



#InclusiveEducation



Tips for behaviour management



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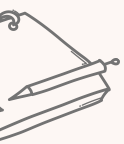


It goes without saying that all children are individual, with their own individual needs, strengths, and challenges. When thinking about 'bad' or 'undesirable' behaviour, it should be remembered that tailored, reflexive, and consistent approaches may be required to help support the child or young person in the education setting, and at home. It is worth noting that 'behaviour' is almost invariably communication – and should be treated as such. An up to date and thorough knowledge of the child, including information (where appropriate) of their education history, home life, and background can help to understand more of where any behaviour is stemming and/or what is being communicated.



Professional help and guidance should be sought when and where required and advice heeded for the benefit of the child, peers, and school staff. The physical and emotional wellbeing of all involved should be paramount in discussions around a child's behaviour.

For children who are struggling to regulate their behaviour it is useful to establish consistent routines, expectations of behaviour, parameters, rules, rewards, and sanctions early on, and stick to these where possible. That said, an ethos of reflection on what works and what doesn't work, and how things can be improved or adapted is also important (but high expectations can remain fixed). Children should feel confident, safe, and secure in the knowledge that certain parts of their day are fixed and predictable, unless given ample warning in advance. E.g., certain morning routines, order of lessons/activities, regular adults, and class protocols.



Often, things will need to change or be adjusted slightly, but if the child is made aware, and any new staff are informed, this can help to cushion any alterations. Particularly for the secondary setting, all staff working with the child in question must be given some simple instructions about what works and what doesn't, what approaches to take, and what reward and sanction systems are in place (if slightly tailored from the general school policy). Being generally much smaller, primary settings can share this information more easily/effectively.





Regular observations of the child, with a view to improving the school offer, are essential. Watching and listening to the child's interactions with other children and staff will help illuminate any social barriers to their participation in, and enjoyment of, their day. Seeing how they cope with learning activities, such as listening, reading, writing, and working in a group may help highlight where extra support is required (or where it needs to be removed). Seek out where the child succeeds and learn from this. E.g., They may flourish in maths or PE – what can be taken from this into areas where they struggle? They may respond better/worse to one member of staff – why?



Communication with home is essential, as partnership with the child's family/carers is vital in approaching behaviour needs consistently. Try to establish good communication and rapport with the child's family through regular informal conversations and updates.

Leaving a long time between meetings, only to give bad news is not conducive to a productive relationship. Set up a regular form of communication either by face-to-face conversations, emails, phone calls, or a home/school diary where open and honest comments can be shared. Put reminders in your diary to speak to the family, to ensure it's not left too long. Share and record successes, no matter how small.



Make time / give staff time to get to know the child and give the child time to get to know the staff and other children. Encourage friendships and try to ensure the child doesn't miss out on opportunities for socialising, if safe to do so. Try to find a balance between being law enforcer, teacher, and social worker. Start each day afresh with positivity towards the child, but not over familiar to lose authority. Always follow through with a threat – empty threats can reinforce a child's distrust in, or disrespect for, adults. Knowing where they stand, on positive or negative matters, can give a child a feeling of security and safety. Being too harsh or lenient emphasises and fosters insecurity.



Set the child up for success. Explicitly plan in opportunities for the child to be successful, even if this is a very short activity or request. Include as many other children in this activity as possible to promote a feeling of inclusion and acceptance. Celebrate this and record it, remembering to treat all the children fairly and equally celebrating peer success. Anticipate where problems will arise on an hourly, daily, weekly, and termly scale. As you get to know the child, this will become easier for staff to predict and adapt to. As you more deeply understand when and where issues crop up, you can begin to adapt and pre-empt these situations.

