

Positive parenting

Positive parenting uses techniques that work well for every child. These techniques build on the importance of listening, and, above all, loving your child – leading to a better-behaved, happy child and less-stressed parents.

What's in this pack?

This pack aims to help you understand your child's behaviour and equip you with parenting 'tools' that you can positively use to help create a peaceful, happy home.

Whats included?

- Explaining big 'feelings and emotions'
 - Trigger points
 - Simple tips
 - Distraction
- Setting healthy boundaries
 - Routines
- The power of praise
- Fun time together

Feelings and emotions

Children, just like adults, often have **'big feelings and emotions'**.

Fear

Frustration

Anger

Loneliness

Children's brains are still developing at this age, so there are limits to how much they can control their emotions.

Because young children **can't yet effectively communicate** what they want, feel, or need, a frustrating experience may be expressed through tantrums or challenging behaviour.

It is normal for toddlers to test limits and have tantrums.

Think of tantrums as their way of expressing and telling you they're **upset and frustrated.**"



Trigger points

One minute your child may be happily playing and the next moment they are screaming and crying. Sometimes by looking back to BEFORE the behaviour occurs and understanding the **'trigger point'** for what caused the difficult behaviour, it can help us to avoid these triggers in the future...

Reflection

At the end of the day, take some time to reflect on when the challenging behaviour occurred and possible TRIGGERS as to WHY it occurred. Was your child hungry? Was your child bored? Was your child tired? Was your child trying to get your attention?

Things to consider...

- Does this behaviour normally occur at a certain time of day?
le before a nap time or meal time
- Does this behaviour often occur in a certain place?
le the supermarket
- Does this behaviour happen when I am focused on another task?
le when I'm talking on the phone or cooking dinner

Simple tips for tantrums

- **Name it to tame it** (naming emotions) Its Ok to feel emotions -
“you seem....(sad, grumpy, worried)....what’s going on?
“You’re feeling sad because....(circumstance, event)...
“It sounds like you’re angry about.... (situation)...

- **Empathise** -“I understand” – Toddlers want to be heard and acknowledged.
“You seem to be feeling angry. I would feel angry if that happened to me. It’s OK to feel like that...”

- **Remain calm** – if you become stressed and angry, they feed off your emotions and become more stressed and angry themselves. Remind yourself this is normal toddler behaviour.

- **Don’t punish** – Feeling big emotions is not bad and does not need to be punished.

- **Don’t give in** – if you say yes just end a tantrum (ie give them the sweets they are crying for), you’re toddler will think this is how they get what they want.

- **Let it run its course** – you don’t need to ‘make them happy quickly’, let them get their feelings out first.

Distraction

Sometimes we have situations where we already know in advance our child is going to say “NO”.

le – when you tell them its time to leave the park, or ask them to put their shoes on...

Children like to have control over their lives and their choices.

By giving children a choice that achieves the outcome **you would like**, we can avoid the ‘outburst’.

For example:

“its time to go now, would you like to jump to the car with me or shall we skip?”

“You can’t have a snack right now, but shall we play with the cars or the train track?”

“Do you want to put you’re shoes on by yourself or would you like mummy to put them on?”

Distraction techniques could also be used during known ‘trigger points’ or when you start to see difficult behaviour arising.

For example if your child starts to demonstrate difficult behaviour when....

- ...you cook dinner - you could offer your child their own pots and pans so they can ‘help’ you.
- ...you change their siblings nappy – have your child collect all the things you need, such as wet wipes or fresh clothes ect.
Children love to be helpful!
- ...you are at the supermarket – give them a list of foods and they can tick of items with a pen. Make it fun for them!

Setting healthy boundaries

All children need love, guidance and to have rules and boundaries. Children can feel insecure when they don't have clear limits.

Rules and boundaries help families to understand how to behave towards each other, and what's OK and not OK.

Remember

It's important to remember that children's behaviour can change due to factors that are outside of their control.

Such as:

- illness
- The arrival of a new baby.
- Moving house.
- Parental separation or divorce.
- Change of setting – such as the transition from home to nursery or nursery to school.

- Keep guidance simple and consistent.
- Give clear and reasonable rules.
- Be fair, firm and kind.
- If your child is behaving in a way you don't want them to, clearly explain what you want them to do instead.
- Set age appropriate boundaries - you shouldn't expect the same from your 12 year-old as you would from your three year-old.

Consistency

When dealing with challenging behaviour and setting positive boundaries, it is important that you and your partner are using the same approach. Children will become confused if different adults have different rules.

You could discuss with your child's preschool setting and see how they are using positive boundaries and discipline.

Routines

Children thrive on routine. Predictable daily routines help children learn what to expect at various times of the day and provides them with a sense of security, control and satisfaction. By knowing what comes next, children can prepare, and are less likely to become distressed or frustrated.

Examples of simple predictable routines

Morning Routine: Wake up, change nappy, eat breakfast, get dressed, put shoes and coat on, and out the door.

Naptime Routine: Make lunch, eat lunch, read a book and then naptime.

Bedtime Routine: Have a bath, put pyjamas on, brush teeth, read a book, and then sleep time.

Daily routine example

7:30 am Wake up
8:00 am Breakfast
9.00 am Play time
12:00 pm Lunch
1:00 pm Nap
3:00 pm Snack
3.30pm Afternoon walk
5:00 pm Dinner
7:00 pm Bath time
7:20 pm Read a book
7.30 pm Bed

Tip

Prepare children for what is happening next...
Ie – “When this TV show has finished, I’m turning the TV off”.

Praise Praise Praise

Children get lots of attention when they are doing something they shouldn't. We might say "stop that, don't do that, get down" ect.

But how much attention do we give children when they are being 'good' and doing things we want them to do?

Children (and indeed most people) LOVE to be praised.

Praise encourages good behaviour

Try to spot when your child is behaving and praise them for it... it may feel strange at first, but they will love hearing you praise them and will be more likely to continue the good behaviour.

Praise phrases you could try...

- "Wow, you are playing with your trains so nicely"
- "You are walking so sensibly next to me"
- "You are sharing your toys with your brother so well"
- "Well done for saying thankyou"
- "You are being so kind to your friend"
- "Thankyou for helping me tidy up, you are very helpful"
- "You put your socks on all by yourself, that's amazing!"
- "You are playing so nicely today"

Fun time together

Daily doses of positive attention to your child can help reduce negative behaviours. When children receive regular doses of healthy, positive attention, they reduce their attention-seeking behaviours.

Just **15 minutes** of focused, undivided fun together a day with your child, is enough make them feel respected, loved and happy.

Try and set aside 15 minutes a day where you can give your child your full attention and have some fun!

15 minutes of fun ideas

- Drawing or painting
- Dressing up
- Water play
- Playdoh
- Catch and throw balls
- Pretend cooking
- Puzzles
- Hide and seek
- Scavenger hunt
- Building a train track
- Reading a book
- Dancing

Further links and Videos

[Baby and toddler play ideas - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Hungry Little Minds – Simple fun, activities for kids aged 0 – 5 \(campaign.gov.uk\)](http://campaign.gov.uk)

[Activities for kids: Fun development and bonding ideas for babies, toddlers and pre-school children - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

[What's the best way to deal with tantrums? \(18 to 30 months\) | NHS - YouTube](#)

[NHS How much does my child understand about being naughty - YouTube](#)