

Dealing with Children's Difficult Behaviours:

Selective ignoring and Logical consequences



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Selective ignoring

Why selective ignoring?

- **Difficult behaviour is often maintained by attention through scolding, criticising, nagging or shouting**
- **Selective ignoring maintains positive parent-child relationship**
- **Model emotional regulation and self-control even when faced with difficult behaviour**
- **Gives opportunity for children to practice calming down independently**



Why selective ignoring?

	“Okay” behaviour	“Not okay” behaviour
Parent attention	<p>E.g. praise</p> <p>↑ “okay” behaviour</p>	<p>E.g. shouting, laughing, over-comforting</p> <p>↑ “not okay” behaviour</p>
No parent attention	<p>E.g. ignoring</p> <p>↓ “okay” behaviour</p>	<p>E.g. ignoring</p> <p>↓ “not okay” behaviour</p>

Selective ignoring: Top Tips

- **Explain what you're doing beforehand (not while ignoring)**
- **Be subtle and neutral**
- **No eye contact or expressions of disapproval**
- **No verbal or physical contact**
- **Stay close so you can return attention as soon as (10-15 seconds) the behaviour stops**
- **Do something distracting to help you stay calm**
- **Look for something to praise afterward**
- **Be consistent in what you ignore**



Remember to...

- Remove attention from the behaviour, **NOT** the child
- Use in conjunction with praising/rewarding positive behaviour
- Do **NOT** use for dangerous behaviour

Good for behaviours such as...

Moaning, complaining, swearing, whining, minor squabbles, messy eating, silly noises, fiddling, back-chatting, pulling faces, answering back (being rude, arguing)


WITHDRAWAL OF ATTENTION

- Withdrawing attention from your child's difficult behaviour is a non-violent approach to managing their behaviour. Trying to reason with your child when they are feeling frustrated and having a tantrum will only make them worse.
- Children aren't born knowing how to manage their emotions, this is something they learn with the support of adults. Withdrawing attention gives children the opportunity to practice and learn to emotionally regulate and calm down independently.
- Remember that it is the difficult behaviour that we're ignoring, not the child! So when they have stopped moaning, it's important to return your attention to them!
- Be consistent with the behaviours you withdraw your attention from and the behaviours you give positive attention to.

FIVE BEHAVIOURS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE LESS OF IN YOUR CHILD

Behaviours that are not harmful such as sulking, moaning, swearing or arguing are a behaviour that are appropriate to withdraw attention from.

X
X
X
X
X



IMPORTANT POINTS FOR WITHDRAWING ATTENTION

- Be clear about the behaviour you are withdrawing attention from. For example, not giving attention to moaning.
- Withdraw your attention as soon as the behaviour occurs.
- You can model staying calm for your child – this shows them that is what you want from them too.
- Remove anything that can cause harm or that has resulted in the withdrawal of attention, for example a game/ toy if they are having a tantrum about that.
- Attention needs to be given again within 20-30 seconds after the behaviour has stopped.
- Ensure that once you have returned your attention you praise a positive behaviour, for example "well done for calming down".
- Therefore, you need to be close by to the child to know when they've calmed down.

What are your strategies for keeping calm?



KEEPING CALM

Withdrawing attention from your child's difficult behaviour is hard! It can be difficult to stay calm when your child is having a tantrum or swearing at you. Many parents can feel angry and frustrated, which can make them respond in ways that they wouldn't normally. To keep yourself calm, it is important to think of strategies that you can use to help you withdraw attention. As you know, the way you think can affect how you feel and behave. Think about what you can say to yourself to keep yourself calm when you are trying to ignore their whining?

Examples:


- ✓ "This won't last forever"
- ✓ "I'm helping them to calm down"
- ✓ "I can get through this"

What distract
ons can
you
use?

My calming thoughts:

REMEMBER, IF WE'RE WITHDRAWING ATTENTION FROM INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE THE BEHAVIOURS YOU WANT TO SEE MORE OF!

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓



Before behaviour gets better...

Extinction Burst

Spontaneous Recurrence



Effective instructions



Why might these instructions be ineffective?

Put your shoes on and get your coat. Do you have your homework? Put that in your lunch in your bag now, and remember your gym kit.

Shall we tidy up?

Stop it!

Turn off the TV. Turn off the TV. Turn OFF the TV. I won't say it again, turn off the TV now. Turn it off!

I need you to put your shoes on now because the bus will be here in 5 minutes and if you're late then your teacher will not be happy with you.



Clear, calm commands

- **Get child's attention before instruction**
- **Say what you want them to do, rather than what you want them to stop (play quietly vs stop shouting)**
- **Be simple, clear and brief**
- **Give one command at a time**
- **Make sure you give the child time to comply - at least 5 seconds**
- **If child complies → praise**
- **If child does not comply → wait 5 seconds → repeat instruction → praise or consequence**

Which instruction is more effective?

Stop
running.

OR

Walk
slowly.

Feet on
the floor.

OR

Let's stop
jumping shall
we.

Careful!

OR

Keep your pen
on the paper.

Clear, calm commands

- **What behaviours would you like to focus on?**
- **What words could you use to make clear, calm commands?**

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT MAKES COMMANDS EFFECTIVE?

- Using positive do commands
- Giving only one command at a time
- Keeping commands clear and brief
- Offer choices where possible
- Give warnings and reminders
- Avoid question commands
- Time to comply - Wait for response (5 seconds rule)
- Be polite
- Use distractions and redirections
- If child complies, follow with praise "well done for tidying your toys when I asked"
- If child doesn't comply, ensure appropriate consequence - "you didn't put your toys away, so you can't have your treat"



WHAT COMMANDS WILL YOU USE?

Choose the behaviours that you would like to use commands for. What words can you use?

Behaviour e.g. walking by your side, tidying toys, talking quietly	Command

Logical Consequences Guidelines

- **Make sure you can live with the consequences**
- **Discuss in advance**
- **Appropriate, Immediate, Straightforward**
- **Non-punitive and non-harmful**
- **Give warnings and choices**
- **Selective ignore any protests or whining when giving a consequence**
- **Keep it brief – it is an opportunity to learn**
- **Use 'if...then' messages**

If you put your coat on then we can go to the park now or we can stay inside.

**If you throw your food then I will take it away.
(take away for 5 mins and then return)**



What are your experiences of using Time Out?



Time out



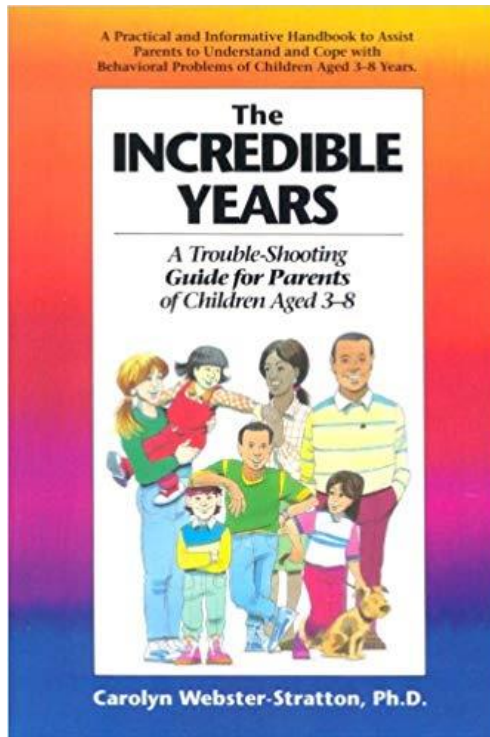
- **Consequence for either extreme non-compliance or dangerous/destructive behaviours**
- **Extreme form of removal of parental attention**
- **Use infrequently but consistently if needed**
- **Can also help to facilitate emotion regulation in a distressed and angry child**

Time out



- **Before: plan which behaviour to use it for, discuss/rehearse with child when calm, choose a low stimulation environment**
- **During: give clear warning → if behaviour continues, give instruction to go to time out → do not end time out until child is calm (return child to time out if needed), keep it brief**
- **After: do not revisit reason for time out, involve child in positive activity, repair relationship, give them a clean slate**
 - **If time out was for non-compliance: repeat instruction**

Recommended book



Carolyn Webster-Stratton

*The Incredible Years – A Trouble-Shooting
Guide for Parents of Children Aged 3-8*

More helpful resources

YOUNGMINDS

NSPCC



my  **life**
Stop. Breathe. Think.

EMHP-

If you would like 1:1 support with learning how to deal with your child's behaviour, you can speak to the school about being referred to the EMHP.



Any questions?