

Caregiver Wish List[®]



CWL[®]: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

**Parents Leading the Way...
Informing Your Coach
About Your Strengths,
Needs, and Wishes!**

What Is the Caregiver Wish List[®]?

Parents are the most important people in a child’s life. When children exhibit difficult behavior, parents need “advanced child management skills” in order to help their children improve.* The Caregiver Wish List[®] (CWL) helps parents identify the special skills they may need in order to help change their child’s behavior.

You can think of these specialized skills as “tools,” just like you might need special tools to work on a car engine or special “know how” to nurture a delicate plant. The CWL helps you identify the specific skills or tools you need in order to support your child.

These special skills can be learned from a professional, much like you might work with a sports coach to learn and practice athletic skills. You might tell the coach what you think your strengths and challenges are. Then, if you wanted to improve your skills, your coach could help you practice new techniques until you achieved success.

The CWL helps you to identify parenting strategies that you have already mastered as well as ones that you may want to improve with practice. The CWL can help to put you, rather than your child, in control of the situation.

What is the CWL Based On?

The CWL is based on scientific literature. It was designed to include only parenting strategies that are proven to promote child compliance or reduce problem behaviors. These “ingredients for success” fall into 6 broad areas.

*Typically, the term “Parent Management Training” is used. However, a better description would be “Advanced Child Management Training” (from Hodges, K. (2004). Using Assessment in Everyday Practice for the Benefit of Families and Practitioners. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 35, pp 449 - 456).

| The 6 Skill Areas | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Areas | Examples of Skills |
| Providing Direction and Following Up | Sets clear expectations and routines; gives instructions in calm tone; and checks to make sure that child obeys rules |
| Encouraging Good Behavior | Reasonably reinforces and models good behavior |
| Discouraging Undesirable Behavior | Consistently gives realistic consequences for misbehavior in a calm manner; handles defiance well |
| Monitoring Activities | Is aware of child’s activities and familiar with child’s friends and acquaintances |
| Connecting Positively with Youth | Spends quality time with child and communicates positive feelings |
| Problem-Solving Orientation | Uses and models good problem-solving skills, discusses sensitive issues and presents a “united front” with other caregivers |

These 6 areas may look simple on paper, but mastering them and being able to consistently use them when faced with difficult behavior takes several steps and a lot of practice! Each of the 6 areas in the CWL is broken down into several smaller steps. You and your coach will work together to select which areas need practice first, based on your family situation. Practicing is the key to successfully being able to use these strategies in real-life situations as they arise at home.

How Does the CWL Work?

You and your coach will sit down together to complete the CWL. As your coach reads the questions, you will follow along and mark responses on your own copy. You’ll first answer a few questions about your child’s behaviors and then answer questions about your strategies. If a question is unclear, ask your coach to explain it better. Use the CWL to help your coach understand your family’s unique situation.

An example of a question from the CWL is: "How often do you structure your child's time with set chores or routines (for example, going to bed, watching TV or playing computer games, doing schoolwork)?" For this question, you are asked to choose an answer: hardly ever, once in a while, sometimes, often, or most of the time.

How Do I Identify My Top Three Wishes or Goals?

Once you have finished answering the questions, your coach will ask you to identify three goals, or wishes, that are the most important to you. Here is an example:

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| NOW – It is time to create your own personal wish list! These will be your "Top 3 Wishes." Look over the items again and choose the top 3 items that are really the most important to you. Your coach/therapist will write them in here for you. You can change them whenever you want. |
| Date _____ |
| Wish/Goal #1: <u>I want to spend more positive time with my son</u> |
| Wish/Goal #2: <u>I would like to learn how to do a better job of following through with consequences</u> |
| Wish/Goal #3: <u>I would like to remain calm when my son "talks back" after I give a consequence</u> |

How Does the CWL Help My Coach?

The CWL can help both you and your coach stay focused on developing positive skills and building on your strengths. You lead the way when you first complete the CWL! You and your coach will develop a plan for sharpening the skills that you will need in order to be successful.



What is Your Role?

At the Start of Services...

You are the most important source of information about your strengths and challenges as a parent. Be sure the goals you and your coach identify make sense to you. Don't be afraid to raise questions or bring up issues that are unique to your family situation. The purpose of the CWL is to build a good partnership between you and your coach. Your coach should help you find strategies that work better for your child . . . not judge you!

After Services Begin...

The CWL can also measure progress toward your goals. You will be able to see if your child has changed and whether you have found more successful strategies to deal with your child's difficult behavior. You may, therefore, be asked to take the CWL periodically (for example, every 3 months) and again when you complete your coaching program. Be sure to celebrate any successes along the way!

A Mom's View of the CWL...

"At first I didn't want to do it... There were some things I never thought about before, like the timing of things to help my kids do what was asked. And my own behavior, telling them some things are okay—when they're not... After a while, though, I saw differences in my scores, and it was good to see. I felt better about what I was doing, and my kids felt better about me."



Other CWL Facts

- The CWL was developed by Dr. Kay Hodges, a child psychologist, for use in social services, juvenile justice, schools, and mental health agencies.
- The CWL lets the parent lead the way.
- The CWL focuses on skill-building—not subjective judgments.
- The CWL has been used successfully to evaluate the effectiveness of programs teaching parents how to better manage difficult child behavior.

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