

UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION:

Mission Control is designed to help children identify feelings, communicate needs, complete missions, earn rewards, and develop problem-solving skills. Unlike traditional behavior charts, Mission Control encourages both the child and caregiver to work together. Before assigning missions, take time to understand the child's current emotional state, support needs, and energy level.
The goal is not perfection. The goal is progress.

I Feel • I Need • Energy Level: Understanding the Child's Current State

Children's emotions, needs, and energy levels change throughout the day. A child who is calm and focused in the morning may be overwhelmed and exhausted after school. A child with high energy may struggle with tasks that require sitting still, while a child with low energy may need additional support and encouragement.

Before assigning missions, begin with a check-in.

I Feel

The I Feel dial helps children identify and communicate their emotions. Children are often told how they are behaving but are rarely taught how to recognize what they are feeling. Learning to name emotions is an important step toward self-regulation.

Questions caregivers can ask:

How are you feeling right now?

What happened?

Has your feeling changed today?

What do you think caused that feeling?

The goal is not to fix the feeling. The goal is to recognize and understand it. All emotions are valid. Mission Control teaches children that emotions are information, not problems.

I Need

The I Need dial helps children identify what support may help them succeed. Sometimes a child is not being difficult. They may be overwhelmed, frustrated, tired, overstimulated, or unsure how to ask for help.

Examples of support may include:

Quiet Time

A Hug

Help

Create

Activity

Calm Time

Teaching children to identify and communicate their needs is an important life skill that can improve confidence, communication, and emotional regulation.

Energy Level

The Energy Level section helps children recognize how much energy they currently have. There is no good or bad energy level. A child with low energy may need fewer missions, shorter tasks, or additional support. A child with high energy may benefit from movement, activity, or active missions before attempting tasks that require focus. Understanding energy levels helps caregivers set realistic expectations and helps children learn how their energy affects daily success.

For Caregivers

This section is not only for the child. It is also a reminder for caregivers to pause and consider the child's current emotional and energy state before assigning missions.

Mission Control encourages caregivers to work with the child rather than against them. A child who is overwhelmed may not be ready for the same missions they could complete when calm. A child who is exhausted may need support before correction. By understanding emotions, needs, and energy levels first, caregivers can assign missions that are challenging, achievable, and appropriate for the moment. These indicators may be changed throughout the day as emotions, needs, and energy naturally change.

Missions, Progress, and Rewards

Choosing Missions: Missions are selected by the caregiver and should be based on the child's current emotional state, support needs, and energy level. Mission Control is designed to create opportunities for success. Before assigning missions, consider:

How is the child feeling?

What support do they need?

What energy level are they experiencing?

What can they realistically accomplish right now?

The goal is not to create as many missions as possible. The goal is to create meaningful opportunities for growth and success.

Active Missions

Mission Control allows a child to work on up to four active missions at a time. This design helps prevent mission avoidance.

For example, a child may be assigned:

Brush Teeth, Get Dressed, Eat Breakfast, Put Toys Away

If new missions are continually added as tasks are completed, a child may choose to avoid a less desirable mission while continuing to complete easier tasks. By limiting active missions, children learn that every mission matters and that difficult tasks are part of completing the mission. When a mission is completed, the mission token is moved to the reward progression area.

Once active missions have been completed, caregivers may assign additional missions based on the child's current emotional state, support needs, and energy level.

Mission Control provides a framework, not a rigid set of rules. Caregivers are encouraged to adapt the system to fit the needs of their family.

Building Progress

Each completed mission helps unlock earned rewards.

Mission Control uses four reward levels:

Level 1: Complete 2 missions	Level 3: Complete 4 missions
Level 2: Complete 3 missions	Level 4: Complete 5 missions

As missions are completed, tokens are moved into the reward stacks. Once a reward level has been completed, the child may rotate the lock dial to unlock that reward. This visible progress helps children see the connection between effort, responsibility, and achievement.

Choosing Rewards

Rewards are selected by the caregiver.

Rewards do not need to cost money and often work best when they focus on connection, attention, or special privileges.

Examples include:

Extra bedtime story	Extra outdoor time
Special handshake	Choosing music
Family game night	Special helper privileges
Choosing dinner	Staying up a little later

Choose rewards that are meaningful to the child and realistic for your family.

Earned Rewards Stay Earned

One of the most important principles of Mission Control is that earned rewards remain earned. When a child unlocks a reward, that reward belongs to them. Adults do not lose a paycheck because they made a mistake later in the week. In the same way, children should not lose rewards they have already earned. This does not mean poor choices have no consequences. Families should continue to teach accountability and use appropriate consequences when needed. However, consequences should not erase progress that has already been earned.

Mission Control teaches children that effort matters, progress matters, and success can be built one mission at a time.