

A Guide to Positive Behaviour

Information for Parents and Carers



What Is Positive Behaviour?

Positive behaviour management is rewarding and showing attention to a child when they are behaving 'well' or displaying good behaviours, such as sharing, listening or showing patience.

This is instead of only using sanctions and consequences or only discussing behaviour with a child when they display negative behaviours such as hitting or running away from adults.



What Is 'Good' Behaviour?

Good behaviour is not just about the absence of bad behaviour.

We recognise good behaviour in children who:

- want to learn;
- want to flourish as individuals;
- have a positive attitude towards school, clubs and home life;
- take responsibility;
- embrace intellectual challenge;
- embrace physical challenges;
- show kindness;
- feel encouraged and supported.



Why Does Better Behaviour Lead to Greater Success?

1. Children achieve more inside and outside the home and classroom;
2. More time is spent learning from both home and school environments;
3. Children will develop social skills to help them to be accepted and welcome in society as they grow up.



Where to Begin?

The Three Rs

- **Routines** – expectations, consistency and maintenance are key.
- **Responses** – strategies to deal with behaviour should be in place, both for positive and negative behaviours.
- **Relationships** – understanding our own behaviour/emotions will help us to help others and be understanding of the circumstances that affect our children.



Routines

Having clear and structured routines builds an environment for clear boundaries and positive behaviour.

Children will be more comfortable and relaxed in a safe environment, that has familiar surroundings or objects and also when they know the routine or schedule of each day.

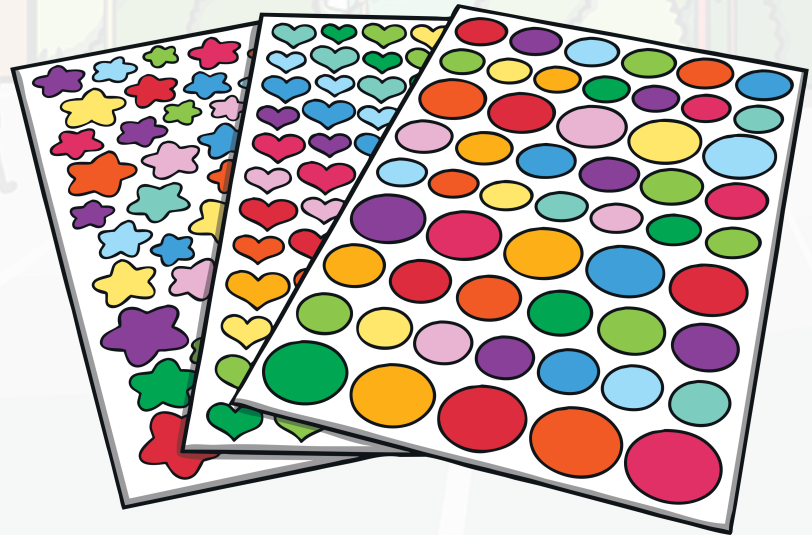
Top Tips

- Each morning at breakfast, describe the day ahead;
- Have a set bedtime routine so that children relax as they go through the process of getting ready for bed and are ready to sleep when their head meets the pillow;
- Have a checklist at the door of items the child needs when leaving the house, such as jacket, shoes and bag;
- Have the same chores on the same day each week, e.g. wash the dishes on a Monday and sweep the kitchen floor on a Tuesday;
- Have a family calendar with each family member's name. Encourage children to read the calendar for the week so that they know where everyone is and when.

Responding to Positive Behaviour

Try some of the following to shift your focus to positive behaviour:

- give lots of **specific praise** for good behaviour – tell the child what about their behaviour was good;
- use **positive body language** by smiling and showing the child you're paying attention;
- give the child **individual attention** so they feel valued;
- set a **good example** and be a good role model;
- **listen** to what the child has to say.



Responding to Positive Behaviour

- **reward** good behaviour with a high five or thumbs up, special privileges, allowing the child to choose the next activity and otherwise celebrating the child's actions;
- use a good behaviour chart to give the child **recognition** for listening, helping, sharing and more (this could be factored into a pocket money system, if you have one);
- **explain** how you feel when your child behaves certain ways;
- use simple, **clear instructions** with no ambiguity;
- have a sense of **humour!**



Responding to Negative Behaviour

Distract	Remove your child from the situation and give them an alternative activity.
Ignore	Depending on the situation, ignore the inappropriate behaviour if no one is in danger and you feel it is being done to get a reaction.
Discuss	If your child is able to understand, discuss their behaviour with them and try to help them appreciate the consequences of their actions towards others. Be clear that it is their behaviour that you do not like, not them. When discussing, make sure to sit or kneel at their height so you can discuss it with them at their eye level. This may work best after the incident when everyone is calmer.



Responding to Negative Behaviour

Refocus	Remove your child from the activity and sit them quietly for a few minutes to calm down or refocus. A sensory bottle can be a good timer for this with younger children. When they return to the situation or activity, treat it as a fresh start.
Remove	Withdraw treats or privileges as a consequence for inappropriate behaviours. Prior to this, make it clear that this will be a consequence: 'If you continue to do [behaviour], you will lose [treat/privilege].' You can also phrase this as giving your child a choice, as long as it's something you will follow through: 'You can either clean your room, or you can pay me to clean it with your pocket money this month.'
Validate	Show the child you recognise and validate the feelings that have caused them to act out but let them know that the way they are acting is not appropriate: 'I see that you're really angry with your baby brother and you want to hit him but I can't let you do that.'

Relationships

Help the children understand the house rules, which are realistic, specific and fair, and be consistent in the enforcing of them.

Be aware of the different reasons why children misbehave and endeavour to keep to routines so that your child feels safe and is not overtired or hungry.

All behaviour is for a reason, so be aware of any changes in your child's circumstances, care arrangements or any other change which may affect their behaviour, such as a new baby, parents' separation or new partner, falling outs with friends or any bereavement.

To be consistent, if you share pertinent details of any significant changes of circumstance with the school, the school will work to ensure your child is fully supported at home and at school. All information shared will be kept confidential unless there appears to be a child protection issue.



Share Responsibilities

No matter what age your child is, you can begin sharing responsibilities with them.

It could be to put their toys away, put their washing in the basket or even to put their plate in the kitchen when they are finished eating.

As your child gets older, they can take on more responsibility, such as folding and putting away their clothes, packing the dishwasher or helping to cook dinner.

By giving your child more responsibility, you will give them a sense of importance in their own home. This develops their sense of ownership of their own environment.

By praising your child for their effort and behaviour while completing their responsibilities, you also are developing their sense of worth and their self esteem.

Positive Language

Instead of...

Don't do that.

You're being naughty.

Behave!

Stop it!

Can you stop screaming?

There's nothing to be scared of!

Say...

Do this instead, thank you.

Show me how you sit quietly.

It's time to walk holding my hand.

Show me that you can do this.

Use a quieter voice.

Tell me what you're nervous about.

Positive Language

Use positive language to tell the child what behaviours you want them to do. Give them your clear expectations of how you expect them to behave positively. This means there will be no confusion over how they should be behaving.

Try to avoid 'Can you' questions when telling a child what to do as the child could simply answer, "No!".



No Means...

No! Follow through on any decision with conviction.

This is why it's important to ensure any consequence you present is something you are able to enforce that fits the inappropriate behaviour. For example, losing tablet privileges for a week may be a fair consequence that you can carry out (depending on the negative behaviour), rather than absolutely no screen time for a whole month.

As tough as it may seem at the time, try not to give into your child if they are moaning, whining or crying because of your decision. If you do, you may be reinforcing that if they whine and moan, it will change your decision. If necessary, this may mean removing them from situations.

Try to follow up emotional situations with calm discussion afterwards to ensure your child knows what is expected of them and what they were doing wrong.

Yes Means...

Yes! Follow through on any decision with conviction.

Always keep promises! If you promise a reward for positive behaviour, follow through with the reward. This means making realistic and do-able decisions on rewards and consequences.

Look for positives in your relationship with your child. As you grow together, you can both look forward to celebrating their successes!





twinkl