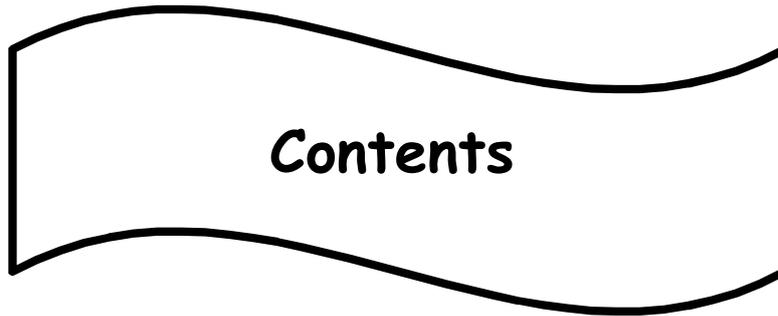




# Early Years Strategies for Positive Behaviour Management

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# 1. Unwilling to Follow Directions

- It sometimes helps if you talk about a consequence **AFTER** a warning e.g. 'If you don't tidy up your bricks, you will stay in at playtime (5 mins).'
- Make an A4 chart of now/next i.e. now - adult choice, next - child choice.
- If the child quietly refuses i.e. non-disruptive, ignore the refusal for the moment. Talk to him later and rehearse what should have happened.
- Use simple language, just one direction at a time.
- If the child refuses to comply, make sure there is **always** a consequence that will have an effect e.g. 5 minutes missed playtime, not allowed to play with the cars today.
- If the child refuses point blank to do as you ask (or throws a tantrum) remove him from the situation decisively or ignore. Avoid eye contact and give minimum attention (but be aware). Return after a few minutes to ask if he's ready 'to do the right thing'. Give lots of praise for the right decision.
- If you think she is mature enough to understand, offer her 'control' of the situation by using the Bill Rogers idea - it's up to you to choose. If you do as I ask, you'll be able to play in the home corner later. If you don't do as I ask, you'll have to stay in at playtime for 5 minutes - it's your choice!
- Use nurturing principles (see nurture pack in PBSS)

- 'Physical prompts' i.e. gently guiding the child to do as you have asked whilst using positive, encouraging language e.g. 'I know you can do this Callum'.
- 'When....then' phrase i.e. when you have done this... then you can ...' to give him hope he will eventually do what **he** wants.
- 'I'd like you/I want you to ... Sophie, please. Thank you! Good Girl! - say all this **before** she does it, never plead, it gives her the sense she has control over you.
- Specific praise e.g. 'I like the way you draw Liam. Can you do it again for me?'
- Positive prompts and reminders - 'Liam I **know** you can do this'.
- 'Catch her being good' - notice it, praise her. She's then more likely to do what you ask, because she will then get attention.
- 'Planned ignoring' - try to ignore low-level non-compliance. It's often a way to get your attention. Only do this if the non-compliance is not potentially harmful to himself or others.
- 'Adjacent praise' - praise the compliant child near to the child, he may then change his behaviour to get praise.
- Always use positive and simple language - the following are good for early years - 'Good Listening, Good Thinking and Good Looking'
- Be firm and consistent, keeping to the same rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Use of star charts (see Section 11) e.g. when you get 3 smiley faces, you can ... (think of effective rewards). It's often good to ask the parent to give the reward at home e.g. a tiny toy from the corner shop, visit to the park, watch a special video together, quality 1:1 time.

- Individual booklet with a daily page e.g.



writing and reading =



playtime 😊

i.e. If Sophie does some writing and then comes to read, she will be able to play in the sand tray. She gets a smiley face for this achievement - the booklet is then shown to the parents at home time.

- Often very small children refuse to leave their Mums at the start of the school day. A special little chair (with the child's name on) for her to put her coat on and a finger puppet to take into school can help.
- Don't forget to check the child's hearing!

## 2. Aggressive Behaviour to Adults and Peers

- If totally unacceptable, use time out on a chair, away from other children (1 minute for each year of child's life).
- Outdoors, the child stands by a wall or is told to hold the adult's hand.
- Use of peer massage (long term measure) and yoga.
- Describe what the child did e.g. 'You have just... we don't do that, I am very upset.'
- Rehearse a better way to react to the situation e.g. 'Please can I have a turn on your bike' instead of pushing.
- Talk to parents about exposure to violent TV programmes and find out about home life.
- For unacceptable aggression show total disapproval by facial expression and stern tone of voice. Remove the child and talk about why it was wrong. Ask him to analyse his own behaviour if possible by asking 'Why am I so upset?' 'Why is Liam crying?' Rehearse the expected behaviour - ask 'What would be the right thing to do?' Give him the opportunity to 'repair' the relationship (touch, hug, shake hands, say sorry). When he returns to normal activities, it's important to notice him 'being good' and give specific praise.
- Long-term solution - 15-minute circle time activities that encourage gentle hands, turn taking, being kind etc. Refer to incident at circle time and say 'something happened this morning that made me very sad' the child remaining anonymous. Ask the children's advice about the incident.
- Give certificates for kind behaviour and have a weekly (or daily) celebration for presenting certificates.

- Kindness tree / kindness train (see Section 12)
- For aggressive behaviour in the playground work out a policy e.g. the child is sent inside for 5 minutes (with adult supervision) and then asked if he is ready to play. Again, 'catch him being good' as soon as possible and give verbal praise. Another strategy is for the child to hold hands with an adult
- If there is playground equipment, an adult could play with the child and model good practice. When you feel the child is ready, progress to including another child.
- An individual chart or booklet showing sections of the day e.g.

Carpet Time	Choosing	Snack	Play
			

Laminated chart so that you can rub off felt-tipped faces.

Sad or smiley faces are drawn as appropriate. If the child gets 3 smiley faces then he receives a small reward from either his parents or teacher.

- It sometimes helps for a highly aggressive child to join older children in their own playground. It's a sobering experience!
- Don't forget 'adult modelling' Display kind behaviour towards colleagues. Some children don't know what kindness looks like!
- 'Take Teddy Home' choose an attractive soft toy to sit on your table. Say to the children 'I want you to meet ... He really likes children and loves it most when they are kind to each other. He's going to watch you all today and then at home time he's going to whisper in my ear the name of someone he's like to go home with - so be careful! He won't want to go home with anyone who is nasty or unkind! The lucky child then takes Teddy home and brings him back the next day. He then tells everyone what he did with Teddy last night. Teddy then sits and watches again. It's important to keep a secret list of the children so that everyone gets a turn (but only if they deserve it!) Remind the children during the day about Teddy watching.
- Relaxation activities in the head teachers room e.g. rainstick.

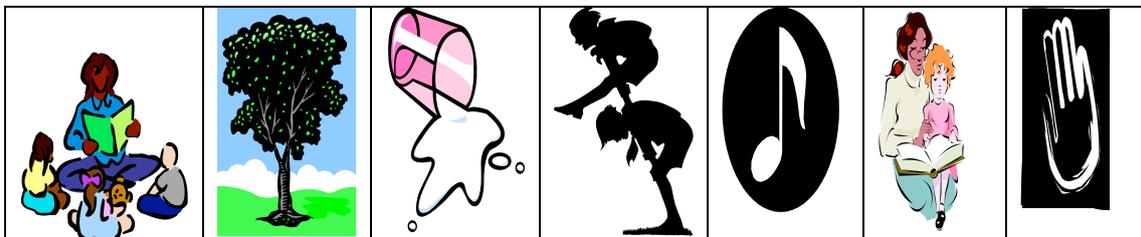
- Circle time with puppets.
- Redirection and distraction.
- For very young children with poor understanding of 'right and wrong' - show cards (as appropriate) with a smiley or sad face.

### 3. Difficulty Co-operating with Peers

- All staff to notice good sharing and to 'catch him being good.'
- Use of PSHE stories to illustrate kind behaviour e.g. Dogger by Shirley Hughes.
- Set up a 'sharing type' activity with an adult (e.g. student / assistant) modelling and encouraging turn taking and waiting. Ask parents to do this at home too. This could be a simple game, doing a jigsaw, building bricks together.
- Progress to one other child, perhaps someone chosen by the child who finds sharing difficult.
- Give wholehearted praise for good sharing - perhaps a sticker?
- At circle time introduce co-operative activities and interactive games that encourage positive interaction e.g. passing teddy, changing places, rolling a ball.
- Include nurturing activities to promote caring for others e.g. bathing and dressing baby dolls, planting and watering seeds, preparing food for the group and serving it e.g. cheese on crackers, caring for class pets.
- Give the child responsibility for 'helping' other children - say 'Lucy's having a lot of trouble with this puzzle Sam, will you help her please? I know you're good at jigsaws!'
- Give the child little jobs that promote interaction e.g. giving out pencils, asking what drink each child would like.
- At playtime ask the child to choose a friend or two. Award her a certificate for good behaviour OR ask someone to be the child's 'buddy' today - 'Shannon, I'd like you to play with Sam this morning'.
- Use the smiley / sad face chart as explained in section 2.

## 4. Difficulty Staying On-Task

- Now/next board (see section 1).
- Start with what he likes (as a motivator). Expect a short achievable time e.g. 5-10 minutes. Be firm about staying with the task and give lots of verbal praise (and a sticker) if he complies. Sand timers can be useful here.
- Avoid totally free choice - it may be better to direct him to an activity i.e. 'Sam I'd like you to go and build a tower with Ben. Thank you!' Again lots of praise when he stays.
- Watch carefully and pre-empt dissent or refusal by keeping it short.
- Gradually increase the time and reward with praise, stickers, small certificates.
- 'When....Then...' strategy (see section 1).
- Ask her to help you with 'very important jobs' to encourage staying power.
- Visual timetable to provide structure to a disorganised child's day - try laminating something similar to this:



Circle Time  
Story

Outside  
Goodbye

Drinks

Play

Music

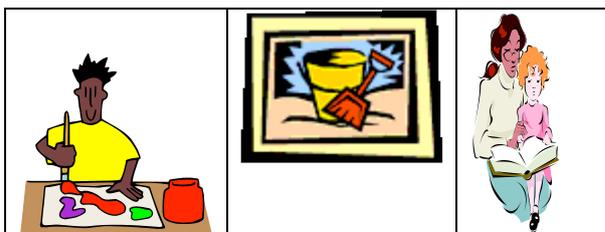
You could have a moveable arrow - special child chosen to move it along.  
Actual photos of the children could be used.

- Use of a **finite** activity e.g. completion of a puzzle to receive a sticker.
- Provide a menu (on the wall) of cards showing activities the child can choose from i.e.

**Pocket**



**Pocket**



**Painting**

**Sand**

**Reading**

The cards are chosen from the 'IN' pocket and stuck on the chart - use laminated card and blu-tac e.g. painting, sand, reading - Ask the parent to do this with the child as they arrive. When one activity is completed, the card is put in the 'OUT' pocket. When all the chosen activities are completed, a reward is given.

- Check the child's diet for food additives!

## 5. Difficulty Sitting and Listening at Grouptime or on the Carpet

- Give the child a soft toy to cuddle or a piece of playdough to manipulate.
- Display a photo of the child sitting nicely and point it out if he starts wriggling.
- Place the child next to an adult (leader or assistant) so she can prompt and remind to pay attention. Perhaps an arm around the child, gentle quiet praise and thumbs up.
- Sitting on his own special carpet mat or chair can work very well. Put his name on it if necessary. This could have a picture of his favourite thing on e.g. Bob the Builder.
- At the start of the day bring something from home to 'show and tell'. This can diffuse difficulty and pre-empts drawing attention to himself.
- Ask the child to look after a soft toy to focus his attention on instead of wandering off.
- Use of special 'sitting on carpet' sticker sheet to show parents at home time so they can reward him (see section 11).
- 'Planned ignoring' - avoid eye contact for minor disturbance.
- 'Adjacent praise' for good role models.
- Use of positive language - 'I know you can sit beautifully Jason!'
- Use the 'ways to listen' sheet in Section 12. This can be very successful with the whole class as a visual chart at the start of carpet time.

- In severe cases withdraw the child to another adult to avoid disturbance to the rest of the group - give no attention.
- Little song: 'I'm looking to see  
Who's sitting nicely!'

## 6. Low Self-Esteem

- Praise the child in front of the class or the rest of the group.
- If he cannot take praise - some children are not used to it, acknowledge good behaviour very briefly e.g. thumbs up, wink, smile.
- Give responsibility 'I really need you to help me with this Millie!'
- Give special certificates to send home for any achievement.
- Show work to others; parents, Headteacher, other staff.
- Preparing food for other children and serving it to them.
- Bringing something from home to 'Show and Tell'.
- 'Special Helper' badge for each day.
- Specific praise for positive behaviour - 'I really like the way you're standing so quietly in the line Rachell!'
- A full-length mirror to admire themselves and to give compliments.
- Use of nurture principles (see section 12).
- For a child going to Reception, to Year 1 or to a new school make a little leaflet of photos of the new setting and staff to share with the child.

## 7. Inappropriate use of Equipment

- Insist firmly on the child tidying and cleaning up the mess he has created. Use minimum eye contact. Lots of praise when he's completed.
- Use role-play with puppets in circle time with the issue of tidying up and taking care of things.
- Refer to Golden Rules 'We look after our nursery'.

## 8. Useful Phrases and Powerful Comments!

- Make me feel proud
- I liked it when you ...
- Let me see you ...
- Show me your lovely smiles
- I'm really pleased with you for ...
- I know you can do it
- I am very disappointed / sad that ...
- (to a child breaking a rule) Oh! Did you forget? (benefit of doubt)
- Show me your best self
- How many sensible children can I see?
- Are you doing the right thing?
- What a star!
- (having a special personal description) Groovy, Fab, Cool
- (to a child misbehaving) We need you to help us
- All eyes on me, 123 LOOK!
- I want you to ... thank you!
- Is there a reason you ...
- Speaking voices, thinking voices, playground voices, carpet / table voices
- Make me smile
- Show me your listening bodies
- (two children messing around on the carpet) Oh are you helping each other to listen? - Good boys!
- If I can see you all being really busy, then we can have a treat later
- (to a child misbehaving) You're not being kind to me Chloe

## 9. General Reminders

- Always use positive language
- Praise goes a long way
- Tell parents about the child's achievements and other staff
- Get parents to use the same strategies - share the behaviour plan
- Nurturing philosophy - look behind the behaviour 'All behaviour is communication'.
- Un-noticed behaviour decreases noticed behaviour increases
- Ensure all staff who have contact with the child have seen / discussed his IBP it needs to be available at all times
- Is the child stressed by full-time attendance? Is it possible to attend part-time?
- Use stories that illustrate positive behaviour e.g. Shirley Hughes books
- Referral to Golden Rules and use of the sun and cloud strategy (Jenny Mosley - More Quality Circle time)
- 'Smiley face book' - if anything good happens (learning or behaviour) jot it down in the book quickly. At the end of the week, have an award ceremony when the children receive certificates. When they get 5 certificates, the fifth one is silver, the tenth one gold.
- Calming music has been shown to enhance children's behaviour (especially Mozart!)
- Use of musical instrument as a signal to stop and raise your hand followed by 'tidy-up' music (change this regularly)
- Relaxation sessions especially at the beginning of a session
- Don't forget basic social skills - encourage please / thank you / excuse me at all times
- Class teams receiving points / stickers towards an award can have a great effect
- You are the adult - remain in control at all times!

- Quick reward - sticky labels on children's jumpers with the good behaviour indicated e.g.

Chloe helped Liam  
with his buttons

(to be awarded immediately)

- Don't forget to relax and have a laugh with the children - show them you love them!

## 10. Certificates

- Since this was originally written, many great websites have appeared that produce colourful certificates and sticker sheets e.g [www.sparklebox.co.uk](http://www.sparklebox.co.uk)

## 11. Sticker Charts

Some examples for you to use but you can probably do some custom made ones for particular children e.g. a football for a city fan or a Harry Potter owl etc.

## 12. Miscellaneous Ideas

### Suggested 'Golden Rules' for Nursery and Reception Children

We are kind and helpful friends  
We look and listen carefully  
We use a quiet voice  
We walk in nursery  
We look after our nursery  
We make our teachers smile

If we do all these things, we will all be very happy!

- Each rule must have a photo of the children displayed next to it to illustrate the rule
- Display mounted at child level
- Refer to the rules often! Keep them high profile!
- If a child 'misbehaves' link it to the rules - 'Oh dear Chloe, you broke the rule!' Take her to the photo to remind her

See 'More Quality Circle Time' Vol 2 (Jenny Mosely pub LDA 1998) for the use of the sun/cloud whole class strategy.

### Kindness Tree

Paint a good shaped branch white or silver, put it in a bucket of sand. Make some 'leaves' from various shades of green paper. Whenever someone is kind, take them over to the tree and write the deed in silver on a leaf chosen by the child. Place on the tree - show parents.