

PARENTS

Managing Behaviour

What does managing behaviour mean?

Behavioural difficulties can have an impact on the child's learning development and can severely affect their and their families' everyday lives. Mild behavioural difficulties can present as your child being argumentative, losing their temper often and blaming others or annoying others. More severe behavioural difficulties can present as your child showing aggression to other people and/or animals, bullying, threatening and fighting, damaging property and/or being deceitful.

Top Tips for Children with Challenging Behaviour

- Be vigilant and intervene early.
- Be consistent - have the same rules from day to day and child to child.
- Children need good role models and sometimes copy adult's behaviour. Think about whether you are sitting in the same way that you expect your child to? Are you using a calm, quiet tone when you talk to your child?
- Recognise and reward positives ('Thanks for listening to me.....')
- Praise! Not just praise for positive behaviour but positive attempts at communication.
- When giving instructions ALWAYS:
 - **Use your child's name**
 - **Use 'I' statements. This is assertive and powerful. 'I' statements affirm who you are and what you want!**
 - **State what you want**
 - **State why you want it**
 - **State when you want it**
 - **Finish with Thank you!**
 - **'John I need you to sit on that table so that you can finish your breakfast now. Thank you.'**
- Attempt to divert your child away from what s/he is doing wrong, to a more constructive activity.
- Tell your child what s/he *should* be doing rather than what s/he *shouldn't* be doing. e.g. "Put your hands under the table" rather than "Don't touch that!"
- Try to reduce the number of times you say "no". Save for when you really need it.
- Be as specific as you can in the way you describe the behaviour to your child.
- Remember that it is the behaviour that you are critical of not your child!
- Use a 'matter of fact' voice and maintain positive body language.
- Use empathetic statements ('I know this may be difficult for you...')
- DO NOT make threats or punishment that you are not prepared to carry out.
- Give your child a warning, making sure s/he has understood the punishment threatened and is given time to correct the misbehaviour.
- Punishment should be immediate
- Match the punishment with the naughtiness e.g. minor problems = a small 'telling off'
- Praise your child when they are doing what you want them to do e.g. "Lovely tidying up!"
- Be respectful but assertive.

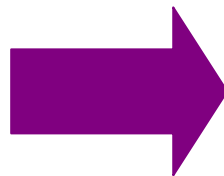
- Minimise embarrassment and hostility.
- Appear calm and confident.
- Try to avoid losing your temper.
- Do not take it personally.
- Choose your language carefully. E.g. avoid saying 'good' and 'bad' behaviour which suggests 'angelic' and 'evil'. Use 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' behaviours.

Managing YOUR behaviour

Passive Communication:

If your behaviour is:

- Passive
- Inconsistent
- Reacting to child's behaviour
- Unplanned to manage behaviour
- Lacking routine
- Not communicating boundaries
- Child led!



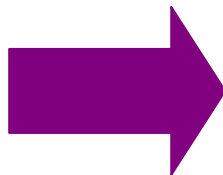
Then your child's response is:

- Frustration
- Attempting to manipulate
- Escalating situation to 'test' limits
- Lack of respect for parent/adults/others
- Showing signs of anger
- Answering back

Hostile Communication:

If your behaviour is:

- Aggressively responding to your child
- Authoritarian
- Not listening to your child
- Expecting your child to behave inappropriately e.g. labelling your child
- Confrontational
- Sarcastic with your child



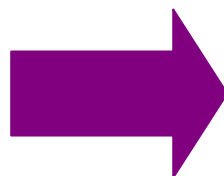
Then your child's response is:

- Fear of making mistakes
- Anxious
- Low self esteem
- Feeling victimised because they are treated differently
- Not taking chances so prefers not to attempt activities
- Confrontational

Assertive Communication:

If your behaviour is:

- Identifying boundaries
- Stating expectations for behaviour
- Fair and consistent
- Listening to your child
- Valuing your child's opinions
- Modelling desired behaviour
- Using humour
- Praising achievement and effort



Then your child's response is:

- Understands boundaries
- Feels valued
- Places trust in you
- Expresses opinions
- Feels safe and secure
- Not frightened of making mistakes
- Is more like to behave positively than negatively.

What does assertive communication look like?

Posture:	Upright, relaxed and open
Facial Expressions:	Committed, concerned, interested, responsive
Eyes:	Maintained eye contact
Speech and voice:	Direct, relaxed, not strained
Gestures:	Open, hands not raised above elbows

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