

## **Behaviour Management Training**

To be used as a guide when showing team members how to effectively manage the behaviour of the children in their group during day to day situations and activities.

### **Speaking to the children and giving instructions**

- Always gain children's attention by saying their name first before telling them something or giving them instructions otherwise they do not know that you are speaking to them and it may seem as if they are ignoring you.
- Never shout to children from across a room, go over to them and get down to their level so that you are able to make eye contact, this will reinforce to the child that it is them that you are speaking to.
- Some of the younger or less attentive children may need instructions given to them on a one to one basis. If after telling the whole group something you can see that some children have not understood, go over to them and explain again (again do not just assume they are deliberately ignoring you).
- Do not give instructions quickly, take your time and pause briefly between instructions to allow the children uninterrupted time to process and respond to each step.
- Phrase instructions so that they are clear and not implied e.g. Tom I need you to.....(and not can you...)
- Use a multi sensory approach - use visual aids such as flashcards and props to aid understanding. For example choose a "tidy up" song with the children and teach them that every time it plays its time to tidy up! For the younger children a flash card or use sign language to go with what you are saying will always help and is quieter.
- Don't forget that sometimes children may still ignore your instructions and it is at this point that you need to use the choices and consequence method with them. (See training sheet)

### **Circle time and small group activities**

- Use flash cards (ComIT) cards to encourage good sitting, listening etc - These are cards with visual images on them such as a mouth, a child sitting and an ear that the children can learn to associate with the action required. By teaching the children these basic actions it will provide them with the skills needed to participate in any group activity and will make your activities far more focused and enjoyable for everyone.
- It may sometimes be necessary with new children or less attentive children to just do circle time focussed around these cards to begin with in order to be able to progress on to other activities. Consider games such as asking the children to stand up and jump around and then produce the good sitting card as a cue to sit back down, and don't forget LOTS of praise for the good sitters.
- When directing children to an activity explain why they will be doing it - think, would you jump off a bridge just because someone told you to!
- Again, with the younger children, use sign language

### **Tidy up time and when its time to move to another place**

- Give a warning that free play will be ending approximately five minutes before - consider using a timer to show the children that they have five minutes left. Also use a song to signal the start of tidy up time (see above)
- Praise all attempts at tidying up no matter how small.

- Make praise specific so that others understand what they have done and will follow..."Good boy Tom, you have put the bat away"
- Use proximity praise to highlight other children following instructions "Look at Tom putting those books away"
- Use "I would be very happy if someone would put the.....away for me"
- Don't forget to get involved, don't just stand and give instructions SHOW the children how to tidy up!!

### **General points**

- Use the children's interest to get them involved in different types of activities - e.g. if you know some of your children love playing with animals but don't like to go outside hide animals around the garden and go on safari with the camera ☺ Or if there is a child who does not visit the writing table but loves superhero's get some Spiderman pencils for that area!
- Introduce "my turn" "your turn" to help children understand the turn taking nature of a conversation.
- When introducing a new skill or activity make sure you model the requirements of it. So if you want the children to crawl like spiders show them how, otherwise how are they supposed to know?

It is also important not to forget the level of voices when with a group, children will respond in the same way you speak to them, so if your voice is loud their voices will be too. Never shout at the children from across the room or to get the groups attention instead use a visual signal such as putting your hands in the air instead, and only speak to the children once they are all quiet. Make them understand the importance of quiet voices particularly when inside the nursery or during a group activity. Also don't forget if children are not taught the basics skills of waiting their turn when in a conversation they will simply try and talk over each other which will increase the noise level within your group.

Always remember the most important thing is lots of praise, not just for the things you have asked them to do but for EVERYTHING!!!!

# Dealing with Unwanted Behaviour

## Conflict Resolutions Choices and Consequences Time Out

### (1) Conflict Resolutions

#### The Look

Call the child's name and look at the child with a look that shows they are stepping over the boundary. If they start to show appropriate behaviour, thank them for what they have done.

If the Look doesn't work, walk over to the child calmly and get down to their level.

Depending on what happened:

- (a) Explain to the child what he/she is doing that is wrong and why.
- (b) Acknowledge their feelings – "I can see you are feeling hurt/cross/upset/angry but and explain why/what they did wrong"
- (c) Gather information from both parties if more than one child is involved – say what's the problem, let them explain and then repeat what they said "so the problem is...."
- (d) Ask for solutions and choose one together. "so what can we do to solve the problem/help you feel better?"
- (e) Keep an eye to see what happens next.

Depending on the age of the child, you may decide to go straight from (1) to Choices and Consequences

### (2) Choices and Consequences

Best used with children 3 and over depending on the maturity of the child. It keeps you in charge of the situation without making the child feel powerless

Walk towards the child (never address situations from the other side of the room so that the whole room is aware of what is happening and therefore the child has all the attention they could possibly want.

Go down to their eye level

In a quiet and calm voice, use choices and consequences (see below)

Make sure that you carry out the consequence that you stated or they will know you do not mean what you say and then they will never take any notice of you as they are never too young to work out whether you are a pushover or not 😊

1. Be clear and specific about the positive and negative choice of behaviour and the positive and negative consequences that follow
2. Relate the consequences to the behaviour
3. Choose consequences that mean something to the child
4. Don't use threats, a threatening manner or ultimatums
5. Don't give a choice when there isn't one (eg they wont come with the group to another room and they cannot stay where they are unsupervised)
6. Choose consequences you can keep to and that wont spoil it for others
7. Do not demand an instant answer – give the child a few moments to reflect.

## **Choices and Consequences wording to be used:**

*Child's Name.. you have a choice*

*You can either ....state the positive behaviour that you want*

*Or you can ----state the negative behaviour they are displaying*

*If you choose the positive behaviour then positive consequence*

*If you choose the negative behaviour then the negative consequence*

*Its up to you its your choice and walk away*

Example

Sarah/Tom, you have a choice

You can either sit quietly and listen (positive behaviour choice)

Or you can keep poking and disturbing your friends (negative behaviour choice)

If you sit quietly you can stay with the group and move onto *whatever they are doing next* (positive behaviour choice)

Or if you continue to disturb them we will leave the room while your friends continue without you (negative behaviour choice)

It's your Choice

### **(3) Time Out**

Time Out should be used as a final solution to the problem. If they ignore you, you warn them that they have until 3 to conform or they will have time out. You start to count slowly to 3. They will either conform and you thank them or they have time out which is somewhere away from the group but somewhere where they can be monitored.

**Time out should be a minute for every year of the child's life  
i.e. if they are 3 it's 3 minutes**

Once the child has sat for the appropriate length of time without getting up or showing unacceptable behaviour you must then explain to the child why he/she was sat there and then ask for an apology. The child must then return to whatever they were doing and the incident must not be spoken about again.

### **Biting (Generally behaviour of young toddlers)**

Children generally bite due to one of the following:

- Out of pure frustration because they cannot speak. They cannot tell the other child to return a toy or they have tried to get it off the other child, who will not give in, so they bite
- They may be teething
- They could be bored as the activities you have for them are not stimulating them enough.

If a child bites someone, focus on the child who has been bitten. Give them lots of hugs and kisses showing them the attention. Then when the child has settled, explain to the biting child that what they did was unkind and that it made the child sad. Ask the child to say sorry (if possible) some children may want to hug after the event but the child who has been bitten may not want that. Never force children to say "sorry". You may be teaching them to lie; children will start saying the words and not know the meaning of them.

Once you have a child that has bitten another, be very aware of his/her actions from there on. If you are aware you will be able to stop any other instances. You may need to monitor the child by completing a written record. You must make the parent of the child aware that he/she has bitten another child and then share techniques of how it is going to be dealt with at home and in Nursery

Some children establish their positions in groups very early on and although you may think it is a little early to call it bullying, they can at times recognise other weaker members of the group. It is your duty to be aware of this and to stop it from happening if it does.

Example of dealing with a Hitting/Biting situation:

A hits B. – Your initial reaction is concentrate on A but to concentrate on B is better. Go to B, comfort them, no child likes to see another distressed and will watch to see what is happening. Gradually involve A explaining that what was done was not nice and to come and give B a hug and say sorry. B may not in the first instance but should come around and eventually realise that hitting didn't get him/her the attention they wanted.

You now know that A hits out and it's probably for attention, so watch him and give him praise when he is doing well. If you see he/she maybe going to strike out then distract him/her. Eventually he/she will realise that he/she will get more attention by joining the group than being a rebel.

### **Unkind Words (or swearing)**

Address the situation, not the child. The child probably has no idea whatsoever that what they are saying is unacceptable. They may have heard the word on the TV or simply in their home. A swear word hold no more significance to them than the word sweeping brush. What they will realise however is that a word can get them a reaction, so it should initially be ignored.

“Oh dear boys and girls, I hope I didn't hear someone say unkind things/not nice words because we don't do that in Nursery do we?”

This will make the child think and realise it's not good to say unkind things. If the child stops and continues to play nicely, make sure you praise them but involve the rest of your group in the praise too.

If the child continues, take them to one side and tell them again “we don't use unkind words in Nursery, if you keep saying unkind things you'll have to go and sit down (time out) and think about why it's not nice”

### **Tantrums**

Your treatment here really depends on the age/stage of development of the child. Toddlers having tantrums are best ignored. Move your group on ignoring the tantrum and allowing the child to work it through. As long as you know they are safe where they are. Someone needs to have an eye on them but discreetly so that the child is unaware they have your attention. You must ignore them. At toddler age you will generally find that they will give up and follow you. At this age they are testing the boundaries.

There is no point in trying to talk when they are having a tantrum. Even a child that wants to stop may already have developed their stubborn streak and your talking will mean they have to re-enforce their tantrum. Return to the group and continue the activity. Eventually he/she will learn that the tantrums are ineffective and they will lessen and eventually stop.

Pre-school children however, having tantrums within Nursery are quietly removed from the room, not only to minimise disruption to the rest of the group, but children learn by example and this example needs to be removed as soon as possible. They are left to work out their tantrum without any interference. When they have stopped, the carer must explain what they did wrong and the consequences. The carer left in the room ignores what has happened and continues with the group. However you need to be aware of whether this child is a young pre-school and may still be exhibiting toddler behaviour.

Sometimes a child just needs to calm down as they may have gotten a little over excited. Times like these call for time out. Move the child away from the group and sit him/her down and talk about what has happened. Or maybe you need to calm the whole activity down rather than single out the child.

However if the behaviour turns to aggressiveness and the child starts to throw things (and could harm themselves, others or equipment), then they must be sat down to prevent any harm. Once they have calmed you must explain to them what they did and why it was unacceptable.

If need be they can be restrained but this will be by sitting them down in your lap and looping your arms around them gently. Whilst sat with the child do not talk to them, just let them calm down. Gradually release the arms and talk quietly about their actions.

When the child returns to the group nothing more should be said about the incident.

### **Excessive Crying**

When a child is fairly new to the Nursery or when you move them up to a different group this can be extremely unsettling. (For how to settle in a child see settling in procedure)

Some children have absolutely no idea how to play. So not only are they in a strange setting, the fact you are asking them to do something they know nothing about (play with toys) is even more disturbing for them. They should settle down with a cuddle but if a child is cuddled for long periods of time, they will get used to it as they are getting one-to-one attention instead of learning to play. These children need huge amounts of reassurance. Children learn through watching others, so you need to sit the child next to you and draw their attention to the toy that you have or the activity that is going on around you (depending on the child's age) Don't expect them to do anything until they are ready, your insistence on them playing can also cause some children stress. Distraction is the best way to stop these kind of tears.

Establish clear and simple rules with the children

- Loud voices are for singing times
- Keep your hands and your feet to yourself
- Be nice to everyone around you
- Always remember please and thank you
- Play fair and share toys with your friends

As soon as you have a child that is exhibiting unacceptable behaviour for which the above is not working, inform your supervisor. You will then establish a procedure to correct this. It may be that the child needs specialist help. So be fair to the child, don't drag it out or ignore it, make sure that he/she is being dealt with

When dealing with extreme situations, if you feel that you have lost control and you are feeling stressed, make sure you realise this and ask a team member for help. Don't feel that you've failed by asking for help, by doing this you will recharge and come back to the situation and your day with a fresher mind. This will also highlight the situation that you possibly need further training in how to deal with that situation.

Children generally settle or change unacceptable behaviour within a few weeks. Even if unacceptable behaviour hasn't been completely changed, you will be seeing an improvement. If this isn't happening, inform your supervisor who will then work with you to address the situation.