



Children's Challenging Behaviour and Useful Strategies

At various ages, children can display different kinds of challenging behaviours and this can tend to occur at the most inappropriate and potentially embarrassing times for parents!

Challenging behaviour can also cause concern, stress and worry for parents and carers, who are doing their best to cope with their ever changing and developing little personalities. Sometimes it is simply hard to know what to do for the best. As a community, we can share ideas and strategies, as well as keep checking in with each other, to reduce that difficult parenting stress.

To help parents and carers navigate this challenging time, the NSPCC have produced a guide with some positive strategies that you may find useful that are listed on this newsletter.

Welcome to the Spring 1 safeguarding newsletter, helping everyone in our school community to feel safe, supported and happy.

Top tips...

for all ages

- Keep guidance simple and consistent.
- If your child is behaving in a way you don't want them to, clearly explain what you want them to do instead.
- Be available and make time for your child, so they will come to you when they feel something is wrong or they are upset.
- Keep talking and listening to your child even if at times it feels like a challenge. Start listening from a very early age and set a pattern for life.
- Review family rules as your child gets older and recognise the different needs of children living at home. For example, you shouldn't expect the same from your 12-year-old as you would from your four-year-old.
- Get support from friends and try any good ideas they have found helpful.
- If you are struggling and feel things are getting out of hand, get advice from your GP, a health visitor, or your child's teacher.

for babies – toddlers

- Introduce boundaries from an early age.
- Reflect to your child that you know how they may be feeling – for example, saying "I know you're frustrated," if your child is struggling to do something.
- Share your own feelings if you find it helps to relieve your stress – for example, "I know you're tired but I'm tired too."
- Try to avoid using orders and ultimatums.

for school age – teenagers

- Be willing and give your child opportunities to show they can be trusted.
- Avoid criticism wherever possible. If your child has done something wrong, explain that it is the action and not them that you're unhappy with.
- Try to avoid getting trapped in petty arguments. There are rarely any winners!
- Consider ways to negotiate or offer choices as your child gets older.

Only you will know what works for your child but here are some helpful points to think about.

- Praise children whenever possible for all they do.
- Reward positive behaviour and consider asking what would be a good reward.
- Avoid making rash decisions when you're angry.
- Talk to your child about the rewards and consequences of their behaviour, and do it before rather than after.
- Take time to really listen to what your children are saying and explain to them what you are feeling.
- Be a role model and don't do things that you wouldn't want your children to do.

Smacking is never a good idea

Ideas on bringing up children have changed, and we now know a lot more about the effects of smacking. Smacking can hurt children's feelings – making them resentful and angry, and damaging the relationship between parent and child. This makes parenting and discipline harder in the long run, not easier. Smacking can get out of control.

This also comes back to being a role model. If you smack your child, they may think this is acceptable behaviour and treat other people in the same way.

Children may avoid being smacked by lying or hiding how they feel. And they may become withdrawn – not developing independence.

Please note, in Scotland and Jersey (and, from March 2022, in Wales), the law no longer permits any type of physical punishment of children.

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Finding the right balance of rewards and discipline is a key part of positive parenting.
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Keeping your cool

It's important to find ways to relieve your stress and manage if you're feeling upset or angry. Lots of things, not only children's behaviour, can make us feel stressed – from family relationships to managing a work-life balance, health, housing, poverty, unemployment and much more. You want to be the best parent you can, but being stressed is stressful!



When stress takes over, it can make you lose your temper and say or do things you later regret. You might find yourself saying something hurtful or smacking your child. Living in a stressful home can also impact on your child's feelings and healthy development. But you can avoid this by managing stress and anger.

- **Accept support**

This may be from your family, a friend or by using online forums. Knowing that there are other parents in the same situation can be a great encouragement.

- **Make time for yourself**

This may involve doing things like exercising or listening to music. It can be as simple as a long soak in the bath, watching a film or going for a walk. If you live with a partner, agree a way to make sure you both get time off.

- **Get help**

This is a positive step to take and not a sign of weakness. If you're feeling stressed and anxious all the time, seek some outside advice. A range of difficulties may get in the way of being a parent and it's important to get help. Talk to your GP or health visitor, or call the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**.

- **Be as prepared as possible**

Parenting can of course be stressful at certain times, so consider ways of dealing with this in advance. For example, if your child gets bored and irritable on long journeys, or waiting for things like doctor's appointments, take a couple of books or activities to keep them busy.

- **Don't overlook success**

If you have coped well with something difficult, be proud of what you've achieved. Celebrate your children's successes too.

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Look after yourself

Being a parent or carer is so important. While it's common to feel less needed as children get older, or to feel more like a taxi driver or cleaner, you are the person your child will look to for help. Finding time for yourself is something you shouldn't overlook or feel guilty about. It may take planning but having a break can help you to be the best parent you can be.

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Building positive relationships

If parent-child relationships become damaged, it can affect the way a child feels or behaves. Finding ways to show unconditional love and affection to your child is important. But this can be easier said than done, especially when you're tired or juggling different needs.

Spend time with your child and learn together. This can help increase your child's confidence, strengthen your bond and also help you to better understand their needs.

Top five tips:

- Show your child you're interested in what they like. Think of enjoyable activities you can do together.
- Think of times when you have seen a positive change in your child's behaviour and anything you could learn from that experience.
- Ask your child for their views and be willing to listen. This can help you to see things from their perspective.
- Don't give up or be too hard on yourself if things don't immediately change. Focus on small steps and achievable goals.
- Be prepared to compromise and admit you've been wrong, and sometimes make mistakes yourself.



Try this:

Now that you've read our top tips, why not add some notes of your own?

Every family is different, so use this page to make this guide your own.

FUN THINGS YOU CAN DO TOGETHER:

A large yellow rectangular area for writing, decorated with a string of colorful bunting flags (pink, green, blue) in the top right corner.

POSITIVE THINGS YOUR CHILD HAS STARTED TO DO:

A large yellow rectangular area for writing, decorated with a yellow star in the top right corner.

HOW CAN YOU REACH THE PLACE YOU WANT TO BE?

A large yellow rectangular area for writing, decorated with a purple pencil in the bottom right corner.

Who can I talk to?

All parents can feel stressed or unsure from time to time, or just need someone to talk to. But don't worry, there are lots of places where you can get different kinds of help. We've put together a list of some of the different places you might find helpful, and you could also talk to your **GP, health visitor** or your child's **school nurse**.

Parenting advice

Family Lives provides help and support on all aspects of parenting and family life, and runs Parentline.

0808 800 2222
familylives.org.uk

Parentline Scotland (Children 1st)
0800 028 2233
children1st.org.uk

Parentline NI
(Northern Ireland)
0808 8020 400
ci-ni.org.uk/parentline-ni

Family information services in Wales provide information, support and guidance on all aspects of children and young people's services. Search:
gov.wales/children-families

Parenting. Give it time is a website developed by the Welsh government offering practical parenting information, tips and activities.
giveittime.gov.wales

Cry-sis provide help for parents of excessively crying, sleepless or demanding babies. Lines are open seven days a week, 9am-10pm.
08451 228669
cry-sis.org.uk

ParentClub Scotland is the Scottish Government's advice hub for parents in Scotland.
parentclub.scot

Citizens Advice can advise on things like employment, housing and income issues which can cause stress in families.
citizensadvice.org.uk

We're here for you, every day of the year

If you have any questions or worries, feel free to get in touch with us.

Our trained experts at the NSPCC helpline can listen to any worries you have about looking after your child, or any tough decisions you're facing.

Reading this guide may have also made you think about other children. Contact us if you're worried about any aspect of their safety, and we can help.

Call **0808 800 5000**

Email help@nspcc.org.uk

Or talk to us online at nspcc.org.uk/help

Mawsley CP School

If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, who is not in immediate danger of harm, please speak to one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads in school.

Out of Hours Safeguarding

If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child outside of school hours, please contact the MASH team on 0300 126 1000 (option 1) or e-mail them at MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk

If you think a child is in immediate danger or missing, please contact the police and/or an ambulance directly by phoning 999