

THE POWER HOUR

| CLIENT | BEHAVIORS | TOOLS |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Toddler (Any child beyond a year) | Family mealtime | “Lifetime Gift” photos or “Lifetime Gift” cards |

REMINDER: Note tool used in client’s record so the same lesson is not repeated

TOOLS:

OPTION ONE:



OPTION TWO: “Lifetime Gift” Photos

OPENING ACTIVITY:

OPTION ONE:

Position “Lifetime Gift” cards on the table or wall so all clients can see them.

The “Lifetime Gift” cards list outcomes parents want for their children:

Better academic performance, higher self-esteem, greater sense of resilience, lower risk of substance abuse, lower risk of teen pregnancy, lower risk of depression, reduced likelihood of developing eating disorders, lower rates of obesity, reduced chance of smoking cigarettes or marijuana, less stress, larger vocabulary, fewer behavioral problems, greater academic success, reduced chance of substance abuse, lower risk of suicide, lower risk of violent behavior, fewer school problems, lower risk of binge eating/purging

ASK: “If you could go into a store and buy any of these gifts for your children, which would you buy first? What would you be willing to pay for this gift for your child? How would it feel to you to be able to give that gift to your child?”

Listen to responses.

OPTION TWO:

Position photos on the table for clients to see.

SAY: “As parents, we dream of what we want our children to be like when they grow up. Some moms want smart, capable children with large vocabularies and top grades. Other moms want happy children who can keep up with a great group of good friends. Still others want well-adjusted children with no drug worries, major school problems, or episodes of depression.”

ASK: “Pick a photo or two that represents the dreams you have for your child in life.”

Ask parents to show the photo they selected and what dreams that photo represents for them.

SAY: “You are a powerful force for good in your child’s life. There’s a no-cost, powerful way to assure your hopes and dreams come true for you and your child. Without spending a dime, you can do something every day that will lead your child to greater academic success and help avoid risky behaviors like drug use and eating disorders.”

ASK: “Any guesses of what leads to such powerful success?”

SAY: “Research suggests the single strongest predictor of better achievement scores and fewer behavioral problems is sharing family meals. Mealtime is more powerful than time spent in school, studying, church, playing sports, or art activities.”

ASK: “What makes mealtimes so important to your child’s success? What life skills did you learn sitting around the table with the people who loved you? What mealtime memories are so powerful that you will never forget them?”

DISCUSS:

“Mealtimes are the ‘power hour’ for strong, capable families. Are any of you finding it hard to imagine mealtimes with toddlers being the ‘power hour’? What can happen at mealtimes that allows the power to surge through everyone at the table?”

Encourage ideas and add some of the following, as needed:

Catch kids in the act of being amazing:

State the exact things your child did that day that delighted you and tell your child how that made you feel.

Give kids positive labels:

Based on what your child did that day, give them a positive label like, “You are so smart,” “You are so brave,” “You are so kind,” “You are so loving,” “You are so responsible,” etc.

If there is time, encourage the group to suggest other positive labels they can assign to their children.

Listen and ask questions:

The simple act of listening has power. It teaches your children they are respected and valuable. It is also modeling behavior, teaching them to become good listeners as well. After your child shares, ask questions like, “How did that make you feel?” or, “Tell me more.” This engages the child and provides parents with valuable insights.

Encourage:

Like adults, kids learn something every day, and sometimes the lessons are hard. Spend time encouraging your child. Tell your child you believe in them. Tell them they are strong. Share your awareness that their actions show how kind/strong/caring they are.

Dream big:

Ask your children about their dreams. Tell them you believe in their ability to achieve their dreams.

Pray:

Thank God for the food and for each person at the table by name.

Problem-solve:

Ask children to describe challenges they faced during the day. Ask questions to help them see the challenge from different perspectives. (Examples: “Tom didn’t share his toys. What could you say to Tom next time to get him to share? What can you do to show Tom how to share toys? Would it help to talk to your teacher about Tom? How did hitting Tom cause a problem for you?”)

Be grateful:

Make “roses and thorns” a daily ritual at mealtimes. Everyone shares a “rose” from their day—something that made him or her happy or proud. After sharing “roses,” everyone shares a “thorn” from their day—something that challenged or upset them, or made them sad. Wrap “roses” with pride and joy; wrap “thorns” with encouragement and advice.

Be silly and happy:

Life can be hard. Mealtimes should be an oasis of happiness, joy, and even silliness. Tell jokes, sing songs, or share stories to keep the mood light. Head off heated arguments quickly by saying, “Mealtime is a no-argument zone.”

Ask questions that tap into emotion:

All children feel emotions, so questions that tap into emotions can generate interesting responses.

Examples: “What surprised you today? What made you feel sad today? What made you feel happy today?”

CALL-TO-ACTION:

ASK: “How will your life be better if you commit to giving your child the gift of family meals? How will you feel as a mom when you sit down with your family for the “power hour”? What will you do today to give your family the gift of mealtimes together?”

SAY: “Please take a thumbprint token home with you to remind you of your success when you imprint your fingerprint on your family’s heart tonight.”