

# Helping Parents Promote Better Behaviours in Young Children

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# What would you do about this?



# How about this?



[momnivores-dilemma.com](http://momnivores-dilemma.com)

The First Years

**And this?**



# Today's session

- Understanding children's behaviour
- Strategies to promote better behaviours in young children

# Facts All Family Should Know

- Genetic make-up or temperament, family environment and learning and experiences often help to shape children's behaviour.
- All behaviour is a form of communication.
- All behaviour has a purpose : Understand the motivation driving the behaviour
- There can be many reasons behind one specific behaviour.
- Behaviour is related to the context in which it is observed.
- Challenging behaviours result from “lagging skills” and “unmet needs”
- Children engage in challenging behaviour because it ‘works’ for them.

# **Facts All Family Should Know**

- Adults can learn to understand and interpret children's challenging behaviour.
- Children's challenging behaviour can be reduced with support, not punishment.

# Understanding Children's Behaviours

- Typical vs Challenging Behaviour

Age/Stage	Typical Behaviours
Toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tantrums</li><li>• Terrible Twos – “ No” being the most used word</li><li>• Emerging independence</li><li>• Bites or hits</li></ul>
Preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Test limits</li><li>• Asks “ Why” a lot</li><li>• May tell lies, steal or argue</li></ul>



# Understanding Children's Behaviours

## What is challenging Behaviour?

Challenging behaviour has been described as any behaviour that:

- Feels overwhelming to the caregiver;
- Is harmful to the child, other children or adults;
- Interferes with a child's cognitive, social and emotional development;
- Prevents optimal learning.



# Understanding Children's Behaviours

## Purposes of Challenging Behaviour

- **To gain attention – positive and negative**
- **To escape attention**
- **To engage in a preferred activity**
- **To escape from a task**
- **For physical pleasure**
- **To escape physical pain**

# Be a Detective...

## Gather the A, B,Cs facts



- **Antecedent: what happens BEFORE the behaviour (trigger)**
- **Behaviour : what the target behaviour looks like**
- **Consequence: what happens AFTER the behaviour (outcome)**

# Let's practice...

- Refer to Handout I

# Proactive strategies...



## 1) **Prevention**

- Identify child's strengths
- Set expectation and stick to them
- Adapt the environment
- Giving effective instructions
- Teach important skills

## 2) **Planned Responses**

when challenging behaviours do arise...  
Different responses for different behaviours

Consider the **nature** of the behaviour

- Basket 1: Safety issue – cannot ignore
- Basket 2: Not a safety issue, but potentially problematic → MAY ignore or respond
- Basket 3: Not a safety issue, not that big of a deal → consider letting it go

# Planned Responses

- Positive Reinforcement strategies/rewards
- Loss of privilege
- Time-out

# Punishment



- Works Immediately
- Decreases likelihood of behaviour
- **BUT not effective for long-term behavioural change**

## Limitations:


- Causes intense, emotional responses
- May model aggressive behaviour
- Teaches what NOT to do
- Does not build skills or knowledge about what TO DO.
- Strains relationships.





# Closing Points

- The goal is improvement, not perfection
- Focusing on your relationship, the positives and the child's strengths will help you choose the best behaviour strategies
- The hope is that we can limit behaviour problems over time , so that the individual can live a fulfilling adulthood.
  - The 'endpoint' is not tomorrow or next month
  - celebrate the small successes along the way



**Q & A**



thank  
thank  
you!