The One-Sentence Intervention

# A Relationship-Building Experiment

1. Select the most difficult child you can find. Who is this?
2. List six brief statements you can notice about this child’s strengths and interests. Example: “I’ve noticed that you like to draw.”
   1. “I’ve noticed that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
   2. “I’ve noticed that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
   3. “I’ve noticed that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
   4. “I’ve noticed that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
   5. “I’ve noticed that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
   6. “I’ve noticed that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
3. You are *noticing*, not *praising.* Do not end your statement with something like, “….and that’s great!” Children have their antennas up for manipulation.
4. Share these when and where it won’t embarrass the child.
5. Find at least one other adult (or other child) who will notice positives about this child.
6. Approach the child, smiles, and use the statements identified above. **Do this at least two times a week for at least three weeks.**
7. Listen to the child if s/he wants to talk about this strength or interest. Otherwise, just keep walking.
8. Save this technique for calm times. Do not use it when a child is upset.
9. After three full weeks, test your experiment by asking the child to comply with something you want. Use the following words: “Will you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ just for me?”
10. Up the odds for compliance by saying, “Thank you,” smiling, and walking away. The longer you look at an oppositional child after asking him or her to comply, the less likely the child is to comply.

This technique is borrowed from Jim Fay’s *Teaching with Love and Logic.* For more tips on the Love and Logic philosophy, visit www.loveandlogic.com