
Guided Self Help for Common Behaviour Problems





We would like to give our thanks to:

- Dr Matt Woolgar
- Caroline Bengo
- Sara Dawson
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Table of Contents

Parenting programmes delivered in a structured manner over several weeks are the most widely researched psychological intervention in child and adolescent mental health. They are the single most effective intervention for the treatment of conduct problems in children.

The programme is designed:

- To promote positive relationships, attachment and pro-social behaviour through sensitive responding
- To provide appropriate routines, boundaries and limit setting



Session 0:

Assessment and formulation 4

Session 1:

Enhancing the relationship with children through play 15

Session 2:

Encouraging behaviours we want to see more of 25

Session 3:

Supporting children's emotional regulation 33

Session 4:

Reducing undesirable behaviour 44

Session 5:

Helping children to follow instructions 49

Session 6:

Promoting boundaries with consequences 54

Session 7:

Clear expectations: Time out and Family Rules 58

Session 8:

Ending and Trouble Shooting 64



Assessment

Handouts:

1. ABC Chart
2. Extended ABC
3. Factors Impacting Child Behaviour
4. Attention Table

When meeting with the parents for the initial assessment try to gain an understanding of:

- Child and family details
- The presenting problem
- The history of the presenting problem
- Child health and developmental history
- General functioning of the child (eg. social and school)
- Family relationships and psychosocial details

Session 0:

In some sites assessments may be completed by another practitioner. In these circumstances it is helpful to have a Session 0 with caregivers. The guidelines in relation to the interview with the parent will still apply e.g. welcome, set agenda, normalise concerns and worries; this is the first opportunity to engage with caregivers.

During this session:

- *Check the current presenting problems*
- *Collaborative shared formulation*
- *Complete an ABC chart if appropriate or explain to parent and ask to complete as part of home practice*
- *Goal setting*

Interview with parents:

Welcome and set agenda. Throughout it will be important to normalise their concerns and worries. They may worry about being judged as 'bad' parents and it will be important to acknowledge that they are doing the best that they can in what may be a difficult situation. Although this is an assessment session, it is also part of the intervention in terms of engaging with parents. During this session you will also be motivating caregivers to engage with the intervention and instilling confidence that it can make a difference.

Parents from all kinds of backgrounds and cultures may well access support in raising their children. As practitioners you will need to be aware of and sensitive to the uniqueness of family life which will be affected by parents' own culture, ethnicity, childhood, values and beliefs. As a practitioner, when working with your families you will need to consider their social and cultural background, the social GRRRAACCEESSS and issues of power differentials, discrimination and systemic bias they might have experienced. You may need to ask explicit and open questions about their experience during the assessment.

Understanding a family's values and beliefs helps to provide context and understanding of a family's response to the difficulties they may be experiencing with a child's behaviour. It also presents the practitioner with the context in which the family lives. The Cultural Iceberg (Hall, 1976) can be a useful tool to help guide your discussion with parents about what their family's culture. Your site may also have their own tools and resources to assist with this.

As practitioners you will be focused on common behaviour problems, to get a more varied picture ask the family about everyday behaviours that are not considered difficult, including positive times with the child, as a family and the absence of the behaviour; this can give more information about parenting style. In addition, ask about wider family members response to the behaviours experienced. This will give you a sense of the cultural behavioural norms for the family.

It may be helpful to complete a simple or extended ABC chart (see end of session for Handout 2) to gain a greater understanding of the family's difficulties. Begin by inviting the parent to think of a recent typical example of a challenging situation with their child. Encourage the parent to consider what was happening before, during, and after the situation, and what both the parent and child may have been thinking and feeling. You don't need to complete the boxes in any particular order and so you can start by asking the parent to talk you through the situation, and then follow up with prompts. Some useful prompts include:

- Let's start from the beginning, roughly what time was this? Where were you? Who was there?
- What happened just before the behaviour?
- What did that look like? (clarify any vague descriptions of behaviour)
- That sounds like a really difficult situation, what happened next? What did you do then?
- What was going through your mind at the time? What were you thinking?
- What do you think [the child] may have been thinking at this time?
- How were you feeling?
- How might [the child] have been feeling? What do you think was happening for them during this?
- What happened after that? How were things the rest of the day?

During this activity, you can begin to recognise potential coercive behaviour cycles and how the child's behaviour may be reinforced, in addition to how the parent conceptualises the child's motivations and emotions. However, it is important to also prioritise the therapeutic alliance that you are beginning to develop with the parent. This is an opportunity for the parent to share their experiences and to feel heard without judgement. Ensure that you are using your empathy and validation skills throughout this activity, normalising feelings of frustration the parent may be feeling with their child and/or themselves. Many parents express concern that they had responded in the 'wrong' way and/or seek feedback from you about their response (for example, justifying their behaviour if they had shown a hostile or coercive response, or asking you what you would have done). Try to avoid providing reassurance for their behaviour if they responded in a manner that may have been unhelpful or reinforced inappropriate behaviours in the child, but it is important to validate and normalise their emotional response and express an understanding that they were doing their best in a difficult situation. You can remind them that parenting is challenging job and all parents struggle to know how best to support their kids at times, which is why interventions such as this exist!



Interview with the parent can include:

The Presenting Problem

What are the main concerns?

- Clear examples of behaviour (ABCs)
- Frequency
- Severity
- Settings
- Impact on themselves and others

History of Report Problems

- When did parent first become aware of this behaviour?
- Sudden vs gradual onset
- How has it changed
- Times when things have been better/worse

Child Health and Developmental History

- Pregnancy, Delivery and Neonatal Period
- Infancy
- Toddlerhood
- Preschool age
- Middle childhood

General functioning

- Social skills and relationships
- School functioning – behaviour, academic performance, peer relationships, disruptions to schooling

Family Relationships and Psychosocial Details

- Parent health and wellbeing
- Parent social support
- Childcare contributions
- Parent's feelings and thoughts about the child
- Parent's own childhood
- Parent's relationship
- Child's relationships with siblings and significant others
- Financial and environmental stressors

Formulation:

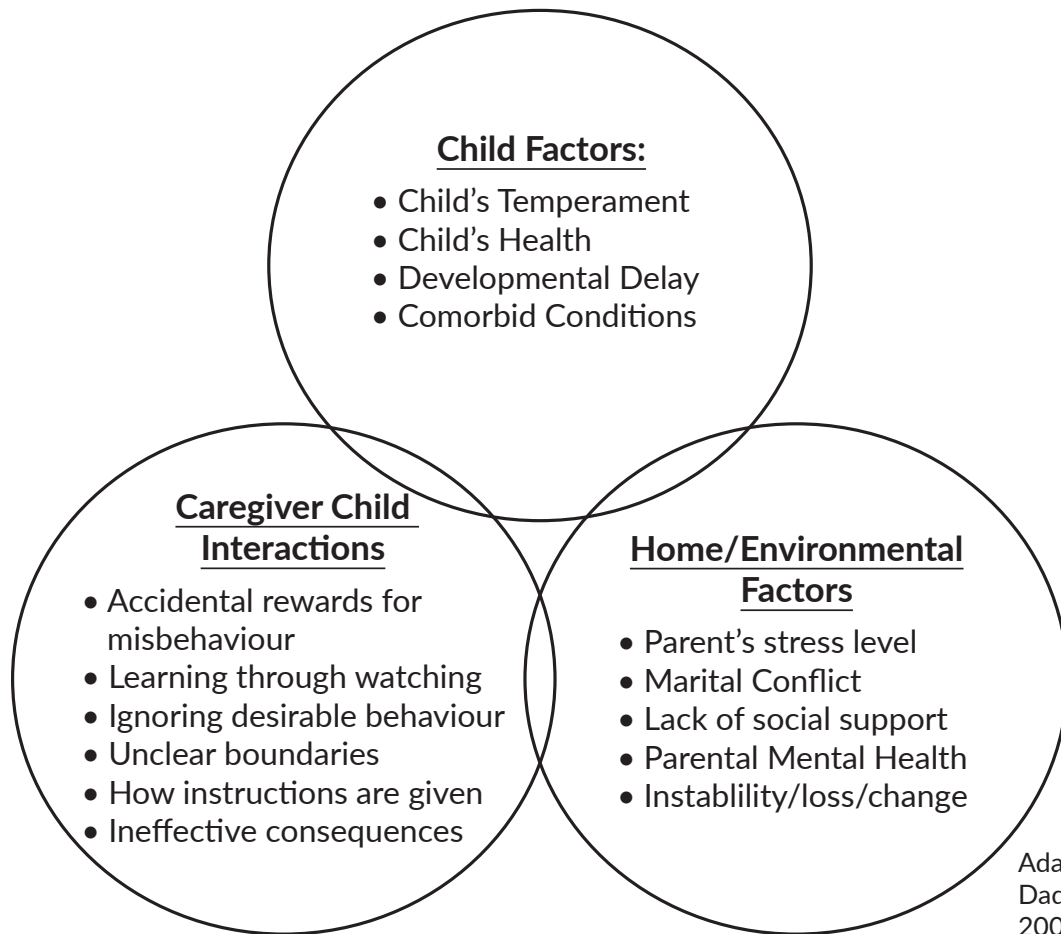
It is important to create a shared formulation with parents but which is also informed by social learning theory.

- Developing a shared understanding of the current problem
- Shows the parent that you've heard them
- Parents are always part of the solution
- Uses information collected, their views, and relevant theory to think about:
- What has led to the current difficulties
- What is keeping the difficulties going
- What can be done to change things
- 'Best guess' – can and should change with new info



Practitioners can use the handout adapted from Dadds and Hawes 2006 to explain the factors which impact on child behaviour:

Factors Impacting Child Behaviour



Parent Traps:

Parenting programmes are based on social learning theory. Social learning theory has two main rules which can be used when thinking about behaviour:

- 1. Reinforcement rule:** Behaviour that is reinforced immediately is more likely to occur
- 2. Attention rule:** Children's behaviour is often oriented to gaining attention from others, especially parents.

Likewise, parents can often become caught in parent traps through what is known as the coercive cycle (hypothesis), for example:

Parent gives a command – child whines/scream – parent shouts angrily – both escalate – child increases screaming / parent becomes more angry – until

This results in one of two outcomes:

1. Child complies and the parent learns that shouting is effective
2. Parent gives up and the child learns that if they protest for long enough their parent will give up and they will not have to do what they are asked.

Aims of the Programme:

Ensure that parents are aware of the role of parental attention as an important reinforcer for children's behaviour (as the parent is so important to the child), and how easily families can become caught in problematic patterns. Referring to the attention table (Handout 4) give examples of how it is much easier to pay attention to problematic behaviour than positive behaviour as it tends to be louder/more triggering/difficult to ignore, and examples of parent traps). Normalise the tendency to focus much more on misbehaviour than positive behaviour, but highlight the problems associated with this.

Parents may feel tired and want immediate solutions, however it is important to help them understand that there are no magic solutions. They are the experts on their child but as the practitioner you will be working collaboratively with them to try out strategies and see how they go. The programme always begins with positive strategies. This can feel hard for parents if they are finding things difficult so it can be helpful to explain that this is so a positive relationship between parent and child is established. This also helps with child motivation and makes it more likely that limit setting will be accepted.

The programme aims to supporting caregivers to:

- **Provide** frequent and varied positive attention to their child (praise, rewards, encouragement) when the child is not misbehaving, and reducing negative attention given (criticisms, directions, questions) [improving relationship and increasing positive interactions]
- **Decrease** the amount of attention provided to misbehaviour (yelling, explaining, bargaining), instead addressing misbehaviour by removing reinforcement (ignoring, time-out) or providing a non-punitive consequence (appropriate limit setting)
- **Ensure** that expectations for behaviour are clear and parental response is consistent [clarity and consistency]

As a result, we should see:

- Misbehaviour reduce as it is no longer an effective way to gain attention or achieve a goal
- Positive/prosocial behaviour increase as this is increasingly reinforced with positive attention

So:

- Breaks coercive cycle (parent traps)
- Retrains parental sensitivity
- Increases positive interactions (pleasurable for both parent and child)
- Increases simplicity and clarity

Introduce the structure of the program and the order of sessions, advising that each session will focus on a different strategy, with opportunities to review, practice, and troubleshoot past strategies in each session.

If the parent expresses concern that the initial sessions will be focussing on play and positive attention rather than dealing with the problematic behaviour, explain that research evidence has shown that when parents put in discipline strategies first (such as timeout), we may see an initial increase in compliance, but this is not maintained – the child needs to know that good behaviour gets noticed.

It is important that we start out by increasing the positive interactions in the household to really clearly show the child how to gain positive attention from their caregivers/parents first, so that the home environment becomes more positive. Children will experience an alternative to using acting up (negative behaviours) to gain attention. Play and positive attention must continue throughout the intervention even when additional strategies are introduced. The later strategies do not replace play and positive attention but rather can only be used if play and positive attention strategies are firmly embedded as part of family life.

Goal Setting

If there is time it can be helpful to set goals at the end of this session – see session 1.

Home Task

Parent/s are not expected to have a home practice task at this point, If there is a particular problematic behaviour ask the parent to complete an ABC chart (Cross-sectional diagram) about their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours between now and the next time you meet. You may also want to use the emotion regulation supplementary manual for parents in the appendix.

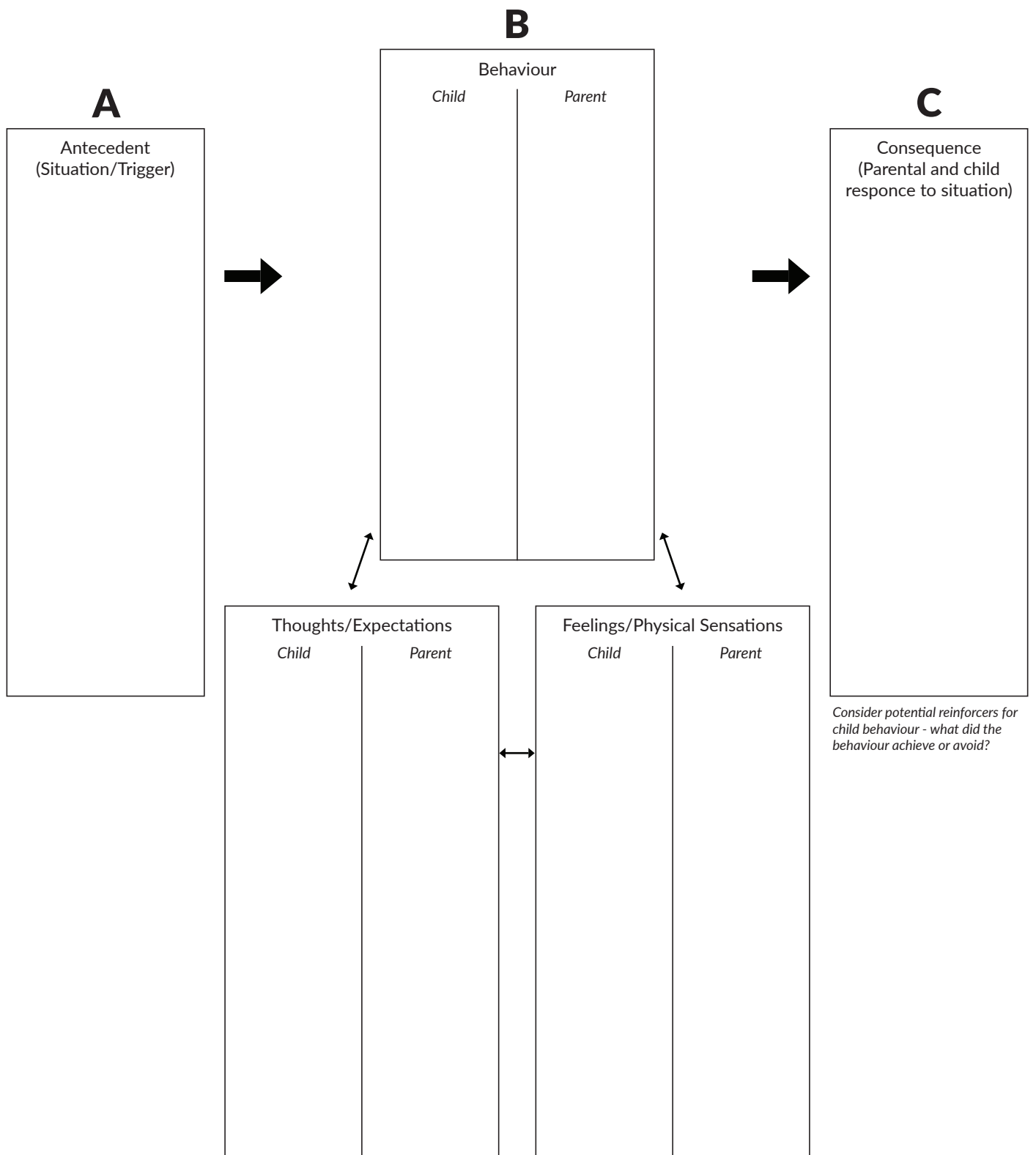


Example and blank ABC chart

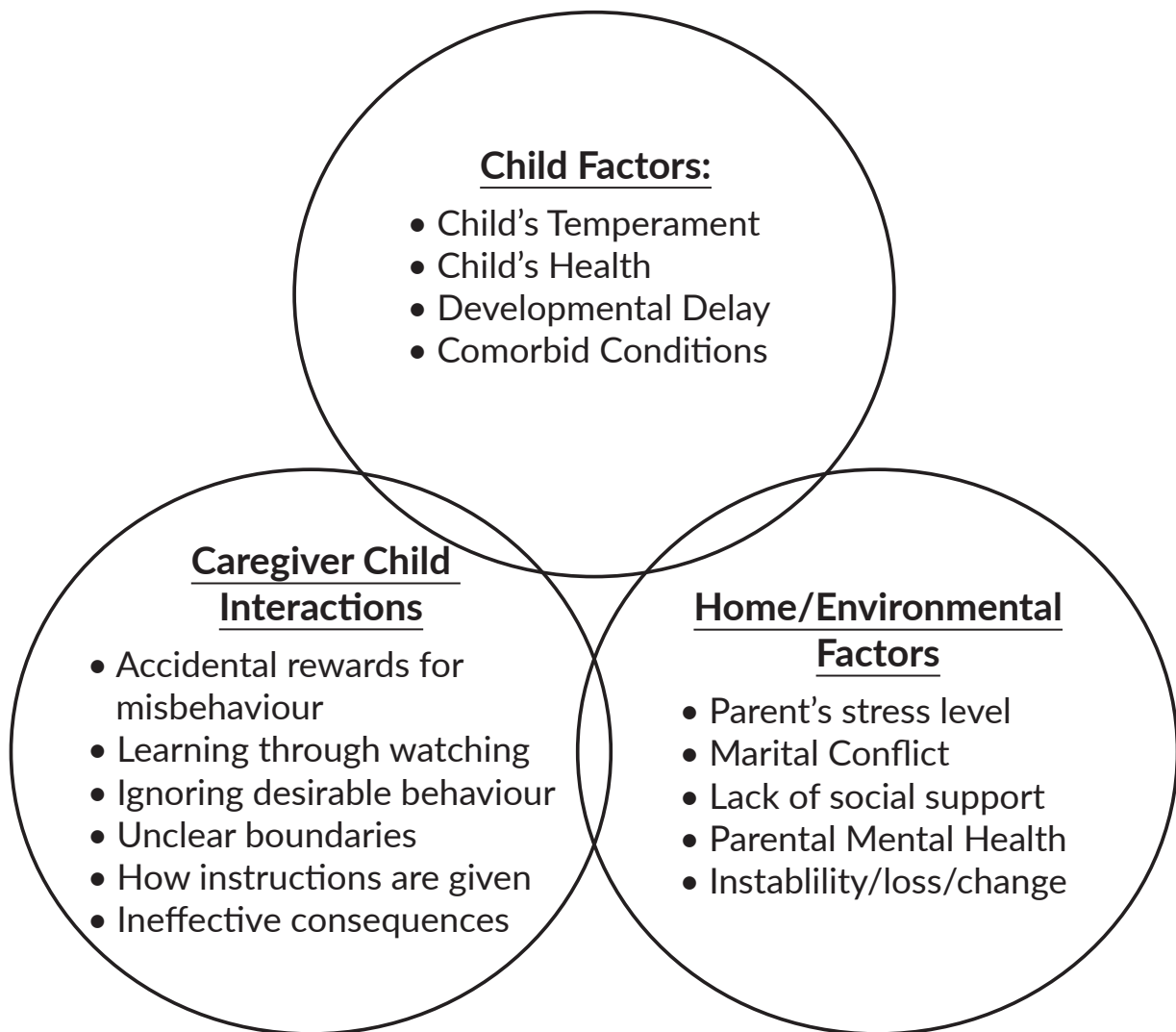
WHEN AND WHERE	ANTECEDENT / TRIGGER	BEHAVIOUR	CONSEQUENCE	Describe your feelings
4pm Home after school, mum and Billy	I asked Billy to change out of school clothes before playing	Billy yelled "no" and ran out into garden. I followed and asked him again. Billy spat at me.	I yelled then went inside. Billy played outside in his school clothes. I came out later and explained to Billy why he should change his clothes and that spitting isn't nice. We cuddled and watched TV together.	Angry then upset with self for yelling

WHEN AND WHERE (date and time)	ANTECEDENT / TRIGGER (WHAT HAPPENED JUST BEFORE THE BEHAVIOUR) e.g. who was there, what was said, asked?	BEHAVIOUR (DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAPPENED) e.g. what did s/he do, say?	CONSEQUENCE (WHAT HAPPENED AFTER), What did you do? How did s/he respond?)	Describe your feelings

Extended ABC



Factors Impacting Child Behaviour



Adapted from
Dadd & Hawes,
2006

Attention Table

The Attention Table

	"OK" CHILD BEHAVIOUR	"NOT OK" CHILD BEHAVIOUR
CARER ATTENTION	PRAISE Positive behaviour increases	Negative behaviour increases
NO CARER ATTENTION	Positive behaviour Decreases	IGNORE Negative behaviour Decreases





Goals and Attending

Session 1:

Handouts:

1. Concerns about my child
2. Goals
3. Attending/Special Time

Agenda:

- Relay Aim of Programme
(If needed,))
- Review Goals:
Determine the main areas of concern and develop goals (if this has not already been covered in the initial assessment or session 0)
- Review Home Practice task:
If given ABC chart. Troubleshoot any difficulties/identify and address treatment barriers
- Session Content: –
Introduce and discuss importance of play
To introduce attending as a strategy to enhance parent/child relationship and provide child with positive attention for appropriate behaviour
Use modelling and role play
- Home Task:
To support parents in how to attend/play and plan how to use this at home

Note for practitioners:

Parents often feel overwhelmed when faced with child behaviour difficulties and an important part of your role will be to listen and validate the difficulties that they face. Trying to do things differently in hectic family life can also require huge personal resources. Above all this is a collaborative process

Points to remember:

- Reflective listening, validation for parents' difficulties and concerns throughout the programme.
- Use of your authentic praise to support and reinforce parental efforts will be vital to progress and celebrate their successes.
- Think prevention before consequences
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours is more effective than limit setting
- Oppositional children won't change overnight
- Some strategies may not work straight away – may need fine tuning
- Create an environment where parents can admit difficulties/concerns
- Model the model! Set an agenda, be clear about the process of the programme, use ABC charts for problems that cannot be covered within the session.

Review/Developing Goals

If this has not been completed in the initial assessment, support caregivers/ parents to develop appropriate SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Limited) goals by first eliciting their two main behaviours of concern, . Encourage parents to note these down in a manner that is clear, specific, observable and described in non-judgmental/blaming language (eg. 'Horatio kicks and screams at me when told no' rather than 'Horatio throws a wobbly'). Ask parents to rate each concern (see attached sheet).

Use these concerns as a base to develop three main goals for treatment. Again, ensure that they are written in a clear and observable manner, that they feel achievable (i.e. developmentally appropriate), and are written in the positive.

- For example, if a parent expresses that their child has violent tantrums when they can't achieve a task, they may say that they simply want their child to not have a tantrum. Encourage them to think about how they want their child to respond when struggling with a task, rather than just what they want them not to do (e.g. They may want their child to ask for help, or express their frustration in words, or persevere with the task, etc). Parents may also want to include a goal for themselves (such as wanting to stay calm when their child misbehaves), which is fine. Ask parents to rate how often each behaviour goal is occurring currently (see attached sheet).

The Importance of Play

Think with parents about the benefits of play for children, and engaging in playful interactions with their child. Encourage them to consider the physical, cognitive, emotional and social learning that can occur through interaction and play. In addition, when a child demonstrates high levels of

challenging behaviour, it can have a significant impact on the relationship between a parent and child. Play is also an opportunity for a parent to have fun with their child and show a child how nice it is to have their parent's undivided positive attention.

It can be helpful to encourage parents to think of attending as an investment in their child (like putting money into a savings account). Good times together and a positive relationship lay a strong foundation that helps parents to manage (and bounce back from) the difficult times.

Be curious as to whether the parent plays with their child currently, how they experience this time, and how they think their child experiences this. Many parents avoid playing with their child because they find it dull, they don't think they're needed (e.g. 'she has her sister to play with, so doesn't need me involved'), these times end in arguments or other difficulties, or they feel rejected by their child when they try to play with them. Normalise these concerns and ask them to try an experiment with you – to try out a different way of playing and see how it goes. Once parents begin using the attending strategies these beliefs will often begin to change on their own, but they may require further troubleshooting in the next session if these beliefs are strong.

Attending/Special Time

It can be fun to start with a little demonstration of how play can be a less than positive experience for children. Invite the parent to engage in a simple activity (such as drawing, building with blocks, etc.) and engage with them in a way that's quite intrusive; asking questions of what they are doing, giving advice, criticising, and taking over. Just do this for a minute (or less if the parent looks particularly angry!), and then apologise and explain that you were deliberately over the top in this example, but you wanted to demonstrate some of the ways that adults often engage with children during play and ask them how they felt during that time. Then ask them to play again and this time use the attending strategies, particularly descriptive commenting and then ask the parent how they felt. Hopefully they will recognise that this was a much more positive and enjoyable experience. Now explain that you're going to think with them about a different way to play that can make this time more enjoyable.

Discuss the principles that make attending effective, by first outlining what we want parents to avoid during this time and why.

Avoid

- **Taking charge of the activity**/changing the activity (e.g. 'I think that's enough play doh, let's get out your new pencils'): this type of play is an opportunity for children to explore and try out new things and develop confidence in their play, so we want it to be directed by them as much as possible
- **Giving commands**: Although commands, or suggestions for play, are usually well-intended ways to try to help the child be successful in play, we want the ideas and problem-solving to come from the child, not the parent, during this time.
- **Asking questions** (e.g. 'Oh, what have you got there? What are you going to build with the Lego? Is that a tower? Who's going to be in the tower?'): This is one of the hardest to avoid as we often ask children questions as a way to show interest in children's activities, and to feel involved. When we ask a question we are expecting a response, which requires children to stop what they're doing and respond to us. This interrupts their activity, flow of thought and means they are following our lead instead of us following theirs.

- **Teaching** (e.g. 'Oh you've drawn a lion, remember when we saw the lions at the zoo? What sound does a lion makes? That's right, and how do you spell Lion?'): During this time, we want parents to focus on the child and the play in that moment, rather than trying to steer them towards what the parent wants them to learn. You can reassure parents that there is nothing wrong with wanting to support their child's learning and there are many other opportunities to teach our children life lessons, but attending is not about this.
- **Criticising** (e.g. 'Well your drawing doesn't look much like an elephant yet, where's his big floppy ears? Now don't pout, I'm just trying to help'): It's easy to start giving a few well-meaning suggestions and criticisms during play, but these can really dampen a child's creativity and confidence. This time is for playing, and play is not right or wrong.
- **Competing**: If your child wants you to build/draw/create something alongside you, ensure you don't outshine your child, even if you think you're being playful or funny. Firstly, we want the parent's attention to be on the child during this time, and secondly, the goal is to support the child's confidence and provide them with an enjoyable experience with their parent, not for the parent to develop their own Lego skills!

Do

- **Use toys/activities** that are not competitive and do not have a 'right or wrong' way to use them: Creative activities are best, such as play doh, drawing, craft activities, Lego, bricks, magic sand, dolls, cars, toy animals, etc.
- **Give your child undivided attention**: Encourage parents to choose a time when they can focus all their attention on their child – put their phone on silent, don't have something on the stove, make sure siblings are engrossed in an activity or with another adult.
- **Allow the child to choose the activity**: if giving the child too many options overwhelms them, or they spend a long time trying to decide/pulling out every activity while deciding what to play, then it's fine to pre-select a small number of activities for the child to choose from. It's important that the child has the final say in what you're playing and how you're playing with it.
- **Follow the child's lead**: Give children as much control as possible during this time, in terms of the activity, the pace of the play, and other decisions made during the play. It's fine if the child chooses to engage in an activity and simply wants you to watch – they are enjoying your attention and want to show you what they can do. Alternatively they may invite you to join or play alongside them, that's fine too – but ensure that your attention remains primarily on the child's activity and you're not competing.
- **Show interest/amazement/empathy**: Be an appreciative audience by paying attention to what they're doing, praising their creativity and perseverance, and showing your child how much you're enjoying this time. And if things don't go the way the child wants (e.g. Their Lego tower falls) then rather than rushing to help or giving advice, show empathy and understanding (e.g. 'Oh, that's so disappointing, you worked really hard on that') and then praise them for trying again.
- Describe what the child is doing by commenting on the child's:
 - **Action:** eg. 'you've got the red brick now and you're balancing it on top of the blue one', 'you're pushing the car along the road', 'you're drawing a long line right across the page, I think this looks like the beginning of a house...', 'you're working on that so carefully'

- **Cognition:** eg. *'you're thinking really hard about how to fit that together', 'you're working out what to do next', 'I think you have a really great idea about what the animals will do next', 'that looks so tricky, but you're sticking with it and working it out'*
- **Emotion:** eg. *'you look so proud of your tower, you have such a lovely smile on your face', 'you're staying calm, even though it's difficult', 'it's so disappointing when the animals won't stand up where you want them'*

Commenting is a great way to show children that we are interested in what they are doing, without requiring them to take themselves away from the activity to respond. The child can then choose to respond to the comments or continue playing, knowing that the parent is there alongside them. Tell the parent not to worry about getting it wrong, the child will correct them if they've misunderstood how they're feeling/what they're doing, and it's better to guess than to not attempt to understand their world. We encourage parents to focus primarily on cognition and emotion comments, as only commenting on actions can seem a little odd and are less likely to be received as well by children. Match the pace of the comments to the children's activity – if the child is very active, they may need more frequent comments to stay on task, but more laid back children may require a slower paces of comments for it to feel natural.

- Repeat back what the child says (e.g. Child: 'I'm going to build the biggest tower ever', parent: 'you're building the biggest tower ever, amazing'): This is a nice way to show the child that you're paying attention to what they're doing, and excited with them (it's also useful when you want to comment but aren't sure what to say!)
- Ignore minor misbehaviour: We want this to be a positive experience for the child (and parent), so encourage the parent to simply stop commenting/subtly withdraw their attention if the child demonstrates minor misbehaviour like knocking over the toys, whining, or being rude. If the child continues to misbehave or becomes aggressive, then the parent may need to end the play for that day ('As you are throwing the toys, we need to stop playing for today but I am looking forward to playing with you tomorrow')
- Avoid putting yourself down when praising your child, or agree with them/encourage them to put you down: Following on from the point above, we want to model positive self-esteem as well as encourage prosocial behaviour in children, so ensure that parents aren't putting themselves down while praising and encouraging their child. We often see parents say things like 'your drawing looks so great, you're so much better at this than I am, my drawing is rubbish', as they're trying to make their child feel good about themselves, at the expense of the parent. We do not want to send the message to children that in order to be good at something, we need to be better than others – it's not a competition (particularly for bossy/controlling children).
- Play for 10 minutes and give a warning before the time ends: Attending/special time can be a very engrossing time for children, and it can feel jarring for this time to end suddenly. Ensure the parent gives the child a warning beforehand (we suggest 2 minutes before the end, but think with the parent whether their child requires an additional warning 1 minute before ending), gaining the child's attention, telling them how long there is left, and letting them know how much they enjoyed this time with their child. If the child protests, redirect them to the play for the remainder of the time, and if they ask to continue when the time is up, advise them that you need to stop playing but they can continue to play and you will check back to see how they are doing (and ensure that you do this). It's important not to increase the time of the play if they protest, as it shows the child that whining/arguing is an effective strategy. We suggest keeping the time to 10 minutes each day, rather than longer, as it requires intense and sustained concentration, and can be difficult to begin with, and we want the quality of this time to remain high and consistent.

Practice

Attending can feel a bit awkward and very different to how we usually play with children, so it's very, very important to practice with the parent. Even if they assure you that they understand it is still important to encourage them to practice with you. Demonstrate first by asking the parent to engage in a simple task or play (such as drawing) and attending to their actions, cognitions, and emotions. Then invite the parent to practice with you acting as the child, and provide positive feedback, highlighting what they did well and normalising the parts that they found tricky (e.g. *'that was really good, you're a natural at giving really lovely praise and using a lovely tone of voice. I could see how difficult it was to not ask questions, but you caught yourself on that last one and turned it into a comment, which was great'*). Discuss any concerns they may have about using this strategy at home. Reassure them that it will feel more natural with practice and outline the benefits if needed. Assure parents that even if they feel uncomfortable attending, it likely won't be clunky or strange to the child – it looks more natural than it feels.

Help parents to think about how they will implement attending at home, considering an appropriate space, time of day, the selection of toys/activities their child can choose from, and other factors to consider in their household (i.e. how to occupy siblings during this time, and to ensure that siblings also have their own time to spend with parent). It's often best to have a set time of day to use attending so it becomes a part of the family routine, but for some families that's just not feasible. Work collaboratively with the parent to plan this in a way that works for their household.

Note for practitioners:

Parents will have different experiences based on cultural and family values which informs their understanding and ideas of play for children. Some may feel very comfortable engaging in 'free play' activities with their children. For others play may be something they expect children to do by themselves. With special time our aim is to try and enhance the relationship between parent and child so that they enjoy each other's company and the child knows they will be receiving positive attention thus reducing the need to engage in negative attention seeking behaviours.

Some parents may say that their child does not like to play with toys, particularly those in late middle childhood. It can be helpful to invite parents to experiment with different activities such as drawing, cooking, playing football, going for a walk, doing nails, a special project etc. The point is for the parent to spend time with their child focussing on them in a positive way, taking interest, noticing their strengths, building their self-esteem free of adult demands for this particular period of time. It may be more helpful for you to introduce the idea of one to one time with some parents rather than the label 'attending'.

Play is often the easiest way for parents to learn the skills and principles of attending but it is of course not the only way of spending time with their child. Naturally as children age and mature they will engage less in traditional play activities but may still have interests and hobbies they enjoy. Through this intervention we are seeking to enhance parental responsiveness to the child and one way of doing this is by helping parents to improve how they communicate with their child. The principles remain the same in the sense we would like parents to provide a period of uninterrupted attention to their child, taking an interest, commenting on what they are doing, how are they feeling, the efforts they are making, giving the message of how much they are enjoying their time with the child and reflecting back what their child has said (to show interest).

Home Task

- Attend to their child for 10 minutes each day
- Ask parents to note down when they achieved this and how it went, to discuss next session



Concerns about my Child

Please list below, in order of priority, the **three** problems you have with your child that you would most like help with. Then rate the severity of the problem at present by marking a circle around the most appropriate number. **Here is an example:**

CONCERN: _____ "Temper tantrums at bedtime" _____

Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Couldn't be worse

Now please fill in three for your child:

CONCERN 1: _____

Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Couldn't be worse

CONCERN 2: _____

Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Couldn't be worse

CONCERN 3: _____

Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Couldn't be worse

Goals:

Rated 0 -10 (0 Never happens, 10 happens all the time):

1: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Attending/Special Time

Avoid

- Taking charge of the activity/changing the activity
- Giving commands
- Asking questions
- Teaching
- Criticising
- Competing

Do

- Use toys/activities that are not competitive and do not have a 'right or wrong' way to use them: Creative activities are best, such as play doh, drawing, craft activities, Lego, bricks, magic sand, dolls, cars, toy animals, etc.
- Give your child undivided attention
- Allow the child to choose the activity: if giving the child too many options overwhelms them, or they spend a long time trying to decide/pulling out every activity while deciding what to play, then it's fine to pre-select a small number of activities for the child to choose from. It's important that the child has the final say in what you're playing and how you're playing with it.
- Follow the child's lead
- Show interest/amazement/empathy: Be an appreciative audience by paying attention to what they're doing, praising their creativity and perseverance, and showing your child how much you're enjoying this time. And if things don't go the way the child wants (e.g. Their Lego tower falls) then rather than rushing to help or giving advice, show empathy and understanding (e.g. 'Oh, that's so disappointing, you worked really hard on that') and then praise them for trying again.
- Describe what the child is doing by commenting on the child's:
 - **Action:** e.g. 'you've got the red brick now and you're balancing it on top of the blue one',
 - **Cognition:** e.g. 'you're thinking really hard about how to fit that together', 'you're working out what to do next',
 - **Emotion:** e.g. 'you look so proud of your tower, you have such a lovely smile on your face', 'you're staying calm, even though it's difficult'



ATTENDING CHART



★ DO follow Johnnie's lead – go with whatever he is doing.

★ DO use descriptive comments – “now you're putting the man on the car....”

★ Avoid asking questions

★ Avoid criticising – for these 10 minutes, pigs CAN fly!

Practise attending for 10 minutes each day - irrespective of difficult behaviour, use other consequences for this. When finished complete the form below. Attending ensures that positives are always going in (attention bank!). It also increases concentration, problem solving and creativity in children and all because of your attention!

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>How long spent playing (minimum 10 minutes)</i>	<i>How did my child respond to us playing together? What did they do/ what behaviours did I notice?</i>	<i>How did I feel whilst playing?</i>



Encouraging Behaviours we want to see

(through the use of praise
and rewards)

Session 2:

Handouts:

1. Praise
2. Reward Charts
3. Behaviours to encourage

Agenda:

- **Review of Goals**
Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments
- **Review Home Practice task:**
Attending and special time
- **Session Content:**
Introducing specific praise and positive reinforcement strategies
- **Home Task:**
Practice giving clear and specific praise, continue with attending and special time.

Review of Home Task :

- Ask how Attending went
- Were they able to complete this every day? If not, what was getting in the way? How can we overcome this next week?
- What toys/activities were used?
- How did the parent feel while attending? How did the child respond?
- If necessary, practice the strategy again, using demonstration first and then inviting them to show you.

- Troubleshooting Attending – see also note to practitioner session 1

<i>My child doesn't want to play with any of their toys</i>	<i>Create a special box with two or three activities reserved specifically for time between parent and child</i>	<i>Parent can begin playing with something interesting themselves describing what they are doing out loud and see if child joins them</i>
<i>It's hard to find the time!</i>	<i>Ask parent to get alongside child when they are involved in an activity they are enjoying</i>	<i>Use naturally occurring times such as mealtimes, walking to school – think about reducing questions at these times using commenting instead</i>

The Importance of Praise

Highlight that praise is important for building a child's self-esteem and letting them know that they are loved and appreciated. It's useful to explore the parent's current use of praise and how they feel about it, as some parents may not have had much experience of being praised or worry that praising their child will 'spoil' them.

Encourage parents to think about praise as another way of investing positive time in their child (along with Attending). It's a really clear way to show children that we are proud of them and that we see their positive qualities, which helps support the development of their self-esteem.

It also helps children to know which behaviours we value and want to see more of. It encourages them to keep trying with tasks that they find difficult. In this programme, we encourage parents to focus praise on the behaviours and qualities that are beneficial for the child, and in line with the parent's goals.



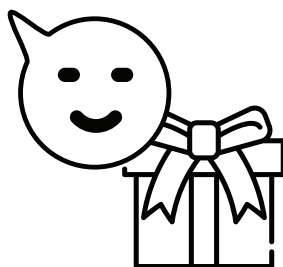
Giving Effective Praise

Discuss the difference between generic praise (e.g. 'good job', 'well done') and specific labelled praise tied to a behaviour (e.g. 'Well done for putting the cars in the box', 'you did what I asked straight away – I'm so proud of you'). While generic praise is nice for children to hear, specific praise really helps children to understand exactly what they did that caught their parent's attention and so increases the likelihood of the child demonstrating that behaviour again. As it's also more focussed and individualised, it feels more genuine. Multilingual families may use different languages to praise their child it is important for parents feel comfortable to explore this during the session. Ask them what they said (be curious about their language and culture) and praise them for using praise. Praise is the C in our ABC framework.

Tips for making praise effective:

- **Be sincere and specific:** Focus on behaviours that have been difficult for your child to demonstrate, and so it's a big achievement when they show improvements in their behaviour. Encouraging eye contact before praising can be a nice way to show your child how much their efforts mean to you.
- **Give praise immediately:** the closer the praise is given to the behaviour, the more likely the child will link this positive experience to the behaviour
- **Focus on behaviours and traits that they have power to change:** such as effort, perseverance, kindness, and patience, rather than outcome or talent
- **Avoid comparing your child to others:** Avoid putting down yourself or another child in order to make your child feel good about themselves
- **Don't muddle the praise with criticism or teaching** (e.g. 'thank you for picking up your toys... finally', 'it's great you tidied the bathroom, now if you'd just done this as soon as I'd asked then we could have avoided all that drama and gone to the park today')” all the child will remember is the criticism
- **Don't wait for perfection/completed tasks** – praise steps in the right direction: if a child who has had difficulties with physical aggression takes themselves away from a peer when angry and yells on their own instead, even though this is not the most desirable response, it is safer than hitting and this should be acknowledged
- **Praise during the task** (don't wait until the end)
- **Make your rewards actually rewarding:** think about what your child likes (for example, if your child does not enjoy hugs, do not use this as a reward) and gain their feedback when developing rewards
- **Ignore negative responses:** If the child talks back or shows minor misbehaviour after being praised, then ignore this and walk away – you've just shown your child that positive behaviour gains your attention better than misbehaviour, don't then give them a bigger pay off (in terms of your attention) for misbehaving
- **Rewards vs bribes:** Rewards are given after the behaviour is shown, bribes are given beforehand – only give a reward after the behaviour has been shown

In addition, encourage parents to consider other ways to acknowledge/reward children’s behaviour, through the use of social rewards, and some (to be used in a sparing way) tangible rewards. Encourage parents to include specific praise as much as possible, even when using other forms of reward as well.



Social Rewards	Tangible Rewards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Non-specific verbal praise ('Good', 'Well done') ■ Specific/labelled verbal praise tied to an identified behaviour ('Well done for putting the cars in the box', 'you did what I asked straight away – I'm so proud of you') ■ Physical Affection e.g. Hugs, kisses, high fives, tickles ■ Time with Child Joining their play, showing interest/ excitement in their activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No or low cost is best: stickers, treats, pound store toys ■ Special Choices and Privileges: Screen time, choosing dessert, choice of film ■ Special Activities: Going to a movie, trip to the park, riding bicycle ■ Special Time with Child Baking, extra bedtime story, choosing a board game to play with parent

Practice

Think with the parent about how often they are praising currently and how they can increase this, incorporating specific praise as much as possible. Support the parent to think about the behaviours that they really want to see more of (refer to their goals) and note down which behaviours they will be looking out for and praising that week (see attached sheet). Encourage parents to really be on the look out for these behaviours so that they can praise their child frequently.

If parents say that they are not seeing any positive behaviours at all, support them to notice even the small steps in the right direction. For example, if the parent’s goal is for the child to comply with instructions, help them to notice the minor instructions the child does comply with, or provide the child with some instructions that they want to follow (e.g. 'Ali, please get the chocolate biscuits from the cupboard for me, I thought you and your brother might like an afternoon treat'), and then praise the resulting compliance.

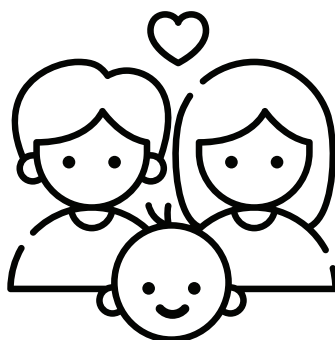
Encourage parents to also praise themselves for something they have done well each day. They can do this at the end of the day and in their head. When parents are experiencing challenges with their children they can become self-critical and more able to notice when they may not have got it right. This can lead to them becoming self-blaming and critical leading to a negative cycle. Most parents are doing the best that they can in difficult circumstances and it is important that they recognise

when they are doing things which are a step in the right direction. This can also help to counter their own inner critics and become their own cheerleaders. Parents and co-parents can also find ways to praise and support one another, modelling this out loud for the child. This is an important part of parental self care.

Having a reward chart can help extend the praise out of the play situation into everyday settings. Parents can identify some simple behaviours they want to see more of: putting toys away after play; brushing their teeth; clearing the their plate. Or indeed identify components in a sequence of behaviour that need to be completed each day – getting ready for bed, or for school. – and then use rewards to help establish these behaviours. Rewards need to be motivating and achievable particularly in the beginning so the child is inspired to continue with the reward scheme.

Home Task:

- Support parents to select behaviours to look out for and praise across the week
- Assist with a reward chart if appropriate – reward charts are good for establishing new routines such as bedtime and getting ready for school
- Notice one thing they themselves (as parents) did well (or in the right direction) every day
- Continue with attending and special time.



Praise

Praising and rewards extends the previous session on attending. Used consistently, praise and rewards can increase your child's self-esteem.

There are three types of praise:

- **Labelled Verbal Praise**

These are statements of exactly what your child did that you liked. Examples include:

“Good boy – you’ve picked up all the toys”

“Well done – you shared with your sister”

“Thank-you for playing quietly whilst I was on the phone”

These statements tell your child exactly how you would like them to behave and so they are particularly meaningful. They should be used very frequently.

- **Unlabelled Verbal Praise**

These are statements of general praise like “Well Done!”, “Good Boy!” and “That’s nice”.

These are still rewarding to the child although they do not specify exactly what they’ve done that you like.

- **Physical Rewards**

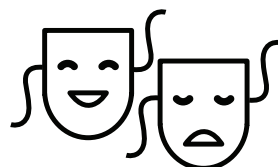
- Hugs, kisses, pats and so on can be added to verbal praise to make it even more powerfully reinforcing to the child.

Avoid

- Avoid comparing your child to others
- Avoid muddling the praise with criticism or teaching
- Avoid waiting for perfection/completed tasks – praise steps in the right direction

Do's

- Use praise and rewards as well as attends. They are all forms of positive attention that your child will like to receive.
- Try to use immediately after your child engages in any behaviour you want to increase.
- Praise your child in an enthusiastic and sincere manner. Use lots of smiles and eye contact.
- - Try not to add sarcastic comments to praise statements, like “Thank-you for tidying up - at last!” or put down statements, e.g. “Well done for tidying up. Why can’t you do that every time I ask you?” These are disruptive.
- Be sincere and specific
- Focus on behaviours and traits that they have power to change



Reward Charts

- Clear target behaviour ■ Agreed upon / understood by the child
- Steps and rewards are discussed with child
- Make sure the steps are achievable (SMART goals), gradually increasing the challenge as appropriate
- Use rewards that are motivating and varied
- Consistently monitor progress and provide rewards
- Don't mix rewards and punishment
- Use in the short-term until the behaviour is learnt then 'graduate' from the chart (but continue reinforcing using social rewards)

Tangible Rewards

- Inexpensive Items ■ No or low cost is best: stickers, treats, pound store toys
- Special Choices and Privileges ■ Screen time, choosing dessert, choice of film
- Special Activities ■ Going to a movie, trip to the park, riding bicycle
- Special Time with Child ■ Baking, extra bedtime story, choosing a board game to play with parent

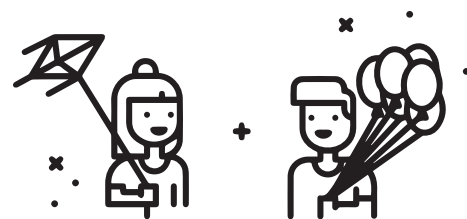


Behaviours to encourage

Five behaviours you would like to see more of in your child:

Remember to break it down into easy learning steps for your child

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____



What words can you use to encourage these behaviours?

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

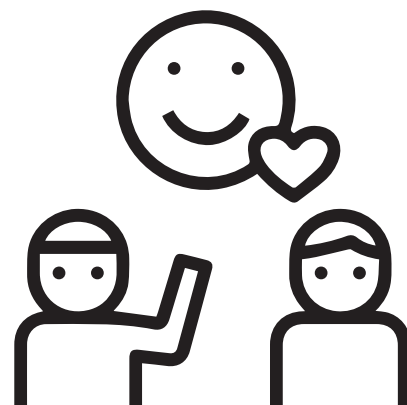
Remember to be:

SPECIFIC

POSITIVE

SINCERE

ENTHUSIASTIC





Supporting Children's Emotional Regulation

Session 3:

Handouts:

1. Emotion Regulation Strategies
2. More emotion regulation Strategies
3. Emotion Regulation Diary

Agenda:

- Review of Goals

Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments

- Review Home Practice task:

Praise

- Session Content:

- Naming feelings
- Reflective listening
- Emotion regulation strategies

- Home Task:

- Support parents to use a strategy to assist with their child's emotion regulation
- Ask parents to model using an emotion regulation strategy at home in front of their child/ children
- Try reflective listening
- Practice giving clear and specific praise,
- Continue with attending and special time.

Notes for practitioner:

Emotion Regulation for caregivers

There are supplementary materials at the end of this manual on emotion regulation for parents. It will be helpful to include some material from that in this session.

Review of Home task:

- Ask how using specific labelled praise went
- Check in that they are also remembering to praise themselves for something
- Check that they are still using special time – review play handout

Emotional Regulation

It is Important for children to learn to manage their emotional responses appropriately (regulate not suppress). Parents also need to remember that children will learn much of their emotion regulation from what they observe in their own household. Some families are naturally good at discussing feelings and scaffolding emotional expression for children. For others this may be less natural and/or easy so it may require more thinking about. Parents and children can also be temperamentally different which may impact on how each expresses their emotion. Strong willed, sparkier children may require more support with this than others.

Emotional literacy can be thought of as the ability to understand our emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathise with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively. An important part of this ability is emotional regulation, wherein an individual is able to recognise their emotional state and choose how they respond to this emotion, such as expressing a difficult emotion in a safe and constructive way or engaging in activity that will help to calm them, or sharing a pleasant emotion with a loved one (as opposed to allowing strong emotions to take over and overwhelm, or suppress emotions).

Explain that emotional literacy is impacted by our genetics, early experiences, and ongoing relationships. No-one is born with the ability to regulate their emotions, but some have a calmer temperament from the outset. However, children learn a great deal about emotions and interpersonal skills from their caregivers and other important people in their lives. As a result, how emotions are modelled and reinforced within the home is very important. Encourage the parent to consider how emotions are discussed and expressed in their home at present, ensuring that you express empathy and understanding during this discussion. For example, are emotions a topic that is discussed openly at home? How does the parent manage difficult emotions such as anger, sadness, and worry? Reassure the parent that no parent is ever a perfect model of emotion regulation, but there are strategies that can help both the parent and child to improve their emotional understanding and expression, which can have significant impact on how difficult situations are managed in everyday life.

Spend time thinking with the parent about their beliefs about emotions which may be influenced by their culture. You could use conversations you have already had when discussing the cultural iceberg or else initiate conversations using the cultural iceberg to facilitate this thinking. Different languages also express emotions in different ways and therefore some of the examples listed in this manual may need to be adapted accordingly to ensure they are relatable for the parent.

Discuss the importance of children (and adults) being able to develop effective skills in recognising and regulating emotions, relating this to the individual child and family's formulation. For example, not being attuned to our emotions or able to recognise what the emotions are can result in emotions seeming sudden, random, and overwhelming. In addition, not having the right skills or tools to manage difficult emotions can result in children taking out their aggression on others, trying

to suppress their emotions, or engaging in unsafe behaviour to try to make strong emotions stop instantly (such as running away or harming themselves). Being able to recognise and connect with other's emotions is also paramount for building relationships. Further, being able to identify our emotions and understand them brings greater understanding of ourselves and our world.

Think with the parent about their child's current ability to identify and regulate their emotions, compared to other children of their age and developmental stage. Can they readily name a range of emotions as they experience them? Do they ever say that they feel one emotion, when they appear to be experiencing a different emotion, or deny feeling anything? Can they name emotions in other people/characters? Can they recognise other people's perspectives and motivations? Do they seem to go from 0-100 with their emotional experiences?

Some Common Pitfalls to Avoid with Emotion Regulation Support

Be careful to normalise these pitfalls, explaining that they are common and are meant with good intentions, while highlighting why they may not be as useful as they seem.

- 1. Labelling emotions as 'good' or 'bad'.** All emotions have their purpose and are appropriate at different times. An emotion may be more difficult or painful to experience than others, but it is not 'wrong' to feel sad, angry, or ashamed. While there may be certain behaviours that are not appropriate or safe, such as violence, the emotion behind the behaviour is valid and there will be a safe way to manage this emotion.
- 2. Encouraging emotional suppression.** For example, telling a child 'don't feel sad, it's not a big deal', or 'you need to stop being angry right now'. Emotions cannot be turned on and off like a tap and it can be invalidating to a child to be told to stop feeling an emotion, effectively communicating to them that their emotion is wrong or inappropriate. Again, the behaviour resulting from the emotion may not be safe and require a consequence or redirect, but the emotion is valid.
- 3. Modelling.** For example if a caregiver shouts loudly frequently a child will learn that this is an acceptable way to express their anger. It is of course normal to shout from time to time but this can lead to a home environment with negative heightened emotion. It may be helpful for caregivers to think about what strategies they are using to support their own emotion regulation.
- 4. Avoid asking why:** for children who already have poor emotion regulation trying to reason with them at the height of their emotion will often be unsuccessful as they are already too upset. It will also be difficult for them to identify why they are upset or behaved in a certain way and may lead to them feeling more pressurised, risking triggering more difficult behaviour.



Naming Feelings

Discuss how naming children's emotions helps children learn to identify and understand their emotional experiences, providing the first step for effective emotional regulation. This can be direct and explicit, naming emotions as you observe them in the child. Parents can also make guesses about how a child may be feeling based on the situation. For example:

"That sounds really disappointing for you"

"It sounds like you're feeling really frustrated that your teacher told you off"

"Wow! You are so excited about going to that party"

"I know it's scary to stay away from home"

"My, you seem angry!"



Encourage parents to remain curious and reassure them that it is ok to get it wrong. Guessing an emotion incorrectly can sometimes help a child identify how they are feeling themselves (for example, 'no, I'm not sad, I'm angry!'). It's best to keep emotional naming simple to allow space for children to correct if needed, and allow for further discussion (if the child is open to this). It's also important to name the full range of emotions, including pleasant emotions as frequently as more difficult emotions.

This strategy can not only help children to understand their emotions but can be a very validating experience for the child that can enhance the parent-child relationship, with the child feeling more seen and understood by the parent. For example, if a child appears happy, naming that feeling and mirroring this back can create a moment of shared enjoyment and understanding. In addition, naming sadness and remaining alongside them in this moment without attempting to judge, change, or 'fix' the situation can demonstrate to the child that their parent can be a good listener. Be sure to reassure parents that naming and validating emotions is not the same thing as agreeing with their thoughts or actions. You can reflect on their emotions and express understanding while not agreeing with their behaviour in that moment.

Express to parents that it can also be very helpful to name their own emotions (and emotion regulation strategies) to model this to children. For example:

"Hmm, I'm feeling a bit flat today after a busy week. I think I'll have a cup of tea and sit down to see if that helps"

"Oooh, I felt so frustrated stuck in traffic today. I felt like yelling! But I took a few deep breaths and felt a little bit calmer and stayed in control."

"I feel sad when you talk about how difficult today was for you, but I feel so honoured that you can talk to me about this and so proud of you for being so brave"

"Look at the little girl next to the swings. I think she looks a bit worried. Remember the first day you came to the park, you felt a bit worried too. How do you think we can help her?"

"Wow, I would feel so scared if I was in their situation"

Discuss how naming the emotions of others (in films, books, or real life) can also help with emotional literacy, and encouraging children to connect with the feelings of others. For example:

“Wow, Simba looks really sad here. He’s so devastated after losing his father.”

“The duck is really angry. Can you think of a time when you felt really angry?”

Think with the parent about how to implement these strategies with their child, given their age and developmental level. For younger children or children with neurodevelopmental difficulties that may impact their social skills, parents may want to be more direct in their emotion naming, and more obvious in their expression of emotions to help children learn. For older children, emotional naming may be more effective when it is more conversational.

Reflective Listening

In order to effectively help children to understand and regulate their emotions, parents need to maintain a curious approach. We are not telling children what we think they should be feeling in a given situation, we are attempting to recognise their experience and reflect this back to them. Being a good listener is therefore very important.

As with every strategy, be sure to normalise how difficult it can be to listen fully to children. Maybe time pressures make it difficult to stop and listen to their child. Maybe their child is very talkative and it’s difficult distinguish what conversations are important, or conversations are so one-sided that it’s difficult to remain attentive. For many families, talking too often seems to lead to arguing. Other children do not seem to want to speak much at all and finding about their day at school feels like a mission.

The goal is to be alongside your child, not to rescue them from their feelings. It is important for parents to be able to show that they can bear their child’s feelings.

Tips for reflective listening:

- Give your child your full attention (schedule a time if you can’t speak at the time they wish to speak): consider the times when your child is most likely to initiate or be more open to discussions involving emotions, achievements, or challenges.
- Use a warm tone of voice
- Repeat back what your young person has said or feels
- Leave space for them to speak – don’t ask lots of questions or try to control the pace of what they are telling you
- When you do ask questions, try to use open questions - be curious
- Listen to the feelings, not just the problem
- Try not to judge or problem-solve
- Walk or drive and talk (if face to face feels too intense)

Examples of when this can go off track (again, normalise this and recognise that the intention of the parent is to help)

Child: *"I had a big fight with my best friend. She said I talked about her behind her back, but I didn't. I hate her and hope she dies."*

Many well-meaning parents may say:

"What an awful thing to say about your friend. Don't talk about people like that." [judgment, criticism – missing the point]

"Well why did she think you said that? Are you sure you didn't say anything? She wouldn't just make it up." [invalidating, accusing – losing focus on how she's feeling]

"You need to let a teacher know when your friends are being mean. I'm call them first thing tomorrow to put a stop to it. You can't let people treat you like that." [problem-solving, jumping in to fix without seeing what she wants – taking control of her story]

If we choose to focus on her word choice or try to weigh in with our opinions or fixes, we can miss the opportunity to show our children that what they share with us matters.

Instead, why not try:

(warm, curious tone) *"She said you talked about her behind her back?"* [repeating back, clarifying, showing interest]

"Oh no, sounds like a really tough day" [empathising, validating – focusing on the feeling]

(after listening and letting the child control the pace of the story and how much they want to share) *'I'm really sorry to hear that. I know how important your friend is to you. That sounds like it was very upsetting / I would be upset about that too. What do you think could help now? Is there anything I can do to help?'* [summarising, seeking her view about what to do, offering help without taking over]

Listening without offering judgment or solutions can help children to calm and reach solutions on their own. And most of all, shows them that you're a team – bolstering your relationship.

Playing and Talking about Emotions

Think with the parent about whether additional work may be beneficial to help recognise, understand, and normalise different emotions.

Play is a wonderful way for children to explore, learn about the world and express themselves, it also provides a safe environment in which to make mistakes. Caregivers can use descriptive commenting to notice their child:

- Working hard, concentrating
- Sticking with a tricky activity: *'Wow, it looks really fiddly trying to put that together, I love how you keep trying'*

- Staying calm when something goes wrong: *'it's tough when it falls over but you stayed really calm'*
- Expressing their thoughts, feelings and ideas; *'so you're annoyed that the model isn't working out the way you would like'*
- Solving a difficulty independently

Roleplaying with toys re situations can be a helpful way to explore difficult situations and feelings:

Oh Panda won't share his food with Tiger. Tiger is really upset about this. He is going to go and sit in his grassy space and do some breathing...

Be curious and name feelings when children are playing – avoid judging/labelling

Use feeling cards/faces /pictures from magazines to help identify feelings – make it fun

Discussing feelings through books, films etc – it can be very helpful for children to think about emotions through a third party/independent character rather than the focus always being on their own emotions.

When children are playing they are more relaxed so will be better able to engage and be receptive to these discussions and ideas. When children are relaxed is also the best time to pre-teach them emotion regulation strategies such as grounding, breathing etc, which in time they can then start to use when becoming dysregulated. This will be a process so each stage requires warm, authentic praise from caregivers along the way for:

- Identifying their feelings
- Expressing their feelings
- Using appropriate emotion regulation/soothing strategies



Calm Down Spaces/Tools:

A calm down space is different from time out and can be useful before a child has escalated their behaviour but when you notice that they are beginning to become agitated, showing signs of frustration, over excited/stimulated. It can be a space for them to use to calm down and help to soothe them selves (not as a consequence for non-compliance or aggression). Make the space cosy with tools and activities they can use such as a soft toy, glitter bottles, stress toys, drawing materials. Involve the child in planning and discussing what they would find helpful alongside practicing using the space and tools beforehand.

Emotional Regulation Strategies

Think with the parent about what strategies they currently use in their household to manage difficult emotions.

Stability, consistency, positive reinforcement and boundaries can help to support emotion regulation.

Parents can also:

- Provide validation of child's emotions
- Talk about feelings (avoid good vs bad) – this doesn't have to be their children's feelings. Parents can use books, films, play characters and this is often easier for children in the first instance
- Model appropriate emotional regulation
- Teach positive self-talk
- Encourage appropriate expressions of feelings
- Remind parents that feelings are always valid although behavioural responses may not be

See Handouts

- Breathing
- Grounding
- Glitter Bottles etc [already in manual at the end]

Home Task:

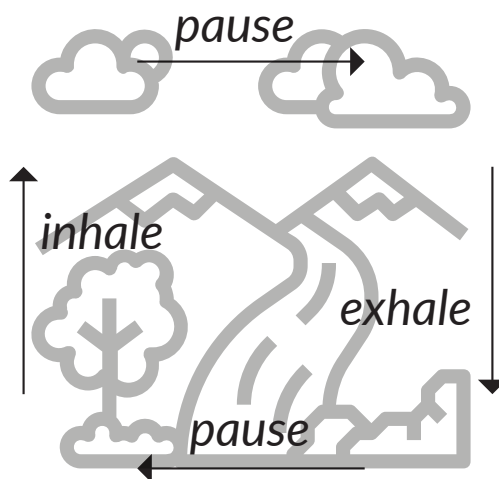
- Support parents to use a strategy to assist with their child's emotion regulation
- Ask parents to model using an emotion regulation strategy at home in front of their child/children
- Try reflective listening
- Practice giving clear and specific praise,
- Continue with attending and special time.



Emotion Regulation Strategies

- Breathing strategies
- Grounding/five senses (5, 4, 3, 2, 1)
- Calming self-talk
- Calm spaces
- Glitter bottle/other calming toy
- The turtle...

Box Breathing



- 7-11 breathing – breathe in for 7 seconds, out for 11 seconds
- Balloon breathing – breathe in slowly and imagine (or watch) filling your belly like a balloon, then breathe out until all the air is gone

Glitter Bottle:

- Small bottle (plastic if concerns re breakage) + water + glycerin/clear glue + food colouring + glitter (the internet is full of instruction pages)
- Metaphor of glitter as thoughts/emotions feeling out of control –if we stop, take a breath and focus, everything slows down and we can feel calmer and in control again
- Encourage child to practice when calm and to use it when stressed, but don't force it...

Calming self-talk:

Encourage parent to think collaboratively with child about helpful things to say to themselves when overwhelmed. They can practice them together or write them on cards:

- 'I can turn things around'*
- 'Remember to breathe'*
- 'This feeling won't last'*
- 'I can get through this'*
- 'I'll be going home soon'*

More emotion regulation strategies:

It is Important for children to learn to manage their emotional responses appropriately (regulate not suppress). Parents also need to remember that children will learn much of their emotion regulation from what they observe in their own household. Some families are naturally good at discussing feelings and scaffolding emotional expression for children. For others this may be less natural and/or easy so it may require more thinking about. Parents and children can also be temperamentally different which may impact on how each expresses their emotion. Strong willed, sparkier children may require more support with this than others. Below are some tips to assist:

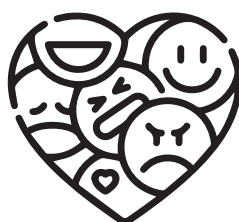
- Stability, consistency, positive reinforcement and boundaries can help
- Parents can also:
 - Provide validation of child's emotions
 - Talk about feelings (avoid good vs bad) – this doesn't have to be their children's feelings. Parents can use books, films, play characters and this is often easier for children in the first instance
 - Model appropriate emotional regulation
 - Teach positive self-talk
 - Encourage appropriate expressions of feelings
 - Remind parents that feelings are always valid although behavioural responses may not be

Naming feelings helps children understand what is happening for them:

- That must have been disappointing for you!
- Sounds as if you are pretty resentful about...!
- Wow! You are so excited about going to that party
- I know it's scary, but...
- My, you sound angry!

Hopefully through the use of attending and descriptive commenting during attending this is a skill that parents have already started to pick up on. Parents can model the sharing of both positive and difficult feelings

Talk to parent about strategies they are already using and help them to tweak these where necessary. Below are some other suggestions which might be helpful:



Emotion Regulation Diary

<p>Describe the situation</p> <p><i>What happened?</i> <i>Who was there?</i> <i>Where was I?</i></p>	<p>How did I feel?</p> <p><i>Angry?</i> <i>Sad?</i> <i>Upset?</i> <i>Anxious?</i></p>	<p>Where did I feel this in my body?</p> <p><i>Head?</i> <i>Arms?</i> <i>Torso?</i> <i>Tummy?</i></p>	<p>What emotion regulation strategy did I use?</p> <p><i>Breathing?</i> <i>Grounding?</i> <i>Calming Self-Talk?</i></p>	<p>What did I notice when I used this strategy?</p> <p><i>What happened to the emotion?</i></p>



Reducing Undesirable Behaviour (with Selective Ignoring)

Session 4:

Handouts:

1. Selective Ignoring
2. Coping Thoughts

Agenda:

- Review of Goals

Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments

- Review Home Practice task:

Using emotional regulation strategy

- Session Content:

- Introduction to selective ignoring as a strategy to reduce behaviours they want to see less of
- To support parents in the use of differential attention
- To support parents in how to use selective ignoring appropriately and calmly.

- Home Task:

Practice selective ignoring **AND** using praise for alternative behaviour

Continue with praise and attending/special time, and supporting emotional regulation.

Review of Home Task :

- Ask how using an emotion regulation strategy went
- Check in that they are also remembering to praise themselves for something.
- Are they using/modelling emotion regulation strategies
- Check that they are still using special time

Selective Ignoring

Discuss with parents the fact that so far in the child- led phase of the programme your child has learnt that attention from you is rewarding. Attention, particularly that of parents is extremely powerful and as we have been learning much of children's behaviour is maintained by attention – even negative attention.

Explain that selective ignoring is a major way to decrease their child's unwanted behaviour. When selectively ignoring a behaviour, parents completely remove their attention from that particular behaviour NOT the child.

Often, especially when under pressure, many adults can respond to misbehaviour through scolding, reprimanding, criticising, nagging or shouting. Rather than correcting the behaviour this provides attention which will probably result in the behaviour continuing.

Most parents find ignoring incredibly difficult, however it is an extremely effective form of discipline. The advantages of using selective ignoring are that it maintains a positive relationship between adults and children. Additionally, parents are providing a good role model for their child by modelling self-control and good emotional regulation in the face of difficult behaviour. It avoids giving negative attention and can help parents to feel calmer. This helps a child to learn that it is better to behave appropriately in order to receive positive parental attention. Selective ignoring also gives children the opportunity to practice calming down independently (thereby assisting them with their own emotion regulation). Selective ignoring is C in the ABC framework.

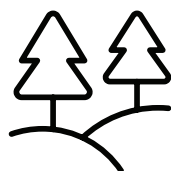
Notes for practitioners:

It is important to remind parents that selective ignoring is not to be used for dangerous behaviour.

It works best for behaviour intended to elicit a parental response (and minor irritating behaviours); and less for say, humming that is part of a child's continual activity (i.e., designed to help them concentrate or soothe themselves rather than the aim of eliciting parental attention). As it requires self-control it is not good for behaviours that really push parents' buttons. Where possible parents should try to make sure that everyone in the home is ignoring the behaviour. Selective ignoring must be used in conjunction with positive attention for appropriate behaviours. By itself it does not teach children what to do. To achieve this parents need to use praise and/or rewards to target the positive alternative behaviour. Remind parents that once they have decided on a particular behaviour to ignore, they ignore it every time it occurs. If they do not the behaviour will get worse not better.

Selective ignoring is good for behaviours such as:

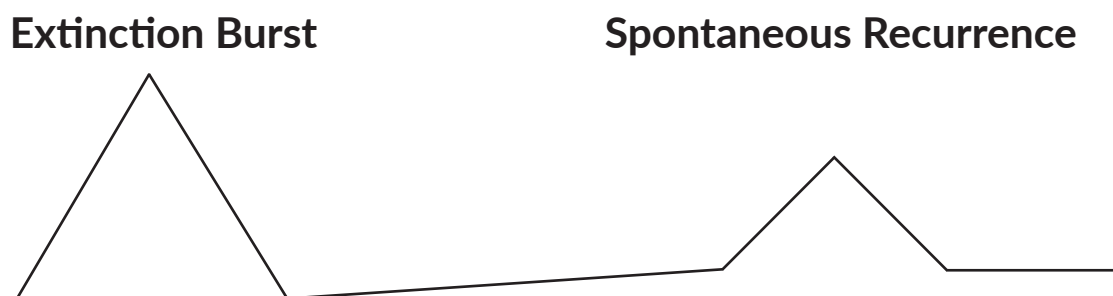
Moaning, complaining, swearing, whining, minor squabbles, messy eating, silly noises, fiddling, backchatting, pulling faces, answering back (being rude, arguing)



Example: The Slot Machine Analogy

Sometimes to illustrate the above it can be helpful to explain to parents that many people play slot machines not because they win every single time but because they win every now and then. This occasional reinforcement is enough to keep them returning to the slot machines in the hope that they will win. Parental attention (whether positive or negative) can work in the same way for children. So you can explain to parents that if they begin to selectively ignore a behaviour and then suddenly after 5 minutes provide attention this makes it more likely the behaviour will happen again. Their child has simply learnt that if they escalate their behaviour their parent will give in. You can if you wish relate this to the parent trap (coercion hypothesis) we spoke about at the beginning of the programme.

Remind parents that a problem behaviour may get worse before it gets better...



If behaviour is not rewarded it will fade away and “extinguish”. Behaviour will often get worse before it gets better if the usual reward is withdrawn. If parents can stick with the selective ignoring it will eventually plateau and reduce. Use the diagram above to illustrate this to parents. Once a behaviour has extinguished it may spontaneously re-emerge sometime later. As long as the behaviour is not rewarded again in any way, it will swiftly fade away and disappear.

Practice:

Think through with parents particular behaviours (following the guidelines) they think they may be able to use selective ignoring with. At this stage it can be helpful to ‘give it a go’.

First ask parents to be their child acting out a particular situation demonstrating the behaviours they expect their child to show. You, as the practitioner will then demonstrate (acting as the parent) how to selectively ignore the behaviour and return positive attention once the behaviour has ceased. Then swap around and now ask the parent to ‘have a try’ with you playing the child.

Discuss how the parent found the practice and problem solve any potential difficulties, particularly in terms of using at home. Think about how to get the rest of the family on board.

Think through positive coping statements they can use to help them tolerate the ignoring e.g. ‘This will pass, I am helping my child learn, I can get through this’. Discuss any other emotion regulation techniques they can use to assist them (supplementary manual available to support this), whilst remembering selective ignoring is an active process and parents need to be ready to return their attention once the behaviour they have selected to ignore has ceased.

Home Practice:

- Practice selective ignoring for a mildly irritating behaviour during the week.
- Remember the importance of using specific praise for the positive alternative to the behaviour being ignored (e.g. whinging – speaking in a polite voice, aggression – being gentle, swearing – talking politely)
- Continue special time



Selective Ignoring

- Explain what you're doing beforehand (not while ignoring)
- Be subtle and neutral
- No eye contact or expressions of disapproval
- No verbal or physical contact
- Distraction can be a helpful technique with some children , particularly younger children
- Stay close so you can return attention as soon as (10-15 seconds) the behaviour stops
- Use emotion regulation techniques to help you stay calm
- Look **for something to praise afterward**
- **Be consistent in what you ignore i.e. every time**
- **Model** being calm

Reinforcement

In the session on praise we learnt about reinforcement and how this strengthens behaviour making it more likely to occur again

Continuous reinforcement: rewarding behaviour every time it occurs – used for establishing new behaviours

Intermittent reinforcement – rewarding behaviour every now and then – used for maintaining behaviour

However, as this strategy requires self-control it is important that the parent can tolerate ignoring the particular behaviour they choose. This will depend on the parent's individual, familial and cultural values. Trying to ignore a behaviour which parents cannot tolerate will result in them inadvertently providing reinforcement through powerful attention if they crack and then shout or tell the child to 'stop it!' (Intermittent reinforcement).

Behaviours I will selective ignore:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

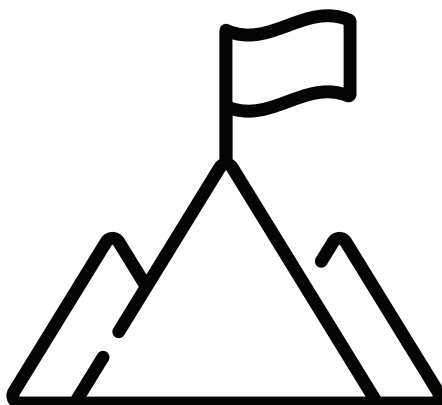
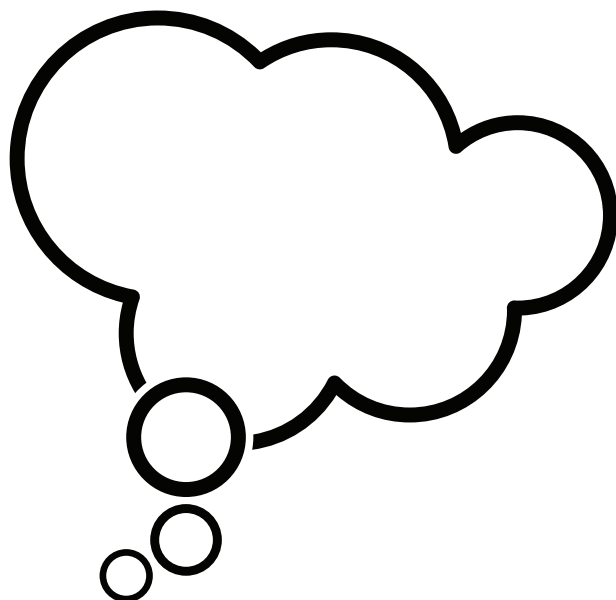
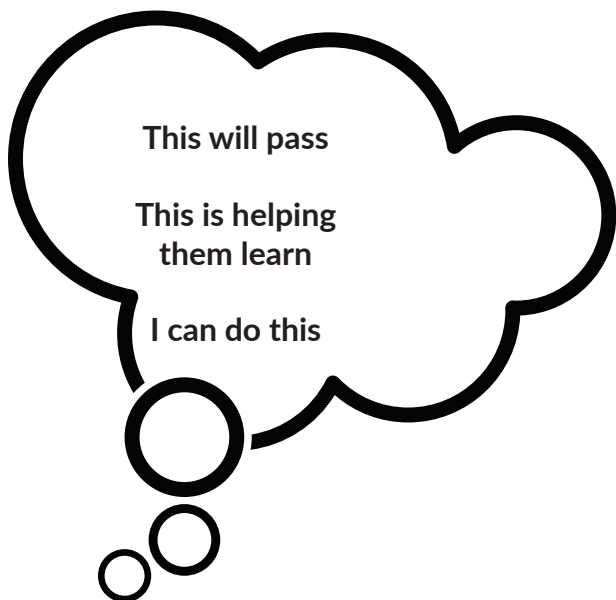
The alternative behaviours I will praise:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Coping Thoughts

Selective ignoring can be difficult because it requires you to stay calm. Some behaviour can be irritating or it can feel like you are not doing anything to tackle the behaviour. Use some calming and positive statements to help you when you are trying selective ignoring.

Calming statements





Effective Instructions

Session 5:

Handouts:

1. Effective Instructions

Agenda:

- Review of Goals

Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments

- Review Home Practice task:

Praise

- Session Content:

Highlighting instructions as a potential trigger for misbehaviour and supporting parents to appreciate how to give instructions effectively.

- Home Task:

Practice selective ignoring, continue with praise and attending/special time, and supporting emotional regulation.

Review of Home Task :

- Ask how Selective Ignoring went
- What behaviour(s) did they use this for? How did their child respond? Were they able to return their attention when the misbehaviour ended?
- Check that they are still using attending/special time every day and continuing to praise prosocial behaviours frequently
- Troubleshoot difficulties with any of the strategies introduced so far

Instructions as Triggers

The previous sessions have focussed on using parental attention to help improve the relationship between parent and child, and to help children to learn that prosocial behaviour is more effective in gaining attention than misbehaviour. This session helps parents to think about how they are trying to elicit compliance from their children, and how to maximise the effectiveness of their instructions or requests.

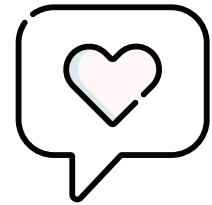
Parents should be familiar with ABC charts by this stage, so highlight that instructions can often be an A (the trigger) in stressful interactions with children. Consider examples the parent has discussed with you to illustrate this.

Ineffective Instructions

Discuss the common mistakes we make when giving children instructions, normalising but also highlighting what can make them problematic.

- **Chain instructions** ('put your shoes on and get your coat. Do you have your homework? Put that in your lunch in your bag now, and remember your gym kit'): combining multiple instructions together can be confusing for children, particularly for young children or those with ADHD – they may only remember the first or last instruction, or become overwhelmed with trying to remember them all and not respond at all.
- **Question Instructions** ('would you like to have your bath now?'): We often phrase instructions as questions in order to be polite and giving children choices is important, but it can be confusing for children when we make an instruction seem like a choice (when we are not actually giving the child a choice in this moment, and they might reasonably assume that "No" is a genuine option).
- **Vague instructions** ('behave yourself', 'stop it'): children may not understand what is being asked of them
- **"Let's..." instructions** ('let's go to bed'): if you're not going to complete the action with them then it can be confusing (the child may be waiting for you to go to bed as well before complying).
- **Instructions plus rationale** ('I need you to put your shoes on now because the bus will be here in 5 minutes and if you're late then your teacher will not be happy with you'): the instruction can become lost amongst the long rationale, and the child may become distracted by/focussed on the reasons behind the instruction rather than following the direction (e.g. 'Dad, my teacher doesn't care if people are late, Angie is late all the time and she doesn't get told off!').
- **Repeated instructions** ('turn off the TV. Turn off the TV. Turn OFF the TV. I won't say it again, turn off the TV now. Turn it off'): If they did not comply the first time, it's unlikely they will comply if it's simply repeated – and the parent is likely to become more annoyed the more they deliver the instruction, resulting in the parent snapping and becoming angry. This can also communicate to the child that a parent's instructions do not matter; at least not until they sound angry.
- **Unnecessary instructions** (such as interrupting a child's favourite show to tell her to put her toys away, when there is no urgency for this task to be completed): Children are told where to be and how to act constantly throughout their day, so try not to give instructions that aren't needed, particularly when they have the potential to trigger challenging behaviour.

- **Poor body language** (such as giving an instruction while looking away or engaging in another activity, without ensuring the child is paying attention): again, this is an issue of clarity; the child may not know that the parent is speaking to them or may have been too absorbed in an activity to register what was being said. Giving instructions in this way can also make it seem like the instruction is not important (if a parent does not take the time to stop what they are doing to ask their child, the child may not feel that it is necessary for them to stop what they are doing to comply).



Effective Instructions

Discuss and demonstrate ways to make instructions more effective.

- **Decide ahead of time if an instruction is necessary.** Ensure that the instruction is realistic and fair (don't set the child up to fail). Parents need to be prepared to see it through (although in this week we focus just on giving the instruction, the consequences for not following the instruction are covered in the next session).
- **Prevention is better than cure:** is there a way that the parent can structure the day so that compliance is easier to achieve (e.g. Having the child complete homework before screen time, rather than trying to get the child to put the screen away to start their homework)
- **Ensure the child is listening:** Ask the parent to stop what they are doing, go to their child, get down on their level, and invite eye contact and/or place a hand on their arm (as appropriate). This first step already significantly increases the likelihood of the child complying.
- **Be simple, clear, and brief:** help their child to process the request by keeping it straightforward. Advise parents that initially it may help to rehearse the instruction in their head before saying it out loud to ensure that they are clear.
- **Be polite:** Remember, we want to model prosocial behaviour to our children. It's best not to frame the request as a question, but parents can add 'please' and use a calm, pleasant tone of voice.
- **Ask the child to do something** (rather than not do something): it's much more helpful to outline to children what we require them to do at that moment rather than simply telling them to stop a behaviour (for example, '*play quietly*' versus '*stop shouting*').
- **Give the child space to comply:** This step is very important. Often when we ask a child to do something, we don't allow them enough time to process the instruction and make a decision about how to respond (instead repeating the instruction again or start telling them off for not complying straight away). We advise parents to **wait 5 seconds** after giving the instruction (counting in your head, not out loud), and not entering into any discussion/argument/repeating of the instruction during this time. If the child has not started to comply at the end of 5 seconds, then repeat the instruction and again wait 5 seconds. If the child begins to comply within the initial 5 seconds, or within 5 seconds of the second instruction given, then praise immediately.
- **Following through is important:** Ensure that praise is given if the instruction is followed, and be prepared to follow up with a consequence if it is not (though again, this will be introduced in the next session). If the instruction was worth giving, it is worth following up.

- Longer tasks should be broken down and praised throughout: Where possible, break tasks down into smaller tasks and praise/encourage after each task is complete (e.g. Asking a child to put their lunch box in their bag (praise), then put their shoes on (praise), then put their coat on (praise), rather than connecting all these instructions together or giving a general 'get ready' instruction). For tasks that are longer, such as tidying their bedroom, start praising as soon as they begin to comply to help keep them focussed on the task (e.g. 'well done, you're doing a great job picking up the Lego, wow you've already put most of them back in the box, you're so quick at this!').

Example:

Approach child, kneel down and look them in the eye: *'Santi, look at me, I need you to turn off the TV and bring your homework to the dining table now, please'*

Wait 5 seconds:

- If Santi has complied: Praise (e.g. *'Thank you, Santi, that's fantastic. Once you've finished your homework we can watch a film together tonight'*)
- If Santi has not begun to comply: Repeat Instruction (e.g. *'Santi, look at me, turn the TV off now and bring your homework to the dining table'*)

Wait 5 seconds:

- If Santi complies: Praise
- If Santi has not begun to comply: At this stage, take no action or respond as you usually would (consequences will be added to this process next session)

Practice

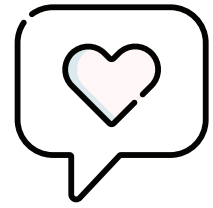
Provide parents with some examples of this to demonstrate the wording and process. Think with them about which instructions are particularly triggering for their child and encourage them to consider how to give this instruction more effectively. Model this as needed (with the parent acting as their child), and then invite the parent to practice this with you acting as the child.

If parents are concerned about how to respond if the child does not comply, you can reassure them that this will be covered, but this week it's fine just to start getting used to giving instructions in this way and seeing how the child responds. If the child does not respond to the second instruction, then it's fine to leave it there, or use their existing consequences (if safe and appropriate).

Home Task

- Ask parents to try giving instructions in the style practiced in session and note the results
- Continue attending/special time and specific praise for desirable behaviours





Effective Instructions (Clear, Calm Commands)

- Before giving a command
 - Decide ahead of time whether to give a command. Make it realistic, Avoid setting your child up for failure.
 - Only give a command if you are prepared to see it through until your child complies it is obeyed – however long it may take.

- When giving commands

Make commands simple and direct

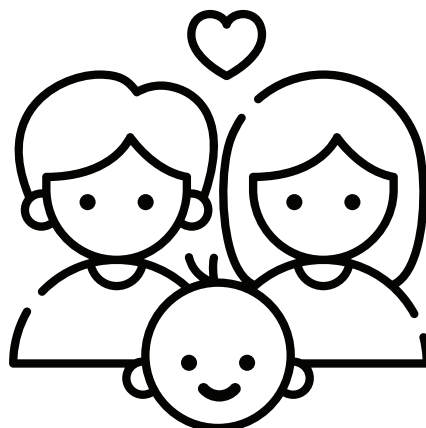
- Get your child's attention before issuing a command, by calling their name and making eye contact.
- Make the command simple, clear and direct to ensure your child knows what is expected of him/ her.
- Use a firm voice and tell the child what you want them to do, not what you want them to stop
 - e.g. 1 - *"talk quietly"* rather than *"stop shouting"*
 - e.g. 2 - Frank wanted to play with his mother - she needed to make a phone call. Instead of saying: *"Stop bothering me!"* she told him *"I'm going to make a phone call. When I've finished I will play with you. Whilst I'm on the phone please play with these toys quietly."* This is a better command as it tells Frank what he has to do to get his mother's attention. He is also rewarded for complying with his mother's command.
- Use physical gestures when appropriate such as pointing to toys.

Give one command at a time

- Young children cannot remember long strings of information.
- If you want them to do a number of tasks, ask each one individually and praise them for complying with each one.
- Limit unnecessary commands.

Give your child a chance to comply

- Make sure you wait after giving a command and give your child enough time to begin to comply. This should be at least 5 seconds and avoid talking in that time.
- If your child complies, or begins to comply, then praise him immediately. If you have asked your child to do a long task (such as putting away a lot of toys) then attend and praise to him throughout the task.





Promoting Boundaries with Consequences

Session 6:

Handouts:

1. Consequences Guidelines

Agenda:

- Review of Goals

Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments

- Review Home Practice task:

Review parents' experience of using clear, calm instructions

- Session Content:

Helping parents understand the importance of boundaries. Understanding how to use consequences in a framework of positive discipline and supporting parents to use natural and logical consequences for unacceptable behaviour.

- Home Task:

For parents to practice using the consequences identified for problematic behaviour and keep a record of how this goes.

To continue special time and specific praise for desirable behaviours

Review of Home Task :

- Ask how using an emotion regulation strategy went
- How did their child respond? Were they able to remember to praise their child for complying? Have they been able to use 'do' instructions?
- Check that they are still using special time
- Problem solve any difficulties

Review of Home Task:

- Ask how using clear, calm instructions went
- How did their child respond? Were they able to remember to praise their child for complying? Have they been able to use 'do' instructions?
- Check that they are still using special time
- Problem solve any difficulties

Natural and Logical Consequences

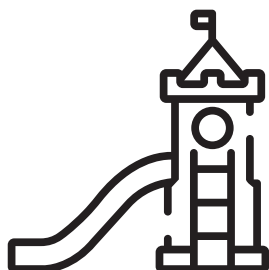
Explain to parents that routines and boundaries help create a sense of safety and security for children. Children tend to be calmer, more relaxed and easier to manage if there is a consistent routine. This helps them to know what is happening next and what is expected of them. Children are not innately obedient and often test out rules and limits by not doing what they are told one third of the time. Whilst this can be seen as a healthy sign of independence, in order to grow into productive members of the community children need to learn how to accept limits and boundaries. In session 7 we will help parents think about family rules to assist with boundaries.

Discuss the fact that parents often intervene to protect children from the consequences of their actions. However parents also need to help children become increasingly independent. It is beneficial for children to learn about the world and the results of their actions and they can do this by learning through their mistakes e.g. If Chardonnay doesn't eat her lunch, she will feel hungry later. These are natural consequences. Of course parents need to protect children from certain dangers – electricity, traffic, strangers etc!

A logical consequence is designed by the caregiver as a response to undesirable behaviour and helps the child make the links between behaviour and its consequences.

Before introducing natural and logical consequences it can be helpful to ask parents what they currently do if their child does something unacceptable or doesn't do as they are told. It is important to check that parents are using appropriate, non-harmful and non-punitive consequences. Whilst smacking is not illegal in England it is not approach we wish to promote. It is also poor modelling for children teaching them that violence is acceptable, possibly scaring them and once again reinforcing the parent trap (coercion hypothesis) that they only need to comply when parents reach that level. Whilst some families may believe smacking is ok we want to take an approach which avoids judging but opens the door to the possibility of thinking about more effective ways to support their children with behaving differently and strengthening their relationship.

When setting limits it is important for parents to model clear, calm disciplinary strategies. Thinking about natural and logical consequences beforehand can help parents remain calm when difficult behaviour does occur rather than acting out of anger. Often if angry, parents can either nag or lecture leading to further arguments and no actual limit setting or issue consequences which are unrealistic such as cancelling a longed for outing or grounding for a week, which they will then be unable to follow through with.



Notes for practitioners:

It is important to remind parents that reinforcing child behaviours with positive parental attention is always more effective than sanctioning child behaviours with negative consequences. Sometimes parents have fallen into a habit of using only consequences to modify child behaviours so that many of a child's toys may have been taken away for example. In this instance practitioners may need to assist parents with introducing rewards for positive behaviours. If children are always receiving consequences for negative behaviour but there is no praise or attention to positive behaviour then positive behaviours will reduce or extinguish over time. It can be helpful to remind parents of the attention table. Rewards are also very effective in establishing new routines. So where there are difficulties around morning and bedtime routines, for example, it may be helpful to introduce a reward chart. In this way if the child does not complete a behaviour they simply do not earn a reward – quite a different experience to losing a toy or privilege.

Practice:

Think through with parents particular problematic behaviours (following the guidelines) they may wish to use consequences for. Help parents to understand that consequences are non-punitive, helping children to learn to make the right choices, so should be delivered in a simple and straightforward manner i.e. calmly, using selective ignoring for protests and whining. Explain that the strategies they have been learning to use build on one another and limit setting will only work if positive attention (through special time) and specific praise for desirable behaviours are also in place.

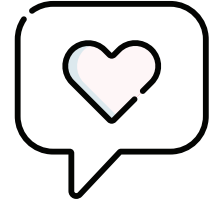
It can be helpful to ask parents to practice with you taking the role of the child and them being the parent. Ask what behaviours they think their child might show and use these in the practice. If this is a telephone session problem solve potential difficulties parents foresee in implementing consequences.

Home Task:

- Ask parents to practice using the consequences identified for problematic behaviour
- Ask them to keep a record of how this goes
- Continue special time and specific praise for desirable behaviours



Consequences Guidelines



- Make sure you can live with the consequences
- Discuss in advance
- Appropriate
- Immediate
- Straight forward
- Non-punitive
- Give warnings and choices
- Keep it brief – it is an opportunity to learn
- Use if...then messages

E.g. **If** you put your coat on **then** we can go to the park now or we can stay inside.

If you throw your food **then** I will take it away (take away for 5 mins and then return) **Examples:**

Natural

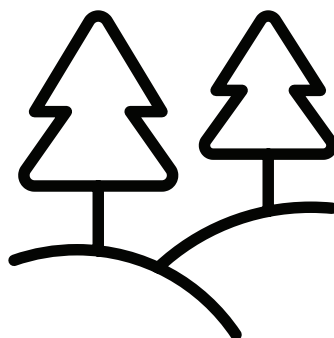
- Jump in a puddle – feet get wet
- Drop your ice cream – can't eat it
- Don't take turns – other child won't want to play

Examples: Logical

- Don't come off the computer – lose computer time later
- Don't eat dinner – no dessert
- Don't tidy room – privileges removed

Remember:

- Non-punitive and non-harmful. This is not about revenge but helping your child to learn
- Selective ignore any protests or whining when giving a consequence
- You can involve your child and ask them what consequences they think are fair – children can often be quite harsh when thinking of consequences so you can help make it more manageable and achievable
- It is an opportunity to help them learn. Shorter is better so that they can try again and have an opportunity for success
- Follow through. You are helping them to learn.





Time Out and Family Rules

Session 7:

Handouts:

1. Time out Guidelines

Agenda:

- **Review of Goals**

Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments

- **Review Home Practice task:**

Review parents' experience of using clear, calm instructions

- **Session Content:**

Helping parents understand the importance of boundaries. Understanding how to use consequences in a framework of positive discipline and supporting parents to use natural and logical consequences for unacceptable behaviour.

- **Home Task:**

For parents to practice using the consequences identified for problematic behaviour and keep a record of how this goes.

To continue special time and specific praise for desirable behaviour

Review of Home Task :

- Ask how they found using consequences
- Problem solve any difficulties
- Check that they are still using positive strategies to promote pro-social behaviour

Time Out

In session 6 you will have already discussed with parents what limit setting strategies they are currently utilising. The phrase time out is widely used now to cover a range of different techniques; some parents may be familiar with the strategy, others may have tried it and found it not to work. If parents are using a time out strategy it will be helpful to gain a sense of what this looks like and how it works for them and their child.

Within our programme and social learning theory time out is a consequence for either persistent (extreme) non-compliance or high tariff (dangerous and destructive) behaviours. It is short for “time out from positive and negative reinforcement” and is a focussed form of removal of parental attention. When the specified period has finished parents should return to providing positive attention. It can be an effective strategy for reducing dangerous and destructive behaviour when used infrequently but consistently. Having a strategy for such behaviours can enable parents to feel in control and calm thereby reducing the likelihood of harsh discipline. Time out as a process can also help to facilitate emotion regulation in a distressed and angry child.

If you are confident that parents are using a time out strategy in a non-punitive and appropriate way which works for their child then there will be little need to change an approach that is working for the family. It may be that they are using phrases such as the ‘naughty’ step in which case it can be helpful to encourage parents to come up with a less judgemental/blaming phrase such as ‘thinking spot’ etc. If you are introducing time out as a strategy for them to use this session ensure that there will be a follow up session (either phone or face to face) to discuss how it went and problem solve any difficulties.

Introducing Time Out

Before:

Explain to parents that they need to discuss and/or rehearse time out with their child when things are calm before using. When explaining ask the child to repeat back so they are sure the child has understood. It can be helpful to either role play with the child or a toy so that both parent and child are clear about what will happen. Time out is usually in a neutral (low stimulation), boring and safe place with the parent nearby, but not in the line of sight, so they know once the child has calmed down and to ensure safety.

Time out cannot end when a child is protesting, arguing or whining, calm here means the absence of these behaviours and is used to help the child understand this. It is better to use the phrase ‘calm and quiet’ rather than stipulating an exact amount of time. Using a fixed amount of time can lead to arguments etc particularly for children with comorbid conditions/traits such as ASC, and for some children the time specified is too long to be effective at first (remember shaping, a first step on the way to target behaviour), and for others it is too short.

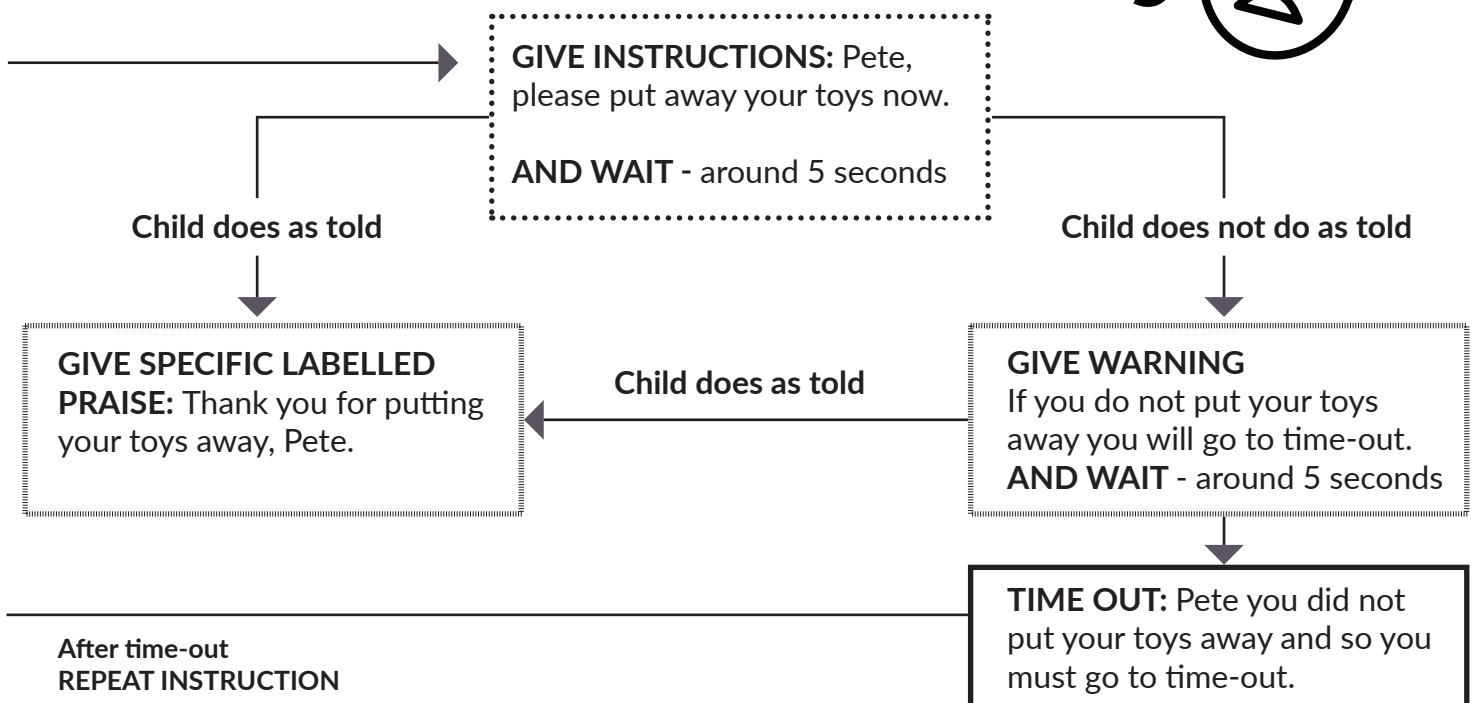
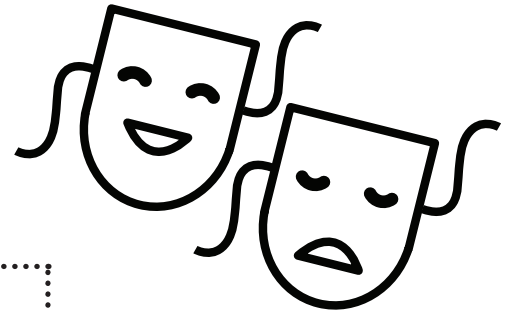
During Time Out:

- Parent gives child clear warning (opportunity to make a choice) [unless violence is extreme – then can go straight to time-out]
- If behaviour continues, child is given clear instruction to go to identified time-out space
- Parent remains close, but does not give attention to child
- **Parent does not end time-out until child is calm** [amount of required time depends on child – but keep it brief – 30 seconds to 2 minutes – children who are dysregulated will require a shorter period of time in order to achieve success, if a child is not dysregulated then 1 – 2mins may be acceptable]
- Return child to time-out space if they leave

Trouble shooting:

- Children not going into calm time
 - For little kids, can pick them up
 - For older children (or if situation feels unsafe), give option of bigger consequence – then withdraw attention until misbehaviour ceases
- Children leaving time
 - Calmly return them (if safe)
 - Or give option of bigger consequence

Children leaving calm time before it's finished



Time Out for persistent non-compliance:

After Time Out:

- Do not revisit reason for being time-out [no forced apology]
- Involve child in positive activity and look for behaviour to praise as soon as possible

but...

- If child is in time-out for non-compliance, then child still needs to comply [or time-out can be used to avoid tasks]
- Prevent further misbehaviour – avoid re-triggering
- Give them a clean slate – show children that the day is not ruined just because one thing goes wrong or one poor decision is made
- Model good emotional regulation (and forgiveness)

Notes for practitioners:

Some parents may have heard of the minute per year of age for children in time out. If this is something they are already using and works for their child this is fine. However, if time out is being newly introduced this is likely to be far too long and will lead to time out not working. For example, many children faced with this task for the first time, will become angry and dysregulated. We want to promote success, and this may well be a task that we want to “shape”, so if we begin to see a change in their angry state, then we would accept maybe 20-30 seconds of looking calmer, as the first step on the way to distinguishing between angry refusal and a calmer state in which the child is more likely to respond to parental requests, and thereby gain access to warmth, love and attention for doing what they’ve been asked to do. For children who are newly learning to regulate their emotions 20-30 seconds may be sufficient.

We want a child to be able to leave time out as soon as they are calm (this means the absence of protesting, arguing, crying, negotiating etc), rather than sitting there for a long time and possibly re-escalating. Even for children who stay calm with the introduction of this new technique, we do not need them to be in timeout for a long time and perhaps a minute will be sufficient to help them learn the difference between being in a state where they are not being attended to, to the benefits of being compliant and calm, and getting parental warmth love and attention.

Research into timeout has shown that while it is incredibly effective when done properly, and it is especially effective for children with more severe presentations, it can be hard for parents to get right on their own, and when they struggle to implement it, then their confidence in this is as a parenting practice drops. One of the reasons why we suggest briefer times is that they are then more likely to be things that parents can implement and make a success of.

Many parents may be used to asking their child to say sorry but this also runs the risk of retriggering a child’s difficult behaviour. It is also important that children feel sorry and learn to express this genuinely rather than being forced into it. It may take some children longer than others to be ready to say sorry. Parents can help support the development of their children’s empathy through:

- Labelling the feelings of others
- Encouraging perspective taking
- Modelling empathy and kindness (including saying sorry)
- When child is calm (some time from episode, too close and although the child may externally appear calm they may still be internally upset and we risk retriggering difficult behaviour or feelings) encourage rather than demand apology
- If apology is needed (i.e. important to parents’ values) give time frame (e.g. by end of day) so child has some control

It can be difficult for parents to feel calm following time out. Encourage them to set their child up with a positive activity and then take a breather (have a cup of tea!) Remind them of the importance of the attention table – time out will only work in conjunction with their lovely positive attention.

Practice:

Think through with parents if time out will be an appropriate strategy for their child. If so, then practice both telling a child about time out and the time out process. It is helpful if you can play the child during the time out practice so that the parents can practice their selective ignoring during the time out process alongside staying calm. Ensure parents re-engage positively with their child.

Family Rules:

Research indicates that children are less likely to misbehave in families that have clearly communicated rules (Patterson and Forgatch 1987). Often within families rules may be implicit but when there are ongoing issues it can be helpful to have four or five explicitly stated family rules. These can help with a smooth household by clearly outlining expectations to children. It can be helpful (and fun) to have a family meeting so that rules can be worked out together. Children are also more likely to follow the rules if they have helped create them.

Guidelines:

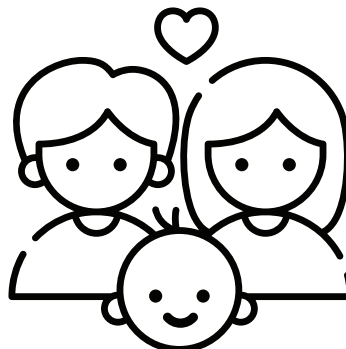
Family Rules need to be:

- Simple
- Fair (apply to everyone in the family)
- Easy to follow
- Positively Stated
- Enforceable

E.g. Avoid saying: 'Stop arguing'
Say: 'Talk quietly and politely'.

Home Task:

- Ask parents to use time out if appropriate
- Ask them to keep a record of how this goes
- Ask parents to set up some family rules with their household
- Problem solve any potential difficulties



Time Out

Before:

Discuss and/or rehearse time out with your child when things are calm. When explaining ask the child to repeat back so you are sure that they have understood. It can be helpful to either role play with your child or a toy so you are both clear about what will happen. E.g. ask them to show going to time out, protesting, arguing and finally 'teddy being calm' so that time out can be finished. Time out is usually in a neutral (low stimulation), boring and safe place where you can be nearby so that you know as soon as your child has calmed down (meaning the absence of protesting, arguing, crying, negotiating etc) and to ensure safety; for children who didn't get upset when put into timeout, then we recommend only a brief period of about a minute or two to help them notice the difference.

During Time Out:

- Gives child clear warning (opportunity to make a choice) [unless violence is extreme – then can go straight to time-out]
- If behaviour continues, child is given clear instruction to go to identified time-out space
- Remains close, but do not give attention to child
- Do not end time-out until child is calm [amount of required time depends on child – but keep it brief – 30 seconds to 2 minutes]
- Return child to time-out space if they leave
- Needs to be delivered calmly [think modelling]

After Time Out

- Do not revisit reason for being in time-out [no forced apology]
- Involve child in positive activity and look for behaviour to praise as soon as possible
- Repair the relationship – showing children that the behaviour was not ok, but they are still loved
- Prevent further misbehaviour – avoid re-triggering
- Give them a clean slate – show children that the day is not ruined just because one thing goes wrong or one poor decision is made
- Model good emotional regulation (and forgiveness)





Ending and Trouble Shooting

Session 8:



Handouts:

1. Maintenance plan

Agenda:

- Review of Goals

Main areas of concern, ratings and discussion of developments

- Review Home Practice task:

Review parents' experience of family rules/time out

- Session Content:

Thinking about how to end the intervention and Strategies for common difficulties.

Ending the Intervention

It is important that there is a follow up session if time out has been introduced to ensure that it is being implemented correctly and to problem solve any difficulties.

When ending review parental goals and congratulate parents on the progress that they have made. It is also helpful to think with parents about a maintenance programme to help maintain the goals that they have made. This might include:

- Who will support them in continuing to use the strategies
- Their plan for going forward
- A framework for future difficulties if they should arise

Putting the strategies together:

Remind parents of the attention table. Children need caregivers who can provide warm, nurturing attention, clear expectations and firm and fair limits appropriate to a child's age and stage. Changing behaviour requires warmth, encouragement and support and a positive relationship with a caregiver provides trust, security and enhanced self esteem.

- Notice/Praise comment: **Pro-social (Speaking nicely, sharing), Regulatory (staying calm, sitting still, thinking), Compliance/helpful.** It is more effective to start with positive strategies to reinforce behaviour before limit setting.
- **Reward:** the learning of new behaviour/skill sets e.g. Setting up routines, going to bed, self care, getting ready for school, behaviour at restaurants, supermarkets, parties etc.
- **Selectively ignore:** Screeching, whining, swearing, tapping – mildly irritating, low level behaviours (not dangerous behaviours) Remember to praise alternative behaviour
- **Effective Instructions and Family Rules: to establish clear expectations**
- **Consequences: For unacceptable behaviour**

The intervention will not necessarily ‘fix’ everything. We are looking to increase parents’ skills to effectively address difficulties as they arise. Hopefully the intervention will have led to increased parental confidence alongside a more positive relationship with their child so that they now feel better able to cope. If any future difficulties arise then it is helpful to remind parents of the general framework for working with behaviour difficulties:

- Identify problem behaviour – be as clear and specific as possible
- Identify goal/incompatible positive behaviour to reinforce and model – what do they want to see the child do instead – state in positive terms
- Identify appropriate praise/reward for positive behaviour
- Identify appropriate response/consequence for misbehaviour
- Put it into practice

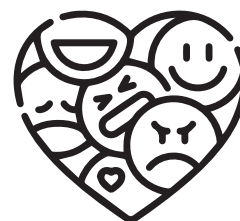
Dealing with future difficulties:

- Identify problem behaviour – be as clear and specific as possible
- Identify goal/incompatible positive behaviour to reinforce and model – what do they want to see the child do instead – state in positive terms
- Identify appropriate praise/reward for positive behaviour
- Identify appropriate response/consequence for misbehaviour

Put it into practice

Other Common Difficulties:

- Bedtime and Morning Routine
- Sibling rivalry
- Parents disagreeing about approach
- Parental self-care



Bedtime and Morning Routine:

Support the parent to think about current steps and timings

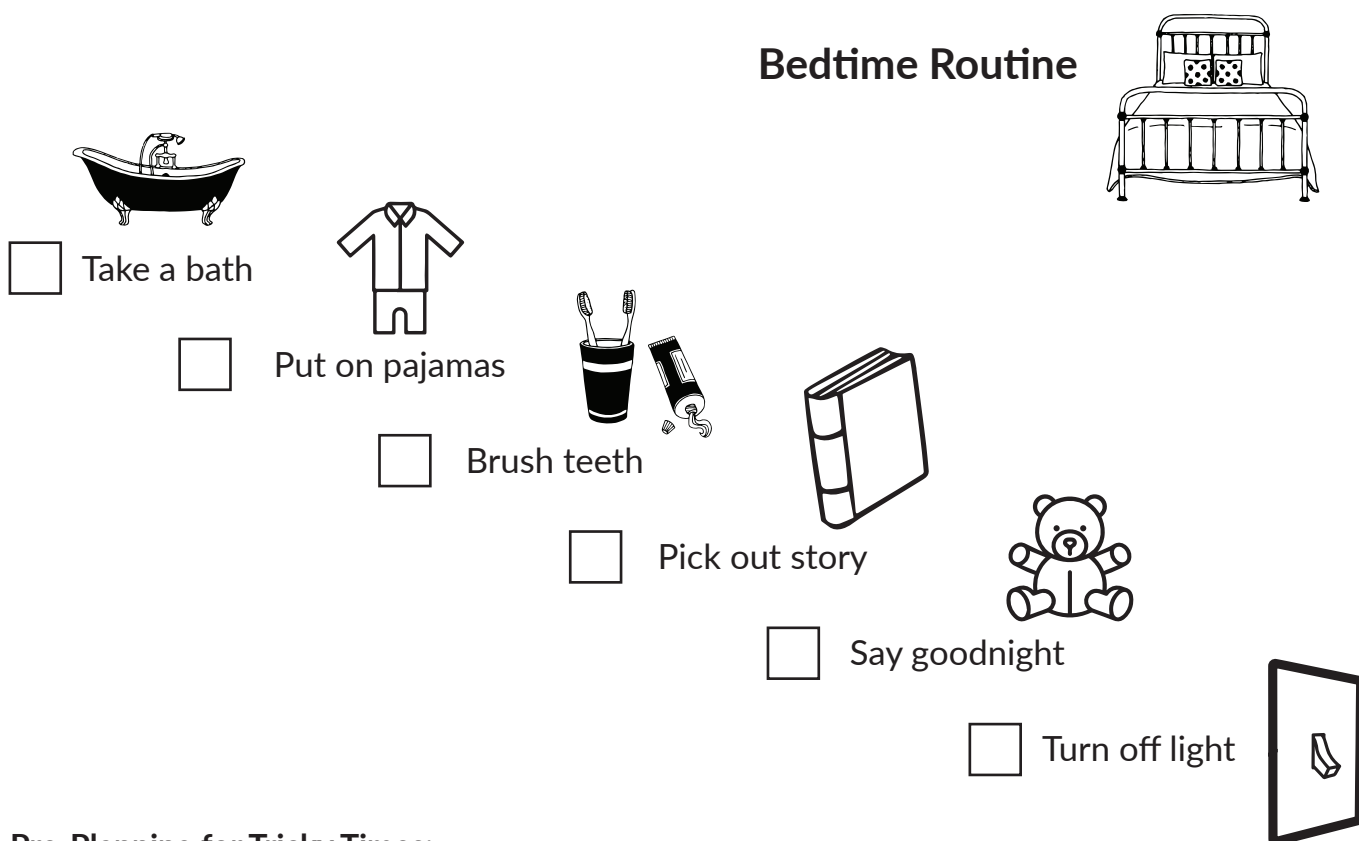
Consider:

- Trigger points
- Use of reinforcement throughout
- The order of steps
- Time needed to complete each step

Work with parent to develop plan, using clear expectations and frequent positive reinforcement. Remember to make steps achievable and small enough, gradually increasing the level of difficulty and ensure that rewards are meaningful for their child.

The Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton 2006) has helpful Information in relation to reward charts.

Bedtime Routine



Pre-Planning for Tricky Times:

- Before situation
 - Discuss appropriate and inappropriate behaviours
 - Check child is aware of rules
 - Decide and organise appropriate activities/options
- In the situation
 - Praise appropriate behaviours
 - Provide different activity if they lose interest in activity
 - Be creative and resourceful
- After the situation
 - Give the child feedback about what went well
 - Set goals for next time

Dadds and Hawes, 2006

Maintenance Plan

What have I learnt from this intervention?

Activities that Johnny enjoys doing with me:

When:

How many times a week?

How I will look after myself:

Rewards; going for a walk, seeing a friend, having a bath

Emotion regulation strategies: coping statements, grounding

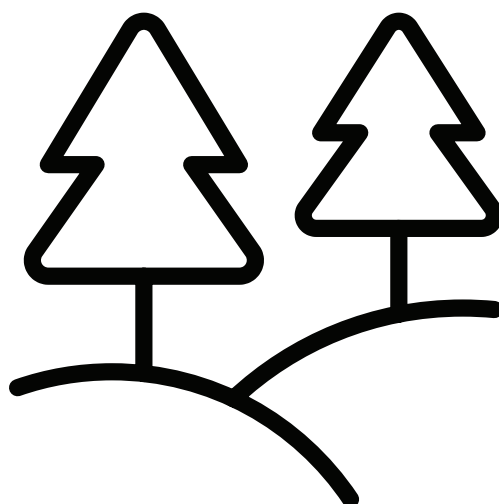
People who can support me: My sister, my friend

Praise for behaviours I want to see more of:

e.g. being kind, being gentle, letting me know how he feels, staying calm when stopping/
changing activities

Rewards for Johnny:

Consequences for misbehaviour:



Parental Self-care:

Although the child is the client the parent is the agent of change and we need them to be healthy and well in order to support their child. Parents can often forget to look after themselves or find themselves in circumstances where it is challenging to do so. However it is vital and not selfish that they do spend time looking after themselves – it is necessary if they are to look after their children to the best of their ability.

Think with them about:

- Familial/social support
- Hobbies
- Time away from home
- Care of physical and mental health

Divided Parents:

- Common for parents to have different expectations of behaviour and views of how to respond – but consistency is important
- Avoid disagreements/arguments in front of children – think ‘united front’
- Support one another (practical and emotional)
- Avoid having one ‘soft’ parent, one ‘tough’ parent (back each other up rather than ‘save’)
- Communicate: Listen and give feedback to one another that is constructive and non-blaming

Sibling Rivalry:

Think positive reinforcement first

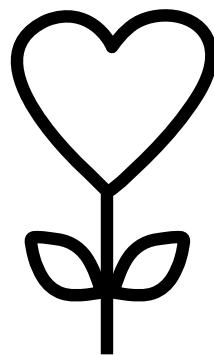
- Reward cooperative play and sharing
- Reward period of non-fighting
- Reward both children as a team
- Spend time with children individually and as a pair
- Reward children for coming and telling you about nice, shared, activities

Dealing with conflict

- Try not to listen to tell-taling
- Minimise refereeing (apply blame equally)
- Apply consequences equally by separating briefly or removing object of argument
- If conflict persists, separate by specifying activities and locations

Dadds and Hawes, 2006

Where necessary sign post parents to appropriate services in the area such as community groups or if necessary to their local CAMHS.



EMOTION REGULATION SUPPLEMENTARY MANUAL

This is a supplementary manual to Guided Self Help for Common Problem Behaviours manual which includes information to help parents with their own emotion regulation. For some parents you may decide that it is helpful for them to go through this supplementary manual before the main manual so they can work on their own emotion regulation first. The use of this manual is formulation driven, i.e. you have identified the need to use it through your formulation, and you should discuss its use with your supervisor before using it.

Some of the ideas in this manual directly relate to those on emotion regulation in week three of the main manual. However, the ideas in week three are written in the context of helping parents to help their children with emotion regulation as opposed to this manual which discusses how to help parents regulate their own emotions. When you get to this part in the main manual you may not need to go through the ideas in as much detail as you will have already covered them in this supplementary manual.

Note for practitioners

As this session is at the start of the intervention, it is particularly important that you spend time at the beginning helping the parent feel comfortable enough to talk to you about how they feel. You will already have begun to create a comfortable environment in which they can share during the assessment. You may want to recap on some of the assessment first and find out how things have been since then so you can practice reflective listening and expressing empathy to create this environment again.

Spend time thinking with the parent about their beliefs about emotions which may be influenced by their culture. You could use conversations you have already had when discussing the cultural iceberg or else initiate conversations using the cultural iceberg to facilitate this thinking.

Different languages also express emotions in different ways and therefore some of the examples listed in this manual may need to be adapted accordingly to ensure they are relatable for the parent.

Emotion Regulation

Emotional literacy can be thought of as the ability to understand our emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathise with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively. An important part of this ability is emotional regulation, wherein an individual can recognise their emotional state and choose how they respond to this emotion. This could include expressing a difficult emotion in a safe and constructive way, engaging in activity that will help to calm them or sharing a pleasant emotion with a loved one (as opposed to allowing strong emotions to take over and overwhelm, or suppressing emotions).

Discuss with the parent the importance of being able to develop effective skills in recognising and regulating emotions, relating this to the formulation, e.g. if the parent tells you that situations often end up in arguments/getting cross with their child etc. Not having the right skills or tools to manage difficult emotions can result in reactive responses to emotions, such as shouting or hitting, or instead shutting down/ignoring emotions when they occur (i.e. emotional suppression). Both can affect the relationship parents build with their children. Additionally, children learn a great deal about emotions and interpersonal skills from their caregivers and other important people in their lives. As a result, how emotions are modelled and reinforced within the home is very important. Reassure the parent that no parent is ever a perfect model of emotion regulation, but there are strategies that can help them to improve their emotional understanding and expression and change how difficult situations are managed in everyday life.

Think with the parent about their current ability to identify and regulate their emotions. Can they readily name a range of emotions as they experience them? Do they find it difficult to be responsive rather than reactive to their emotions? Which emotions do they find harder to regulate than others? What current strategies of emotion regulation do they use?

Naming Emotions and Feelings

Discuss how recognising how they are feeling and naming their emotions provides one of the first steps for effective emotional regulation, as identifying and understanding their emotional experiences means they can choose how to respond to them.

'I'm feeling angry right now!'

'I'm feeling anxious that they aren't doing what I'm asking them to do'

'I'm feeling really sad that he is angry with me'

When naming their emotions discuss with parents the importance of adopting a non-judgemental stance towards these emotions, so that they do not judge themselves for the way they are feeling. They also do not need to change the way they are feeling or 'fix' what is going on. They can simply be curious about the emotion(s) that they are experiencing and validate this for themselves.

Explain to the parent that you are going to teach them a couple of strategies that help them to use the body and mind to regulate their emotions. Discuss with parents how we experience a physical feeling in our body when we have emotions (hence why we call them feelings) and when naming their emotions encourage parents to start noticing where in the body they feel this emotion. Explain that alongside naming their emotions this is one of the first steps of emotion regulation. When they name their emotion to themselves, they can also name what they are feeling in their body.

'I'm feeling really angry right now! I'm aware of this feeling in my chest and arms'

'I'm feeling anxious that they aren't doing what I'm asking them to do. I can feel this in my tummy'

'I'm feeling really sad that he is angry with me. I can feel this in my throat and face'

Discuss with them about also trying to adopt a non-judgemental approach to what they feel in their body, again trying not to change the way they are feeling but to just notice it. Attempting to change the emotion, ignoring it or telling themselves that they shouldn't feel this way stop them from adopting healthy and constructive ways of regulating their emotions. This makes it more likely for big emotions to overwhelm them when they occur.

Explain to the parent that no-one is born with the ability to regulate their emotions, and this takes practice over time. As with any new skill, they will need to practice this frequently and it may take some time to become automatic. However, as we all have emotional experiences throughout the day (and many parents find they especially have lots around their children!) there will be many moments to practice it. You could use the analogy of learning to drive a car and how the parent would not expect to be able to learn to drive straight away but this takes practice over time. It is the same when learning emotion regulation, this is something which needs to be practiced just the same.



Emotion Regulation Strategies

Breathing - demonstrate this/these technique(s) and practice with the parent. Discuss with them afterwards to find out what they noticed when they used it.

Grounding - demonstrate this technique and practice it with the parent. Discuss with them afterwards to find out what they noticed when they used it.

Calming self talk - encourage the parent to create statements with you in the session. These are things they can say to help themselves when they are feeling overwhelmed by an emotion.

e.g. "I'm feeling really angry right now, this is a hard situation, but it will pass soon"

"I'm feeling really overwhelmed but I know I can stay calm"

"I feel anxious that I don't know what to do but it will be alright and I can cope"

Home Task

For the home task this week discuss with the parent about choosing one of the emotion regulation strategies that they would like to use and then ask them to complete the diary to keep of record of how they get on with this. If they would like to use more than one, then think with them first about which strategy they will use for each emotion.

Each week therefore after include a check-in to see how they are getting on with these emotion regulation strategies for themselves.

Emotion Regulation Diary

Describe the situation <i>What happened? Who was there? Where was I?</i>	How did I feel? <i>Angry? Sad? Upset? Anxious?</i>	Where did I feel this in my body? <i>Head? Arms? Torso? Tummy?</i>	What emotion regulation strategy did I use? <i>Breathing? Grounding? Calming Self-Talk?</i>	What did I notice when I used this strategy? <i>What happened to the emotion?</i>