**MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS**

Lots of children can get frustrated and show challenging behaviours. As parents it is important that we deal with these challenging behaviours in the best way possible. The most important message is to **keep calm** in these situations. The best way to develop your child’s desired behaviour is to give your children attention when they are doing something you like and remove your attention when they are doing something you do not like. An excellent way to promote desired behaviours is by modelling the behaviour that you would like to see.

**Here are some examples to promote positive behaviour:**

* **Show and tell** - Teach children right from wrong with calm words and actions. Model behaviours you would like to see in your children. For example, if you as a parent are feeling anxious, model anxiety management techniques that you would like to see.
* **Set limits -** Have clear and consistent rules for your children to follow. Be sure to explain these rules in age-appropriate terms they can understand.
* **Give consequences** - Calmly and firmly explain the consequences if they don't behave. For example, tell her that if she does not pick up her toys, you will put them away for the rest of the day. Be prepared to follow through right away. But remember, never take away something your child truly needs, such as a meal.
* **Hear them out -** Listening is important. Let your child finish the story before helping solve the problem. Watch for times when miss-behaviour has a pattern, for example, if your child is feeling jealous. Talk with your child about this rather than just giving consequences.
* **Give them your attention -** The most powerful tool for effective discipline is attention, try and reinforce good behaviours and discourage others. Remember, all children want their parent's attention.
* **Catch them being good -** Children need to know when they do something bad and when they do something good. **Notice good behaviour and point it out**, praising success and good tries. Be specific (for example, "Wow, you did a good job putting that toy away!").
* **Know when not to respond** - As long as your child isn't doing something dangerous and gets plenty of attention for good behaviour, ignoring bad behaviour can be an effective way of stopping it. Ignoring bad behaviour can also teach children natural consequences of their actions. For example, if your child keeps dropping their cake on purpose, they will soon have no more cake left to eat.
* **Be prepared for trouble** - Plan ahead for situations when your child might have trouble behaving. Prepare them for upcoming activities and how you want them to behave.
* **Redirect bad behaviour -** Sometimes children misbehave because they are bored or don't know any better. Find something else for your child to do. Encourage them to help you complete daily tasks or redirect them to something them might find enjoyable.
* **Call a time-out -** A time-out can be useful when a specific rule is broken. This discipline tool works best by warning children they will get a time out if they don't stop, reminding them what they did wrong in as few words and with as little emotion as possible, try and remove them from the situation for a pre-set length of time. With children who are a little older, you can try letting your children lead their own time-out. You can say, "Go to time out and come back when you feel ready and in control." This strategy can help the child learn and practice self-management skills.

**MODELLING BEHAVIOUR**

Children learn by watching everyone around them, especially their parents. When you use manners and good coping strategies, you teach your children to do the same. For example, if you as an adult use your phone regularly in front of your child, then they are likely to want to copy what you are doing and want to use that phone, however if you read a book or a newspaper then this may encourage the child to do the same with a book of their choice.

**Here are some examples to model behaviour**:

* **Point out sharing among adults** - Children often feel that they are the only ones who have to "use your manners," "share," and "take turns." So when adults share, point it out to your children. For example:

"Daddy is sharing his drink with Mommy. Good job sharing, Daddy!"

* **Model good ways to calm down** - Teach your children how to calm down when they are upset or frustrated. For example, if you are frustrated about sitting in traffic, you might say:

"Mommy is really frustrated right now. Please help me calm down by taking 10 deep breaths with me."

* **Teach children to say how they feel** - If you are really frustrated, you might want to say, "You are driving me crazy right now." Instead, try to express your actual feelings: "Mommy is really frustrated right now." This teaches children to say what they feel instead of making critical or hurtful statements. Then help your children do this when they are upset.

Remember your child will learn from you.

Be patient and be positive!

**Please be aware that our service does not cover behaviour management and if you should seek any further information please visit your GP or gain further advice from the link below:**

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