

Strategies for supporting behaviour:

Before deciding which strategies to use, it is recommended that ABC observations are kept and analysed. A behaviour support plan may then be appropriate, linked to a risk assessment and always in partnership with parents/carers.

Refer to the Department for Children Schools and Families, National Strategies; 'Inclusion Development Programme, Supporting children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties'.

Distracting the child away from the inappropriate behaviour:

Children are not always easy to distract but can be redirected to a similar alternative. This acknowledges the child's choice and begins to teach that others have rights too.

- It can be possible to anticipate inappropriate behaviour or to intervene swiftly once it starts to occur. For example "Come and play with the play dough", just before the child knocks down another child's tower of bricks.
- Removing the child from the situation - Calmly removing a child from the situation takes the heat out of the problem and gives the child time to calm down. For example;
- Help the child find something to do in the room and participate if appropriate.
- Tell the child it's all right to feel cross and ask if there is anything that can be done to make them feel better.

Ignoring the inappropriate behaviour/selective attention:

- Can the behaviour be ignored? For example if it is not disruptive or harmful to themselves or other children.
- If the behaviour is attention seeking, we could be reinforcing inappropriate behaviour by giving attention to it.

Consistency is important when staff choose to ignore behaviour. A child who finally gets a reaction from staff after calling out or screaming for two minutes has not learned that calling out or screaming is a waste of time, but that calling out longer and louder gets results. Staff will have taught the child to be longer and louder at calling out or screaming.

Promote self-esteem

Show that you recognise and accept the reason the child is behaving unacceptably.

"**You want** to play with the train set **but** it is time to go home now."

"**You want** to play with the blue train **but** Luca is playing with it now."

This values the child's point of view and shows that you are listening and understanding. The adult is the person in charge and sometimes has other priorities

Model the behaviour you want to see

In some situations, after firmly stating what is not to be done, you can demonstrate how to do it in a better way. This sets firm limits and builds relationship.

“We don’t hit, it hurts. Pat my arm gently.” (gently stroke child’s arm)

“Henry, Lego bricks are not for throwing. Let’s build a tower together.”

Demonstrating the behaviour you want to see:

- Talk children through how to ask for a toy from their friends. For example ‘Fred please can you pass me the doll, thank you’.
- When children are observed sharing, give positive praise. For example ‘Well done Doris for sharing your play dough with Fred’.
- Keep a positive diary to illustrate what the child does well. Share this with parents/carers and ensure that information-sharing is 2-way.

Helping children to resolve conflicts:

- Approach calmly and stay neutral. Prepare yourself for a positive outcome. Acknowledge feelings (e.g. you seem angry/sad/upset/ **very** upset). Give children time for their feelings to subside, and then let them know that you think that they can work out a way to solve the problem.
- What do they **want**? Listen carefully to each child’s details and needs; they are the key to finding the solution. Identify the problem.
- Restate the problem and check that both children agree.
- Help the children to find solutions/ make plans and choose one together.
- Give follow-up support if required. Check with each child that the problem has been resolved.

The way we speak to children:

- Use positive language.
- Always keep calm, never shout or lose your temper.
- Avoid using words like ‘naughty’, ‘play nicely’ or ‘good girl’; most young children do not have an understanding of these phrases and it triggers other meanings.
- Use short and specific sentences and say what the child is doing well. For example “you have painted a lovely picture”, “that’s a lovely drawing, I like the way you have used the red”, “I like that puzzle and you managed it all on your own”.
- Do not give the chance for a negative response – Say “It’s story time”. Instead of “Do you want a story?”
- Use simple language with all children. We will avoid saying what we don’t want the child to do and focus on what we would like them to do instead. For example:-
 - ‘No running’ to ‘Fred walk’;

□ 'Don't hit' to 'Fred hand down / in your lap' or a plain 'STOP' with accompanying hand signal.

Separate the behaviour from the child

Keep the focus on the behaviour or rule and avoid attacking the child.

Putting thanks at the end is powerful as it assumes compliance.

"Jason, Amy, leave the brushes alone. Well done, thank you."

Avoid arguing

Do not get distracted by secondary issues. Stick with the primary behaviour, which is the behaviour that first caused you concern.

"Jason, Amy, leave the brushes alone. Well done, thank you."

Use three positives before you use a negative

Again, this is focusing on the positive. It avoids overusing a child's name in a negative corrective context.

"Jane, well done you are sitting quietly and ready for the story.

Violet you are sitting well,

Luke good waiting, you are sitting and looking at me.

Gordon... look at me and sit still."

Use the least intrusive method of intervention

This ensures the smoother running of the group. Develop low-key signals. Follow up with thumbs up or some such signal to acknowledge the desired behaviour.

If you need to speak to the child, move to be nearer so that you speak quietly and personally to the child and avoid disrupting the group and embarrassing the child.

Give take-up time

This avoids being too confrontational and allows the child to process the information and follow the instructions.

"Jake, I need you to put the mugs on the tray."

Turn away and give Jake the opportunity to start on the task.

"Thank you Jake, let me help you."

Remind children of consequences

This encourages children to make the right choice. Obviously, you need to be consistent and fair so that the child doesn't feel aggrieved. Offer a very limited choice.

N.B. If there are agreed consequences they must be consistent and the children must understand that they are choosing them. This may be difficult for young children or those with learning difficulties or those with English as an Additional Language.

Using 'I' statements

There are times when a child needs to know that you are angry, hurt or annoyed due to something they have done. It is the behaviour that you are unhappy with, not the child.

"I feel worried when you leave the toys on the floor because someone might trip up and hurt themselves."

N.B. This should only be used with children who have sufficiently good skills in understanding English.

Problem solve together

This can help develop the child's self-esteem as they learn that they can solve problems for themselves.

"Someone might fall over these toys in the middle of the floor. What shall we do?"

Offer a challenge

This offers a quick motivator to get the job done quickly.

'I **wonder** if you can clear this table before I count to five.
By the time I go to the home corner, I **know** it will be tidy.'

N.B. Avoid setting challenges between children.

Hamburger statements

This should only be used with children with sufficiently good skills in understanding spoken English.

An initial positive statement followed by the correction and a final positive statement. The initial comment engages the child and makes them more receptive to the correction. The final comment maintains/restores the relationship.

"William, Thomas, you are having fun in the home corner today."

(bread)

"It is time to put the dressing up clothes away."

(slightly unpleasant bit)

"I know that you are both really good at clearing up. Well done."

(bread)

Use the six step approach to resolving conflicts

- 1) Approach quickly and calmly, stopping any hurtful behaviour
- 2) Acknowledge feelings
- 3) Gather information
- 4) Restate the problem
- 5) Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together

6) Be prepared to give follow up support

1) Practitioner separates children fighting over toy car by sitting between them. She says:

2) "I know you are feeling cross because you both want the car".

3) "Who was playing with the car? What happened?"

4) "So the problem is Sam wants the car and Kelly wants the car".

5) "What should we do? How can we make everyone feel better?"

They find a similar car for Sam, who is happy because it is his favourite colour.

6) "Well done Sam and Kelly. You are both playing with your cars together".

Points to remember:

- Concentrate on the behaviour causing most concern.
- Define the behaviour clearly.
- Be consistent, calm and clear about the message you are giving.
- Provide more of what the child does well.
- Give strategies a chance.
- Have a few simple positive rules.
- Set the standards.

Behaviour will not change overnight.