

Our Positive Behaviour Strategies

Set clear boundaries that are at the child's level - We discuss our 3 golden rules at circle time to give the children a foundation for their behaviour expectations. These are:

"I can be kind to others"

"I can be a good listener"

"I can make the right choices"

Choice clarifies a child's responsibility and encourages cooperation. It also teaches the children to manage their own behaviour through the decisions they make. After giving an instruction, walk away and give them a chance to make the choice. It shows you trust that they will do as you ask.

For example, "Finley, (pause) put your toy in your bag" ... walk/ look away... if the child does not comply then take the toy "I will keep it in my cupboard until play time".

Focus on the positive - We use the word '**stop**' as this is more of a command than 'no'. By saying 'stop' you are asking the children to do something rather than just saying a word. Always follow with the behaviour that you want to see. For example;

- ✓ "Stop, remember our listening ears"
- ✓ "Stop, please talk quietly"
- ✓ "Stop, we walk inside"

Desist – Stop challenging behaviour straight away.

- ✓ "Stop that now. Hitting is not okay".
- ✓ "Stop spitting now. It is not kind"

Talk at your child's level – This includes developmental level and height. **Get down to their level** and give good eye contact, encouraging your child to look at you too. Sometimes the child may not be confident to give eye contact, forcing a child could be seen as threatening behaviour. Also, avoid shouting across rooms as this can make the child feel embarrassed in front of the other children.

Use clear, simple language to give instructions – Giving children too many instructions at the same time can be confusing. To make your instruction clear, break it down into small parts, give a pause in between to give the child time to respond. Give visual cues to support the instruction.

For example:

- ✓ Child's name (pause) can you put the books in the box? Give visual clues, such as gesturing with an open hand to the books and then the box. This can be simplified further: Child's name...books, box, thank you.
- ✓ "Looking this way everyone" and point to yourself
- ✓ "Listening with eyes and ears" and point to your eyes and ears.

Realistic Commands – Make sure your commands are actionable rather than simply observations or criticisms. For example, "your spilling your juice" becomes "Jessica, please hold your glass with two hands."

Other examples:

- ✓ "follow me"
- ✓ "speak quietly"
- ✓ "tidy up the toys"
- ✓ "Wash your hands"

Reward good behaviour - Give lots of **praise**, telling the child what they have done well. Other children will hear and change their behaviour to suit.

For example:

- ✓ "Well done Jenny! I really like it when you put your toys away."
- ✓ "Sam, Ben and Stacey. Thank you for listening."
- ✓ "Paula, you have washed your hands. Well done."

Reward children's effort – This is where practitioner should give the child positive feedback with specific **description of the effort** they have put in rather than saying "good boy" or "clever girl".

- ✓ "Wow, I can see you have put a lot of effort into your painting".
- ✓ "Thank you. You remembered to use your manners".
- ✓ "That's a very interesting story. I liked the bit about the princess"
- ✓ "That's a very good observation."
- ✓ "You have done very neat hand writing"
- ✓ "That was thoughtful to let Emily have your chair."
- ✓ "Thank you for telling me you have poo'd. Next time we will go to the toilet".

Use Visual Prompts - Practitioners also use lots of visual prompts:

- ✓ Use the hand gesture opposite for 'stop'.
- ✓ Smile and give a 'thumbs up' for good behaviour.
- ✓ Put your finger on your mouth to indicate the expectation of quietness.
- ✓ Show pictures that indicate sitting and listening time
- ✓ Point to your eye and ears to promote good looking and listening
- ✓ Sing "one, two, three, looking at me" while pointing to yourself as another means to promote the children to look towards the front of the group.
- ✓ Wiggling fingers in the middle of the room and saying "stop and show me your empty hands".
- ✓ Smile and wink at a child to show gentle humour to ease a tense situation and to verbally say "I hear you shouting out, but its listening time now".
- ✓ Instead of pointing your finger gesture with an open hand as it is considered non-threatening.
- ✓ Use sand timers to indicate 5, 3 and 1 minute. Always give a **warning before a change**, for example: "In 5 minutes we need to get our shoes on because we are going outside."



Ignore the unwanted behaviour – tactical ignoring is when you choose to ignore behaviour that could be disruptive – and instead focus on the good behaviour you see. It can also be used to demonstrate that children who display unwanted behaviour do not get the attention they crave. If they want attention then they must conform to the class rules and behavioural expectations.

Use distraction – To prevent further disruption you can distract a child displaying unwanted behaviour. You can ask them a question, ask them to run an errand, or ask them to come to you.

For example:

- ✓ If a child is running and you wish for them to walk then start a dialogue such as: "I bet you can't walk like I do?!" Then follow with praise "Oh wow, look how well George is walking!"
- ✓ Ask them an open ended question relating to your topic of discussion, their play or what they are doing "William (pause) what might you need to put in your suitcase when going on holiday?" "Why do you think a policeman wears a hat?" "Have you got plenty of juice?"
- ✓ Ask the child to come to you "Joshua, come to me." "We eat our food nicely."
- ✓ Ask a restless child to run an errand "can you choose a book to read".

Make it fun - Make a game of 'must do's'.

For example: When tidying up set your child the task of picking up a certain amount of toys, put a song on the radio and see if they can tidy up before it finishes, or have a race between yourselves as to who can finish the job first.



Ask for feedback – Ask what, when and where questions in a calm and respectful tone. "What are you doing?" Asking in a polite, calm manner allows the child will self-regulate without feeling like they are being accused.

For example:

- ✓ "How do we use our knives and forks?"
- ✓ "Where do we do our wees and poos?"
- ✓ "Where do we play with the playdough?"
- ✓ "Where are you supposed to be?"

Give rule reminders – instead of reprimanding poor behaviour we can remind the children of our expectations.

For example:

- ✓ "We take turns"
- ✓ "We use our indoor voices"
- ✓ "remember our golden rule for good listening"
- ✓ "Peter (pause) when you are looking this was I know you are listening"
- ✓ "Remember, we let other people speak, if I haven't called your name, then you need to be quiet".
- ✓ "Remember, if we want to ask a question at group time, we put our hands up so I know you have something to say"
- ✓ "Remember, only 4 children at a table"

Using Manners - Encourage children to use their manners and show curtesy.

- ✓ "excuse me"
- ✓ "thank you"
- ✓ "please"

Positive Corrective Language - Use positive corrective language and raise behavioural awareness – rather than simply saying “stop”.

- ✓ say “Joe you are talking in story time, this is quiet time, you need to be looking and listening”.
- ✓ “Jess you are throwing toys... we use safe hands”.
- ✓ “Walking, thank you”
- ✓ “I want your doll in your bag or in your tray” to a child that is playing with the toy at group time or not sharing with friends.
- ✓ “Keep the sand in the sand tray”

Eye scanning during group times - Give instructions and expectations with confidence and certainty in a positive tone – children can recognise indecision, non-assertion, and lack of enthusiasm).

Maintaining calm – if you show too much excitement and enthusiasm then the children will get ‘hyped’ up too and you could lose engagement.

Dealing with emotion – It is important to teach the children that it is good to share their emotions. This leads to good mental health as the children don’t keep their feelings bottled up. Talking about emotions is important to build understanding of one’s self and empathy for others also.

- ✓ “I can see you are upset about something...”
- ✓ “I can see there is a problem...”
- ✓ “Harry, are you feeling sad?”
- ✓ “William is feeling a little nervous, it’s his first day”
- ✓ “I hear you shouting, do you feel angry that Rex took your toy?”
- ✓ “Lana, you have tears running down your face, are you missing Mummy and Daddy?”
- ✓ “I know you are upset but remember to use your kind hands and feet”

Consequences – For children who continue to show poor behaviour you can give them consequences for their actions. Consequences should only be ones that you can and will follow through with.

For example:

- ✓ “if you keep messing with your food, then you will have to move tables”
- ✓ “If you don’t wear your apron then you will have to leave the paint area”
- ✓ “Carrie, when you have put the paints away, then you can go outside”

Dealing with behaviour

We follow these simple steps:

1. Polite warning- “Child’s Name, stop, you need to sit down whilst you’re eating.”
Dependant on the child’s age and stage of development you can also tell them the reason why they have to follow the instruction. This is important as we wouldn’t do something as an adult if we didn’t understand the reason why.
2. Again a polite warning, “Stop, you need to sit down.”
3. A final warning, “Stop, sitting, please.” You can also give a consequence. Such as “If you do not sit down, you will have to stop eating until you can sit down.”

4. Forth step is to intervene and follow through with the consequence. If a child continues unwanted behaviour then we do remove them from the situation, such as guiding them to another activity or area of the nursery room.

This step is dependent on the situation, if your child is at risk of harm or of harming someone else then you may choose to remove them from the situation immediately.

It is only on severe circumstance that we will ever sit a child out, such as repeated unwanted behaviour, repeatedly not following the golden rules or harming another child.

In these situations, the adult always stays with the child, and then explains to the child why they were sat with the adult. We encourage the child to tell us why they were sat out and removed from the situation. The child is only ever sat with an adult for a maximum of 2 minutes as they are still very young and may not understand fully why they have been removed from the situation.

We always follow through with the 4 steps, **consistency is key**.

Child disputes – All child disputes should be dealt with so that the children can learn how to work through disagreements and talk about their feeling and work out possible resolutions.

Examples:

- ✓ "I can see you are upset about something..."
- ✓ "I can see there is a problem..."

Talk in the circle time about conflicts. Encourage children to find resolutions themselves. For instance for two children that are fighting over a toy.

- ✓ "Robert, you have a toy that Greg would like to play with. How can we solve this?"

Then the adult can scaffold conflict resolution through suggesting examples;

- ✓ "Shall we get the timer and Greg can have turn after minutes?"
- ✓ "Shall we have a look and see if there is another train so Greg can play too?"

Empathy – This links to the children's well-being. It is a method used that will encourages the children to make the right choices for themselves and self-regulate their behaviour through positive interactions.

- ✓ Child: Bonnie is running away from Robin who is wearing a tiger mask. She is screaming and scared. Practitioner: "are you afraid of the tiger?" and sits the child on their lap. Child: nods anxiously. Practitioner: "are you afraid he is going to bite or eat you?" Child: nods, then starts to calm down.
- ✓ Joe snatches a toy from Harry. Practitioner: "if you want the toy then you need to ask Harry for it so speak to him and say, "can I have the toy please?". Practitioner then says to Harry "you don't have to give Joe the toy" you can say "no, am using it" or "you can have it in a minute".

Providing choices – Providing a child with options prevents protests and non-compliance as the child has another alternative, for instance another fun activity.

- ✓ “We only have a few minutes before tea, go and play on the carpet instead”
- ✓ “We haven't got any salt to make playdough, shall we make gloop instead”