



Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Most children demonstrate challenging behaviours throughout their development. As a parent/caregiver, you can teach your child positive behaviours when they are expressing those challenging behaviours. There are two main things to remember as you encourage more positive behaviour:

1) How You Respond To The Challenging Behaviour

- First, do not use words such as “Stop” and “No.” Using these words may temporarily stop the behaviour, but it won’t change it. Your child may not know an alternate way of asking for help to meet their needs.
- Stay calm and do not change the tone of your voice. Some children may be displaying a behaviour in order to receive negative attention from you.
- Determine if you are reinforcing this behaviour by giving into your child’s demands. An example of this would be letting your child leave the dinner table when he/she starts dropping food on the floor to signal they are done. Do NOT ignore your child completely, but rather, simply refrain from giving in to the behaviour and meeting their demands.
- Because several children may not know what else to do, REDIRECT their behaviour by offering a solution or by changing their interest. Redirection is a great tool to help children understand what else they can do to meet their needs. You are providing your child a solution that encourages the behaviours you want to see, while decreasing the behaviours you don’t want to see. When you are redirecting, remember:
 - Use clear and simple instructions
 - Use visuals to help your child understand any steps
 - Model the desired behaviour if needed
 - You can provide two options and allow your child to choose which one they want
 - Give them time to process the new request

There are several reasons why your child may be showing challenging behaviours. When you understand why a behaviour is happening, you are able to determine strategies that will help decrease the behaviour and support your child in using a more positive behaviour. This tip sheet will take a closer look as decreasing challenging behaviours and encouraging positive behaviours.

If you are looking for information about understanding your child’s behaviour and identifying why those challenging behaviours occur, please visit <https://www.childinüoxford.com/newsletters/>

Types of Positive Reinforcements

1. An item such as a toy, blanket, favourite stuffed animal, etc.
2. **Verbal praise** such as “great job!” and **physical praise** including hugs, kisses, smiles
3. **Favourite activities /games** such as going to the park or throwing a baseball in the backyard
4. **Give them the opportunity to make an exciting decision** such as what to eat for dinner, what movie to watch on family movie night and so on.

If you require assistance in supporting your child’s needs, please contact your Resource Consultant with Childinü Oxford.

Visit

<https://www.childinüoxford.com/about/meet-our-team/> for their contact information.

2) Reward The Positive Behaviour

- Reward your child when they display the behaviour you want to see after you redirect them
- Praise your child for positive behaviours, even when you weren’t looking for them
- Make sure to follow through on any promises you make when you see the positive behaviour
- Be encouraging and genuine in your praise

Remember:

- Stay consistent! When you are trying to change a behaviour, often the challenging behaviour is going to increase before it decreases. This is because a child is now wondering why you are no longer giving in to their behaviour, so they will try other behaviours to get you to give in to them.
- When your child follows through on your request, praise them! If your child returns to a behaviour you don’t want, remember:
 - Stay calm
 - Do not react to what they are doing
 - Redirect them
- If your child displays several challenging behaviours, don’t try to change multiple behaviours at a time. Start with one and as your child begins to replace a challenging behaviour with positive behaviour, move on to a different challenging behaviour. You don’t want to overwhelm your child or yourself.
- Stay positive! Change takes time

