

# Handling Difficult Behaviour

If behaviour is causing you or your child distress, or upsetting the rest of the family, it's important to address it.

## Do what feels right

What you do has to be right for your child, yourself and the family. If you do something you do not believe in or that you do not feel is right, it probably will not work.

## Do not give up

Once you've decided to do something, continue to do it. Solutions take time to work. Get support from family, friends or your health visitor. It's good to have someone to talk to about what you're doing.

## Be consistent

Children need consistency. If you react to your child's behaviour in one way one day and a different way the next, it's confusing for them. Ask those close to your child to deal with their behaviour in the same way as you.



## Try not to overreact

This can be difficult. When your child does something annoying time after time, your frustration can build up. It is impossible not to show your irritation sometimes, but try to stay calm. Move on to other things you can both enjoy or feel good about as soon as possible.

## Talk to your child

Children do not have to be able to talk to understand. It can help if they understand why you want them to do something. For example, explain why you want them to hold your hand while crossing the road. Once your child can talk, encourage them to explain why they're angry or upset. This will help them feel less frustrated.

## Be positive about the good things

When a child's behaviour is difficult, the things they do well can be overlooked. Tell or show your child through action when you're pleased about something they've done e.g., giving a hug.

## Avoid smacking

Smacking may stop a child doing what they're doing at that moment, but it does not have a lasting positive effect. Children learn by example so, if you hit your child, you're telling them that hitting is OK.

## Extra help with difficult behaviour

Do not feel you have to cope alone. If you're struggling with your child's behaviour talk to your health visitor or local children's centre – they will be happy to support you and suggest some new strategies to try