time out

If persuasion and two (usually) subsequent warnings haven't elicited the desired cooperation then:

1. Put child on 'time out'. In time out the child is told to sit quietly in a designated place for one minute for each year of the child's life.
2. Explain to the child that putting them on time out is the result of their behaviour and explain what is unacceptable about it.
3. Tell them to sit quietly and to think about their behaviour and why they have been put on time out. (Sit with them if necessary but avoid engaging them in conversation.)
4. At the end of the time out re-state why they were put on time out.
5. Ensure that the child apologises for their behaviour to whomever the apology should be directed towards.

Any subsequent failures to cooperate will result in an immediate time out.

Consequences

At any time if the child's lack of cooperation has an effect that needs to be corrected (for example: a deliberately spilt drink that needs mopping; scribbling on the wall with crayons) the child must take action (with assistance as appropriate) to correct their action. The child's cooperation in rectifying can, usually, be considered as the equivalent to a time out in terms of punishment.

Re-establishing calm

At any time, should the child become too distressed to respond to the carer's requests, assist the child in becoming calm. This can be done by asking the child to take three slow deep breaths in through the nose and out through their mouth; or, by giving the child a glass of water to sip. Then return to eliciting their cooperation.

As you persevere with eliciting cooperation you will be educating both yourself and the child. As time passes the process will become easier and life will become more enjoyable. Much more enjoyable.