

*DINING OUT WITH CHILDREN:
EFFECTIVENESS OF A PARENT ADVICE
PACKAGE ON PRE-MEAL INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR*

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The effectiveness of an advice package designed to restructure the restaurant environment and encourage parent praise was examined. Experiment 1 assessed the usefulness of the package when used with experimenter assistance. Videotapes were used to record the target child's behavior. Pre-meal inappropriate behavior decreased an average of 51% across target children. Mealtime inappropriate behavior and parent praise and disapproval were also measured. Experiment 2 was designed to determine whether families could implement the package without experimenter assistance and whether effects obtained would generalize to a different restaurant. Data were taken in vivo. Nine families were randomly assigned to one of three groups. Group assignment determined the order in which families went to two restaurants, the number of dinners each family participated in, and the point at which parents received the advice package. The order in which the families went to the two restaurants as well as the number of baseline meals was counterbalanced. Results of Experiment 2 showed that, when using the advice package, parents in all sequences were able to decrease pre-meal inappropriate behavior of their children, and that these effects generalized to a second restaurant.

DESCRIPTORS: mealtime behavior, parent training, antecedent control, instructional packages, community setting

Researchers have long recognized the importance of developing techniques for teaching behavioral procedures to significant persons in the child's environment (Tharp & Wetzel, 1969). Because of the amount of information that parents have concerning their child's behavior, they have been seen as ideally suited to become "change agents." Techniques developed for parents have led to a proliferation of parent

training studies (for a review, see Gordon & Davidson, 1981) and consequently, to the publication of "how to" parent training manuals (see McMahon & Forehand, 1981, for a review). Most of these manuals have focused on general child rearing skills (e.g., Becker, 1971; Patterson, 1976). Manuals or advice packages focusing on specific problem behaviors have also become more common and are viewed as potentially more useful and effective (Risley, Clark, & Cataldo, 1976). In addition, they are more easily evaluated than those teaching general principles (Bernal & North, 1978).

Advice packages have been developed to teach parents a variety of skills, including how to toilet train children (Azrin & Foxx, 1974), how to improve children's behavior on shopping trips (Clark, Greene, Macrae, McNees, Davis, & Risley, 1977) and how to encourage children to

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finish their meals as well as control before meal snacking (Sloane, 1976).

In the area of mealtime behavior, procedures have been developed for teaching retarded adults the skills needed to order and eat at fast-food restaurants (Marholin, O'Toole, Touchette, Berger, & Doyle, 1979; van den Pol, Iwata, Ivancic, Page, Neef, & Whitley, 1981). In addition, a number of studies have focused on reducing inappropriate mealtime behavior of retarded individuals in residential settings (Barton, Guess, Garcia, & Baer, 1970; Henrikson & Doughtly, 1967; Martin, McDonald, & Omichinski, 1971).

There have been few studies, however, dealing with the dinner behavior of normal children. Jewett and Clark (1979) taught preschoolers to initiate conversational comments to family members during dinner time at home. McMahan and Forehand (1978) taught mothers to modify their preschool children's inappropriate mealtime behavior at home.

An important aspect of mealtime behavior that has not been researched is the management of children's behavior in restaurants. This is particularly relevant because increasingly large numbers of families dine out regularly. Disruptive children can make dining out an unpleasant experience for parents, other customers, restaurant owners, and themselves.

In pilot work for this study, parents indicated that their children's level of inappropriate behavior was not a problem during the meal itself. Parents reported that the meal kept the children occupied. In their opinion, the majority of inappropriate behavior occurred while waiting for the meal to be prepared and served. Fast-food restaurants overcome this difficulty by providing quick service (and occasionally toys or games to keep children occupied). The informal atmosphere also helps produce a setting in which inappropriate behavior is likely to go unnoticed.

A more problematic situation, however, is dining out with children in family-oriented restaurants. These restaurants tend to be designed primarily with adults in mind and, frequently, a family must wait 20 or more minutes

from the time they sit down until the time their food arrives. During this time, the children are expected to sit quietly with nothing to do while adults talk among themselves. It is not surprising that children who are normally well behaved are disruptive in these situations. It would be beneficial, therefore, for parents to learn techniques to help their children and themselves through this difficult pre-meal waiting period.

A cost-effective method for teaching these skills would be the use of an advice package format. Most advice packages have stressed rearranging the consequences of children's behavior by teaching parents specific praise, punishment, and extinction techniques. Effective use of these procedures by parents, however, often involves considerable time investment on the part of the trainer. Another approach that is less often used is to arrange the antecedent stimuli in the particular setting in order to decrease the probability of inappropriate behavior. A particular advantage of this second approach is the ease with which it can be taught and appropriately applied compared with the former.

In this study an advice package was developed that provided instructions to parents in ways to rearrange the immediate surroundings at the restaurant such that inappropriate behavior would be less likely. In addition, a component for encouraging parents to praise their children was incorporated into the package.

Two experiments were conducted. The purpose of Experiment 1 was to assess the effects of several steps in the advice package on child and parent behavior. During this study, an experimenter instructed parents in the use of the package and prompted parents, when necessary, to ensure that the steps were used properly.

The purpose of Experiment 2 was to determine if parents could read the advice package and apply the procedures without instruction or assistance from the experimenters. In addition, parents were asked to dine at two different restaurants so that the usefulness of the package could be assessed across settings.

EXPERIMENT 1

Participants and Setting

Four families were recruited through an article in the local newspaper. The article described the study and requested participation by families with children who were disruptive in restaurants. For participating in the study, a restaurant provided families with a 50% discount on the cost of their dinners. The number of meals observed was intentionally limited since even the discounted price of meals over a more extended period of time amounted to more money than most families indicated they would be willing to spend.

During the initial contact phone call, parents were asked a series of questions about their restaurant habits and their children's restaurant behavior. They were asked to identify one child who was the most disruptive while dining out at restaurants. For logistic reasons, discussed later, this child was labeled the target child for each family. None of the target children was receiving mental health treatment or attending special education programs during the study.

The participating families came from lower-middle to middle income homes. Families 1, 3, and 4 had two children; Family 2 had three. The target children for Families 1 through 4 were all boys, aged 3, 5, 3, and 4, respectively. The father in Family 4 refused to dine out with the children because of their previous disruptive behavior. Of the seven parents involved, two had high school educations and five held bachelor's degrees.

The study was conducted in a family-oriented restaurant in Tallahassee, Florida. Families were seated in a small dining area, 10 m by 15 m, at the back of the restaurant. This area had one side open to the main dining room.

Observation System

Dinners were recorded on tape using video equipment which was located at the side of the room adjoining the main dining room. During pilot work families expressed embarrassment

that other customers were aware of the videotaping. For this reason, a screen was used to prevent the video equipment from being seen from the main dining room. The screen did not shield the equipment from the families' view since parents did not indicate that the equipment affected their behavior or their children's.

It had been determined during the pilot study that the video camera could not obtain an unobstructed view of the disruptive behavior of more than one child in each family. Therefore, the child labeled as most disruptive by the parents in the initial contact call became the target child to be observed. Parents, however, were never informed that only the one child was being observed. Data were recorded on the inappropriate behavior of the target child and on parental praise and disapproval statements to all their children.

Observers viewed each videotape twice. Data were first recorded on inappropriate behavior of the target child, then on the frequency of praise and disapproval statements made by parents.

To record data on child behavior, videotapes were scored using a 10-sec observation interval and a 5-sec record interval. Observers used a cassette tape which specified the next observation interval, followed by a tone marking the beginning and end of the observation interval. Data were then collected on the frequency of parental praise and disapproval statements toward the children. These behaviors were recorded separately for the target child and his siblings.

Advice Package

The advice package was designed to provide ways to help parents restructure the restaurant environment by removing many of the opportunities for inappropriate behavior and by providing children with the opportunity to engage in alternative, more appropriate behavior. (A copy of the package is available from the first author on request.) The package contains the following steps for parents to follow: (a) specifying the appropriate behavior that the children

are to engage in at the restaurant; (b) finding a table or booth away from the crowd; (c) seating the children on the inside, next to the wall; (d) separating the children; (e) providing the children with a pre-meal snack (e.g., crackers) while waiting for their food; (f) ordering food that the children enjoy; (g) providing small interesting toys to occupy their time; (h) moving the dinner utensils from the children's reach; (i) removing the toys when the food arrives; and (j) periodically praising the children for appropriate behavior.

The use of the video camera to tape the dinner prevented parents from implementing steps b and c since the location of the table was predetermined and target children were seated toward the outside of the table.

Behavior Definition

Data were taken on inappropriate behavior of the target child and praise and disapproval statements of parents. Child behaviors were divided into four categories: verbal, motor, food and utensil use, and noncompliance. Inappropriate verbal behavior included crying, whining, demanding, interrupting others, humming, or singing. Inappropriate motor behavior consisted of standing on the chair, being out of the chair without permission, hitting or kicking others, or reaching more than halfway across the table. Inappropriate use of food or utensils included picking up nonfinger foods with hands, playing with dinner utensils, stuffing, dropping, or tossing food into mouth. Noncompliance was defined as not complying with a request from the parent in the same recording interval that the request was made or in the following one. For reliability purposes it was determined that if a behavior occurred that could be simultaneously rated in the motor or food category, only the food category would be scored, e.g., hitting a sibling with a spoon. The target child's behavior was scored as inappropriate if, during any part of the observation interval, one or more of the behaviors occurred.

Praise and disapproval statements by parents were also observed. A praise statement indicated approval of a child's behavior. Examples of praise statements are: (a) "I like the way you are sitting." (b) "Thank you for sharing your toys." Although parents were told to praise their children's appropriate behavior, praise statements were recorded regardless of the behavior that they followed. A disapproval was scored when a parent's comment indicated disapproval of a child's behavior or when a parent gave a command for the child to stop engaging in a behavior. Examples are: (a) "You are talking too loudly." (b) "Stop rocking."

Reliability

Reliability checks were made on 100% of parent and child observations. A divider was placed between the observers while they viewed the videotapes. To prevent one observer from responding to the auditory or motor cues of the other observer's recording, observers were required to make a mark on the observation sheet within every interval.

Interobserver agreement on inappropriate behavior data was determined by comparing observer's responses, interval by interval, for agreement on the occurrence and nonoccurrence of the behavior. The number of intervals of agreement was then divided by the total number of intervals and multiplied by 100. The resultant percentages were averaged across families to determine mean agreement within each condition.

Interobserver agreement on frequency data for praise and disapproval statements was determined for target children and siblings separately. Within each condition, the number of statements scored by each observer was compared. The smaller of the two scores was then divided by the larger score and multiplied by 100. The resultant percentages were averaged across families to determine mean agreement. Mean interobserver agreement percentages for Experiment 1 appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean percentage of interobserver agreement across all four families of Experiment 1 and all nine families of Experiment 2.

	<i>Experiment 1</i>				<i>Experiment 2</i>	
	<i>Pre-Meal</i>		<i>Meal</i>		<i>Pre-Meal</i>	
	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Advice Package</i>	<i>Meal Preceded By Baseline</i>	<i>Meal Preceded By Advice Package</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Advice Package</i>
Child Inappropriate Behavior						
Occurrence	90%	83%	88%	72%	89%	87%
Nonoccurrence	78%	96%	94%	95%	92%	98%
Parent Behavior-Target Child						
Praise	50%	93%			100%	100%
Disapproval	90%	100%			84%	100%
Parent Behavior-Siblings						
Praise	100%	91%				
Disapproval	67%	— ^a				

^aDash indicates that neither observer scored an occurrence of the behavior for any family.

Procedure

Each family ate two dinners at the restaurant. During the first dinner, parents were asked to behave toward their children and each other as they normally did when dining out. No further instructions or attention were given to the family by the experimenters during this dinner.

When the family arrived for the second dinner, an assistant watched the children while an experimenter talked to the parents. The parents were first asked to read the advice package. The experimenter then discussed each step with the parents and answered any questions that they had regarding implementation of steps in the package. Parents, however, were asked to continue behaving as they normally would during the first part of the dinner, until told by the experimenter to begin using the advice package steps. In this way, data from the first dinner and from the initial part of the second dinner could be compared and serve as two baseline measures of inappropriate behavior.

At a predetermined time during the second

dinner, the experimenter cued the parents to begin using the steps listed in the advice package. At the same time, a tray of small toys was provided by the experimenter from which the parents selected one toy per child. To assist the parents in praising their children at frequent intervals, a soft tone was sounded once every 2 min from an observer's cassette recorder. Parents were told that when they heard the tone they should turn to their children at the next convenient moment and praise any appropriate behavior occurring at that time. These procedures were used until food arrived at the table. At that time, the tone was discontinued and parents were prompted to remove the toys and replace the silverware.

Experimental Design

A modified multiple-baseline-across-families design was used. The onset of the intervention was staggered within the first 15 min of the second dinner to assess the experimental effects of the advice package techniques on the target children's behavior.

RESULTS

Pre-Meal Inappropriate Behavior

For all families, during the advice package condition of Experiment 1, decreases in pre-meal inappropriate behavior of the target child were observed. The effect of the package on pre-meal behavior within the four families is shown

in Figure 1. For purposes of comparison, baseline data from Dinners I and II have been combined. Each data point represents 2 min of the dinner except for the last data point of a condition which may consist of slightly more or less than 2 min: if more than 1 min was accumulated, a new data point was plotted; if less than 1 min was accumulated, the additional time was com-

PRE-MEAL INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

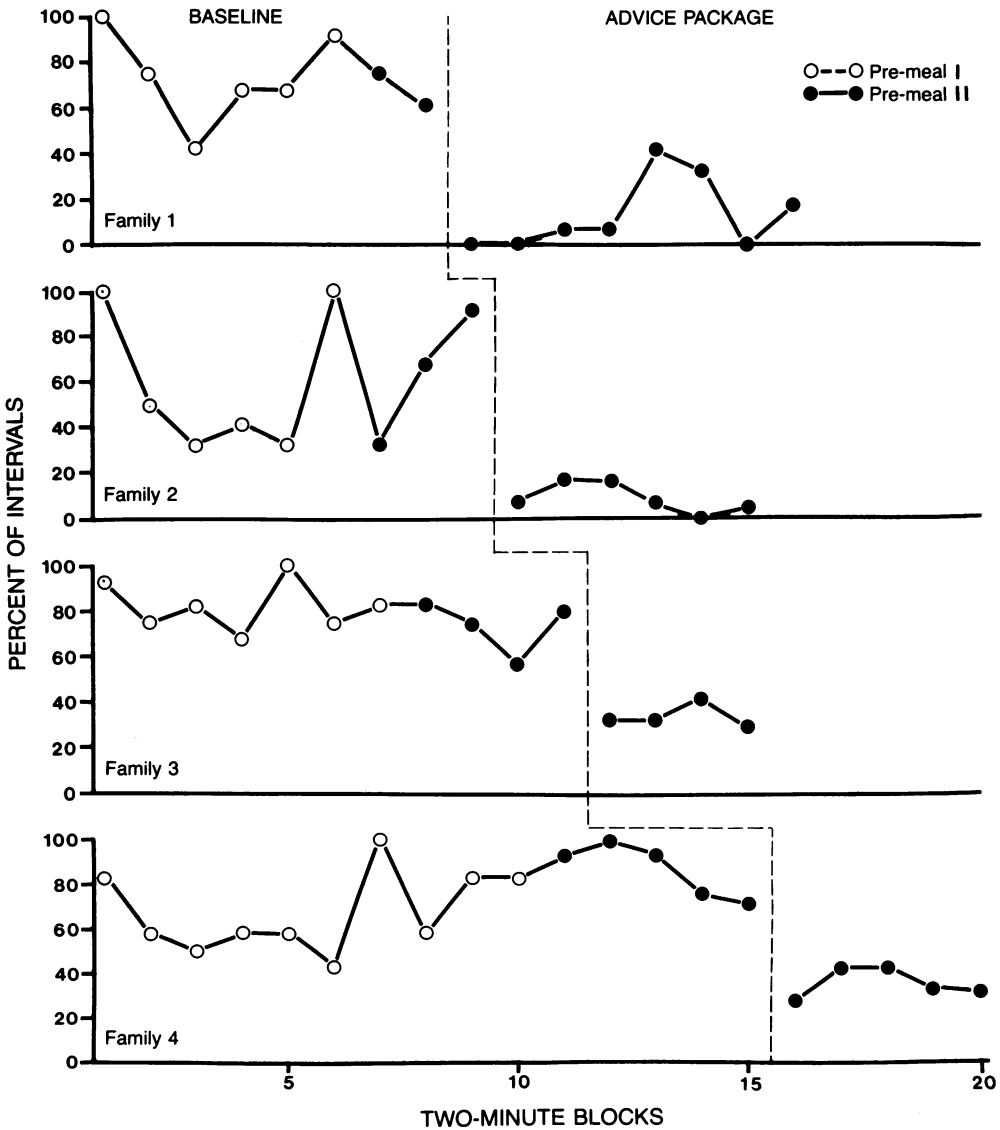


Fig. 1. Percentage of intervals across 2-min blocks of pre-meal inappropriate behavior by target children during baseline and advice package conditions.

bined with the preceding data point (Stokes & Kennedy, 1980).

Across all families, there was an average decrease in pre-meal inappropriate behavior of 51%. For Family 1, inappropriate behavior dropped from an average of 73% during baseline to 14% after the advice package was implemented. Inappropriate behavior for Family 2 went from an average of 61% in baseline to 9% during the advice package condition. For Family 3, inappropriate behavior averaged 79% during baseline and 34% with the advice package. For Family 4, inappropriate behavior averaged 74% during baseline and 35% with the advice package.

Data for the first two families were collected within each category of inappropriate behavior. A breakdown of these data shows that the greatest decrease in pre-meal inappropriate behavior between baseline and the advice package was in the food and utensil category. Family 2 showed a 91% decrease while Family 3 showed an 83% decrease. Changes in the motor category were an 80% decrease for Family 2 and a 55% decrease for Family 3 while in the verbal category resultant decreases were 35% and 40%, respectively. Noncompliance was not scored by either observer for Families 2 or 3.

Mealtime Inappropriate Behavior

Data on inappropriate behavior that occurred during the mealtime period of Dinners I and II (i.e., after food arrived at the table) are presented in Figure 2.

No specific intervention was implemented during the mealtime period of Dinner I or II. However, Meal I was preceded by a baseline condition and Meal II was immediately preceded by the advice package condition. For Family 1, inappropriate behavior averaged 17% during Meal I and 5% during Meal II. Means for Family 2 were 24% during Meal I and 8% during Meal II. Means for Family 3 were 30% for Meal I and 26% for Meal II. Means for Family 4 were 47% during Meal I and 17% during Meal II.

Parent Behavior

Figure 3 shows the average pre-meal frequency, per minute, of parents' praise and disapproval statements to target children and to siblings. Parents in Families 1, 2, and 3 did not make any praise statements during the baseline condition. During the advice package condition, when parents were prompted every 2 min to praise their children, average frequency, per minute, of praise to target children increased to .41, .21, and .41 statements, respectively. None of these families increased their frequency of praise to the prompted rate of once every 2

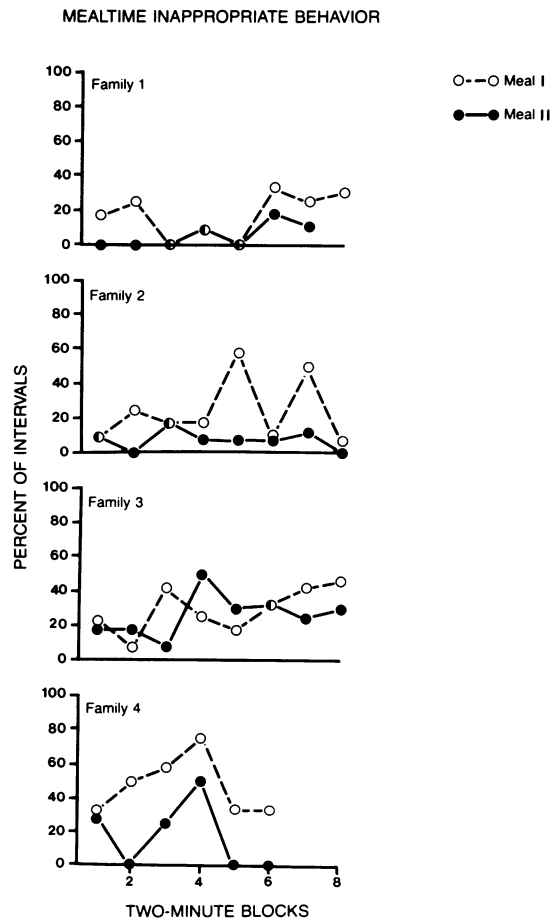


Fig. 2. Percentage of intervals across 2-min blocks of mealtime inappropriate behavior by target children during Meal I and Meal II. Meal I was preceded by baseline condition and Meal II was preceded by the advice package condition.

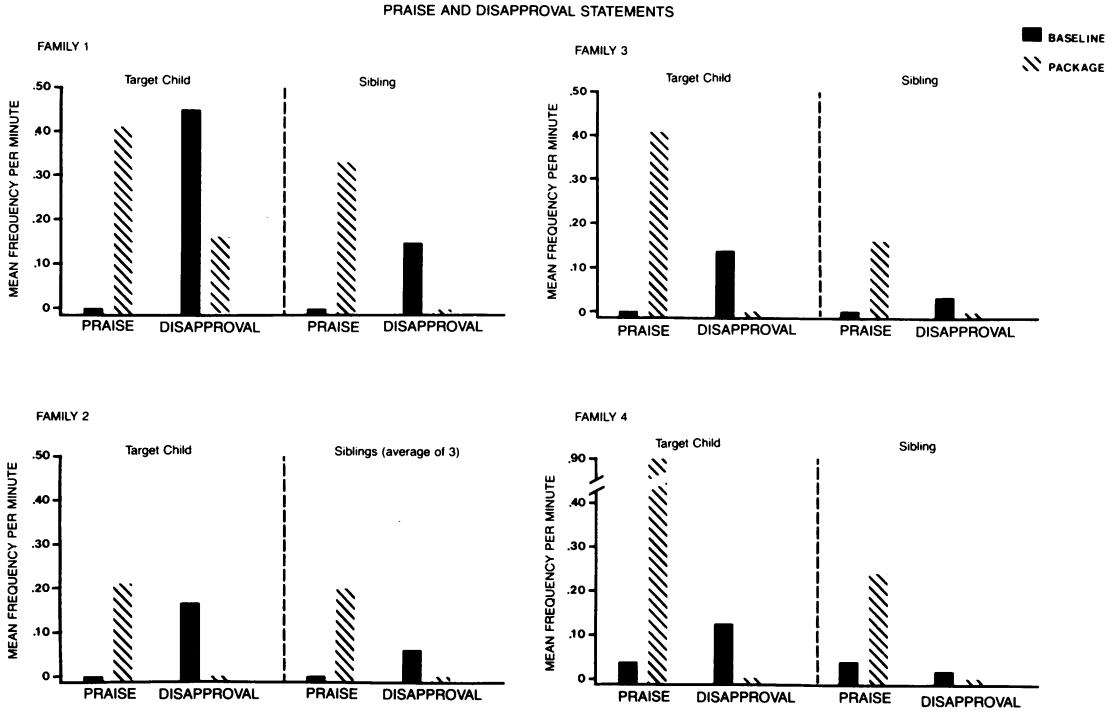


Fig. 3. Mean frequency per minute of parent praise and disapproval statements to target children and siblings during baseline and advice package conditions.

min (or .50 per min). Family 4 was the only family that praised their children during baseline (.14 statements per min) and increased their frequency of praise to over once every 2 min (.90 per min for the target child).

The average frequency, per minute, of parents' disapproval statements to the target child during baseline averaged .45, .17, .14, and .13 for Families 1 through 4, respectively. During the advice package condition, the average frequency decreased to .16 per min for Family 1; no disapproval statements were made by Families 2 through 4. Data on frequency of parents' praise and disapproval statements to siblings at the table are also presented in Figure 3. These data are similar in trend to those of the target child. This supports the notion that parents were unaware that one child had been designated a target for the purposes of research.

Proper implementation of the package steps was ensured by having parents read the advice

package just before the dinner began, and by having an experimenter discuss each step with the parents and prompt use of the steps. Experiment 2 was designed to determine whether families could successfully implement the package without experimenter assistance and whether any effects obtained would generalize across settings.

EXPERIMENT 2

Participants

Families were recruited and target children identified by the same procedures used in Experiment 1. Three of the nine families participating were single parent families. Of the 15 parents involved, five had two years of college, three had bachelor's degrees, four had master's degrees, and three were unspecified. Five of the nine families recruited had two children; the others only one. The target children ranged in

age from 3 to 8 yr old. All were males, with the exception of the target child of Family 9.

Setting

Two family-oriented restaurants (Restaurants D and M) were used in this experiment. Restaurant D was the same one used in the first experiment. Families received a 50% discount on the price of their meals at both restaurants.

Observation System

In Experiment 2, the data were taken in vivo rather than with videotape equipment. Observers sat at a table adjacent to the family and took data on parent and child behavior. Data on the target child's inappropriate behavior were taken using a fixed 15-sec momentary time-sample recording method. (Before the beginning of the second study, one of the videotapes from Experiment 1 was rescored using both a 15-sec and 30-sec time-sample recording method. The 15-sec time-sample data closely matched the original data taken using the 10-sec interval method. The time-sample procedure was therefore chosen because of its ease of use in an in vivo setting.) A cassette tape was used to cue the observer every 15 sec. The recording gave a "ready" signal 2 sec before the time sample was to be taken.

The frequency of parent praise and disapproval statements to the target child was measured during the pre-meal period. Data forms were shielded with a cover sheet to assure that observations were recorded independently. Observers also completed a checklist which was used to assess parent compliance with the steps indicated in the advice package.

Advice Package

The advice package in Experiment 2 contained the same steps as described in the first experiment. Parents were allowed to implement every step except choosing the table. This was predetermined to aid in observation. A detach-

able checklist, stating each of the steps in a few words, was included at the back of the advice package as a reminder to parents.

Behavior Definitions

Definitions of inappropriate behavior and praise and disapproval statements remained the same in Experiment 2 as in the first experiment.

Reliability

Interobserver reliability was assessed on 50% of the data taken on parent and child behavior during Experiment 2. Agreement was calculated by the same method used in Experiment 1. Mean agreement percentages appear in Table 1.

Procedure

Each family was randomly assigned to one of three sequences. Each sequence specified the order in which families would have dinner at Restaurants D and M, the number of dinners each family would participate in (three or four dinners), and the point at which parents would receive the advice package. Of the nine families in Experiment 2, three families were assigned to each sequence.

Families 5, 6, and 7, assigned to Sequence I, went to restaurant D for their baseline dinner. After the end of this dinner, parents were given a copy of the advice package. They were asked to read it and bring the reminder checklist to the second dinner. They returned to Restaurant D for their second dinner. They were asked to reread the reminder checklist at the beginning of the dinner. The experimenters did not explain any aspect of the advice package to the parents. The third dinner took place at Restaurant M. The purpose of the final dinner was to assess the effects of the package across settings.

Families in Sequence II (Families 8, 9, and 10) followed this same procedure starting at Restaurant M and dining at Restaurant D for their third dinner.

Unlike Sequence I and II families, the three families assigned to Sequence III (Families 11,

12, and 13) were observed for a baseline dinner at both Restaurant M and D. Parents were given the advice package after the second baseline dinner and were asked to return to each of the restaurants for an additional meal. Parents were asked to reread the reminder checklist at the beginning of the first intervention dinner.

A group design was used to assess the effects of the advice package. The order in which the families went to the two restaurants as well as the number of baseline meals were counter-balanced.

Consumer Evaluation

A short questionnaire was given to the parents after each dinner. They were asked to rate their children's behavior during the pre-meal and mealtime periods using a 5-point scale. After the last dinner, parents were asked to rate the usefulness of the package as it applied to controlling their children's behavior in restaurants. They were asked to rate the difficulty of understanding and using the package procedures as well as the likelihood that they would continue to use the procedures in the future.

RESULTS

Pre-Meal Inappropriate Behavior

Figure 4 shows the average amount of inappropriate behavior during each dinner for all nine families. At Restaurant D, inappropriate behavior of the target child in Family 5 decreased from 28% during the baseline dinner to 9% during the advice package dinner at the same restaurant. For Family 6, inappropriate behavior went from 22% during baseline to 9% during the advice package dinner. For Family 7, inappropriate behavior dropped from a baseline level of 43% to 9% during the advice package dinner at Restaurant D. Averaged across all three families in Sequence I, this represents a 67% decrease relative to baseline level. During the generalization dinner at Restaurant M,

inappropriate behavior decreased to 3% for each family.

For Sequence II, baseline levels of inappropriate behavior at Restaurant M averaged 41%, 36%, and 39% for Families 8, 9, and 10, respectively. During the advice package dinner at the same restaurant, inappropriate behavior for these families dropped to 19%, 5%, and 26%, respectively. This represents a 68% decrease relative to baseline averaged across all three families. During the generalization dinner at Restaurant D, inappropriate behavior for Family 10 decreased further to 16%. Families 8 and 9, however, showed slight increases to 24% and 11%, respectively.

Data for families in Sequence III indicate that, averaged across both dinners, baseline levels for Families 11, 12, and 13 were 51%, 62%, and 47%, respectively. During advice package dinners inappropriate behavior for Families 12 and 13, averaged across both dinners, decreased to 18% and 7%, respectively. For Family 11, little or no decrease in inappropriate behavior occurred during the first advice package dinner. (Parents informed the experimenter during the meal that they believed their child was ill and had an elevated temperature.) During the second advice package dinner, inappropriate behavior for Family 11 decreased to 13%.

Parent Behavior

Table 2 shows the relative frequency of parent praise and disapproval statements to the target child during the pre-meal period of the dinner. Generally, disapproval statements decreased during the advice package condition. Praise statements, however, did not increase significantly. Family 5 made one praise statement during the pre-meal period of the baseline dinner. No other praise statements were made by any other family during baseline. Little or no increase in praise statements was observed for eight of the nine families during the pre-meal period of the advice package dinners.

Seven of the nine families made fewer dis-

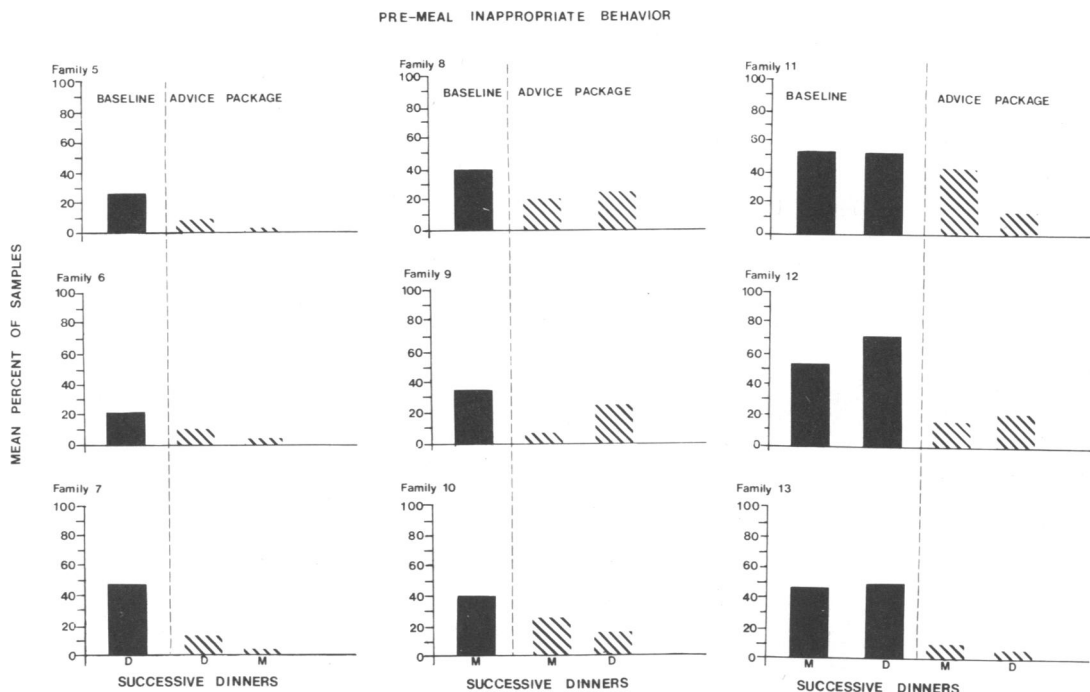


Fig. 4. Mean percentage of pre-meal inappropriate behavior by target children during baseline and advice package dinners.

approval statements during the pre-meal period of advice package dinners compared to baseline dinners at the same restaurant. Of the remaining two families, Family 7 made more disapproval statements (from zero during baseline to one during the advice package), and Family 11 made more statements, relative to baseline, at one restaurant and fewer at the other.

Advice Package Compliance

Percentage of compliance to the advice package steps is shown in Table 3. This table does not include the use of praise since the results of this step are reported separately. During advice package dinners, parents complied with an average of 82% of the steps included in the advice package compared to a baseline average of 31%. The most frequent step complied with during baseline and package meals was ordering foods that the child either did not object to or had requested. Bringing a toy, removing the silverware, and separating children were steps most

frequently observed during intervention meals. The step most frequently omitted by parents during the advice package condition was failure to tell the children what behavior was expected of them at the restaurant. Average rate of compliance for that step was 22%.

Social Validation Data

The modal amount of time parents reported that it took them to read the advice package was 10 min; the range was 3-20 min. Two families found the advice package steps "somewhat difficult" to implement. The rest of the families reported that the package was "easy" or "very easy" to implement. Two families stated that using the package interfered "a little" with their enjoyment of the dinner while the rest of the families reported no interference at all. All the families rated the package as somewhat or very helpful in decreasing their children's inappropriate behavior. When questioned whether they would continue to use the advice package

Table 2

Frequency of parent praise and disapproval statements to target children during the pre-meal period.

Family	Condition	Res- taur- ant	Pre-Meal	
			Praise ^a	Disap- proval ^a
5	Baseline	D	1 (.07)	6 (.41)
	Advice	D	1 (.06)	4 (.25)
	Advice	M	1 (.10)	1 (.10)
6	Baseline	D	0 (.00)	4 (.21)
	Advice	D	9 (.36)	0 (.00)
	Advice	M	1 (.05)	0 (.00)
7	Baseline	D	0 (.00)	0 (.00)
	Advice	D	1 (.05)	1 (.05)
	Advice	M	0 (.00)	0 (.00)
8	Baseline	M	0 (.00)	3 (.31)
	Advice	M	2 (.09)	0 (.00)
	Advice	D	1 (.06)	2 (.12)
9	Baseline	M	0 (.00)	4 (.24)
	Advice	M	0 (.00)	1 (.09)
	Advice	D	0 (.00)	1 (.11)
10	Baseline	M	0 (.00)	5 (.34)
	Advice	M	1 (.11)	0 (.00)
	Advice	D	1 (.10)	1 (.10)
11	Baseline	M	0 (.00)	1 (.09)
	Baseline	D	0 (.00)	10 (.51)
	Advice	M	0 (.00)	4 (.19)
	Advice	D	1 (.05)	0 (.00)
12	Baseline	M	0 (.00)	4 (.28)
	Baseline	D	0 (.00)	6 (.41)
	Advice	M	2 (.15)	0 (.00)
	Advice	D	1 (.10)	3 (.31)
13	Baseline	M	0 (.00)	1 (.06)
	Baseline	D	0 (.00)	4 (.25)
	Advice	M	0 (.00)	0 (.00)
	Advice	D	0 (.00)	0 (.00)

^aNumbers in parentheses indicate the mean frequency per minute.

when dining out, one family reported "probably not" and the rest reported that they "probably" or "definitely" would.

DISCUSSION

The results of Experiment 2 demonstrate that parents can correctly implement steps of the written advice package in restaurants without experimenter assistance. Decreases in pre-meal inappropriate behavior were observed for target children in eight of the nine families that participated. In addition, inappropriate behavior re-

Table 3

Mean percent compliance with advice package steps across all families in Experiment 2 during baseline and advice package conditions.

Items	Baseline	Advice
	(%)	Package (%)
Instructions	0	22
Sitting on inside	17	100
Separating children	80	100
Pre-meal snack	50	78
Ordering food that children like	92	100
Small, quiet toy	0	94
Move tableware	0	72
Remove toys at dinner	—	89
Mean	31	81

mained below baseline level during a second dinner at a different restaurant. This result suggests that parents were able to generalize the use of the package steps to a new restaurant setting.

In contrast to the results of Experiment 1, when parents were being prompted, little if any increase in parents' rate of praise during advice package dinners was observed in this experiment. Inappropriate behavior, however, did decrease. This suggests that praise, although possibly contributing to an effect, is not a necessary component of the advice package and that restructuring the restaurant environment is the more important variable in decreasing inappropriate behavior.

For most families, parents made fewer disapproval statements during advice package dinners than during baseline dinners at the same restaurant. Most of the families, however, did not decrease the number of statements to zero as did families in Experiment 1. Based on these limited data, it is difficult to determine the extent to which use of the package reduces disapproval statements.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to develop an advice package to help parents decrease inappropriate behavior of their children at family

restaurants. In contrast to advice packages that teach parents specific consequence techniques, this study focused on developing steps that restructured the restaurant environment to reduce inappropriate behavior. A praise component was included to help maintain appropriate behavior.

The results of Experiment 1 demonstrated that steps in the advice package were effective in decreasing pre-meal inappropriate behavior; however, their correct use was ensured by an experimenter who provided assistance and prompting. Experiment 2 showed that parents could correctly implement the steps without experimenter assistance when presented with the written advice package. In addition, parents continued to use advice package steps effectively during a dinner at another restaurant. It was found that, excluding praise, parents complied with 82% of the package steps. During Experiment 2, although most parents did not comply with the praise component, the advice package remained effective. This suggests that the inclusion of a praise component may not be essential in order to achieve decreases in inappropriate behavior at restaurants.

This type of advice package, which focuses on prevention rather than the manipulation of consequences is simple to use and produces immediate results. In addition, this type of package is less likely, if misused, to have negative effects on child behavior. Teaching parents to restructure a particular environment does not, however, replace the need for parents to learn effective parent training skills.

Consumer satisfaction with an intervention technique is as important as the effectiveness of the procedure itself. Families participating in this study rated the advice package as being helpful in lessening their children's disruptive behavior and reported that they probably or definitely would use the advice package when dining at restaurants in the future. Verbal reports about future behavior, however, do not always agree with the actual behavior. Nor can the demand characteristics of such a questionnaire be ignored. A more convincing demonstra-

tion, therefore, would be provided if families could be observed dining out repeatedly over several months. The difficulty in terms of cost to the families of such a procedure has been mentioned previously.

The advice package can be expected to be effective mainly with children whose disruptive behavior at restaurants is due to the lack of appropriate activities or to a restaurant environment that makes such disruptive behavior more probable. In addition, these results can presently only be generalized to families who request assistance through means similar to ones used in the present study and would not be expected to have equivalent results with children who are severely disruptive in many other settings.

Although it was originally intended for use by parents requesting such assistance, restaurants could also become consumers of such an advice package. Prior to participation in this study, over half of the families indicated that they only took their children to fast-food restaurants because of previous bad experiences at family restaurants. By helping families to have more enjoyable dining experiences, i.e., reducing disruptive behavior vis-a-vis the advice package, restaurants might increase "family business." In addition to providing toys, restaurants could print other steps of the package on placemats, print the package on small "tent" cards on each table or make the package available on request.

These experiments illustrate that an advice package to improve pre-meal behavior can be successfully used without professional assistance by parents dining at family-oriented restaurants. To determine the usefulness of such a package to the public, studies of families who have not specifically requested assistance for their children's inappropriate behavior would be necessary. The use of such an advice package on a large-scale should also be investigated. Ideally, a family-restaurant chain would adopt the use of the advice package in some of its restaurants. Comparisons among restaurants could then be made. From the viewpoint of the restaurant, it would be important to determine not only if

parents used the procedures and reduced inappropriate behavior, but whether there was an increase over time in the number of families with children visiting that restaurant.

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