



Managing Behaviour At Home:

Positive Strategies



Welcome Parents/Carers/Families...

School has been suspended so all our routines have been disrupted. Your young person may be displaying new/challenging behaviours. We often see this when routines have changed and when transitions occur without preparation. This document will share basic tips for behaviour management at home. As you know, there is no manual for this and we can only refer to what we know.

Remember to be reasonable and kind to yourself. We all want to be our best parenting selves as much as we can, but sometimes that best self is the one that says, "Go for it," when a young person asks for more time on Youtube. My daughter is watching Ruby and Bonnie on Youtube and possibly getting slime all over the walls as I write this.

1) **Focus on the positive.** Catch your child when they are doing something nice or kind – notice it, and be specific with your comments. Spend more time connecting than on correcting. Be sure your child knows you love them even though you don't always like their behaviour. Separate the deed from the doer. "I like/love you, but I don't like how you are behaving"

2) **State the rules.** All children need and want boundaries and limits. Try to state your rules in positive terms. Tell them what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to do. For example, say "Use your walking feet" instead of "No running!" Keep rules short and to the point, for example "Hands to yourself" or "dishes to the dishwasher". Have a few, reasonable rules and be consistent in using and enforcing them. Comment when your children are following them.

3) **Make your world predictable.** Set your child up for success and keep the same basic routines every day. Homework, TV, play, baths and meals can all be on a similar daily schedule so that your child gets used to a certain rhythm. Prepare your child for transitions....it can be hard to stop a fun play activity to go somewhere so give a 5 minute heads up. (Attached are routines that work via the **powerpoint/word** apps and are 'drag and drop').

4) **Keep routines in place.** Setting and sticking to a regular schedule is important, even when at home all day. Young people should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. Young people, or those who are anxious, benefit from knowing what's going to happen and when. The schedule can mimic a school schedule, changing activities at predictable intervals, and alternating periods of study and play. (Attached are routines that work via the **powerpoint/word** apps and are 'drag and drop').

5) Encourage positive behaviour and ignore negative behaviour (to the extent that you can safely!) If a young person receives lots of attention for positive behaviour, that behaviour will continue. The same is true for negative behaviour. If there is no audience, the show will stop.....eventually. Be firm and consistent. A gambler needs just one win to encourage more gambling.

It may help to print out a schedule and go over it as a family each morning. Setting a timer will help young people know when activities are about to begin or end. Having regular reminders will help head off meltdowns when it's time to transition from one thing to the next.

Things to Avoid:

- Don't assume young people know what is expected of them — spell it out! When young people are unsure of what they are supposed to be doing, they're more likely to misbehave.
- Calling things out from a distance: Be sure to tell young people important instructions face-to-face. Things yelled from a distance are less likely to be remembered and understood.
- Transitions can be hard for our young people, especially in the middle of something they are enjoying. Having a warning gives young people the chance to find a good stopping place for an activity and makes the transition less fraught.
- Asking rapid-fire questions, or giving a series of instructions: delivering a series of questions or instructions at young people limits the likelihood that they will hear, answer questions, remember the tasks, and do what they've been instructed to do.

Things to Embrace:

Here are some strategies that can promote good behaviour...

- Be aware of the situation: Consider and manage environmental and emotional factors — hunger, tiredness, anxiety or distractions can all make it much more difficult for young people to rein in their behaviour.
- When it's work time, for instance, remove distractions like toys, provide snacks, establish an organised place for young people to work and make sure to schedule some breaks — attention isn't infinite.
- You'll get better cooperation if both you and your young person are clear on what's expected. Sit down with them and present the information verbally, supported by signs and symbols. Clarifying expectations at the outset of a task helps head off misunderstandings down the line.
- Whenever possible, prepare your young person for an upcoming transition. Let them know when there are, for example, 10 minutes remaining before they must come to dinner or start their work. Then, remind them when they have 2 minutes left. Just as important as issuing the countdown is actually making the transition at the stated time.

***It is important to try not to be hard on yourselves.**

You have to find a balance that works for your family.

The goal should be to stay sane and stay safe!*