

Behaviour Management

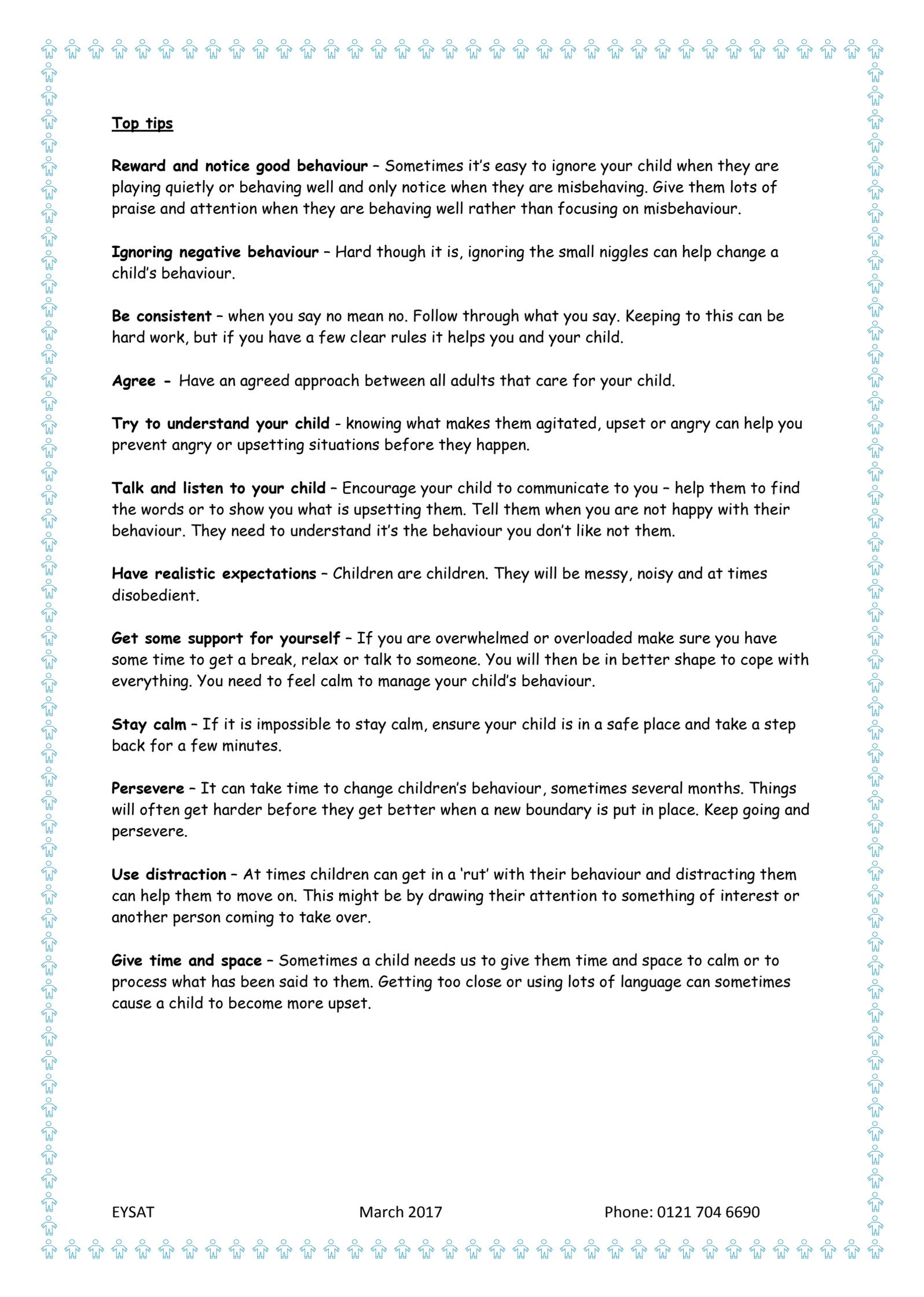
All children need to learn to deal with frustration and accept boundaries. Challenging behaviour can be difficult for parents to manage but there are positive and effective ways to help children to learn self-control. Children respond more positively to encouragement than to punishment and all children learn by example.



- There is always a trigger for any behaviour. No child is born 'naughty'. At this point when a child is displaying anxiety, there is a need for diversion, support and reassurance for the child.
- When unwanted behaviour is beginning to escalate, establish clear boundaries and expectations that are positive and that tell your children what they can do rather than what they can't e.g. "kind hands" rather than "don't hit". Give clear choices i.e. "if you make the right choice you can have Later". Give regular praise for "doing the right thing."
- Use planned ignoring to deal with minor problem behaviour. For example, if your child is using a word that you don't like, ignore its use and calmly turn away, rather than giving the child attention and when the child stops using the word, praise them for a good choice of words.
- Gain the child's attention before speaking and speak clearly, calmly and concisely when giving instructions. Give your child time to co-operate. Support words with visual symbols.
- There should be clear consequences that start with a reminder of the correct behaviour. If inappropriate behaviour continues, the child should spend up to three minutes in time out, one minute for each year of their age. You may wish to use a traffic light system here, red for stop, amber for think about behaviour and green for put it right.
- If a child goes into crisis, there may be a need to clear the area around them in order to keep everyone safe. Keep words to a minimum at this stage because the child has gone beyond the point of reason. Do not fuel the situation with recriminations.
- Allow the child time to recover giving support and reassurance. Acknowledge their feelings even if you don't agree i.e. "I can see that you are angry".
- Give the child space to calm down but be there in a supportive way.
- Afterwards when the child is calm which could be up to 24 hours later, follow up by listening to the child's grievance and explain how they could have handled the situation more positively.

What else can I do?

- Complete attached ABC log for at least two weeks and then analyse to look for behaviour triggers.
- If you need additional support please seek help from your GP, Health Visitor or the allocated person for additional needs at your child's setting.
- In some cases a child may need a 'Positive Handling Plan' at their setting which sets out a plan for managing behaviour. If this is something you feel your child needs discuss this initially with the allocated person at the setting for additional needs.



Top tips

Reward and notice good behaviour - Sometimes it's easy to ignore your child when they are playing quietly or behaving well and only notice when they are misbehaving. Give them lots of praise and attention when they are behaving well rather than focusing on misbehaviour.

Ignoring negative behaviour - Hard though it is, ignoring the small niggles can help change a child's behaviour.

Be consistent - when you say no mean no. Follow through what you say. Keeping to this can be hard work, but if you have a few clear rules it helps you and your child.

Agree - Have an agreed approach between all adults that care for your child.

Try to understand your child - knowing what makes them agitated, upset or angry can help you prevent angry or upsetting situations before they happen.

Talk and listen to your child - Encourage your child to communicate to you - help them to find the words or to show you what is upsetting them. Tell them when you are not happy with their behaviour. They need to understand it's the behaviour you don't like not them.

Have realistic expectations - Children are children. They will be messy, noisy and at times disobedient.

Get some support for yourself - If you are overwhelmed or overloaded make sure you have some time to get a break, relax or talk to someone. You will then be in better shape to cope with everything. You need to feel calm to manage your child's behaviour.

Stay calm - If it is impossible to stay calm, ensure your child is in a safe place and take a step back for a few minutes.

Persevere - It can take time to change children's behaviour, sometimes several months. Things will often get harder before they get better when a new boundary is put in place. Keep going and persevere.

Use distraction - At times children can get in a 'rut' with their behaviour and distracting them can help them to move on. This might be by drawing their attention to something of interest or another person coming to take over.

Give time and space - Sometimes a child needs us to give them time and space to calm or to process what has been said to them. Getting too close or using lots of language can sometimes cause a child to become more upset.