

Mistaken Goal Chart (How Adults May Contribute)

Lynn Lott and Jane Nelsen 2021 Feelings Column One

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
If the parent/teacher feels:	And tends to react by:	And if the child's response is:	The child's goal is:	The Belief behind child's behavior is:	How adults may contribute:	Coded messages	Parent/teacher proactive and empowering responses include:
Annoyed Irritated Worried Guilty	Reminding Coaxing Doing things for the child he/she could do for him/herself	Stops temporarily, but later resumes same or another disturbing behavior. Stops when given one-on-one attention.	Undue Attention (to keep others busy or get special service)	"I count (belong) only when I'm being noticed or getting special service." "I'm important only when I'm keeping you busy with me."	"I feel guilty if you aren't happy." Or, "It's easier to do things for you than to watch you struggle." Or, "I don't practice that mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn." Or, "I don't have faith in you to deal with disappointment."	Notice Me. Involve Me Usefully.	Redirect by involving child in a useful task to gain useful attention. Say what you will do, "I love you and ____." (Example: "I care about you and will spend time with you later.") Avoid special services. Say it only once and then act. Have faith in child to deal with feelings (don't fix or rescue). Plan special time. Involve child in creating routines. Touch without words. Set up nonverbal signals. Involve child in finding solutions during family and class meetings—and one to one.
Angry Challenged Threatened Defeated	Fighting. Giving in. Thinking "You can't get away with it" or "I'll make you". Wanting to be right	Intensifies behavior. Defiant compliance. Feels he/she's won when parent/teacher is upset. Passive Power	Misguided Power (to be boss)	"I belong only when I'm boss, in control, or proving no one can boss me " " You can't make me."	"I'm in control and you must do what I say." Or, "I believe that telling you what to do, and lecturing or punishing you when you don't do it, is the best way to motivate you to do better." Or, "I don't practice the importance of teaching you contributing ways to use your power."	Let Me Help. Give Me Choices.	Acknowledge that you can't make him/her do something and redirect to positive power by asking for help. Offer a limited choice. Don't fight and don't give in. Withdraw from conflict and calm down. Be firm and kind. Act, don't talk. Decide what you will do. Let routines be the boss. Develop mutual respect. Get help from child to set reasonable and few limits. Practice follow-through. Involve child in finding solutions during family and class meetings—and one to one.
Hurt Disappointed Disbelieving Disgusted	Retaliating. Getting even. Thinking "How could you do this to me?" Taking behavior personally	Retaliates. Hurts others. Damages property. Gets even. Intensifies. Escalates the same behavior or chooses another weapon	Revenge (to get even)	"I don't think I belong so I'll hurt others as I feel hurt." "I can't be liked or loved."	"I give advice (without listening to you) because I think I'm helping." Or, "I worry more about what the neighbors think than what you need." Or, "I hurt you to teach you not to hurt others."	I'm Hurting. Validate My Feelings.	Validate child's hurt feelings (you might have to guess what they are). Don't take behavior personally. Step out of revenge cycle by avoiding punishment and retaliation. Suggest Positive Time Out for both of you, then focus on solutions. Use reflective listening. Share your feelings using an "I" message. Apologize and make amends. Encourage strengths. Put kids in same boat. Involve child in finding solutions during family and class meetings—and one to one.
Despair Hopeless Helpless Inadequate	Giving up. Doing for. Over helping. Showing a lack of faith	Retreats further. Passive. No improvement. No response. Avoids trying.	Assumed Inadequacy (to give up and be left alone)	"I don't believe I can belong, so I'll convince others not to expect anything of me." "I am helpless and unable." "It's no use trying because I won't do it right."	"I expect you to live up to my high expectations." Or, "I thought it was my job to do things for you." Or, "It is too scary to have faith in you." Or, "I don't believe you are really able to handle the challenges of life."	Don't Give Up On Me. Show Me A Small Step.	Break task down to small steps. Make task easier until child experiences success. Set up opportunities for success. Take time for training. Teach skills/show how, but don't do for. Stop all criticism. Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small. Show faith in child's abilities. Focus on assets. Don't pity. Don't give up. Enjoy the child. Build on his/her interests. Involve child in finding solutions during family and class meetings—and one to one.