

Handy Tips on Managing Children's Behaviour

How we speak to our children has a profound affect on how our children respond to us....there are some basic, simple to follow, guidelines that can make a huge difference to family life. Why not put them to the test and see?

Don't forget though, children can be very persistent and the most important thing is to have patience with any changes you are making and make sure that you are consistent in following them through. Children will always see through whether you really intend to follow things through or not!

Try and ensure that all family members; Nan and Granddad, Mum and Dad all stick to the same approach.

Don't 'feel mean' for imposing a sanction and back track on it and try not to make up for other events in a child's life by allowing them to dictate what they will do, how and when!

- Use basic truths e.g. make clear statements like **"It's time for bed."** (Don't let it appear that it is up for negotiation) Then follow up with an



I statement...**"I want you to go to bed."** This clearly asserts your expectation to your child.

- use empathetic assertion to indicate that you recognise and acknowledge their 'grievance' but that you still want them to do as asked...e.g. **"I know you didn't drop it but I have asked you to pick it up."** Or **"...maybe he did say that to you but I have asked you to..."** or **"...yes I know that you want to watch TV but we don't eat in the lounge."** It really expresses clearly that you know that your child has an alternative view or opinion but that your expectation is still to be followed.

- **Negative Assertions**...use should your child be protesting and giving every reason why they shouldn't do something or begin to threaten you e.g. If your child says they hate you if you tell them it's bed time.

"I'm really sad that you think that, but I love you and it's time for bed now."



- **Consequence Assertions**...avoid being a 'broken record' nagging and saying the same thing over with no response from your child. This allows your child to control you. Don't repeat a request more than three times without a consequence, a sanction. Give your child a choice of something you want them to do....always give the one you would really like them to do last. They are more likely to pick that one!



- **Escalating Assertion** Be firm, polite and clear when giving an instruction. I need you to do this right this minute. Insist on eye contact, maintain an appropriate physical presence.
Or **"I know you want to stay up, but it's bed time now and if you don't go to bed now then tomorrow you will be going to bed at 7 o'clock."** Then make sure you enforce it the following day!
- use **lots of praise and rewards** of hugs and love or activities your child enjoys doing...don't give presents as rewards and don't be tempted to bribe! Make it a positive household. For example **"That was excellent...I really liked the way that you helped to clear the table after tea."**
- **Thinking Step:** Consider using the bottom stair as a thinking step when a child needs to reflect on inappropriate behaviours.



- **Use Positive Role Models:** For example, praise one child for doing something that you wanted them to do then praise the other child if they join in and do the same.
- **Guiding:** Show children how to break down difficult tasks into smaller more achievable steps and praise them for trying.

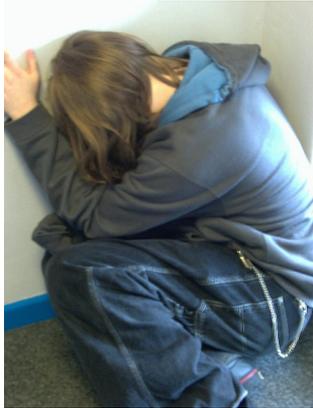
- **Ignoring Behaviours:** Give minimal amounts of attention to poor behaviours e.g. don't respond in a big way to tantrums and don't nag! Children would always rather be nagged than be ignored altogether. It's easy to take good behaviour for granted; a child may resort to misbehaviour to seek attention if they don't receive praise and attention. Don't ignore bad behaviour if other children are paying attention or are watching what is happening closely. It'll give the wrong message!



- **Removal:** Consider removing the child away from where they are carrying out the misbehaviour. Remove favourite toys for a given time period...not forever though and don't succumb and give them back before the end of the time allotted!



- **Sanctions:** Always try and finish any sanction set, on the day that it was 'earned' and with older children, within the week. Don't let sanctions carry on



too long as it can deter the child from improving their behaviour. Always stick to sanctions promised...you'll lose credibility if you give a sanction then give in on it. It'll make it very hard for your child to take sanctions seriously in the future if you are not consistent in seeing it through.

- Avoid using '**Contaminated Praise**' at all costs. For example "**...you did that really well, why don't you do it all the time?**" Although you have given praise, you have ended with another implied criticism which takes away hugely, from the praise. Try to praise and stop and avoid following through.

We hope that you find these pointers helpful....meanwhile if we can be of any more help please don't hesitate to contact school.



