



Parental Tool Kit:

Ideas and strategies to help you manage your child's / teen's behaviour

Managing your child's behaviour successfully relies on having the right tools available for each child.

There are many tried and tested tools that we can use - not all will work with every child, all of the time – but one or two, or even a combination of tools, will work for most children, most of the time.

You are the expert on your own child, so finding a selection of the right tools for your child may depend on the situation - encourage the behaviour you'd like to see more of.

Remember that there is always an emotion behind your child's behaviour - this will help you to respond in the best way and choose the most effective tool.

Household Rules

- Involve your children in agreeing household rules – this can help to ensure they stick to them
- For older children and teens, negotiate the times they need to be home and which chores they agree to be responsible for
- Review the rules - add to them or change if necessary
- Make sure that the rules include **all** the family, including the parent(s) & that everyone sticks to them

Setting Boundaries

- Helps children understand what is acceptable and unacceptable
- Encourages self-discipline
ie. deciding not to cheat and lie, or complete homework tasks without being told

Time Out

- Use Time Out for occasions when all other discipline methods have been tried
- Offers cooling-off time for children & parents
- Works best with 3 to 8 year olds – if you have an older child and have not used Time Out before, do not start
- If a child is resisting - be firm, gentle and consistent
- The child's own bedroom is not a good place for Time Out - try a 'thinking' (not 'naughty') chair or place
- Time Out may not be appropriate for children who are on the Autistic Spectrum or who have been fostered, adopted or been in the care system

Star Charts and Rewards

- Effective for quickly changing behaviour
- Successful because they motivate the child
- The rewarded behaviour becomes habit fairly quickly
- Stars or stickers are good for younger children
- For older children, a system where points are accrued & can be exchanged for agreed reward could work
- Pick behaviours that are easily achievable, as this will motivate
- Stars should never be taken away
- Child should be involved in choosing rewards
- The 'reward' does not have to be material – the best reward of all could be time with the parent

Praise

- Use praise to reinforce positive behaviour, which will encourage your child to repeat the behaviour
- Describe the positive behaviour - be specific so they know what they have done well
- State the effect, if there is one & say how you feel about it

Teaching Consequences

If a consequence is given after the event, it becomes a punishment, and the child has no opportunity to change their behaviour.

- Consequences should
 - Be relevant to the situation
 - Be realistic and achievable
 - Be clearly explained in advance
 - Give the child a choice over their actions
 - Be immediate

For more information, please contact the Parenting Team via email to

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