

## Top Tips for Managing Behaviour

### Look at the Behaviour in Context

If there's been a sudden change in your child's behaviour see if you can put the behaviour in context. Have there been any changes in your child's life? Are they having problems at school? If there's a reason for your child's behaviour see if you can help them find a solution.

Be prepared that your child may not want to talk to you about what's wrong. Whether they talk to you or not is less important than them knowing that you're there for them if they change their mind.

### Establish Clear Behavioural Expectations

Sit down with your child and ask them to help you come up with a set of reasonable expectations for problem areas. For example, if time on Facebook is a constant source of tension, ask your child what they think is a reasonable Facebook limit for weekdays and weekends. Negotiate a mutually agreeable solution. It's critical that this process is collaborative – if your child feels they've been involved in the process they're more likely to respect the rules.

Be specific when establishing guidelines. For example, if you agree that your child can spend 45-minutes on Facebook decide on a specific time and consider how the time will be monitored. For example, will you give your child a 5-minute time warning or are they responsible for finding you to tell you that they're off Facebook?

Make sure you only work on 1-2 problem areas at a time.

### Set Up Consequences

Once you've agreed on a behavioural goal ask your child to think of a reasonable consequence for not achieving the goal. When you've agreed on a consequence, write it down and both sign it.

Keep in mind that consequences are only effective if they're meaningful, time-limited, and followed through with. Example consequences are: withdrawal of a privilege for 24-48 hours (e.g. Facebook, TV, computer, or phone) or 20-minutes of chore time.

### Establish Rewards

Rewards are a tangible recognition of your child's effort and are just as important as consequences. Without rewards children can feel that it's pointless to try because everyone only ever notices their bad behaviour.

Ask your child to think of reasonable rewards for achieving their behaviour goal. Example rewards are: extra time with friends on the weekend, having a friend over, extra Facebook on the weekend, or a slightly later bedtime on the weekend.

## BEHAVIOUR

**Challenging behaviour isn't uncommon in children and adolescents, but some children develop behaviour that's more challenging and difficult than the behaviour of their peers.**

**Signs of problem behaviour are:**

- Argumentativeness
- Temper outbursts
- Aggression
- Being deliberately annoying
- Blaming others
- Refusing to comply with requests
- Being touchy or easily annoyed
- Anger and resentment
- Deceitfulness

**Kids and teens might develop problem behaviour for a number of reasons, but common causes are:**

- Anxiety and depression
- Friendship problems
- Bullying
- Family conflict
- Divorce and separation
- Learning difficulties
- Change

**If your child's behaviour is difficult to manage there are a number of things you can try, start with these tips.**

**If your child's behaviour continues to cause problems speak to your GP about a referral to a child and adolescent clinical psychologist.**