

Positive parenting strategies

FOR CARERS

The majority of kids in out-of-home care do not display behaviours of concern. While you may find their behaviours challenging or difficult to manage, they don't require formalised behaviour support.

Positive parenting strategies are a useful way to support kids with difficult behaviours. In fact, the majority of parenting challenges can be managed using these strategies. Positive parenting requires carers to identify and effectively support the individual needs and skill development of their kids. The ability to effectively meet your kids' needs This generally leads to a reduction in difficult behaviours.

Positive parenting practices prioritise:

- safety
- clear rules
- boundaries and expectations
- praise and positive feedback
- emotion regulation and emotion coaching
- a supportive learning environment
- self-care strategies.

Kids who do not display behaviours of concern, but do have difficult behaviours, may benefit from positive parenting strategies such as:

Communicating clear expectations – kids feel safe when they know exactly what is expected of them and are able to meet those expectations.

- ensure your communication is clear
- use age-appropriate language, and as few words as possible, when discussing expectations with kids
- limit excess information - provide just enough to ensure they understand.

Allowing time – always give kids time to process new information before they need to act on it.

- give them a warning (ten, then five minutes) before an activity starts or ends
- use visual aids like clocks or egg timers to support time warnings or countdowns.



Ensuring understanding - when giving directions, check that kids have understood by having them repeat the direction in their own words. Provide further support if they are unsure.

- break directions into individual steps such as "please take your plate to kitchen"; then, "rinse it"; followed by, "put it in the dishwasher"
- give your kids time to process the information they are receiving, avoid the immediate repetition of instructions.

Using clear communication - limit information when giving directions.

- use age/developmentally appropriate language and a neutral tone of voice
- use as few words as possible, and speak slowly and clearly.

Providing positive feedback - use specific praise and rewards to show kids what they are doing right.

- instead of saying 'good work', you might say 'I really like how you folded all your clothes and put them away neatly'
- use positive reinforcement to highlight the building of skills and use of appropriate behaviours.

Building connection - ensure kids have positive one-on-one time with each adult caring for them. Time as a family group should also be included regularly.

- be available to your kids and listen actively when they speak
- do what you say you will, and follow through on promises - this builds connection and trust.

Other considerations

While positive parenting can be extremely effective, kids who display behaviours of concern require more targeted support. Positive behaviour support strategies, including the development and implementation of a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), may be necessary. If positive parenting strategies are not working in your home, speak with your caseworker about potential next steps.