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## Rip those behavior charts off of the wall and burn them. (//www.progressivepreceptors.com/blog/rip-those-behavior-charts-off-of-the-wall-and-burn-them)

9/26/2015

157 Comments (//www.progressivepreceptors.com/blog/rip-those-behavior-charts-off-of-the-wall-and-burn-them#comments)

by Travis Tagart (<https://www.facebook.com/travisjamestagart>)

YOUR TEMPLATE FINDER

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They're not just all over pinterest. They're all over early childhood classrooms, and they are actively damaging children every day that they're in use.

Behavior charts are not a classroom management technique. They are a **symptom of a teacher's devastating control issues**. A product of the need for more socio-emotional developmental education on the teacher's part or a teacher's misguided, willful decision to contribute to a system that works to crank out compliant, stifled children rather than confident, free-thinking children.

**Check out my article about my journey as a teacher discovering my own control issues** (<http://www.progressivepreceptors.com/blog/why-i-ditched-the-compliant-classroom>), and coming to terms with them.

When I travel to early childhood centers to help remedy their practices, I rip these suckers off of the wall in front of the teacher who probably spent two or three hours of prime "connecting with children" time cutting and laminating them so that they could bang the metaphorical gavel on these kids' heads whenever they "stepped out of line". And I do it with pride in my heart. I don't damage the thing, I don't burn it in front of them, but we take a look at something that has so much power and weight being lifted off of its throne and I say, "this should not be replacing your understanding and connection with these children." I then work with the teacher to address their concerns and needs and I help find a developmentally appropriate way to meet them so they can work in a stress-free environment that works to do best for the children in their care. The goal is to solve problems for the teacher so the teacher can go forth and solve problems rather than reducing them to a rainbow behavior chart on the wall.

If I were to make a job performance chart that rated **every teacher's job performance** on a scale of green to red and pinned that teacher's name for all of their students, peers, colleagues, administrators, and the students' parents to see--based solely off of my opinion of their job performance--these same teachers would be **livid** with me, right? Usually at that point, most teachers are on board.

The pushback when I wage war on public shaming--and that's what it is, no matter how "nice" you word the chart--is that there's no other way to manage behavior. But here's my ammo: if a teacher needs this at all, if they have this

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## Authors

Our posts are created by several early childhood professionals. Most stories will include the author's name and a link to their "About Me" or the program they own or represent.

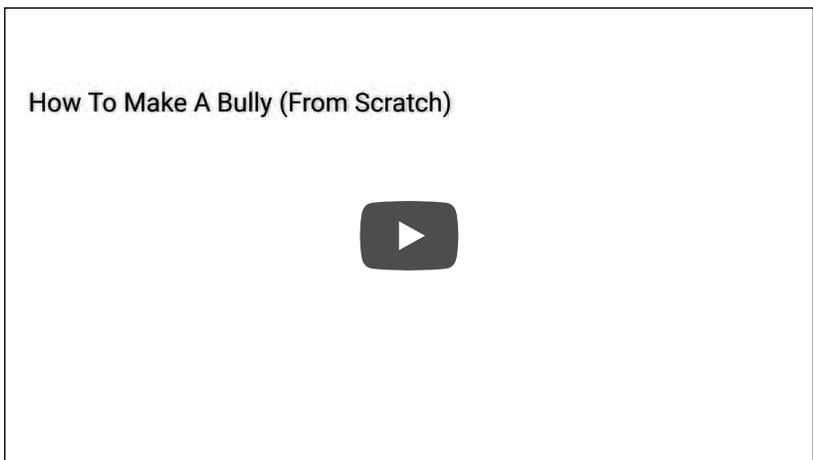
hanging on their wall, they're not **managing** behavior, they're threatening it by holding a child's reputation hostage. They're trying to make the negative behaviors go away because they're too routined with this lazy technique and too steadfast in their control to actually deal with them in a developmentally appropriate way. They're telling kids: the most important reason to meet my requirements of you is because you need to care about what the teacher and all of your friends think of you.

Positive peer pressure is still peer pressure, friends. It's still just as damaging and sets just as dangerous a precedent.

These charts effectively teach children that they should be compliant so that they **can gain their dear leader's love**. These teach children that they should be compliant so that they can **be like the other kids who are "good"**. These teach children that if they don't behave, it will be posted for everyone to see. These teach children that if they're not compliant at school, they will be **ratted out**. That is not acceptable. If you're dealing with behavioral problems through the transitive property, nothing is being solved. The child isn't benefiting, you are.

I visited a center a few months ago where a preschool teacher had given behavior charts up because one day, a child who was "on red" was spanked in front of her very eyes by his father because of that. It had visibly shaken her to the point where, even six months after the fact, it reduced her to tears. She, at that moment, realized why that child often acted out about the color chart. She decided that children feeling completely safe, secure, and open with her was more important than having control over them. I had a very similar experience to turn me off of these horrific tools, so this hit home with me as well.

Beyond the strong-willed kids, we have to think about those kids who always stay on the green. Think about how incredibly resented they become because their teacher is constantly looking at them and saying in the nicest, kindest way, "you're doing such a good job staying on green today!" because apparently ostracizing the bad from the good and ostracizing the good with the love of only the teacher is "behavior management". Me? I think it's abuse. Teachers that do this are not just cranking out compliant children. They're cranking out real, human persons with severe social deficits. But, like, in a totally cute, pinterest-worthy way.



Our job, as early childhood educators, is to build children up, regardless of their behavior. To teach children how to resolve conflict with words instead of threats and punishments. To model healthy power by **not** making them compete for our positive attention and affection. To be present and empathetic of every "behavior problem" rather than passive, disengaging, transitive, and brutal.

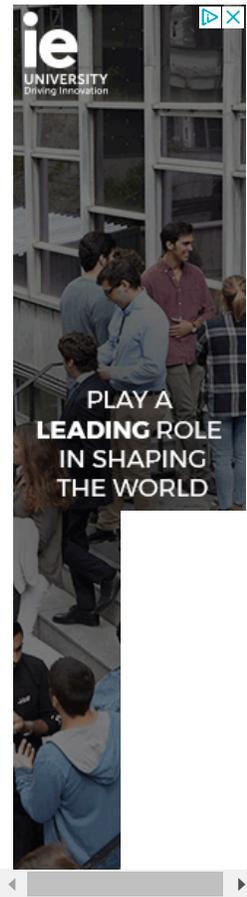
Our job, as early childhood educators, is to deal with conflict resolution by teaching the importance of talking it out, rather than making children feel ashamed that they had a conflict to begin with.

Our job, as early childhood educators, is to **get over it** when kids tell us "no", because we are not always right, and children have all of the same rights as any other human being. If you wouldn't be comfortable saying it or doing it to a stranger on the street, then you definitely shouldn't say it or do it to a child that trusts you.

If I asked for a discount at the store, and the clerk told me "no," I wouldn't tell them to go sit in a corner. If I asked for a raise, and my boss told me "no", I wouldn't tell them "I guess you're on red then today." If the table next to me at a restaurant was talking too loud, I wouldn't turn around and tell them to be silent or say "I shouldn't hear your voices!" You see, all of these things would be called "being a jerk". So, let's stop being jerks to kids. Let's stop raising kids to be jerks, too, while we're at it.

There's just absolutely no way around it. If you have a behavior chart or any behavior scale located in your classroom, you are failing the children in your care. It's time to let them go.

No child should be having hyperventilations when their parents show up and they're "on red". Isolating children from their peers to reflect how isolated they are from your heart is only going to lead to more isolation. Stop pushing problems under a rug, and get a grip on them. If you're strong enough to be a teacher and choose this profession,



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you're strong enough to be an introspective one.

Burn it, and release your control issues with it.

If you find yourself struggling with the information in this article, would like to explore alternatives to the behavior chart, or your counter-argument involves any sort of tone-policing, please refer to this follow-up article (<http://www.progressivepreceptors.com/blog/cognitive-dissonance-and-other-professional-fallacies>).

Check out this article about my experience with control issues of my own. (<http://www.progressivepreceptors.com/blog/why-i-ditched-the-compliant-classroom>)

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157 Comments (<http://www.progressivepreceptors.com/blog/rip-those-behavior-charts-off-of-the-wall-and-burn-them#comments>)

**Roseann Murphy** (<http://essenceofchildcaring@edublog.com>) 9/26/2015 09:55:31 am

Excellent insight...excellent article..

Reply

**chrissy** 2/19/2018 03:57:02 pm

YES!!! AMEN!!!! Finally, somebody has said this!!! I agree wholeheartedly that these behavior charts are not a solution—they are a real problem. These poor kids have so much pressure at school. And I love the point about how would teachers (or anyone at their profession) like a public chart posted for everyone to see how you are doing on the job.

Reply

**Firoza Salahuddin** 9/26/2015 11:50:39 am

Children learn from us...each and every step and every move...work on our self...no need to use those ready to learn posting...we are the open books for the children. We are performing... they are executing!

Reply

**Yolande** 9/27/2015 05:17:11 pm

Preach!

Reply

**Shelli** 9/27/2015 01:41:15 pm

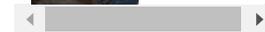
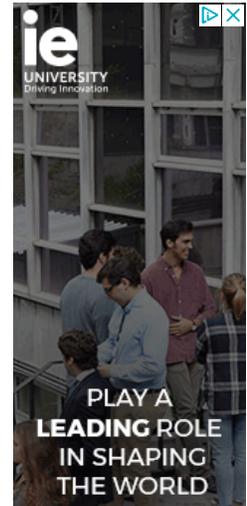
What do you offer as a reacement? It's easy to point out what is wrong, but what solution do you offer in its place?

Reply

**Travis Tagart** 9/27/2015 05:15:12 pm

This post was meant specifically for pointing out the flaws in this strategy. I use and prefer conscious discipline, and myself and others will write further posts about it down the road. I did hint at the alternatives. For the most part, however, the advice is to just cut these out. They don't need to be replaced with anything but understanding.

Reply



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- Photoposts (/blog/category/photoposts)
- Short Posts (/blog/category/short-posts)

**Today In Kindergarten**

9/29/2015 10:55:06 am

In our JrK classroom we have one rule: be kind. Everything falls under this guideline. We have a sign inside our door, "Work hard and be nice to people". Gentle reminders, empathy and communication work well in guiding behaviors. Not shaming.

**Lisa**

9/30/2015 06:38:11 am

Hi Travis, Thank you for this article!! How do you feel about the "have you filled a bucket today ?" book? My co teacher and I use a visual of a giant bucket poster and when the children are kind we hand them a paper star or a paper heart and say something like "thank you for being kind, you just filled my bucket" And they get to go put it in the bucket. We read the book during the first week of school and talked about ways to fill your bucket and friends' and teachers' buckets. We stay away from labels like "you are a bucket filler" or "you are a bucket dipper" and instead talk about the fact that good people sometimes do this that dip buckets and that's ok because we are all learning. They seem to really get it. They are allowed to say No they are allowed to say "i'm not done" so they don't need to be perfect compliant little posits to fill a bucket, they just need to be kind. I would like your honest opinion as to what we can do to make sure we are not doing damage. Their little lives mean the world to us. Easy is not what we are looking for, we want positive outcomes for their futures. Thank you!!!

**katherine brady**

7/5/2016 07:51:16 pm

Well said. I went to the principal and district psychologist to discuss these horrible behavior charts. I even discussed this with a retired new york city teacher who has written a book about this. She dislikes the behavior charts and told me they are charts of shame. I told this to the principal and psychologist. They did not like that I was trying to change their system. I think they just do this because it's a form of peer pressure, so not only do the kids get pressure from other kids but they get it from their teacher and principal. It's a horrible way to teach the kids manners!!! I am ashamed of any teacher who uses them. I don't care how many kids you have there's just no excuse! There are teachers who have lots of kids, over 30, and they don't have behavior charts and their kids do well.

**Deb**

9/28/2015 07:57:30 am

Here is a helpful video from Conscious Discipline on the power of attention to hep explain and offer ideas. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LELXYeQI7kg>

**Reply****Deb**

9/28/2015 08:01:31 am

Here is another great resource - <http://mamablog.teach-through-love.com/2014/02/what-to-do-when-you-are-no-longer-using-punishment.html>

**Reply****Deb**

9/28/2015 08:05:35 am

Last resource for alternatives to the behavior charts - <http://beyondthestoplight.com/>

**Reply****Mandi**

9/29/2015 02:24:47 pm

I agree with you totally.

**Reply****Mandi**

9/29/2015 02:25:38 pm

I agree totally.


 **RSS Feed (2/feed)**

Post

**Nancy**

9/30/2015 04:55:09 am

One suggestion: I notice teachers (AND parents) phrasing commands this way: "Get out your books, okay?" "Listen up, okay?" "Michael, get back in your seat, okay?"

So if it's not okay with him, he doesn't have to?

As a sub for ten years, I noticed classrooms where even the bad kids minded, and others where even the good kids were disruptive. The teachers who acted as though they expected good behavior got it. They might make a checkmark on a seating chart, and have a quiet talk or other consequences, but no shaming. And no pleading "Okays" at the end of every sentence.

As kids in a very large Catholic gradeschool classroom, we behaved mainly because we feared disapproval. Mostly, a look from the teacher was enough. We raised our hands to be called on, stood up to recite, and lined up to go in or out. This takes constant attention and consistency from teachers, and support from parents.

Shaming is a lazy substitute.

Reply

**betsy** (<http://www.kidsandconflict.com>)

10/2/2015 02:26:56 pm

Help children how to problem solve. Stop blaming them for not having skills that you should be teaching them.

Reply

**Emily**

10/3/2015 05:26:53 am

Find out why they are acting that way. Maybe something is bothering them and they can't express it in a socially appropriate way.

Introduce new vocabulary. Maybe they don't know the words to use so they act out.

Model proper behavior and do it consistently.

These are just some examples.

It takes more time but it's more helpful to the child in the long run than the easy behavioral chart.

Reply

**Jennifer**

10/4/2015 03:08:50 pm

Empathy

Reply

**Jean marie**

10/5/2015 11:45:37 am

A reward system. Every time a child is working quietly, playing nice, etc. Give a ticket. Then at the end of the week sell them prizes for their tickets... kids respond to positive reinforcement better than a punishment system... clinically proven!

Reply

**Travis Tagart**

10/5/2015 07:13:00 pm

I hate punishment systems, but I'm not a fan of rewards systems either. Rewards and punishments do not foster a healthy behavioral development, they only foster a healthy compliance. The "I need to be 'good' so I can get a prize" is just as detrimental as the "I can't be 'bad' or else I'll be shamed." Instead, I say, get rid of all "behavioral management tools" all together, and actually talk to the kids who are causing the most "problems" for you, after you decide for yourself whether they're "problems" or just kids being kids.

An actual behavioral management plan will be determined on a child-by-child basis, not by throwing them all on to the same thing. It has to be one that focuses on solving one's own problems. It has to be one that focuses on empathy.

The reward for good behavior should be that good feeling you get by doing things correctly.

The consequence for 'bad' behavior should be accountability with the person the child wronged--no punishments.



A child hurt someone? They have to confront that person and the teacher has to facilitate for the person they hurt to speak up to the "aggressor".

A child broke something? They have to fix it.

But stuff like a child throwing a toy, using a toy "wrong", or saying a bad word? Welcome to the world of developing children. Most of these things are a non-issue and control-related. If they really pose an actual problem, they could be impulse control issues. Punishments and rewards do not solve impulse control issues, time and careful, delicate instruction to help search for intrinsic motivation solves these issues.

This is not a judgement call on teachers that use the prize methods for controlling their classroom. I do not believe in controlling a classroom, but at the very least, controlling with the promise of material goods is better than controlling with the threat of public shaming, but neither are developmentally appropriate.

Now, my comparison about teachers probably not preferring public shaming comes in here, because the promise of material goods might work for adults who have already developed their social awareness skills... :)

**Maddy**

10/23/2017 04:51:28 am

I had this system in my class in primary school and remember sitting there at the end of the week while the same kids went shopping with all their tickets and I had none . Didn't make me want to earn tickets just made me sad and angry. If the teacher had spoken to me about why I wasn't completing my work and sitting quietly it would have helped a lot more.

**Tracey dunn**

10/5/2015 03:09:41 pm

Read up about conflict resolution on the high scope website

**Reply**

**sharon raymond (<http://www.simpleshoemaking.com>)**

10/10/2015 05:16:01 am

please consider reading Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg. There's a book i have found useful, for teachers using nonviolent communication by Sura Hart called The Compassionate Classroom.no judgment expressed toward children, instead an exploration of what the teacher or the child may be feeling and the needs behind the feeling - Feelings cards by todd parr is a supplement that i have used - my granddaughter at age 2 said recently - i think my friend is concerned about being in this group - parr has many more books that i have found useful

**lez**

1/19/2016 04:44:36 pm

Agree

**Reply**

**Jess**

4/14/2016 12:40:35 pm

Engage children! Get to know them, understand why kids behave like they do. Create expectations and rules WITH your class, be clear about the consequences, and be consistent! All this does is tell everyone who's not behaving well. They already know, but why shame them over and over by making them move a clip? I am enraged that teachers still use stuff like this, and even more angered that principals and directors let them. It's disgusting.

**Reply**

**katherine brady**

7/5/2016 07:54:16 pm

You said it! I had a discussion with the principal and district psychologist about this. they were offended that I was trying to change their system.

**Valerie**

9/27/2015 02:14:39 pm

Too bad they are required by our district. If we want highly effective ratings on our evaluations, they better be posted and in use in our classrooms.

**Reply****Travis Tagart**

9/27/2015 05:16:46 pm

That just breaks my heart. I won't advocate for breaking the rules of your workplace, but if I were forced to have one I would just work as though it didn't even exist.

**Reply****Erin**

9/30/2015 08:32:06 pm

It's also required by my children's school system. Can you direct me to any research I can present to the school board in hopes they will reconsider? I expect a LOT of pushback because when I posted a similar article on my personal page other parents were quick to defend it in the absence of a better alternative.

**Jessica**

9/29/2015 10:29:52 am

I wonder, if you have to use them, if you could use them in a collaborative way. In other words, at the end of the day, the whole class gets to decide where the whole class was at the at the end of the day and what they could do better the following day?

**Reply****Karen**

9/29/2015 03:23:31 pm

Way to make lemonade! Just be sure parents understand that the color is a group result.

**Emily**

10/3/2015 05:32:36 am

Personally I wouldn't do that either. It'll be like the whole class is condemning you and judging you. That's public shaming with 15-30 fingers pointed at you. No child deserves that.

**katherine brady**

7/5/2016 07:56:03 pm

I have tried at my son's school and they were offended that I was trying to change their system. I am upset about this and will make every attempt at changing this system.

**lynda**

8/10/2016 03:27:55 pm

they are required in MY district too. i have discovered you can still be rated highly effective withOUT posting these controlling charts! natural consequences, listening to one another, conflict resolution, peaceful classroom...guaranteed for all children! here the quiet ones gain a strong voice instead of quietly being on GREEN the entire year!!!! i tore up MY chart!!!

**Reply****Tameka Phillips (<http://dellasapron.com>)**

9/27/2015 03:18:38 pm

Rip the behavior charts and try other strategies. As educators, we have boxed ourselves into these strategies that are counterproductive. We place our children in the same box. And then wonder why we fail to accomplish authentic results. Burn the box. Rip the behavior charts. Try something else.

**Reply****Lisa**

9/27/2015 04:13:53 pm

You must have been one of those children who could not or would not follow directions as a child. You need to be in a classroom environment for a few years before you have the right to tell teachers what will or will not work for them. To blanket a statement like this and think you have all the answers is wrong. If your way worked so well we would not have ANY discipline problems in school. That would be so nice. I use this method as a positive reinforcement. My students look forward to reaching the top of the ladder and getting the star student award. There are very few days any of them go below the green and stay there. They want to be at the top just like we do as adults. Please don't tell me how to do my job with your lack of experience and say I am lazy because I use this. I am a very dedicated teacher with more years of experience than you have been on Earth. You have no right. If you walked in my classroom and tore up my behavior chart I would have a few choice words for you. You have shown what a pompous idiot you are in this blog. You have no knowledge of what you speak about. Show me your credentials before you tell me how to manage behavior as a teacher. Even the Ph.D.s don't agree with you. There I can make blanket statements also.

**Reply**

**Yolande**

9/27/2015 05:13:09 pm

Hmmm... that was a very unprofessional, and ignorant comment. Obviously you have more consideration for yourself than the actual developmentally appropriate practices in our profession?

<http://teachinginprogress.blogspot.com/2012/10/why-i-will-never-use-behavior-chart.html>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/our-gender-ourselves/201304/dont-shame-children-in-pursuit-discipline>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont-worry-mom/201408/the-dos-and-donts-the-sticker-chart>

I just presented you with three separate articles that relate to how psychologists and teachers view behavior charts. Where are these PhD's you speak of? All of the PhD's in this field seem to agree with this article. Maybe point us to one of THEIR articles? Or give us their names so we can contact them and share our information.

**Reply**

**Kristen**

9/28/2015 09:10:34 am

Absolutely correct!!!

**David M. (<http://www.sarasotalearningproject.com/>)**

10/3/2015 06:25:55 pm

More links to articles on the negative consequences of behavior charts:  
[http://blogs.babycenter.com/mom\\_stories/whats-wrong-with-classroom-behavior-charts/](http://blogs.babycenter.com/mom_stories/whats-wrong-with-classroom-behavior-charts/)  
 and  
<http://www.sanduskyregister.com/Health-and-Fitness/2015/09/03/Is-it-worth-it.html>

**Jimi**

10/4/2015 06:20:57 am

Awesome feedback!!!

**Lindsey**

11/1/2015 05:41:53 pm

I understand Yolande's feelings. She has been using these behavior charts for years. She was probably taught to use them in school! They have seemed to work for her. Then she reads this article and takes it personally when you call her "lazy" for using them. She knows she is not lazy. Teachers work so hard as I'm sure she does as well.

The thing is we can all be wrong sometimes, and that's okay. It's okay that you have used these charts, and it's okay to change your mind about something and try something new. As teachers shouldn't we be models to our students and show that we can learn, change, and grow too? Hopefully, learning, changing and growing isn't something that you have given up on, Yolande...

**Mandy**

2/4/2016 09:01:10 pm

My son has had incredible self esteem problems this year that revolve around the behavior chart. It's heart breaking. I am at war with this concept and if it works for some teachers it may be because these teachers are except using more compassion in concert with its use.

Unfortunately, that's not our experience. It's used as a crutch and is the primary measurement for our son's good days and bad days.

**Travis Tagart**

9/27/2015 05:30:27 pm

Lisa, I work under the standards of D.A.P., and these charts just simply aren't that.

Your assumption that I have little experience is upsetting, as this has been my life for years. I do this for a living. This is my career. You will not make me feel less than for expressing my opinion about something on my own forum. If you have topics that you're passionate about, you can go write your own posts elsewhere. This is a forum for people who engage in D.A.P., so to come here and insist that D.A.P. is in the wrong without any evidence to the contrary is just sort of silly.

I am not in the business of building compliant children. I build respectful, kind children--but not compliant ones. Whether or not I "listened" in school means nothing to my ability as an adult, and I would certainly hope this vengeful attitude toward children who "don't listen" (re: control issues on the teacher's part) isn't impacting your time spent with children who may be like that in your classroom. If I were in the business of making assumptions, I would assume there's a lot of cognitive dissonance going on here. Just because you're experiencing that doesn't make me any less right in what I, and plenty of other specialists/experts/psychologists/experts, know to be true.

What I am in the business of, however, is rude awakenings. We as adults need to know just how much impact we have over the children who trust us, and so I, therefore, do not tolerate developmentally inappropriate practices, and I refuse to be flowery and cute about it. If it's wrong and lazy, I'm going to call it wrong and lazy.

As professional adults, when someone confronts us with information that proves something we're doing is actively harming other people, we have to be able to take it and run with it, rather than shutting down and behaving unprofessionally by calling that person names and shutting down their message by challenging their experience and education.

I have this very stark feeling that what you define as a "discipline problem" and what I would define as a "discipline problem" are two different things. Could that be because of my years of education in Neuroscience? Maybe, but...

I owe you nothing. My education is mine, my experience is mine, my business is mine.

But you and I and every other early childhood educator owe(s) children the implementation of D.A.P.

**Reply**

**Anna**

9/30/2015 07:05:51 am

110% AGREED WITH YOU. I have a son who will say no to me with everything and I explained to him why i asked him to do certain things and why it is beneficial to him. However if he decided to not do it then I explain to him what are the results he might encounter and these results are not coming from me. These are the results he will receive on his own as he is growing up into adulthood. School is horrible and it is what he thinks. School has an extra behavior chart for him which he scores badly everyday. I asked him to score higher if he could and I do not punish him at home for not having higher scores. I teach him to be responsible for his own actions and behavior. I am teaching him the adult way of behavior and treat him as a responsible individual since i treat others how I want to be treated. Now he is 8 years old and everytime he does something, he asks himself outloud what are the results ( not bad or good, just simply results) he will get as he is about to make a choice. HELP CHILDREN THINK IS AN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL AS PART OF COGNITIVE THINKING DEVELOPMENT FOR ANYONE NOT ONLY CHILDREN's BRAIN.

**teachertoo**

9/30/2015 07:54:33 pm

GREAT POST - well said. 100% agree also.

**Heidi Bunch**

10/1/2015 03:18:22 pm

I want to thank you for this post. I am not an educator, nor have a background in Neuroscience. I am no expert in that regard. I am however an expert at loving my child and make conscience efforts to build self esteem. I honestly have never regarded behavior charts as much more than another tool educators use to maintain order, and hold children responsible for themselves. I do however remember moments when I would wait for my 7 year old son at the gate after school. He looked worried, terrified even. When he saw me and

made eye contact, he would burst into tears. He fearfully admitted, "I landed on red". To be honest, I began second guessing my parenting. Why is my child so afraid to tell me this? We don't spank, we don't have a "naughty corner". We talk everything out and discuss how we could have made better choices. It never occurred to me to think it was the behavior chart itself, and not just the behavior. I began telling him that tomorrow was a new day, and another opportunity to do better, and left it at that.

**jkoepky**

10/5/2015 07:20:38 pm

The biggest mistake any educator or parent makes is generalizing a one size fits all model of behavior implementation for every student, which is exactly what you are doing. You tell her that your education is yours and your experience is yours, which is true. However in the very next sentence you do not grant her the same respect. Did she choose a poor way of telling you she disagreed, absolutely, but just as you are entitled to your beliefs, she too is hers. To say that every single educator owes it to the children to do only your chosen method or they are poor or ignorant teachers as you would have them believe is naive and narcissistic. If is your business act like it a be professional.

**Travis Tagart**

10/5/2015 08:16:01 pm

Jkoepky,

You just validated my point. A one-size-fits-all approach is horrid. However, there is no other option besides what I'm suggesting and a one-size-fits-all approach.

My suggestion is that teachers treat children like human beings and plan for their behavioral development on a student-to-student basis. This is not "my way". This is what all parents and teachers did before school became a rigid structure. There is this way, or a behavior management tool. Those are the only two option. "My way" encompasses all of the realities of human behavior and development. I am advocating for the 1,000,000 different methods that don't involve rewards/punishment.

The part you must not be understanding is that I do not have to respect beliefs that objectively damage the self worth of vulnerable children, just like I do not have to respect the parenting beliefs of a parent who choses to hit their children. Opinions that actively harm people are not "opinions", they're just wrong.

You are also mistaken in what I said, which is strange, because it's right there to read. I did not say that every educator owes it to children to do exactly what I do. I do a million different things for each specific child until something creates an intrinsic sense of belonging and awareness. I said, "Every... educator owe(s) children the implementation of D.A.P." And that's true. Every educator should be implementing developmentally appropriate practices. What part of that struck you as wrong?

That's like saying that it's wrong to imply that every doctor owes it to their patients to try to heal them.

Perhaps rather than tone-police my writing, consider the amount of passion there is behind it to defend the defenseless against developmentally inappropriate practices that harm them? That's my business, and this is the way things get done in these stubborn control-centric environments. Rude awakenings.

And if we're going to talk about "professionalism" please let me know what effective advocacy organization has gotten anywhere by respecting opinions of the people that harm those for whom they advocate?

I, for one, think tone-policing is the most unprofessional mode of counter-argument. It's illogical and part of the problem.

**Min**

10/8/2015 05:10:08 am

I think you just became my new hero.

دانلود کلیپ کوتاه (<http://clipo.tv/>)

8/13/2016 03:53:57 am

Graet! Thanks a lot.

**Deb** 9/28/2015 09:08:58 am

Lisa, I am sure you are a dedicated teacher., However, clearly the color chart did not teach you to be a kind and respectful human being. Your response was just plain rude. I don't understand how you, as a teacher, who is partially charged with molding the future of our kiddos, can justify public humiliation on any level. How said it is to pick up my kid from school and be approached by his classmates telling me "I had a bad day today". No 5 year old should leave a classroom feeling he had a "bad" day and publicly feeling less than his peers. If a behavior is a problem, address the behavior with whatever punishment is appropriate. Send a note home, send him to the principal's office, make him write 100 times-I will not \_\_\_\_, make him sit out of an activity., Your justification of public humiliation is just mind-boggling to me.

And, before you accuse me of commenting because my kid ends up on the low end of the chart, you're wrong. He does not.. I am advocating for those kids who come home feeling defeated and downtrodden.

**Reply**

**Kristen** 9/28/2015 09:10:04 am

This man is totally Correct. You should be ashamed of yourself as a teacher because you promote the exact opposite of what I want my Child to be learning in a classroom. You promote segregation, Bullying, And a hostile environment. If you have issues with the children in your classroom they should be brought up With the child's parents not for the other kids to know and harass the kids in the classroom.

**Reply**

**Kami** 9/29/2015 09:29:21 am

It's so interesting to see...that as a proponent of behavior charts and public shaming...Lisa's response to this author was toned in the same way. Harsh, judgmental, belittling...and a clear attempt at public shaming. Is this the same method we are to use when teaching children??

The PhD's actually do agree with him. Behavior charts are not developmentally appropriate practice. They aren't ever going to be. Thank you for the post, Mr. Tagart.

**Reply**

**Mandi** 9/29/2015 02:29:15 pm

I agree.

**Reply**

**Lisa** 9/29/2015 05:32:59 pm

Excellent, well said. Thank you for your retort!

**Reply**

**Caitlin (<http://Caitlinann.com>)** 9/30/2015 05:03:02 am

You have shown that you have no regard for the emotional well being of children or for developmentally appropriate practice.

There will always be discipline problems in a school, but showing children how to work through problems and giving them the tools they need to be successfully is so much more effective and respectful than making a public display of their rough days.

It sounds like your school should implement behavior charts for teachers, posted in the hall by the office for parents and students to see if you're having a bad day or not.

The old way is not always the best way.

**Reply**

**Breanna** 9/30/2015 02:31:25 pm

Thank you! You took what I was thinking exactly and put it into words.

**Reply**

**Teachertoo**

9/30/2015 07:52:49 pm

Wow - with that temper, you really should not be teaching children! The article makes great points. I agree about the public humiliation of these charts and that they create nervous kids. And that some parents will punish their kids if they hear they were in the red zone.

There are better ways to manage a classroom.

**Reply**

**Gina**

9/30/2015 08:26:33 pm

I see that this post upset you, I feel that maybe a more open mind is required when reading this. I am a foster parent with a degree in psychology and feel that some times teachers don't take in consideration that some kids no matter how hard they try will never reach the top of your ladder. Due to mental illness, abuse and neglect, or other issues that have gone undiagnosed. Unless you have the education to diagnose these children or know the difference then you are not helping THESE children but continue to destroy any type of self worth they may have left. With your so many years experience as a teacher, one would think that you of all would understand things do change, in both the way we help our children grow intellectually and emotionally.

**Reply**

**Stephanie**

10/1/2015 11:48:14 am

My daughter is the most sweet, loving and kind person you will meet. In fact that is the only thing her teachers say positive about her behavior. She completes her homework and gets 100% on her spelling and math. However, she has ADHD. We have not gone to medication yet. Her problem is more hyperactivity. So more often than not she is below green. She is scared to tell us, she cries and just feels horrible about herself daily. I strongly believe that if her teacher did not point out every time she was misbehaving on a chart she wouldn't feel so bad. It's wonderful that your students strive to get above green, but for the ones that struggle just to stay seated, shame on you!

**Reply**

**Jean**

10/5/2015 08:21:43 pm

Stephanie, please google NPR interview with Dame Gillian Lynn... Her mother brought her to a doctor for wriggle bottom and he prescribed dance! And she is still dancing in her 80s and a famous choreographer... Find an outlet and love it!

**Jessica**

10/1/2015 06:48:02 pm

Lisa, I haven't worked in the school system, but I used to get my nephew off the bus when he first started elementary school. He came home on a DAILY basis, upset about not being on Perfect Purple. Those charts don't work for us all, like many things. For some children, those charts are nothing but discouragement.

**Reply**

**Kimberly**

10/2/2015 03:28:58 am

I was fortunate to attend several workshops with Dr. George Sugai who has a PhD in special education and his area of focus is positive behavior supports. He was very against these charts. He found them to be very punitive and asked the simple question, "What does it say to the 4 year old when it's 8:30 in the morning and he's already on red? It says I'm bad." I agree. It's not solving the problem in the long term. I remember my own child had a teacher who had the same system disguised as an apple tree. To this day ten years later her friends from that class still talk about how much they hated kindergarten and the fear of having their apple "fall off the tree". I would be devastated if years from now that was the only memory my students had of me - feeling bad about

themselves and terrified. So not all people with PhDs agree with you - in fact I've never seen and real data to back up the use of these charts.  
<http://education.uconn.edu/george-sugai/>

**Reply**

**Les**

10/3/2015 12:27:16 pm

You don't need a PH.D. to know that these charts are counterproductive and damaging to children (or people of any age). My credentials are MOM! My child just began kindergarten. I didn't know what a behavioral chart was, but I do now! How dare you think you need Ph d to know what's best for children! Did I mention that my son has SPD (if your a PH d or and experienced teacher, you should know what it means), he is also ADHD. Since this chart started, his behavior has changed for the worse (at school and home). He was placed in the RED w/in 2 1/2 days. The children in the class are telling me (in front of my child) that "he is bad" "he's in the RED". He loved school at first now he doesn't want to go. That is disheartening and unacceptable. Maybe your a kind teacher that would treat each child based in his individual challenges and needs? His teacher and the school have done nothing to help him (long story...principal hand selected a teacher for my son based on his needs and then she retired and they put him w/ teacher that would not be a good fit and much more...they have yet to implement any tools to help him, also recommend by previous principal). His spirit and our spirit is being crushed. His strengths in pre school are now his weakness! We are frustrated! We requested his name be removed from the chart. The root of the problem or trigger needs to be found before a child is publicly shamed! I'm his parent. I know him. This teacher has only known him 3 weeks. Who is she to judge my son and attribute to him be called and seen as bad. She's also called him defiant several times. In my opinion, this is unprofessional. Believe me, some of his behavior is unacceptable, but I don't agree with this system. He needs tools and support, not shaming.

**Reply**

**TLR**

10/6/2015 03:08:18 pm

Hang in there, Les! SPD is real and extremely challenging for young children. My own son (diagnosed with SPD) started kindergarten two months ago and runs away from us when we pick him up from school, he is so ashamed. We tell him, "we are not angry with you, you don't need to hide what happened at school. Everyone makes mistakes. If you can look us in the eye at the end of the day and say, 'I did what I know to be right, to the best of my ability,' then all is well. Everyone makes mistakes, everyone is learning. Tomorrow is a new day." We talk about the and role play situations that might be hard for him. These charts are a travesty. Charts like these favor compliance above everything else. They allow for no differences. Good luck.

**LESLEY**

10/3/2015 12:32:38 pm

P.S. How would you like your performance review posted in the teachers lounge, especially the first year you taught and were inexperienced. Or the superintendent said all performance reviews had to be posted in public?

**Reply**

**Amanda**

10/3/2015 07:04:43 pm

Wow, Lisa. I think the rudeness you just showed here is cause to move your clothes pin. How dare you. There is no research or evidence that shows behavior charts work. And how dare you speak unkindly of children who misbehave in school. I wish children were not allowed in your hateful classroom. You obviously hate others. Yes I just judged you the way you judge the author. Your ignorance is disgusting. I am so thankful you not only are not in my school system but my children are not in your class or in a school that hires such filth.

**Reply**

**Lesley (Les)**

10/4/2015 06:40:07 am

Amanda,  
 Hi I'm Lesley. Thank you for commenting on Lisa's negative and ignorant comments. I hope you read mine, as well. Now, the big question is how to get these charts removed from the classroom's. I never had a behavioral chart as a child (or adult) and I'm a very successful, well adjusted human being, who did not become a meniscus to society! Imagine that!!!! I just had a number of great teachers (and I was not a picture perfect student) and parents whom

held "me" accountable for my behavior ("me" and me only, not in front of my peers to be judged or labled as "bad"). There's nothing wrong w/ accountability, but a lot wrong with public shaming!

**Jimi**

10/4/2015 06:19:14 am

Seriously....show a little grace.

There are better ways to raise the spirits of our children... If you have true love for your job as an educator, you will research and realize that there is more out there just waiting for you....Question for you... Do you think kids are better off now or 40 years ago when you were that age? I'm thinking no for a host of reasons....you have to start at the early stages do make sure they have seld worth.....

**Reply**

**katherine brady**

7/5/2016 08:04:48 pm

I have personally discussed these behavior charts with a retired new york city teacher and literacy consultant. She has visited several classrooms in the city and she says the ones that perform better are the ones without behavior charts. She was very helpful in my discussion with the principal and district psychologist regarding these. My husband's cousin is a 4th grade teacher and she has 32 kids. She has never had a behavior chart and her kids perform well. When I was little my classroom was great and we never even heard of a behavior chart. I think they are nonsense and they are just no excuses to have one. I have been a substitute teacher for 3 years and have never had a problem. None of the teachers I subbed for had behavior charts. I think it creates more problems than it is worth! At home and at school!

**Reply**

**joel**

8/23/2016 10:17:18 am

are you kidding me??? kids dont look forward to being at the top! they look forward to be allowed to be who they are. you look forward to them being at the top (or bottom). it instills seperation, jeoulsousy, resentment, shame, the list goes on. your not making leaders and emotionally healthy kids, your making emotionless robots.

**Reply**

**Yolande**

9/27/2015 05:17:43 pm

WHAT? I'm NOT supposed to publicly shame children and breach confidentiality? Who knew?

**Reply**

**Amy**

10/1/2015 08:31:39 am

I've never understood why some teachers publicly discipline students when they would be mortified if they were disciplined in front of their peers.

**Reply**

**Deb**

9/27/2015 06:26:54 pm

I read that you go into classrooms and rip down these charts as a consultant. Please help advise us parents what to do and how to approach this issue when we see these charts in our children's classrooms. The 3rd grade teachers and my children's school use a smaller chart on a magnetic board they carry around. It even follows them to specials classes. I feel it carries the same weight as a big one on a wall. Any advice on kindly working on opening our teacher's eyes and asking them to drop this hurtful management tool?

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/27/2015 07:10:11 pm

Deb,

First of all, good for you for having a proactive attitude about your child's development. As a

disclaimer, my expertise pertains primarily to early childhood education. I understand that K-12 teachers are under immense pressure as they--unlike ECE teachers--have to meet core standards and have to do what's quick and easy to avoid the distraction that "developmentally appropriate but socially unacceptable" behaviors pose in the classroom. I empathize with these teachers, but I don't think that excuses just how wrong the charts are. They need support to make changes like these in their classrooms, and they rarely get it. So, this may be a long-term struggle for you.

As a few other commenters have pointed out to me, some districts require these for some ungodly reason, so this may turn out to be something that you take up with administration.

I would first and foremost bring up the confidentiality issue. Your child's behavioral "status" in the eyes of the teacher should be something that teacher keeps to his or herself. If a child has a diagnosed behavioral disorder, posting their behavioral status could be considered a breach of their privacy and confidentiality, so why on earth is it acceptable to do it to any other child?

Because changing a teacher's mind when they're in a very controlling state of being is often very difficult, I would first request to have your child's name opted out of the exercise because of how it is a form of public shaming and a reflection of the teacher's opinion instead of an objective state. Neither of which should be imposed on the child.

If the teacher refuses, consult an administrator, at which point you can point out articles like mine and many others, as well as information from psychological releases about public shaming and behavioral management.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont-worry-mom/201408/the-dos-and-donts-the-sticker-chart>

<http://www.sociology.org/the-emotional-abuse-of-our-children-teachers-schools-and-the-sanctioned-violence-of-our-modern-institutions/>

I most definitely urge parents to consult administrators about implementing conscious discipline, the company that developed the video I posted in the article. They TRANSFORM schools on a very diverse spectrum and change children's lives by changing controlling teachers or getting rid of them and placing the child's emotional well being above all else.

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

Good luck!

**Reply**

**Deb**

9/27/2015 07:24:43 pm

Thank you. My administrators know me very well, even the sups. I am a Conscious Discipline nut. I have bought the CD classroom management book for the building to use and gave the principal some CD's to listen to. Unfortunately they just adopted the PBIS model that has lots of great language, but so many incentives. I am currently sharing the 8 week CD video series with 65 families this Fall. So excited so many have taken this journey of learning new skills. I did get one rep, the title one reading teacher, from my children's elementary school to come. I am making a difference, but you are right, it is slow going and sometimes a painful road. I will keep at it.

**Kayla**

9/28/2015 06:23:37 am

This is a good point. So if my son who is in kindergarten and is diagnosed with adhd and oppositional defiant disorder, is constantly doing "bad" according to her and this chart, it is a confidentiality problem? My son has trouble focusing and shouts out but I don't believe he's being "bad". He actually isn't too oppositional with the teacher either as she has told us. She said he isn't one of her problem kids, yet he comes home on yellow everyday since she said that. He's upset because his once friend, who's always a "super student", won't talk to him anymore because he's always below green.. It's so saddening. He comes home talking about another little girl who is always with him on the same color and not doing good. My son blames the little girl. My son was on "orange" on Friday, which is "bad", and she took away outside time for today(Monday)! A whole weekend away! He didn't even want to go to school because of it today. He also told us she moved him down for not focusing on something while he was trying to learn. I know my son might stretch the truth but he's usually pretty truthful. He seems down about this chart. The first few days he liked it, he wanted to get up to purple and he was doing great for a week. He gets his first yellow and now he's struggling to get out of it.. I feel like it's had a definite negative impact and it's consuming our lives as a family having to worry about this chart and it's effect on our son.

**Travis Tagart**

9/28/2015 08:21:57 pm

Kayla, that breaks my heart. I hope you can speak with the administrators about how the stress of hitting "work quotas" behaviorally is really starting to affect your child's social wellbeing. That should be enough to opt out.

**Deb Ingram**

9/28/2015 06:23:30 am

Here is a new FREE webinar that Dr. Becky Bailey of conscious discipline did last week. We can all use it to send to our administrators and ask them to help build emotional intelligence and empathy in our schools. Throw those pebbles out there and we will see the ripple effect.  
<https://www.heartmath.org/resources/downloads/managing-emotional-mayhem/>

**Reply****Allana**

9/28/2015 06:31:56 am

Travis,

I have a child with ADHD and ODD. They use these charts on him in school. Can you pm me what school/parents can do instead of behaviour charts?

I am very interested in knowing what is healthy/helpful. I want my child to grow up a well adjusted and emotionally stable adult.

**Reply****Travis Tagart**

9/28/2015 08:19:40 pm

There is nothing that can "replace" them, because their very intent is flawed and unnecessary.

If teachers have a problem with the way a child is behaving, they should find suitable solutions for each problem, rather than pretending that human behavior can be condensed into a scale of green to red/good to bad.

For instance, if a child is fidgeting with something/causing a disruption, find something quiet they can fidget with.

If a child is talking in class (K-12), use kind words to explain why it's harming the child and the group as a whole, and offer specific times at which it's okay to talk. (Pre-K) Children shouldn't be expected to be silent ever. We spend the first two years of their life begging them to say words and learn how to walk, it's ridiculous that once they hit three-six, we forbid them from talking too loud or running.

If a child is being unkind to another child, talk it out as a group and give them the script for a healthy conflict resolution! I think this is the most important. If a child is bullying another child and gets put on red for it, that seems like the easiest "out" I've ever heard of.

I would highly suggest opting my child out of the practice over privacy concerns.

**Reply****deb**

9/29/2015 05:03:45 am

This video addresses this article very well and it helpful for those looking for an alternative.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeXdmRYjYHI>

**Reply****K K mirro**

9/29/2015 05:20:56 am

I would just like to say I can see where you are coming from.

But my side of the fence goes a little something like this...

My 7 year old has autism and mental illness. Her behavior issues enable her to learn. Her school implements a universal behavior program of point system, visuals, and color charts. Since being placed in this program the behavior system has motivated her to stay stable and work hard.

I am just wondering what your views are in a special needs setting.

Reply

**Travis Tagart**

9/29/2015 07:11:35 am

I definitely understand the need for visuals in children on the autism spectrum. I've worked with kids on the spectrum since day one in this field.

For me, no matter what, reducing the entirety of human behavior to a scale of a teacher's opinion of good and bad is absolutely wrong.

Instead, Conscious Discipline has a chart called "I feel..." with a set of emotions that I like to turn into a Velcro chart. If a child on the spectrum, a child with sensory issues, or any other child for that matter, is having a behavioral moment, it's my job to ask "why?" rather than say "no, don't feel that way".

It's my job to be a detective and figure out what they're feeling that's making them behave this way. Pull out the chart, ask what they're feeling. If they're nonverbal, I can say "your face is like this" (mirror their expression) "and your body is like this" (mirror their body language) "it looks like you're (insert emotion and point to chart, if it's a Velcro chart, they can pull it off to hear that noise)."

The takeaway is that we shouldn't be "motivating" kids to be emotionally stable, especially in a public forum that judges them from good to bad. We should be giving them the tools to where emotional stability is a byproduct. These charts cut out all of the behavioral development by jumping from A to Z because the rest of the letters are time-consuming. There are plenty of ways to give visuals that focus on actual development. Behavior charts trivialize the issues so that they're easy to compartmentalize and shuffle away.

Threatening, yelling at, and hitting children are also similarly effective. They make misbehavior "bad", compliance "good", but they don't teach healthy emotional management. They just teach that something bad will happen if you don't behave.

Reply

**Mary Meta Lowe**

9/29/2015 07:06:32 am

I appreciate your position. I have been teaching Early Childhood Education courses for 10 years as an Adjunct Instructor for a local community college. I have taught 10 different courses numerous times over that period, and I have never seen the behavior chart concept promoted in any of the positive discipline courses that I have taught. Our texts are the most current in thought and philosophy for children, and aware of DAP practices.

Reply

**Curious**

9/29/2015 11:50:47 am

So let me get this straight, on one hand "Our job, as early childhood educators, is to build children up, regardless of their behavior. To teach children how to resolve conflict with words instead of threats and punishments. To model healthy power by not making them compete for our affection. To be present and empathetic of every "behavior problem" rather than passive, disengaging, and brutal."

However, you will in fact walk into another teacher's room and "rip these suckers off of the wall in front of the teacher...And I do it with pride in my heart."

Your real life actions seem to contradict your post just a bit.

Reply

**Travis Tagart**

9/29/2015 01:44:55 pm

I missed the part where I owe adults who disrespect children like this the same respect they withhold from the children?

I'm not sure if this is news, but adults are different than children. If I need to give an adult--whose behavior is a result of routine and willful ignorance--a rude awakening, the abrasive manner in which I do it (pulling it off of the wall? I also missed the part where taking something off the wall is a devastating act?) is totally justified.

I think what's most depressing here is that you imply someone pulling something off of the wall in the

classroom is just as damaging as publicly shaming a child. An adult, who is relatively set in their self esteem and self worth being told "this is stupid, don't do it" needs to be told that, and why. A child is still building their emotional stability and figuring out what priorities are. The world of difference here shouldn't be ignored.

In the same way, if I saw a teacher hitting a child, I would push them away and have some "not very nice" words for them, too. How contradictory of me!

When you sign up for a job and you are harming children who didn't "sign up" to be there by their own will, you definitely deserve a rude awakening. It's not my job to make teachers feel good about themselves, it's to advocate for children.

Essentially: Apples and oranges, friend.

**Reply**

**Yolande**

9/29/2015 01:46:48 pm

Because having the choice to hang it back up on the wall is the same as never getting your sense of safety and worth back in a classroom that publicly shames you. Wooooooow.

**Reply**

**Karen**

9/29/2015 03:30:34 pm

I have worked in a school that used these charts. I would hear parents ask their kids, "How was your day?" and the kids would answer, "I stayed on blue," or whatever color, and that would be the end of the conversation. No "I played with my friends" or "We read a new book and it was funny" or "Our plants are growing!" Nothing, just a color equivalent of if they were "good." It was sad.

**Reply**

**Sherry**

9/29/2015 04:36:17 pm

New methods which promote lack of structure are ridiculous... I have never damaged a child because they had a consequence chart in the class 😊

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/29/2015 06:19:09 pm

If you really think something like this is what a "consequence" is, then yeah you've probably done a lot of damage.

I definitely damaged a lot of kids for a period of time when I thought control-centric teaching was the only way. But I decided to abandon my peaceful, quiet right ship of a classroom for one that was developmentally appropriate, and I was able to do this by admitting my wrongs and not trivializing the new methods by saying they lacked structure.

The downfall of teachers in this profession is that they'll never really know what becomes of the kids they teach because they're with us at this part of their life when they're still figuring themselves out. That seems to be the ignorance from which you're speaking.

I can't make you do anything, but I suggest you let that go, and cut the cognitive dissonance from your life.

**Reply**

**Tammy**

9/29/2015 06:10:09 pm

Absolutely great article Travis. There is not enough, stopping, listening, understanding and the comforting, explaining and so on these days in almost anything. I look forward to more articles. 😊

**Reply**

**TeachFirst**

9/29/2015 06:23:07 pm

How about we agree to disagree without the name calling? Sounds good to me!

**Reply**

**Maya**

9/29/2015 07:13:00 pm

Wow. Unprofessional.

I see no "name calling" that you wouldn't hear as normal critique from a college professor in an ECE course. Maybe you just think it's name calling because it's hitting home? I'm pretty sure that's the point of the article.

Step off the high horse and learn the reality of this profession--things change with new information. These were always developmentally inappropriate but they're more for the teachers than they are the kids.

Every teacher I know who uses these revels in the fact that it's an easy way to skim confidentiality and share behavioral information with parents that policies would normally not allow. It's revenge. It's controlling. It's bad.

If someone wants to spank their kid, nobody who actually cares about children is going to "agree to disagree" so why should we stop with physical maltreatment and physical unfair power struggles?

**Reply**

**Rachel**

9/29/2015 09:05:03 pm

This article is on point!!!! I came across this at the perfect time. I have two school aged children, one in kinder and one in 3rd. My kindergartener has been had an AWFUL first 5 weeks of school because of these STUPID charts. I ended up pulling him out of his original class because his teacher was so completely obsessed with it. My daughter, who is more of a conformist, has also had issues with the chart. She's been the "stay on green" kid and was completely beside herself because nothing she did caused her to move up to blue. I will be taking this article to the PTA meeting , along with some other research to back it. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!!! Teachers who use this are lazy and can't possibly understand the psyche of a young child.

**Reply**

**Gael Nash**

9/30/2015 04:24:46 am

Attune to children. Adapt to their individual characteristics. Enjoy them, learn from them, don't control them. Establish democratic decision making with the group. Don't sweat the small stuff. Turn a blind eye sometimes and hone that keen sense of humour. Kids respond when they can feel you are genuine. Authenticity and being a human being rather than a label i.e. "teacher" goes a long way in gaining respect. Then you can lead not control others even preschoolers, even with "developmental" issues. It doesn't have to fit the mould for god's sake. Results oriented teachers with their colour coded charts are missing out on having warm loving interactions with children. Where is the humanity and what are we really teaching our children?

**Reply**

**Joy**

9/30/2015 05:17:53 am

Thank you for this insight. As a former educator (speech therapist) I thought these were a great idea in the classroom, then my son went to kindergarten. He is an incredibly bright child who suffers from ADHD and anxiety. From the beginning, I was determined to do everything "right" to help him be successful in school (medication, weekly therapy, follow through at home). Yet everyday he was on yellow or red, not for bad behavior but excessive and impulsive behavior according to his teacher. He became obsessed over this color chart and began labeling himself as a "red kid". This was very concerning to the behavioral therapist and me. She sent a letter to the school asking them to use a different form of management and gave many suggestions but no changes were made. I had parents at a event talk about how their children would come home and tell them who was on red everyday. I approached the principal to discuss this at one point and he clearly stated to me that achieving anything other than red or yellow was not an achievable goal for my son at this time. I was appalled to hear him say that and pressed him on the decision to set the same behavior standards for all children when we would not dream of doing that with reading goals (which my son excelled in). This went on for 2 years with no improvement and increased anxiety in my son. We now homeschool.

**Reply**

**Rebecca (<http://www.thesparklenest.com>)**

9/30/2015 05:36:53 am

These remind me ever so much of the personal development reviews we have at work. I wish they could be burnt too!

**Reply**

**diane**

9/30/2015 06:40:32 am

I do agree with this, last year when my son was in p1, he came home very upset one day, all he kept saying was "I'm on red" after a while he explained what it was, he was so upset, i thought the same thing that it was the teachers sole opinion.

**Reply**

**Anna**

9/30/2015 07:42:35 am

BRAVOS TO TEACHERS WHO NEVER STOP OR REFUSE TO BE OPEN MINDED AND CONTINUE TO LEARN. WHAT IS THE CONCEPT BEHIND TEACHING IF ONES CANNOT LEARN. THERE WOULD BE NOTHING GOOD TO TEACH AFTER ALL WITH AN EMPTY BRAIN OR CLOUDED I WOULD SAY. CANT WAIT FOR MORE ARTICLES FROM BRILLIANT TEACHERS LIKE TRAVIS 🐼

**Reply**

**Mike**

9/30/2015 07:55:55 am

I'd like to add the perspective of a highly involved parent who has spent a considerable amount of time getting to know my child's teachers, their methods and styles, their classrooms and their students.

Over the past two years, I've fairly closely observed four kindergarten through second grade-level teachers. Of the four:

- The least effective teacher made the greatest use of behavior charts. In fact, she began the year with one version; when that didn't work, she added an additional one; and when that didn't work she replaced the first with yet another one.
- The second-least-effective teacher had a single chart that she came to use more heavily as the year went on with zero effect on the targeted kids. It literally became nothing more than a classification system for grading impulse- and emotional-control levels rather than a tool to improve them.
- The most effective teacher had a behavior chart that literally had dust on it. It went unused the entire year.

When I say "effective", I'm speaking broadly about my subject observations of the quality of that teacher's overall performance across the board - which includes connecting with children, successfully engaging them, conveying the subject matter, cultivating their development, understanding and responding to their individual needs, fostering a positive, enriching learning environment, etc..

The bottom-line is that behavior charts are - like it or not - a crutch that gets more and more attractive, the less able/willing the teacher is to manage student behavior and development via less command-and-control methods.

From my observation, they have had no beneficial effect on the kids with the greatest developmental needs in terms of behavior and emotional regulation.

While I saw no clear positive impact, I did, however, see a negative impact that bordered from minor to creating outright toxicity. In the worst case, the environment and the students became so wholly focused on the chart that they truly played back how their days went solely based on how the teacher had color-coded their behavior that day... which, rather obviously, is the absolute opposite of the very concept of self-regulation.

Policing isn't teaching. Cops aren't coaches.

While I fully get the attractiveness of behavior charts, in reality, they serve only the teacher and not the students.

**Reply**

**Elaine**

9/30/2015 08:17:12 am

Speaking as someone who has never been a teacher and thankfully the parent of someone with no significant issues, I do nonetheless have vivid memories of some awfully abusive teachers in my younger years (about half a century ago). I have ADHD and no one knew what that was back then. But I'm thinking it would have been helpful if adults had explained that the behaviors they emphasized (paying attention, not interrupting,

waiting our turn, etc.) would stand us in good stead AS ADULTS IN THE WORKPLACE, and that wanting to cut in line and do our own thing are natural human impulses. The one thing that needs to be eliminated is labeling these behaviors, and by extension, LITTLE KIDS, as "bad."

**Reply**

**Nancy**

9/30/2015 10:57:49 am

Responsive Classroom is a great alternative. I liked it much better than Conscience Discipline.

**Reply**

**Nicole**

9/30/2015 03:37:18 pm

Ok, so you talk all about why we should get rid of the behavior chart...but then what?

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/30/2015 04:48:22 pm

I address this in the comments here as well as a brand new post on this blog.

**Reply**

**Kerri**

9/30/2015 04:41:54 pm

Since when were behavior charts designed as means and purpose to promote shaming students in classrooms? My understanding of a behavioral chart is to provide children, generally those who lacking certain skills, a visual reminder for general classroom behaviors. I have walked into classrooms with behavioral charts in use or not in use and have seen certain teachers reprimanding student after student. I have walked into other classrooms with behavioral charts where children are listening to lecture or working in learning groups in a true learning environment. In reviewing this article and subsequent posts and a video that someone posted which I thought was fantastic by the way, I have alot to say. Focusing on poor behaviors takes away alot of class time and the more successful well adored teachers do spend the majority of their time in something called lecture and child centered activity all the while promoting and complimenting positive behaviors and doing their best to make sure everyone is treated with respect. These are the effective teachers producing students who are getting something out of their education and whose behaviors. Preventing behavioral problems is about setting a good example and a positive environment. Good teachers model appropriate behaviors that they want their students to also display. At the end of the day, we have things like curriculum and subject matter and children need to gain some knowledge while in school. And why shouldnt they. But indeed it would be helpful to assist students further in dealing with the negotiation skills, or how about some interpersonal skills, or how about some decision making skills so we can all end up in the career of our dreams? Negotiation skills, which they will need later in life, which is something I work hard at as a speech therapist. I promote more listening on my part and my sessions are as child directed as possible. My students ask thought provoking questions, but at times that can lead to a session bordering on chaos or falling off topic when there is academics and literacy at stake here. And in those times that I do refer to appropriate classroom behaviors and my reward system which is both behavior and academics based. And that is when I am careful with my words because why should we spend our lives living among constant criticism? At the same time, why should I allow one student to continuously say mean things to another student? Why should the "nice kid" always have to ignore it. Why should the "nice kid" have to feel as though he should have to defend himself at all? If I have to point it out to him from time to time and that makes him embarrassed, it should eventually subside and it has but its been at the expense of someone else. And that is something society should be ashamed of. We live among not necessarily bullies , but on a collective whole, we are criticized so often that my society feels like a bully, at least to me. Its rather insightful to review a post that suggests that any one using a behavioral chart is doing so with the purpose of shaming students(whether they realize it or not). Do you remember the story of a special needs student walking out of his school and later found deceased? I have a student who teachers call "a runner". This student runs away from adults. She will absolutely has a behavior chart and it is not to shame her. It is used as a temporary aid that will be faded to get something called yes dare I say compliance because I need to know I can count on that child in an emergency to follow basic instructions for the safety of all, for the safety of YOUR child as well. I need to know that she will be safe at school and I am doing that for her safety, because while I do dislike her behavior I don't dislike her. This student is illiterate. I dont think people quite understand what is at stake with certain severe cases. It takes every ounce of my energy as a new teacher working with a new student such as this to exude a model (and facial expression!) of a person with self control when you have a child ready to bolt at a school whose security has holes in it, while another with the same kind of behaviors, in that moment, however, waiting patiently for you for another worthy venture, an education. You bet your tailbone I will use a behavior chart when necessary. You can bet it will be faded in time and in the interim Ms. S won't let them leave their session without making it to green because they were able to get some work done and they earned their sticker and I return proud students to their classroom showing them that yes, indeed they are capable of completing some

academics and yes, they can feel safe with a little bit of continuity and consistent reward for a job well done every time they see me. Say what you may, but I earned those smiles when I walked through the door this year. I earned them because I made a difference and I'm an amazing teacher? I'm not sure I'd say that yet. I'd say I earned it bec

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/30/2015 05:42:59 pm

We are speaking of the group behavior charts, not personal behavior charts which do have value in special education classrooms. There are alternatives to those as well, but when it comes to special education, the most important people to listen to in regard to special needs behavior are the doctors who develop IEP's and other behavior plans. Even then, it's always good to get more than one opinion just to make sure of the route you're taking.

Any time a child's behavior is posted on a scale alongside every other child's behavior, it's public shaming.

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/30/2015 05:46:14 pm

Also, Kerri, if you ever want to contribute an article to this blog, please let us know!

<http://www.progressivepreceptors.com/contact.html>

**Reply**

**Teacher**

9/30/2015 06:03:45 pm

Teachers are not controlling. They are frowned upon by administration if their kids are talking in the halls, etc. So good teachers end up forced to resort to control mechanisms. We don't want to be that way. We just don't want to get dirty looks because our kids are talking.

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/30/2015 07:21:11 pm

Exactly! While this post was focused more on early childhood environments, where the people judging each other for noncompliant children are actually other teachers, it's something that needs to change in all aspects.

Please continue to read the other posts on this blog as I feel that we're more in tune with one another than you may think. I definitely feel for teachers who have no other option from their administration. It really sucks. I've been there, and my heart is with you.

**Reply**

**Karen**

9/30/2015 07:49:40 pm

That is an excellent point, Teacher. I have seen admin who pressured teachers to have children maintain absolute silence while walking in a perfectly straight line in the halls. Yet, in any natural setting, people walk together and talk, and talk quietly if needed. Lines at the stores, etc., are not perfectly straight, yet we expect this of children. And don't get me started on when they have to wait in the halls at pick up time, or waiting to enter a class. I would like to see some of these admins sit ""criss-cross applesauce"" without talking or squirming for that amount of time!

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/30/2015 08:05:17 pm

We must expect of children only what we can expect of ourselves. We must model our expectations constantly.

**Lesley**

10/4/2015 06:38:46 pm

Your only goal is to let your kids be taught by a loving soul and not worrying about what anyone thinks....at the end of the day, YOU are the one that can make a difference...be a leader.....following others will not bring the rewards you deserve!

**Reply**

**tim\_the\_enchanter**

9/30/2015 06:54:36 pm

Absolute truth. Control issues. Build relationships and teach empathy.

**Reply**

**Joan**

9/30/2015 07:26:27 pm

Don't really disagree with some of your concerns, Travis, but looking at the bigger picture in the classroom, there has to be some sort of a management plan. Teachers are forced to resort to such plans as these behavior charts due to lack of resources and support necessary in implementing the nurturing of PBIS and Conscious Discipline programs.

Much has and continues to change in the public education system and most changes are not for the better, in my opinion.

As a teacher of 35 years, I watched outstanding support programs, that assisted the neediest students, phased out. Specialized teachers, that could customized learning goals for students, we're reduced to educational aids as inclusion became the vogue. Students were now spared the embarrassment of instruction from a specially trained teacher, to be able to remain with the rest of the class. The classroom teacher now must make adaptations for the individual students. Did i mention short changing students and saving money?

There were more than a few times in my career, I was stopped in my tracks trying to get more help for a student. The system failed the student, but they were still in my classroom. At those times, I was much more concerned with the students needs than any test scores. If I were still teaching today, those test scores would become part of my evaluation. When education becomes a numbers game, we have lost our focus.

Class size and time are yet more factors. Increasing class sizes, with the growing demand of expectations in the curriculum, creates the need for a quick efficient tool to organize and guide students to work together as a team.

Teachers deserve our understanding of the pressures they face each day, and suggestions for more appropriate discipline ideas would be welcomed without the accusation of the harm they have already inflicted on the students.

Thanks for reading, and for sharing information on these programs.

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

9/30/2015 08:02:24 pm

I don't think any one here is denying that or saying anything to the contrary.

Public schools have their own set of problems that must be dealt with, and teachers should be given the resources and training to implement developmentally appropriate practices to meet their goals. That's for sure.

My concern with this post, is in early childhood classrooms (Pre-K), where those pressures are close to non existent, especially in private, center-based and in-home care.

Thank you!

**Reply**

**Deanna**

9/30/2015 07:41:31 pm

This does not mean Bly apply to EC but primary as well. I have a 9 year old who's school has used this system since kindergarten. In all his years there he has only made it to the top of the chart once! So sad!!

**Reply**

**Kate**

9/30/2015 09:31:25 pm

As an educator and mom, I get to see both inside and outside of the classroom every day. As a Dean of Students, I witness first hand the psychological harm these charts cause. I also see the healing and growth behavior management systems such as CHAMPS and Love and Logic provide. I was THAT teacher for my first five years, and I ask for forgiveness nearly every day when I think about the damage I caused.

For those who think total control equals respect and learning, remember why we entered this profession - because we want to help children learn and grow. Forcing them to become compliant behavior zombies while shutting down their rights to be the individual they are (with individual needs and strengths ) is not only lazy, but it's also borderline abusive. I got into this business to raise kids up, not crush them.

Think back to your favorite teacher growing up...did that teacher plaster your weaknesses, bad days, and personal struggles all over the wall for your peers see? Or, did they build a relationship with you, support you unconditionally, and treat you with respect while holding you accountable for growth opportunities?

Think back to the teacher that caused you the most pain. How many times was that pain caused by embarrassment and shame?

When you are ready to "clip up or down" at work - When you are ready for your spouse or partner to judge your every move and "clip you up or down" - When you are ready for your coworkers to see your every fault - then come back here and say you want the same for your kids.

Teaching is one of the hardest jobs in the world. We are underpaid, under appreciated and over worked. However, let's not make teaching one of the hardest things for our students.

Blessings to you all.

**Reply**

**Lesley**

10/5/2015 06:33:55 pm

You said it all!!!!!!

**Reply**

**Shayna**

9/30/2015 10:10:52 pm

Thank you for this article!

**Reply**

**Stephanie**

10/1/2015 11:50:02 am

I am so happy that you posted this article. I've been saying this since my daughter was in Kindergarten.

**Reply**

**Corina Becker**

10/1/2015 12:07:45 pm

I'm not a teacher, but I remember being in classrooms with reward charts. You know, you get a sticker for doing a good job and it goes up on a board? I found those to be shaming as well. I have disabilities, some only recently diagnosed, and so I wouldn't earn as many stickers as my peers. It contributed to a lot of issues I had about accepting accommodations and self-esteem. In my opinion, public charts of how well a student is doing, is a source of subtle peer pressure and shame. (In the case of sticker earnings, I would suggest their own private sheet that they or the teacher keep; still have the reward, just take the shame out of it.)

**Reply**

**Jamelyn**

10/1/2015 12:14:32 pm

My friend at work forwarded me this blog. When i found out my son was going to be using the Class Dojo in his classroom I started researching about it. I feel very strongly, these types of "behavior charts" or the use of programs like "class dojo's" is a form of shaming these kids. I am glad to know that I am not the only one out there that sees it. I am not a teacher. But I'm a mom. And my job is to make sure that my kid grows up to be kind, forgiving, understanding, and empathetic.

Those types of "tools" are NOT showing any of those behaviors to my kiddo.

My son is 5 years old. He started kindergarten at a public school this year. He was so excited to go to school, but now, everyday he comes home he is only worried about what color he was on in his "Class dojo"

I am a first time mom. I am a single mom. I am doing everything I can think of at home to talk to him, and reassure him that he is a "good" kid,, at least according to their point system standards on the "class dojo."

This is hard for me, for the longest time I believed that behavior charts at home or school would help his

behavior. We tried using it for a year at home. He would get so stressed out, even more depressed, or upset because he couldn't possibly live up to the behavior 'Goals' I set for him. I finally realized that these charts never made a difference, other than being a shaming tool, that taught my kid he had to live up to a certain expectation. My kiddo is far from Perfect, I certainly have no delusions about his behavior. Hes just like any other 5 year old. Sometimes he is really great, and sometimes he isn't But I know for a fact that he does better when we just talk about something. He responds to not feeling pressured to act a certain way, or make a certain decision, that his little brain isn't quite ready to make.

As far as our "class dojo" is concerned. I tell him all the Positive things he got points for. And the Negative things, I just try to make a friendly conversation about it while we are doing homework, or cooking dinner, and i always try to remind him that its ok to make a mistake. We all do, including me. My kid will never be a "green" kid all the time. But that's okay with me. I just want him to be a kid. And honestly, its a shame that we put all of these expectations on children.

**Reply**

**Page**

10/1/2015 02:40:55 pm

I am a parent as well as a teacher and am struggling with this in my daughter's first grade classroom. I read the majority of the comments and hopefully I didn't overlook it, but does anyone have any information or articles that speak to the cognitive developmental age of these students? In my mind, especially at 6 years old, students just aren't at a cognitive development stage where they even understand the "green is good". All the know is that they failed that day and have constant visual reminder of that. If anyone has any hard evidence about the relationship to cognitive development and these insane charts I would love it if you could share.

**Reply**

**Alk**

10/1/2015 05:07:48 pm

I have a bargained chart that only displays positive behavior...the students all start out on Green and the earn the opportunity to go to Purple by showing random acts of kindness or other community building positive behaviors. What is your advice for this?

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

10/1/2015 05:14:27 pm

I think this is a great step in the right direction! I do hesitate with the fact that it still shows where each child is in relation to one another, so the kids who stay at the bottom are sort of outed as being "not as nice."

I prefer something like the Kindness Tree in Conscious Discipline. When a teacher notices something a child did that was helpful or kind, the teacher adds a leaf to the tree on the wall with the child's name and what they did. This helps children understand that there are lots of different things that can be nice or helpful, and that when you do these things, it's far more cherished than "moving up a color", it comes with an explanation along with a visual, and children who aren't on the tree just don't have a spot on the tree--not a bad thing, not outing their behavior, not calling them out by name or visual.

Perhaps that may be worth trying, too!

**Reply**

**Ronda Goodman (<http://rondagoodman.myhomehq.biz/>)**

10/2/2015 12:47:48 am

I loved this article. I am a parent of a daughter with fetal alcohol syndrome and a son with autism. I hear this same thing from my childrens psychologist. It is all about the twist you put on things instead of the negative concentrate on the positive and don't respond to the negative. Kids love any attention, all attention, that is why we want them to crave the positive and not the negative.

How can I get a copy of this whole article. I was unable to copy it in a very good format. I want to pass it on to my children's school.

Thank you.

**Reply**

**Lynn Gard**

10/2/2015 07:12:02 am

I am wondering how you feel about the Zones of Regulation program. I know this is not necessarily a disciplinary issue but I am struggling with the students having to choose a colour and it is also public. Would appreciate any feedback.

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

10/2/2015 12:39:52 pm

I will say that they're a step in the right direction, if used in the spirit of the program's intentions. However, nothing in the world will ever be a good enough substitute for actual, down-to-business emotional regulation. We can't just say, "go to the safe area and calm down", as many who use the zones will wind up doing, we have to go with them and practice deep breathing and calming methods with them. We have to be present and empathetic to the many emotional trips children go through if we really want them to remember the healthy tools of self-regulation.

**Reply**

**Lynn Gard**

10/2/2015 02:54:40 pm

Thank you for your feedback, I totally agree with you.

**Lindsay**

10/2/2015 08:35:53 am

My 5 year old son started preschool this year and his classroom has the behavior clip chart. Every day he gets in the car he tells me the status of the clip chart. (who was clipped down, that his clip didn't move etc.) Granted during the open house, we were able to hear from the teacher about the conversations that happen when a clip is moved, what it means when they are clipped up or down and what behavior requires a clip to be moved. I will admit, that it has sat uneasily with me as we do address behavior at home but more importantly I want to reach my son's heart behind the behavior, not just modify his behavior. Yesterday when he got in the car he told me he was clipped down because he didn't pick up his center. (he tends to get lazily distracted even at home when asked to do a task) He said he was able to talk with his teacher and that he didn't cry, so that made me feel a bit better, but still, it doesn't sit quite right with me. Funny that I ran across this article today! I don't agree, however, with comparing our children to a stranger on the street or other adults and that we are being jerks when we as parents or even teachers say "no" among other things to our kids. I do think there are times and places for us to say no, but it's all about our methods.

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

10/2/2015 12:37:20 pm

I say "no" to strangers all the time. You just have to be appropriate and have actual reasoning that goes beyond your own needs for the "no". I think the comparison is completely acceptable, because it helps curb the sometimes abrasive way we phrase things as adults who feel like we need to control a situation.

**Reply**

**Lindsay**

10/4/2015 04:26:35 pm

I understand now with your clarification! Thank you! Too many people say no way too many times for no good reason but their own desire to be right and in control. How I read it initially was if we wouldn't say it to an adult or stranger, don't say it to our kids. And I do think my communication with my children is very different than how I communicate with adults or strangers (obviously I'm coming from a point of respect and love towards my kids) but they are also kids and don't know everything. If the "no" is in direct defiance, I won't get over it- I have to deal with the heart behind the resistance. Of course I am not a perfect parent, and I have even had to apologize to my little ones for my wrong methods. But if I feel they are directly going against something that I've asked them to do- there will be consequences and a conversation about the why to their defiance. Thank you again for clarifying your comparison!

**Patricia F.**

10/3/2015 12:05:40 pm

I love this article and agree whole-heartedly. I think this can be a very charged topic for adults; we are products of the very environments that we now know are unhealthy and need to be changed. When professional development providers, consultants, researchers, administrators, and the like talk to teachers,

yes, they are talking to adults, and yes, that is different than talking to children. While we might not damage other adults, we may be dealing with adults who already have been harmed, in a variety of work and educational environments, by practices that were/are coercive, punitive, and personally and publicly shaming. As a result, I don't use words like "lazy" with adults or with kids; instead, I explain that, while certain popular practices might seem more efficient, they have a number of shortcomings, including x, y, and z. I have found that, like kids, adults want to know that they are heard and understood. Once I show that I am talking with them, not at them, we build respect and trust and usually have dialog that leads to behavior change. I say this as someone who has worked in early childhood and in special education, and who has no children but had to build credibility with parents while teaching positive discipline and child development. It really does work.

**Reply**

**David M** (<http://www.sarasotalearningproject.com/>)

10/3/2015 05:55:09 pm

We have seen how these behavior charts can negatively impact children that manage to stay on the "good" colors:

"For the children who can always maintain 'green,' they often feel increased pressure, stress, and worry to maintain, do well. Often they are observing their classmates frequently change the colors on the chart; they observe the negative impact it has on peers and know, 'I don't want that negative attention, I don't want to feel that way, or get yelled at, or miss recess.'"

(From this article: <http://www.sanduskyregister.com/Health-and-Fitness/2015/09/03/Is-it-worth-it.html>)

That is what we experienced. Our daughter was highly stressed and anxious at the thought of getting moved down a color. She saw how kids that were on the lower colors were perceived, judged, and punished. She felt like she had to be extremely cautious to avoid getting moved down a color as she saw kids punished for minor infractions on a daily basis. She bounced between the "good colors" of green and purple, while ironically not even understanding why she was being rewarded and moved to purple. As time went on, her anxiety about the possibility of ever getting moved down to just "yellow" increased. Then one day, she was at a "learning" station playing a game with 2 other kids and 1 child suggested they play the game differently. Sara said she didn't want to but did it anyway. When the teacher noticed they weren't doing it "correctly" they all got put on "yellow". She was extremely upset. She could recognize the injustice and felt humiliated. Not a good system for our sensitive child like our daughter.

For kids that do great with this system, I still wonder how it affects their sense of fairness, judgment, etc. When asking a few of my daughter's schooled friends how they feel about kids that get put on the lower colors, they all seem to have this perception that these kids are "bad" kids and should be avoided. To me it is awful to think that a kindergarten child has to deal with being labeled as a "bad kid", when what they need is guidance, support, and time to play & move.

I also witnessed one parent tell the teacher that his child gets spanked if they come home with a report that they have been on "yellow", "orange" or "red". How awful. Punished and shamed at school, then physically punished on top of that at home. SMH. The whole thing just makes me sad.

**Reply**

**Rebecca**

10/3/2015 09:26:18 pm

I have been working in a preschool classroom and the lead teacher is constantly saying to the children something to this effect, "If you don't get back on the rug I am going to call your mom." Which usually ends with the child complying but in tears, no please don't call my mom. I hate that this is the method she uses to bring control to the classroom as I feel it also makes kids fearful of their parents and really doesn't establish that connection with the students. I try to speak with the child privately or model playing in a group and sharing as opposed to just saying you need to move if you can't share.

**Reply**

**Regina**

10/4/2015 05:58:42 am

I believe we also need to look at the fact that teachers are forced to demand more and more of younger children based on the curriculum. When I was in kindergarten, I was in a very large room filled with toys. Now in preschool there are worksheets and handwriting lessons. Preschool! I think what is being taught and the developmentally inappropriate expectations of young children needs to change.

**Reply**

**Anna**

10/4/2015 06:53:18 am

<http://fredschostag.efoliomn.com/Uploads/2661dab1-d0aa-46f8-a6bc-aeb357952ab2/3915fc85-cbd5-410b-8e6d-2df33d80f805/A.%20Kohn.pdf>

Travis recommended this author Alfie Kohn to read about even rewards are still just as damaging to children for good behaviors.

**Reply**

**Tania**

10/5/2015 10:32:34 am

I call them public charts of shame.

**Reply**

**Linda**

10/5/2015 05:42:00 pm

What do you do when your class is required to use it??

**Reply**

**Travis Tagart**

10/5/2015 07:17:33 pm

Plenty of teachers get away with, well, just not using it. Having it posted, but never mentioning it. I'm not sure how that would be perceived by every administration system in the country, so I don't want to recommend that people put their jobs on the line, but I hope this can open up a dialogue between teachers and their administrators.

Administrators seem to ignore most of the aspects of the School-to-Prison pipeline, and this is just one more thing that can't be ignored any longer. Best of luck!

**Reply**

**fkbaloha**

10/6/2015 11:59:45 pm

Would it surprise any teachers to learn that this is the only type of discipline system I learned through Teach for America...and that not only were we specifically taught it, we were reprimanded for NOT using it with fidelity?

**Reply**

**Elena**

10/7/2015 06:57:04 am

Thank you for this text. My daughter just started preschool and I am appalled that every school I visited had those on the wall. I tried to speak with the teacher, but they seem to see this as a "gentle way to manage behaviour and teach". I am at a loss what to do, as I understand I can ask them to take her name off? Also will print out resources, but wanted to ask is there a way I as a parent can invite you to the school, if not to talk to the teachers (if they refuse), then initially to talk to parents so we can all some pressure. I am a psychoanalytical psychotherapist and am acutely aware of the great emotional implications early prolonged separation and this type of interacting with children have. Looking forward to any support and advice you and your readers can offer. Thank you

**Reply**

**LisaM456**

10/10/2015 06:48:25 am

If we want students to behave in the classroom, we need to build a safe, loving classroom that promotes mutual respect, self-discipline, self-reliance and communication skills. When students "misbehave" they often don't realize that they hurt someone else's feelings. Students need to be taught to solve problems proactively and move on. If we want to avoid the behaviours that cause students to see themselves as bad and destroys their self-esteem, behaviour charts or posted rules are not the way to do it. We need to be models for the students. We need to reduce the time students are expected to sit still and listen. Instead focus on small group instruction and inquiry based education. Also, most importantly, spend lots and lots of time outdoors exploring, playing, walking, observing. Young children are not wired to sit still. They will respond positively and happily to an active classroom that values their develop and curiosity. Most will not respond to behaviour charts, but to positive relationships, teamwork and classroom community expectations.

**Reply**

**Kristie Pretti-Frontczak** (<http://b2kcoach.com>)

10/20/2015 10:31:57 am

One of my favorite quotes from the article is, "But here's my ammo: if a teacher needs this at all, if they have this hanging on their wall, they're not managing behavior, they're threatening it by holding a child's reputation hostage." Reading this post inspired my colleague Ashley Lyons and me to write on this critical topic and to provide additional solutions for those who are ready to "rip the behavior charts off the wall and burn them!" Our post was published today (<http://b2kcoach.com/chart>).

**Reply**

**Julie**

2/3/2016 09:30:24 am

This article makes some GREAT points, and I totally agree with most of it, but in my opinion it tends toward blaming and shaming teachers a bit too much. In my personal experience as a parent of two spirited young children, I find that the need for control that results in this kind of discipline comes from a dysregulated nervous system. No one WANTS to have this kind of response to stress. But rowdy children creates a stress response that many adults have a hard time with. So they resort to these kinds of measures in a desperate attempt to feel safe. Part of teacher training needs to be about this... how to self regulate. Maybe through mindfulness practices. Then, they can have the ability to implement more positive discipline practices. But before this can happen I suppose there needs to be general shift in perspective, an understanding of what's broken and why... so the information here is crucial!

**Reply**

**James**

5/26/2016 01:06:02 pm

I highly disagree with this article. I teach junior kindergarten and when I put up a clip chart I saw a huge improvement in my students' behavior. I use it as a motivational tool and the kids love to try to get the highest color they get. The parents have given me so much positive feedback and have even begun to use it in their homes. For a brief period I considered stopping the clip chart and the kids were begging me to bring it back. They enjoyed it and I love watching them get so excited to move their clips up and strive to get as high as possible on the chart.

I do wonder how much time, if any, you have actually spent in the classroom. I've come to find out that the ones who are supposedly "experts" on classroom management and try to tell teachers how to be more effective have spent very little (and in some cases, none whatsoever) time in the classroom. I'm all for receiving advice and getting feedback, but don't act like your opinion on a given matter is an absolute fact.

**Reply**

**Travis**

5/26/2016 02:43:19 pm

Here is the reality: you do not like being called out for what I (and a hefty scientific and educational research body) consider to be unacceptable behavior. You have just proven this. You can't handle it, and neither can children. It is not motivating you to do the right thing, and instead you become defensive.

My goal is to not create children who are impulse-free, compliant robots with an unwavering disposition to follow the orders of adults. That is extremely dangerous, for one, and only contributes to the school to prison pipeline, age compression, and sets them up to be successful in one line of work: being a low-level employee in an office setting forever.

I have no doubt in my mind that children behave well when they are threatened. I never said that it doesn't "work" it just isn't "right" and doesn't work long term.

I have no doubt in my mind that parents are very excited about the fact that their children behave when they use threatening force against them rather than taking the time to actually connect with their own children over behavior they don't like.

What I do doubt, however, is that using this form of punishment is positive \*for children\* (I'm sure it's very positive for you and parents!) in the long run. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and neuroscientists like myself agree that using tricks like this really only gets them to behave when their behavior is being closely monitored. Check out Alfie Kohn. Rewards don't work for intrinsic motivation, and neither do punishments. It may make them more incentivized to meet your expectations, but not to have any organic or intrinsic motivation to do right. That is not an opinion. That is a well-known fact.

It is more important to facilitate and encourage children to do what is right because it is right, not because of the allure of a present or the threat of punishment.

I spend 60 hours per week directly in a classroom with young children, not including breaks, not

including lesson planning, not including cleaning. That's about 20-25 more direct instruction time with children than public school teachers. That your defense of your practices needed to include a presumptuous indictment that I do not spend enough time in the classroom as a teacher to you have an opinion based in fact and research about said practices is incredibly indicative of your ability to self reflect on your value and pedagogy as a teacher.

You may have so much positive feedback from parents that you don't \*think\* you need professional development as our understanding of childhood changes and evolves with research and study, but I can assure you, objectively, you need it -- we all do.

And if you really believe your opinions defy the conclusions of high-level, long-term, large-scale scientific study, you're not doing what you're doing because it's right, you're continuing to do it because it's more comfortable and less work.

**Reply**

**Alex**

5/26/2016 02:45:38 pm

The fact that you need tools to do something that can be accomplished by connecting with children personally and individually says everything. Why on earth would you be in this profession if not to grow every day and do right by kids?

**Reply**

**Crystal**

6/27/2016 04:44:06 pm

I'm trying to introduce conscious discipline into our agency since my experience with it has been outstanding and life changing. They currently use PBIS and a color clip chart where they are thinking about implementing it into the infant toddler rooms too! I'm scared that I cannot change their mind but I've given them my facts, experiences and conscious discipline research. They say "we use it because our elementary school does too. The kids will be ready for it in kindergarten." Help Travis can you come talk to my agency?!? I'm desperate!

**Reply**

**Deb**

7/1/2016 12:04:46 pm

My answer would be, just because others are doing it and it is common does not mean it is okay or what is best. I hear them wanting consistency and getting the children better prepared for what is coming in their student's educational journey. We will do this better by using CD and teaching our students the skills to self regulate and deal with all the social and educational requirements that will be placed on them. We teach and guide, not punish and shame. We offer empathy and understanding as we would want others to do for us. Ask them to think about if they were treated that way in a public environment. See if they will watch the free videos before making a final decision. Good luck and keep sharing with others. Let's change the world with what we know!!!  
<http://consciousdiscipline.com/videos/default.asp?cid=5>

**Reply**

**katherine brady**

7/5/2016 08:18:55 pm

I love all of the comments made here. And just to spite you disbelievers, I am going to get my credential to become an elementary school teacher! I have a master's degree in Environmental Studies. I will show you that my class will not have a behavior chart and will be the best class in the whole school! I love teaching and I have the utmost patience and praise for every child no matter who they are or what behavior type they may be.

**Reply**

**joel**

8/23/2016 10:14:00 am

I have a son who is an active 5 year old with plenty of personality and he just started kindergarten. last year he was in preschool and he had constant issues with moving up and down several times a day and for small infractions. we were worried that he would have a hard time this year and we were right. it has only been 5 days of school and he has been on blue twice and moves almost everyday and it kills him and me. my heart breaks when i see this happening to all kids and for the small people like me, who have to send their kids to public schools so i can work to pay bills, it's emotionally crippling to not be able to do anything. does anyone have any suggestions of how i could make a difference at the school and in my child's life.

**katherine brady**

8/23/2016 02:48:18 pm

Tell the teacher to take him off those behavior charts! I did. I told the teacher and talked to the principal about it. They did take my son off the behavior chart. If you do it. Other parents may follow and that's a good thing. I don't understand why the principal would approve of such a thing!

**Reply****Deb**

8/23/2016 03:00:40 pm

You may opt your child out of that and ask that they be removed from the public wall. Ask that all their behavior issues be shared privately with your child and yourself. I have had to do the same thing for my children and every year deal with talking to the school principal and teachers about these poor practices that rely on shame, peer pressure and punitive responses.

**Reply****katherine brady**

8/23/2016 03:34:52 pm

You just flat out tell your child's teacher and principal that you do not want your child represented on those behavior charts. Put your foot down. Don't let them give excuses. Don't let them push you into a corner to make you say yes. Stand your ground. You know it's not right. I am actually going to the district to speak about behavior charts to get them removed for good!

**Reply****JJ**

11/17/2017 05:10:21 pm

My teacher likes clip charts because he says that the child should be embarrassed and should not do it again.

**Reply**

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