

- Rewarding the non-occurrence of a problem behaviour is important
- Rewards can be given in short interval and in small quantities to maintain the child's interest on the given task
- Combine the use of social rewards like 'good' or 'well done' along with other rewards
- Learn to fade the use of primary rewards like edibles gradually

Some Don'ts...



- Never make false promises and refuse them later
- Never give long lectures, multiple instructions
- Never give instructions that you yourself are unable or not prepared to enforce
- Do not use positive instructions like 'Do this!' than negative instructions like 'Don't do this!'
- Never reward a problem behaviour either knowingly or unknowingly
- Never beg or bargain with the child to behave or not to behave in certain ways
- Never discuss strategies for managing problem behaviours in front of the child
- Never use spanking, hitting, or physical punishment
- Never give prophecy-fulfilling instruction. "I know, you are like your father who gets angry at the very sight of this dish. Now, you don't get angry!" This statement invites the child to get angry and fulfill the expected role model of an angry father.

- Do not bother or worry about what others will think or say when using some behaviour techniques

Myths and misconceptions of behaviour management

- Changing another person's behaviour is coercive
- All children should be treated in the same way
- Rewards or reinforcements are nothing more than bribes
- Behaviour intervention can be applied to simple but not complex problems
- When one symptom is eliminated it gets substituted or replaced by another in its place
- It only changes peripheral symptoms and not the underlying cause of the problems

A collaborative effort between the parent and Clinical Psychologist can help the child to overcome the problem behaviours.

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Managing Problem Behaviours in Children with Communication Disorders



Antecedent



Consequence



Behaviour



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What are problem behaviours?

Problem behaviours are negative or excess behaviour that may prevent the child from developing pre-academic & social skills, receiving education, speech and listening therapy. It causes a concern and problem not only for the child herself/himself but also for others. These behaviours are of inconsistent pattern and can vary in terms of frequency, intensity, severity and duration. Children with problem behaviour often required behavioural intervention to improve their faulty behavioural patterns.

What are the risk factors for problem behaviours?

- Ineffective communication
- Over-disciplining or not disciplining the child
- Modeling from the peer at school/home
- Childhood traumatic experiences such as loss of loved ones; emotional, physical & sexual abuse and neglect
- Physical or psychological violence in the family

What are some common problem behaviours?

- Sucking thumb
- Nail biting
- Rocking body
- Damaging objects
- Violent behaviour
- Telling lies
- Making loud noise
- Does not pay attention

- Screaming and rolling on the floor
- Does not sit at one place for required time
- Does not continue with the task
- Snatching objects without asking

Assumptions of behaviour modification

- Most behaviours are learned
- Behaviours are stimulus-specific
- Behaviours can be taught and modified
- Behaviour change program must be individualized
- Emphasis on intervention is on the here and now
- The focus of etiology is on child's environment
- Behaviour change goals are specific and clearly defined



Some Do's in the management of problem behaviours

- Be brief while giving instructions
- Learn to ignore behaviours that increase when you pay attention
- Always praise in public and use punishment, if inevitable, in private
- Catch them doing good than wait for a wrongdoing to say 'NO'
- Remember that you are NOT against the child. You are only against their negative behaviours
- Keep in mind that no two children are the same
- Although well intended, avoid comparison with others. It will only communicate negative reactions
- Understand, respect and accept individual differences between children

- Desist from Helicoptering. This is to do with keeping a round-the-clock vigil on all the activities of the child
- Training in 3 Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) is NOT the only skills to be targeted for teaching children
- Children's interaction with computers, tablets, and smartphones should be limited and programs, games, or applications they use should be under parents' supervision.
- Note that rearing or caring for children or disciplining them is dedicated responsibility
- Realise that there are no quick fixes to behaviour issues like a tonic, medicine, or surgery
- All stakeholders must unanimously agree on the list of problem behaviours for a given child
- Make a clear distinction between a deficit skill behaviour and excess problem behaviour
- Develop the habit of keeping a simple daily record of the home-based behaviour program being undertaken
- Functional behaviour assessment and tailor-made individualized training programs can help these children
- Successful termination of problem behaviour can be made by teaching appropriate behaviour
- Follow the rules of consistency, constancy, clarity and immediacy when dispensing rewards
- Specify the rules for dispensing rewards and follow them carefully
- Prefer to use rewards rather than punishment