



parenting@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

Positive parenting skills practitioners can pass on to parents.

'Time In' or Positive Attention

- Giving your children positive attention – through playing, enjoying a TV programme together, outings or other family activities. Help them or encourage them to learn new skills – children can enjoy learning gardening, cooking, music, sports, arts and crafts etc.

Praise/ Encouragement

- Praise your children for everyday things they do like getting ready on time or playing well together. Say 'thank you' when they are helpful etc. In particular use praise to comment on behaviours you want to see more of. 'Well done for staying calm even though you were fed up.'

Listening

- Use listening skills to support children and young people if they are upset. Give them your full attention, hold back from giving them advice, guess what they might be feeling (their behaviour or tone of voice gives you clues to how they are feeling, if they slam the door they probably feeling angry or fed up!) and say it. 'You sound upset/angry/worried or disappointed etc.' Keep the focus on them. Say what they are saying to you back to them, using your own words, so they feel heard.

Planned Ignore/ Distract/ Redirect

- Use 'planned ignore' to ignore minor irritating behaviours such as attitude or possibly swearing. Offer distraction or a positive comment once the irritating behaviour has stopped. Praise the opposite desired behaviour and use 'self-calming' techniques to manage your own irritation.

Clear limits/ Talking

- Use assertiveness skills to set boundaries or challenge their behaviour. For instance try using 'I' messages to let them know how you are feeling and/or what you need. 'I' messages ('I'm feeling tired/fed up/stressed and I want you to stay in your bedroom until you get to sleep') work better than 'you' messages, which are more blaming of the other person ('you are stressing me out').

Clear limits/ Rules / Consistency

- Ask for the behaviour you do want – notice any time you say 'don't.... and think about what behaviour you do want to happen. "Can you talk in a polite way at granny's house" – instead of "don't swear in front of granny".



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Clear Limits / Talking

- Notice any 'labels' – words like naughty, rude, selfish, lazy etc and describe the behaviour instead. Think about what your child is doing or not doing that is stressful for you and say it to them using descriptive language. So instead of 'you're always so selfish' try 'you snatched that toy from your brother and now he's upset.'

Rewards/ Celebrations

- Star charts with rewards work well. They work best when used for one issue at a time, the expected behaviour is achievable, the reward is something the young person wants, and the timescale not too long. Sticker, spontaneous rewards and 'kindness' charts work equally well to increase the families focus positive behaviours.

Consequences

- Choices and Consequences. One of the ways children need to learn about choice is that they have a choice about how they behave. This is an important life skill. Choices and consequences can help the adult stay in charge whilst the child keeps some power too. It ends the "Do as I say!" – "Shan't" stalemate. Using choices and consequences as part of a positive approach to discipline can reduce arguments and confrontations quite dramatically e.g. When you want a child to tidy up, you could offer a choice, "You can tidy away the toys now or do it later. If you put them away now, you can watch TV before you go to bed. If you choose to do it later there won't be time for TV tonight. It's up to you."

Consequences

- Time out to calm down. This skill needs to be planned carefully in practical terms (eg using a special room, a particular location). Identify a location that is safe but boring and non-reinforcing for the child, perhaps using a step or chair for young children. Target behaviour should be defined clearly by parent in consultation and cooperation with child if possible. No more than one or two behaviours should be used at a time. Time out to calm down is usually best taught within the context of a parenting course. Time out will only 'work' if there is good quality 'time in'.