

Imperial Avenue Family Learning Sessions

How to support your child's behaviour



Aims of session

- What is behaviour?
- Top tips to support behaviour
- Resources



What is behaviour?

Behaviour is a form of communication.

It's not always that our children are choosing to be defiant. Instead, they are either

- Trying to tell you something that they don't have the words for yet
- Looking to assert their independence

As parents rather than diving straight in and thinking **'How can I control this behaviour and how can I manage it?'** we need to ask ourselves

'What's my child trying to tell me by acting in this way?'



The behaviour may be trying to tell us....

- I am hungry
 - I am tired
 - I don't feel well
 - They were in my personal space
 - I was happy playing now I have to stop
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- Neurodiversity can play a part in some cases
 - It's about being curious, although we know how challenging it is for us parents! Validate the emotion - "It's okay to feel sad", etc. Modelling of good co-regulation looks like, e.g. let's have a snack, a rest, spending time with them (no phones!)

Dealing with behaviour

There are two things that are really important.

- **The first one is warmth, making your child feel loved and safe and a sense of belonging.**

Showing your child it is ok to be upset, angry. Instead of saying things like 'There's no need to get upset' try 'I can see you are upset, it is ok to get upset. Model how to regulate behaviour 'let's have a snack or a rest' (no devices at this point!)

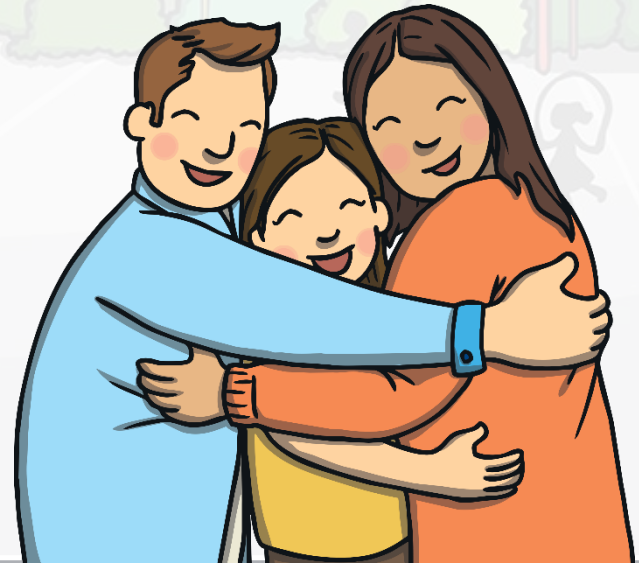
- **The second is limit-setting, making sure that you're putting boundaries in place for things that aren't appropriate.**

Sometimes we can jump straight to setting limits at the cost of warmth.



Why is improving behaviour important?

- Children achieve more inside and outside the home and classroom
- Learning improves both at home and in school
- Children will develop social skills to help them to be accepted and welcome in society as they grow up
- It reduces stress for everyone



Where to Begin?

The Three Rs

- **Routines** – expectations, consistency and maintenance are key.
- **Responses** – strategies to deal with behaviour should be in place, both for positive and negative behaviours.
- **Relationships** – understanding our own behaviour/emotions will help us to help others and be understanding of the circumstances that affect our children.



Routines

Having clear and structured routines builds an environment for clear boundaries and positive behaviour.

Children will be more comfortable and relaxed in a safe environment, that has familiar surroundings or objects and also when they know the routine or schedule of each day.

Top Tips

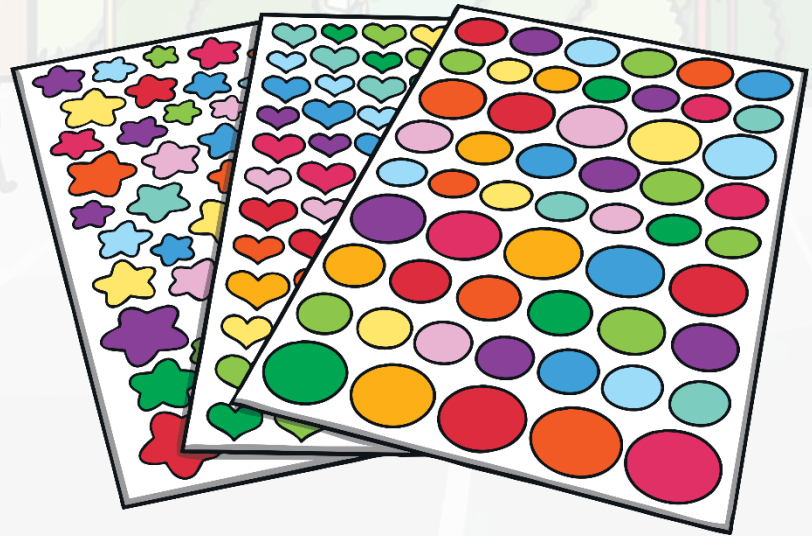
- Have a clear routine for things like getting up, getting dressed, eating breakfast, going to bed
- Each morning at breakfast, describe the day ahead (pictures and lists can help with this)
- Stick to routines and if things need to change give warnings and explanations about why
- Pictures and symbols and lists to tick off can help with this



Responding to Good Behaviour

Try some of the following to shift your focus to positive behaviour:

- give lots of **specific praise** for good behaviour – tell the child what about their behaviour was good;
- use **positive body language** by smiling and showing the child you're paying attention;
- give the child **individual attention** so they feel valued;
- set a **good example** and be a good role model;
- **listen** to what the child has to say.



Responding to Positive Behaviour

- **reward** good behaviour with a high five or thumbs up, special treats, allowing the child to choose the next activity and otherwise celebrating the child's actions
- use a good behaviour chart to give the child **recognition** for listening, helping, sharing and more **explain** how you feel when your child behaves certain ways
- use simple, **clear instructions**
- have a sense of **humour**!



Responding to Negative Behaviour

Distract	Remove your child from the situation and give them an alternative activity.
Ignore	Depending on the situation, ignore the inappropriate behaviour if no one is in danger and you feel it is being done to get a reaction.
Discuss	If your child is able to understand, discuss their behaviour with them and try to help them appreciate the consequences of their actions towards others. Be clear that it is their behaviour that you do not like, not them. When discussing, make sure to sit or kneel at their height so you can discuss it with them at their eye level. This may work best after the incident when everyone is calmer.

Responding to Negative Behaviour

Refocus	Remove your child from the activity and sit them quietly for a few minutes to calm down or refocus. Use timers or sensory bottles can be a good timer for this with younger children. When they return to the situation or activity, treat it as a fresh start.
Remove	Withdraw treats as a consequence for inappropriate behaviours. Prior to this, make it clear that this will be a consequence: 'If you continue to do [behaviour], you will lose [treat/privilege].' You can also phrase this as giving your child a choice, 'You can either put on the shoes or the wellies'
Validate	Show the child you recognise and validate the feelings that have caused them to act out but let them know that the way they are acting is not appropriate: 'I see that you're really angry with your baby brother and you want to hit him but we don't hit eachother.'

Relationships

Help the children understand the family rules, which are realistic, clear simple and fair, and be consistent in the enforcing of them.

Be aware what the behaviour is communicating to you and to keep to routines so that your child feels safe and is not overtired or hungry.

All behaviour is for a reason, so be aware of any changes in your child's circumstances, care arrangements or any other change which may affect their behaviour, such as a new baby, parents' separation or new partner, falling outs with friends or any bereavement.

To be consistent, if you share pertinent details of any significant changes of circumstance with the school, the school will work to ensure your child is fully supported at home and at school. All information shared will be kept confidential unless there appears to be a child protection issue.



Give children 'jobs' or 'responsibilities'

No matter what age your child is, you can begin sharing responsibilities with them.

It could be to put their toys away, put their washing in the basket or even to put their plate in the kitchen when they are finished eating.

As your child gets older, they can take on more responsibility, such as folding and putting away their clothes, packing the dishwasher or helping to cook dinner.

By giving your child more responsibility, you will give them a sense of importance in their own home. This develops their sense of ownership of their own environment.

By praising your child for their effort and behaviour while completing their responsibilities, you also are developing their sense of worth and their self esteem.

Positive Language

Instead of...

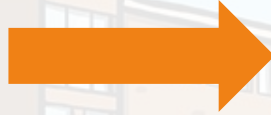
Say...

Don't do that.



Do this instead, thank you.

You're being naughty.



Show me how you sit quietly.

Behave!



It's time to walk holding my hand.

Stop it!



Show me that you can do this.

Can you stop screaming?



Use a quieter voice.

There's nothing to be scared of!



Tell me what you're nervous about.

Positive Language

Use positive language to tell the child what behaviours you want them to do. Give them your clear expectations of how you expect them to behave positively. This means there will be no confusion over how they should be behaving

Try to avoid 'Can you' questions when telling a child what to do as the child could simply answer, "No!".

"Muhammed ..., I need you to pick up your coat for me now ... Thank you."

"Sam ..., I know you say you didn't drop it, but I want you to help me and pick up your coat and hang it up ... Thank you."

"Max ..., when you have finished done your homework, then you can play on the computer."

"Syeda . . . , I like it when you listen first time when I call."

No Means...

No! Follow through on any decision.

This is why it's important to ensure any consequence you present is something you are able to enforce that fits the inappropriate behaviour.

If you say you can't have your tablet until after tea stick to it! Make sure it is realistic if you say you can't have it for a week will that really happen??

As tough as it may seem at the time, try not to give into your child if they are moaning, whining or crying because of your decision. If you do, you may be reinforcing that if they whine and moan, it will change your decision. If necessary, this may mean removing them from situations.

Try to follow up emotional situations with calm discussion afterwards to ensure your child knows what is expected of them and what they were doing wrong.

Yes Means...

Yes! Follow through on any decision.

Always keep promises! If you promise a reward for positive behaviour, follow through with the reward. This means making realistic and do-able decisions on rewards and consequences.



Useful resources

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/parent>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

