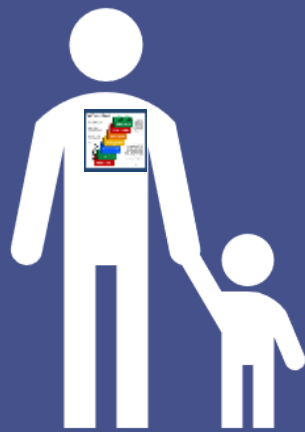


POSITIVE PARENTING



Boundaries

Structure & Routines

PREDICTABILITY

When the world is unpredictable and confusing there is a lot of uncertainty which can lead to anxiety.

Many children have a need to control activity and interaction around them. To help deal with this insecurity and anxiety, we have to decrease the uncertainty in their lives.



REWARDS & CONSEQUENCES

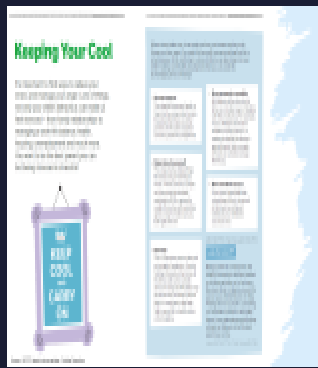
Children need to learn that being good feels good. They do this by having lots of chances to do well and getting rewarded for it. You can help with this by giving rewards for the behaviours that you want to see in your children.



ASSAULT CYCLE

One recognised method of identifying actions that can lead to challenging behaviours is the 'Assault Cycle'. Learning and understanding the phases of the cycle will help you to identify the patterns of behaviour, observe and resist your child's response spontaneously. As the child becomes increasingly stressed about a perceived threat, the intensity of their reactions escalates. Their reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature, with one associated with behavioural, physical and psychological responses.

Phase	What is happening?	What is the child's response?	What is the parent's response?	What is the child's response?	What is the parent's response?
1. Trigger	Something happens that the child perceives as a threat.	The child becomes increasingly stressed about a perceived threat.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.
2. Escalation	The child's stress levels increase and they become more agitated.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.
3. Peak	The child's stress levels reach their highest point and they become very agitated.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.
4. De-escalation	The child's stress levels decrease and they become less agitated.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.
5. Resolution	The child's stress levels return to normal and they are calm.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.	The child's reaction and response to the threat is cyclical in nature.	Observe and resist your child's response spontaneously.

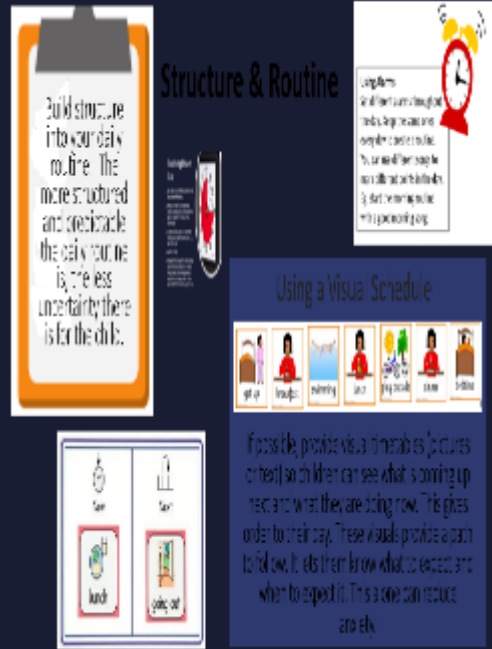


Boundaries

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Structure & Routines

How can I set boundaries?

All children need love, guidance and to have rules and boundaries. Rules and boundaries help families to understand how to behave towards each other, and what's OK and not OK. But the best way to go about this will vary based on your child's age and stage of development. All children are different and develop and reach milestones at different rates.



Top tips...

for all ages

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

for babies – toddlers

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

for school age – teenagers

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

Structure & Routine

Build structure into your daily routine: The more structured and predictable the daily routine is, the less uncertainty there is for the child.

Using Alarms

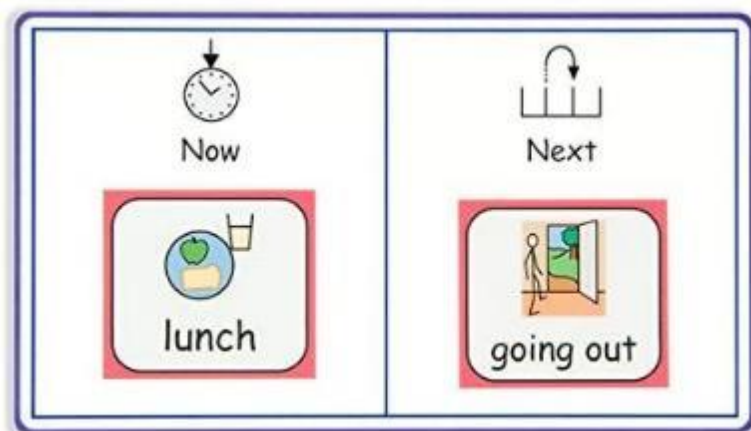
Set different alarms throughout the day. Keep the same ones every day to create a routine. You can use different songs to mark different points in the day. Eg. start the morning routine with a good morning song.



Using a Visual Schedule



If possible, provide visual timetables (pictures or text) so children can see what is coming up next and what they are doing now. This gives order to their day. These visuals provide a path to follow. It lets them know what to expect and when to expect it. This alone can reduce anxiety.



Transitioning between Tasks

1. Some children can have difficulty switching their brain activity between different tasks.
2. They do much better if they have warnings or reminders when one activity is ending and another is beginning, especially if the current activity is a favourite activity.
3. To ease transition difficulties try to ensure that the child always knows what will be coming up next, e.g. watch TV, then bath.
4. Use timers if it helps.
5. This way their brain is prepared for what is coming up next, and the reminders help bridge the transition. This is particularly useful for limiting time spent on devices – there are some apps available that allow you to control this from your phone, e.g. screen time.



Keeping Your Cool

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



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

- **Accept support**

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

- **Make time for yourself**

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

- **Get help**

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

- **Be as prepared as possible**

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

- **Don't overlook success**

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

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Look after yourself

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

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REWARDS & CONSEQUENCES

Top Tip 1

Give rewards for behaviours that you want to see more of

Top Tip 2

Give the reward as soon as possible

Top Tip 3

Get the behaviour before you give the reward

Top Tip 4

Make the reward the right size for the behaviour

Top Tip 5

Stick to your promises

Top Tip 6

Give your child lots of clear, specific praise at the same time as giving the reward

Children need to learn that being good feels good. They do this by having lots of chances to do well and getting rewarded for it. You can help with this by giving rewards for the behaviours that you want to see in your children.



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- Star charts work particularly well for children aged 4 – 12 years old
- Choose the behaviour that you want to see more of
- Choose the reward
- Choose how many stars your child must earn before they get the reward
- Make sure the first few stars come particularly fast
- Make sure that what you are asking is manageable
- Get your child involved
- Never mark up failures on a star chart
- Leave days and dates off the chart



Star Charts

Some Ideas for Simple Rewards...

Getting to stay up half an hour later

Painting your child's nails

Getting to choose what sort of take-away to order

Watching a favourite cartoon

Having a friend around to stay over

Half an hour on the PlayStation

A small toy (e.g. something from a pound shop)

A trip to the park

A magazine

ASSAULT CYCLE

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What you might see:	What you might see:	What you might see:	What you might see:	What you might see:	What you might see:
<p>An obvious 'quick' trigger such as a word or an action.</p> <p>A 'slow-burning' trigger such as tiredness or hunger.</p> <p>Nothing – Sometimes you just <u>don't</u> see a clear trigger.</p> <p>You need to be aware of what the very first signs of any triggers are; changes in activity, tone of voice etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not able to understand or communicate emotions • Frustration • Anger • Worry • Confusion • Not sure how to solve a problem 	<p>There are likely to be more obvious behaviours increasing throughout this phase.</p> <p>Throughout the cycle, what you see will be very individual.</p> <p>Some children show this by the volume of their speech increasing, or repetitive behaviours such as tapping, being more argumentative, or a whole range of changes in their behaviour.</p> <p>One thing to keep in mind is that some children may be increasingly quiet or withdrawn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not feeling able to communicate emotions • Frustration • Worry • Confusion • Not sure how to solve a problem 	<p>'Explosive' behaviours, aggressive behaviours, hitting, shouting, pushing, pulling, threatening, crying, running, hiding.</p> <p>Signs that the 'emotional brain' is in control, such as impulsive actions and speech, and speech that may not make as much sense due to the nature of the emotional outburst.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling like they can't trust anyone • Extreme anger or frustration • Threatened by the situation • Feeling people are against them • Feeling unsafe 	<p>The intensity of behaviours are starting to reduce. </p> <p>Signs that the 'thinking brain' is in control such as speech becoming more logical, actions appearing to be more controlled, and physical signs of becoming more relaxed such as shoulders dropping or breathing becoming slower.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting to feel safe • Becoming more aware of things or the people around them 	<p>Crying, negative speech, very quiet, being tired, falling asleep.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of their actions • Shame • Guilt 	<p>Back to their 'normal'.</p> <p>Able to chat and have a conversation either about what has happened or about other things.</p> <p>They may get more animated when talking about the triggers, but they are able to control those and they are not above their baseline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted • Encouraged • Positive

• Words in **bold** are feelings the child might be feeling during each phase

The 7 Confident Thoughts

'The 7 Confident Thoughts' are the building blocks of self-assurance and self-confidence. People who can think in this way will be more ready to cope with and manage any changes that may arise.



Other people respect me

People are generally pretty nice

I have some control in my life

Bad things don't often pop up out of the blue

Bad things don't happen often

I can cope with most things

The world is pretty safe

Happy, confident children are those who have a feeling that the world is safe, that they can cope with most things, that they have some control over their lives and that people are generally nice.

Children who feel that the world is fraught with danger or that they cannot cope (even if they actually can) are prone to anxiety and other mental health problems. So they need to start developing the belief that the world is safe and that they can cope with whatever life throws at them. In order to do this we should teach them about how our thoughts have a huge impact on our feelings and behaviours.