Setting Limits for Effective Behavior Management

1. **Model the appropriate response** for the children at every opportunity. Discuss your behavior as well as the students' positive steps toward self-control at regular times each day. This technique works slowly over time. While it does not produce instant, measurable changes in behavior, it is a powerful tool of instruction when used consistently.

2. Keep **power struggles to a minimum**. Set limits by using impersonal, measurable criteria. Timers that "ding" to signal the end of an activity, for example, are easier for some children to respond to than someone telling them to stop.

3. **Be positive**. Setting limits is healthy. It does not have to be done in a rude or hostile way. Firmness does not mean intimidation.

4. Set limits by requesting behavior that is incompatible with the undesirable behavior. Many times it will be far more effective to say "Hands at your sides!" instead of "Don't hit!"

5. **Give students choices**. The fact that they have choices should be a constant topic of each conversation concerning behavior. An example might be "I see that you're not very interested in reading today. Rather than having you do all of the reading this time, would you like to take turns or have me read the book to you? When we complete the reading assignment, you can decide what we do next."

6. **Redirect attention** to get students out of stressful situations before they lose composure. Students can take a break to sharpen a pencil, or pass out papers to other students. Sometimes a change of scenery is necessary. It's okay to take a short walk with your student to get some fresh air and "take a breather" for a few minutes.

Ideas to Help Children Stop Fidgeting

Fidgeting consists of constant, unconscious movement that includes shifting the entire body, jumping, thumping pencils on desks, and tapping fingers and feet. Children often start fidgeting out of boredom, nervousness, agitation and conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder and anxiety disorders. Fidgeting can affect a child's social life and school work. Parents and teachers can use different strategies to help a child stop fidgeting.

Break Lessons into Smaller Tasks

- Children often have a shorter attention-span than adults; after a short amount of time, they can become irritable and fidgety. Teachers can break their lessons into smaller segments, according to the needs of their students. Teachers can let students stand up and walk around the classroom between lessons. According to the "Additude Magazine," some teachers keep mini trampolines and Swiss exercise balls in their classroom for students to use between lessons. At home, parents can also break their child's homework down into smaller tasks.

Provide Errands and Tasks

- Children fidget less when they have things to do that require activity and movement. Teachers may assign in-room tasks like passing out papers, sharpening pencils, cleaning a blackboard and taking messages to other teachers and the principal's office. Teachers can alternate these classroom tasks weekly so that all students are able to get out of their desks from time to time. Parents should assign tasks like cleaning the kitchen, yard work, vacuuming and dusting to keep their children busy. This helps children focus their energy on their assignments and not on fidgeting.

Encourage Physical Activity

- Parents should encourage their children to play sports or participate in physical activity during the day, according to Helpguide.org. Children do not have to participate in an organized sport. Simple activities like running around before and after school will help a child release some of his nervous energy. Good activities for fidgeting children include roller skating, running and martial arts. At school, teachers should make sure fidgeting children never miss gym class or recess.

Give Fidgeting Objects

- Fidgeting children often do things like tapping their pens and pencils, which can be noisy and can distract other children or family members. Parents and teachers can give their children quieter fidgeting objects like worry beads and squeeze balls. In this way, a child can release her energy without distracting other people. Parents can also encourage their child's interest in hobbies that require constant hand movement. Kid-friendly hobbies include painting, knitting, embroidery, coloring and drawing, and playing with clay.