

Consequences

 Sometimes children learn best when there is a consequence to their unacceptable behaviour. If they refuse to do something you have asked of them – let them know what will happen if they continue to refuse, for example, *'I will take away your phone for the evening if you do not do as I ask.'* Deliberately breaking something may mean they lose some of their pocket money.

Use your normal voice when responding to your child's refusal to do as asked; speaking in a stern but calm voice, keeping eye contact with them and letting them know you are disappointed by their behaviour will be much more powerful than shouting, often we ignore people when they shout, or we get angry and shout back! A frightened child is not a child who can learn.

If your child does as you request, thank them for listening and doing as you ask. Then, change the conversation away from their poor behaviour.

Help your child get it right, explain your rules and the reasons for them and be CONSISTENT in how you respond to their behaviour



Time Out

This should be used as a last resort when other strategies have not worked. You might put your child in a quiet, safe place for your child to think about what they have done.

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- 1 Make sure your child knows why they have been given time out.
- 2 Tell them how long it will last, (no longer than 15 minutes and for young children 1 minute for every year, therefore age 5 is 5 minutes).
- 3 Start timing them from when they are calm (you remain calm too) If needed, repeat that time out will start when they are calm.
- 4 When time is up, ask if they will comply with the rule or request. If yes, time out ends, if no, time out should continue for 1 minute more.
- 5 When your child agrees to the rule, time out is over. Do not speak about their poor behaviour any more.
- 6 Praise your child for their next positive behaviour.

If you want support in carrying out any of the above strategies, talk to someone in your school, nursery or your Childminder.

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10 Tips

to understand the needs of your children



Enjoy being a parent

1 Building a good relationship with your child is the best way to support them as they learn about the world and move to independence.

Get to know your child

2 Spend time with your child on a regular basis – however short. Listen to their views, enjoy activities together and let them know you enjoy their company. Continue with this as they get older; they may not want to spend a lot of time with you, but give them opportunities to tell you what is happening for them with friends and school, eating meals together is a good time for this.



Lead by example

3 How we behave can be more powerful than what we say to our children. If you want them to be polite to others, treat them with respect and model the behaviour you want. If you have house rules, follow them yourself or let your children know the reason it is different for you.

Praise your child

4 One way of encouraging good behaviour is to praise the behaviour you want. Let your child know how pleased you are when they play well together; do a job you have asked of them or show kindness to others. Be specific about what it is they have done. If you want homework done

before other activities, give attention to them when they are doing it and praise their efforts.

We often ignore the behaviour we want but are quick to react to behaviours we do not like. Your child needs to hear how proud you are of them and their achievements. By doing this, you will encourage them to do better; remember; our children want to please us.

Clear instructions

5 More often we say what we do not want – ‘Don’t slam the door’ - but telling children what you want – ‘Can you close the door quietly please’ – is more likely to work. For small children, do not give too many instructions at once and make your instruction short so they know exactly what you want, for example, ‘when we get to the road I want you to hold my hand.’

Give choices

6 Sometimes we can avoid a tantrum or argument if we give choices. If you have a child who is difficult to dress, giving them a choice of two outfits can make life easier. With an older child, asking them which they prefer; to wash up or tidy the front room is more likely to get the response you want - even if it comes with a scowl!



Negotiation

7 You are more likely to get the result you want if you negotiate, for example, first - ‘I want you to do your homework and then you can go on the computer.’ Use clear instructions for this.

Your child will negotiate with you, it is good to encourage this as it is an important life skill to develop, so for example, if you tell them to be in at 9pm and they want to be out until 9.30, ask them why they want the extra time, they may have a good reason so listen to what they have to say.

Managing negative emotions

8 If you feel sad or down in the dumps, you are more likely to act in an unhelpful way. Help your child manage their difficult feelings by talking to them about why they feel sad / hurt / angry. Try to understand what led to their difficult behaviour and explore with them how they could manage the situation differently. This will help them to develop problem solving skills. Pick your time to do this, make sure they are calm before you have a conversation with them about it.

Managing your child’s behaviour is easier when you and your partner agree, so decide what strategies you will use to deal with difficult behaviour, stick to them and support each other.

