

Promoting Positive Behaviour and Self-Regulation

Try to get inside their head

Sympathise with how your child may be feeling. Their thoughts and behaviours might seem irrational or even naughty to us on the outside. But inside they're trying to make sense of their experiences of the world and their needs. If we can take the time to understand, we can help them. Ask yourself: are they tired? Bored? Overwhelmed?

Catch children being good

How often do you focus on the mealtime where your child doesn't eat, rather than the mealtime where they do? Good behaviour should not be taken for granted.

Be sure to praise your little one for doing well and staying on track. Evidence shows that young children are very responsive to praise. Rewarding them, even with a simple 'well done', has been shown to lead to fewer behavioural problems later down the line.

Diversion ahead

Positive parenting often means distracting children from behaving in ways you don't want. You could try to pre-empt any conflicts by anticipating what might happen. Then employ a distraction technique before it does happen.

Preparation and Rewards

Prepare your child visually, what is happening the week ahead, so children can prepare for the week ahead. Simple things you will be doing anyway..... turn it into a reward.

Think of yourself as their lawyer

Stick with us here. You don't have to agree with their demands or behaviour but ask for their side of story and give it a fair hearing.

You could show them this by reasoning with them fairly, with empathy and constructively. Then you can help them find a positive solution to their problem. Think about how you'd like to be represented and treated. Be their ally.

Take time

It's easy for us to be (a) distracted – we're looking at you, phone, and (b) busy – we're looking at you, housework. But reading aloud, having conversations, and playing with your child are the classic cornerstones of positive parenting. Encourage these positive interactions together. Get down to their level and be a kid with them. And be available so they'll come to you when something is wrong, or they're upset. Listening to them from a young age sets up a positive pattern for life.

Feeling frazzled? Angry? Stressed?

It's common sense that being angry might affect your ability to positively parent in that moment. But children can pick up on other emotions like stress from a young age. Your stress and relationship tension makes them stressed too. So, step away for a few deep breaths, or ask family or friends for support if your emotions are building up. Looking after your emotional health and wellbeing is paramount, you need to love yourself.

