**Positive Behaviour**



**Managing behaviour positively**

This leaflet aims to give you some ideas about what you can do to promote your child’s positive behaviour and some strategies to manage inappropriate behaviour.

Young children have conflicts over toys, space, and friendships. When they get into conflicts with others, they do not aim to be mean or hurtful. They are simply goal oriented. For example, they may want to play with a toy or sit next to you. Their actions are focused on getting what they want without regard for the effect of their behaviour on others.

Children may also be imitating aggressive behaviour they see elsewhere without having learned that violence or verbal abuse is not an acceptable way of dealing with social problems.

Challenging behaviour can be a result of a child’s stress or anxiety, and this can be triggered by many things, so it is helpful to identify the triggers and anticipate your child’s responses.

**One to one time**

Young children need positive attention and emotional connection. Sometimes when they are not getting positive attention, they will seek attention in negative ways.

Read a story together, play together with their favourite toys, do a jigsaw, go for a walk, make a cake or anything else you enjoy doing together!

**Routines**

Children like to know what to expect so a predictable routine helps them feel secure.

You can draw out the routine and then put it where they can see it so that they know what’s coming next.

**Make sure your child has enough sleep**

Nobody is at their best when they are tired. Make sure your child gets enough sleep.

The NHS recommends that

2 year olds need around 11 ½ hours sleep at night and a 1 ½ hour nap

3 year olds need around 11 ½ hours sleep at night and sometimes a nap during the day.

4 year olds need around 11 ½ hours sleep at night

Create a calming bedtime routine for your child, with a bath, story and bed at around the same time each night.

Remember that the light from TVs and electronic devises disturbs sleep, so keep them out of the bedroom.

**Helping**

Children enjoy the responsibility of helping with small tasks such as laying the table, putting the shopping away etc.

It gives them a sense of belonging and family values.

**Resolving conflicts**

Encourage children to resolve their squabbles between themselves and help them to come to a solution together.

This is the approach we use at nursery, where we ask the children what has happened, listen to both sides of a disagreement and help them to agree on a solution that they are both happy with.

**Family rules**

Have a few clear rules and always follow through on them.

**Food**

Food can affect our behaviour.

Make sure your child eats a balanced diet: ensuring small frequent healthy meals, lots of water, fresh fruits and vegetables and a high intake of essential fatty acids. It is also a good idea to strip out too many high sugar, refined, processed foods and additives.

**Yes**

Find opportunities to say ‘Yes!’

**Responding to challenging behaviour**

This could be: Kicking, biting, hitting, spitting, pulling hair, head-butting, head-banging, trashing spaces, throwing.

* Try to identify the triggers for these behaviours and avoid situations where behaviour may be affected.
* Make eye contact and get your child’s attention before saying anything
* Use simple direct language, such as, ‘Stop!’
* Use a sign or symbol to reinforce language.
* Allow time for the child to think and process your command or instructions
* Speak calmly and don’t raise your voice
* State positively what you want to happen e.g. ‘I need you to come down from there, it’s dangerous.’
* Be firm and clear and avoid a power struggle e.g. by saying ‘I can wait one minute for you to give that to me’ giving the child time to adjust to what is being asked
* Find out what soothes your child and use this strategy consistently
* Remember that every day should be fresh start!

**Triggers**

Challenging behaviour can be a result of a child’s stress or anxiety, so it is helpful to identify the triggers for the behaviour.

These can be

* Unexpected changes in routine,
* Changes to the environment
* Noise or light levels
* Inconsistent approaches and responses
* Friendship issues
* Difficulties in expressing emotions

**Trigger – Inconsistent approaches and responses**

This could be because: Different parents or carers use different approaches; Different responses at home and at nursery school

* Talk to nursery about what strategies work at home and what works at nursery
* Be consistent in your responses
* Make explanations clear and concise
* Use symbols or visual cues to support your explanation (if needed)
* Remain calm
* Be prepared to be flexible but consistent within those expectations
* Be persistent
* Don’t take your child’s responses personally

**Trigger – Changes to the environment**

This could be because: Furniture has been moved around or changed; Untidy or cluttered environment; Loud noises or bright lights

* Involve child in making changes to the environment (as far as possible)
* Maintain an uncluttered and tidy space
* Teach your child where toys and equipment goes and involve them with tidying up

**Trigger - Friendship issues**

This could be because: Friendships change; Difficulties in making friends; Personality clashes

* Talk to your child’s Key Person about their friends and who they play with
* Talk about how we behave towards our friends
* Read books and show pictures about friends and friendly behaviour

**Trigger - Difficulties in expressing emotions**

This could be because: Your child expresses their emotions and feelings in a way we find challenging or inappropriate; Your child feels unwell; Your child feels in a bad mood

* Notice and comment on your child’s emotions so that they can start recognising and naming their own emotions, for example ‘I can see that you are feeling cross.’
* Comment on emotions of the characters in the stories you read
* Provide a quiet place for them to go to ‘unwind’

**Remember**

Some strategies need time and repetition to become effective.

Try to stay calm and don’t give in!

**Trigger – Changes in routine**

This could be because: The morning routine takes place in a different order; A different route or transport to school; A staff member absent; visitors at home or school

* Let your child know about any changes before they happen so that they know what to expect
* Remind them that the change is going to happen
* Use a visual timetable to explain the routine
* Ask your child’s Key person for a ‘Social Story’ that shows behaviour in different situations