

Q&A

Putting in place a mentoring framework for teachers and managing children's challenging behaviours.

Q I would like to establish a mentoring framework in my centre for my educators. How do I go about it and what are the pitfalls to avoid?

Rebecca Han: Mentoring is a relationship based on trust. Good mentoring can lead to positive outcomes for both the mentor and mentee's professional development. It can enhance the overall quality of teaching, improve performance and retain educators. Here are some guidelines to help you get started:

➤ **Identify the mentors**

The mentor needs to be able to commit time and resources to help other educators grow and develop professionally. He or she should possess good interpersonal skills and a warm personality that draws people to him/her.



for professionals

➤ **Ensure 'goodness-of-fit' between mentors and mentees**
The higher the compatibility, the more positive outcomes the mentee will reap. Factors to consider include personality traits, communication styles, personal values and work ethics.

➤ **Processes involved in establishing the mentor-mentee relationship**

Set and clarify expectations and roles right from the start so all parties are clear about the objectives, process and outcomes. Establish goals that can help both mentor and mentee review and track progress, and schedule regular sessions to discuss performance and development.

GOOD MENTORING CAN ENHANCE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF TEACHING, IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND RETAIN EDUCATORS.

//Ms Rebecca Han

Q How can I effectively manage challenging behaviours in my child?

Sai Jun Lin: Often, children exhibit challenging behaviours to communicate a specific message. Usually, the purpose is to gain consequences that are positive to them such as to gain adults' attention; or get/avoid a task or object. Understanding the function and purpose of these behaviours enables you as a parent to better manage them. However, keep in mind that



for parents

your child's cognitive ability, temperament, medical and health conditions need to be considered when managing challenging behaviours.

When a challenging behaviour is triggered, do not respond with positive consequences. For example, you should not get your child a toy after he or she screams and lies on the floor in a toy store. Instead, help to trigger alternative and more appropriate behaviours in your child such as reminding him or her to ask for a toy verbally, instead of screaming and crying. Provide a positive consequence such as specific praise, if he or she responds appropriately.

Sometimes, it may not be feasible to help your child achieve what he or she wants, even if he or she displays appropriate behaviour. For example, you cannot always get a new toy for your child even if he or she asks nicely. In situations like these, carry out alternative consequences that will not reinforce his or her challenging behaviours. For example, carry the child away from the toy store without buying the toy, even if he or she screams and cries when you say 'no'. Most importantly, be consistent in dealing with challenging behaviours. Your child will learn more quickly what the expected and desirable behaviours are. ♥

Ask The Experts!



REBECCA HAN is a Senior Programme Specialist with Odyssey the Global Preschool (Busy Bees). She works closely with curriculum mentors and teachers on coaching, mentoring and teachers training, and is also involved in curriculum design and development. She received the Early Childhood Teacher Award in 2008 for her contribution in mentoring other teachers. Rebecca was appointed an ECDA Fellow in April 2015.



SAI JUN LIN is a psychologist at the Department of Child Development, KK Women's and Children's Hospital. She works with children with developmental concerns as well as their families. She has a Master of Educational Psychology from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne.