



Helping Your Child in School

(A few tried and tested methods)



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Dear Parent

Every parent worries about their child at some time.

The SEMH Support Team have prepared this booklet with a few suggestions which you might find helpful.



Please feel free to discuss the booklet with us. We might be able to help.

Feeling badly about themselves

Sometimes children have bad feelings about school.

This can lead to low self-esteem, they may feel like a failure and this will affect the way they behave.

If you had bad experiences at school, you will probably have some idea of how they are feeling and the thoughts they may be having.



What can you do to help them?

- ◆ Remind them of their achievements (in school or out of school);
- ◆ Remind them that there is always the opportunity to make a fresh start;
- ◆ Remind them that you care about them.

Magic Tricks?

The first thing to stress is that there are no magic tricks in helping to change your child's behaviour.



But there are two main things to remember:

- ◆ Make sure that your child knows that you love them and want the best for them;
- ◆ Be fair and consistent at all times

Try the ideas on the following pages again and again...

Remember you are the adult.

That means it's up to you to act calmly no matter how you feel.

- ◆ You can't help the way you feel, but you can decide how to act.
- ◆ You might feel like shouting, threatening or even hitting out, but none of those things will help you or your child (in fact, they'll make things worse).
- ◆ Even if you feel angry, act as if you are calm.

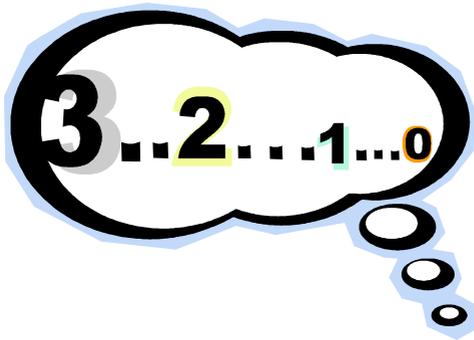


Act Calmly

Don't let yourself become wound up.

If you feel like “blowing your top”:

- ◆ Take six deep breaths



OR

- ◆ Walk away and come back when you can act calmly.

Set an Example

Your child will be influenced by the way **you** behave.

So, do the things you would like them to do:

- ◆ Use suitable language.
- ◆ Act calmly and quietly.
- ◆ Behave responsibly.
- ◆ Be polite to other people.
- ◆ Be polite to your child.



There is no guarantee that your child will behave exactly the way you would like them to, but setting an example for them will improve the chances.

Ground Rules and Routines

Routines provide security for your child:

- ◆ Bedtime/getting up
- ◆ Homework— time/place
- ◆ TV, computer—how much, suitable games and programmes
- ◆ Playing out (where?) coming in (time?)



- ◆ Clothes
- ◆ Helping at home

Praise and reward your child whenever he or she follows the rules and routines.

Ground Rules and Routines (Cont..)

When your child fails to follow rules and routines:



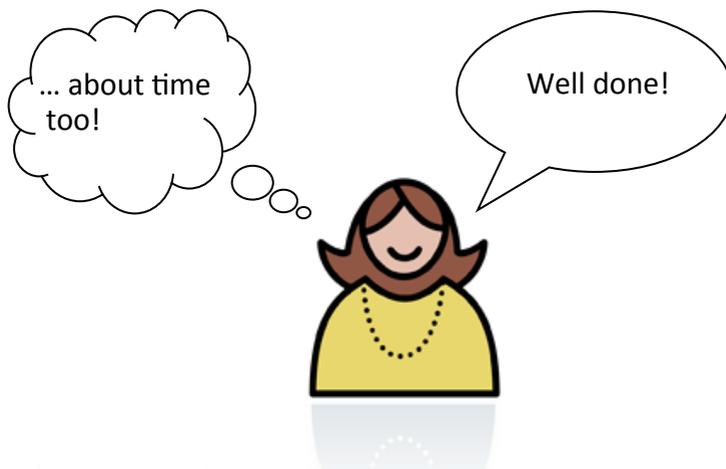
- ◆ Act calmly and talk quietly
- ◆ Remind them of the rule
- ◆ Use the broken record technique
- ◆ As soon as your child starts to obey the rule, give him/her lots of praise and rewards.

BROKEN RECORD TECHNIQUE

Say over and over again, what the rule is. Don't explain the rule (they know what it is); don't argue about it. Just repeat the rule until it is done.

So they finally do what you have asked

You've used the broken record technique and your child has done what he/she was supposed to do.



Don't be tempted to make any sarcastic comments.

You could just be starting the next problem. Just be glad they've done it and say "well done for doing as you were asked". In that way, they get attention for doing the right thing instead of getting attention for doing the wrong thing.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.

This is very hard to do if they have been very difficult and you'll have to do it again and again. But in the long run, you'll find it well worth the trouble.

When Then

Here's another good technique you can use.

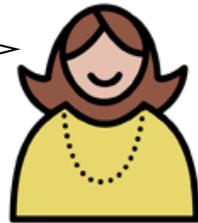
It's called the **when—then technique**.

Instead of saying

“No. You can't do that,”

Try “**When you have done, then you can**”

WHEN you've done
your homework **THEN**
you can go out.



Your child might now try to argue
with you. Stay out of the argument.
Just keep saying **When, then**

.....

In this way, you're using the old broken record technique again and you already know how to use that, don't you?

Partial Agreement

Sometimes, your child might give you a weak excuse for not doing as you want them to. If it's not important, don't get into a discussion about it. Acknowledge it then remind them what they should be doing.

For instance,

If they say, **"I'm too tired to do any clearing up"**.

You just say, **"You might be right about being tired, but I would like you to help clear up the table"**.

And just keep saying the same thing, over and over again.

Avoid discussing it, or telling them why they're tired, or saying that it's not hot or that they're not too busy or whatever their excuse is. It is their way of distracting you from what you originally asked them to do. Don't get drawn in to their game.

Just keep saying

"You might be right about, but I would like you to"

This technique is called partial agreement.

Techniques

In this booklet, we have suggested several techniques which could be a great help to you and your child. They are:

- ◆ **Set an example; model the behaviours you want them to show**
- ◆ **Broken record**
- ◆ **Use praise**
- ◆ **When—then**
- ◆ **Partial agreement**

And most important of all,

- ◆ **Act calmly, however you feel**

If you're not quite sure of any of these techniques, talk to the staff at the SEMH Support Team

Helping your child in school

If you would like to help your child you can do this by simply taking an interest and talking to them about school.

- ◆ Although it's not always practical or possible, it will help your child if they have a suitable quiet place and time for homework.



- ◆ Encourage your child to have high expectations for themselves by using praise and rewards. Try not to make them feel stupid or a failure. Recognise when they have tried their best.
- ◆ Encourage your child and let the teacher know if there is a problem.
- ◆ Go to school yourself and talk to the teacher.

If there is anything you're not sure about, get in touch with the school. The staff will do everything they can to help you to help your child do well in school

Listening

Listening to what your child has to say is sometimes difficult. But it is one of the most important things in your relationship.

Here are a few ideas which will help you to really listen to them.

- ◆ Make a point of asking them what they think about things (all kinds of things—sports, TV programmes, music, his/her room, the house).
- ◆ Talk together while you're doing something else together (preparing a meal, travelling in a car, washing/drying up, watching TV). It is much easier for them to talk and for you to listen if you're not eyeball to eyeball. That can feel very threatening.



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- ◆ Make some decisions together, especially about the rules mentioned previously.
 - ◆ If they're doing strange things or saying things out of character, they might be trying to deal with a big problem. It's not easy to do, but listen and watch carefully. At some stage, you will find out what is really bothering them.
 - ◆ Don't feel you have to take sides when talking about school. Just let them talk and let them know that you will help where you can.
 - ◆ Don't be too quick to make critical judgements—big or small. Listening is much more helpful.



- ◆ Make sure that they know that you love them .

The Child

If a child lives with criticism, He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, He learns to be guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, He learns justice.

If a child lives with security, He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.



Which of these strategies do you think you might try to use?

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- _____

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