

## **Letter to the Parents and Carers Week 9**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I do hope that you are keeping safe and well. I continue to think of all of you at a time of huge change and upheaval. Despite whatever changes occur, family life carries on. We continue to do our best, the best we know how, in caring and bringing up our children.

Here are a few more thoughts that may help us, a few helpful strategies that I have learned and have tried to put into practice.

### **Praise is a form of positive discipline**

In my previous letter, I spoke about noticing and emphasising positive and good behaviour in our children. If we do this, acknowledge it and praise the children for the good that they do, we give the right things the attention they deserve. We need to go on about all the good things! By doing this we draw attention to all the good things that the children say and do and make it more obvious to them what we really want from them. They get the message as we consistently praise them. They like to receive praise, this is a pleasant experience for them. They will appreciate the positive attention that they receive and know what direction we want them to go in.

'Family Links' that I have referred to before have a saying:



'WHAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO IS WHAT WE GET MORE OF!'

It makes sense. On the other hand, if all we say is 'Don't do that!' or 'Stop doing that', the message becomes confused, the children are not sure of what we want them to do. They can become confused. I admit that I have not always had this information and that I probably said an awful lot of 'don'ts' when my children were young. We do the best we can but we are learning as we go along.

A useful illustration of 'don'ts' being unhelpful is this;

If I say to you 'Don't think of an elephant!' - I am sure that you will immediately think of an elephant. Our brains hear the word elephant and immediately an elephant comes to our minds. The positive approach is to say what we want in a positive way.

Another example is that if I want my child to walk sensibly along the pavement, I should say;

'Walk sensibly along the pavement by the road.'

Not; 'Don't run along the pavement by the road!' The brain may hear 'run'.



This method is a form of positive discipline. Discipline is not a negative word, it is how we train our children. Positive discipline is a positive way that we direct and help our children to go in the right way that we want them to. Praise is a way of directing them and that is very positive!

### **Ignoring annoying behaviour**

There are some behaviour that we can ignore; irritating and annoying behaviour. This is behaviour that is in no way harmful or dangerous. Examples of this are:

Fiddling, fidgeting or restlessness

Hair twiddling

Whining or whingeing



Fiddling with nose

Thumb sucking

Interrupting

Showing off

Demanding things in shop

Silly voices

You know your children best. If it is a tantrum, a certain amount can be ignored and obviously giving in is not helpful (If we do give in the child will think that it will work to have a tantrum to get what

they want.) but we can't ignore the child completely. The child will need comfort if distressed. The point is that we ignore the annoying behaviour but not the child.

If we show that we are irritated by minor annoying behaviour, the child may do it more. We can get quite 'wound up' by it and we need to find a way to cope. By ignoring it, it can be reduced.

Distraction is a good way to stop such behaviour, especially with a younger child. It is really a way of changing the subject. Reasons for the behaviour can range from tiredness, frustration, hunger, to boredom.

In all of this, as far as we can, we can try to work on the positive to create good relationships with our children.

Finally, just one more thing. We, as parents and carers are so busy helping others that we can be left quite tired with little time to think about ourselves, to think about our own feelings or to nurture ourselves. So, here is another thought to finish;

Misery making belief;

I'm completely selfish to have any needs of my own.

Better Choice;

I have needs too, and I can try to meet my own as well as other people.

Do take care,

From Mrs New