

LEARNING TO MANAGE BEHAVIOUR

Creating a Positive Family Climate

The climate of the place you live in is the average weather you experience over a year. The climate might be hot and humid or cold and dry. But whatever the climate the weather can be different from one day to the next.

CLIMATE refers to an overall pattern, WEATHER reflects the day-to-day change that occurs.

Families have a general climate. Some families are warm and expressive, with lots of cuddles and emotions. Other families are cooler and more reserved with each other.

However, whatever the family climate there can be changes in the weather. There may be stormy days with arguments, dark, gloomy days with sadness, or bright cheerful days with fun and laughter.

The goal of PUP is to help create as many warm sunny days in YOUR family as possible. This might involve some climate change. Creating this change is possible because unlike the actual weather that you can't control, you do have some control over the weather in your family.

In the following pages we have provided a range of suggestions that will help make the sun shine in your family. Choose the exercises that seem to suit your family best and talk through how to put these into practise with your PUP therapist.

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Staying Positive to Create a Sunny Climate

Staying positive means asking you children to do what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to. Add to the following list.

What you want your children to do	What you can say to stay positive	What you don't want then to do	A negative thing to say
Hold your hand while crossing the road	"Please hold my hand as we cross the road"	Run across the road ahead of you	"Don't run across the road!"
Speak quietly using their inside voice	"Please use your lovely inside voice"	Yell and scream inside	"Stop yelling!!!"
Brush their teeth	"Go and brush your teeth and then we can have storytime"	Refuse to brush their teeth	"If you don't brush your teeth you'll go to bed with no story time!"

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Alternatives to Physical Punishment

When your child has done something that breaks your house rules e.g., bringing the soccer ball inside and kicking it in the kitchen, do the following:

1. Give a clear instruction to the child to do something or stop doing something

Stop kicking the ball please..

2. Let child know how long they have to do (or stop doing) what they have been told. (The time will vary depending on what the child is doing, but should range between about 30 seconds and 5 minutes)

Now pick up the ball and take it outside...

3. Give the child a chance to do what they are told (they will usually wait until the last second to start (or stop) doing it!)

Please do as I asked now

4. Repeat the instruction asking for compliance immediately if the child has not done what you have asked within the specified time and maybe tell the child you are counting to THREE

James, I have asked you to pick up the ball and take it outside, please do as I ask

I am counting to three and I want this done

5. Deliver the consequence if the child does not comply immediately

I am taking the ball away for the rest of the day

6. Praise the child if they do as they are told

Thanks for taking the ball out when I asked James.

STAY CALM WHILE YOU GIVE THESE INSTRUCTIONS - AND EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL CALM YOU CAN PRETEND TO BE CALM.

Giving clear instructions to stop something

- Make sure you have your child's attention
- State what the problem is and why it is a problem (e.g. "You are shouting and it is too loud for inside").
- Tell your child what you would like from them instead (e.g. "I would like you to talk quietly please").

Think of something your child does that you don't like them doing and write down how you could instruct them to stop doing this behaviour:

What is the problem behaviour?	
Why is this behaviour a problem?	
What would you like to see from your child instead of this behaviour?	

Giving clear instructions to do something

- Make sure you have your child's attention.
- State exactly what it is you would like your child to do. Be specific (e.g. "I would like you to pick your clothes up from your floor and put them by the washing machine").
- Explain why you would like them to do what you have asked (e.g. "I need to wash your clothes for school, but I don't have time to pick up everyone's clothes").

Think of behaviour that your child does that you would like them to change.

How you could instruct them to stop doing this?

What is it you want your child to do?	
Why do you want your child to do this behaviour?	

Neutral Zone

When children get very wound up and don't have the maturity to get control of themselves, it may be necessary to get your child into a space where they can chill. We call this the neutral zone. It is an emotional space where nothing is happening, except learning to calm down.

This is a difficult technique because it could take a while. You use this technique when your child is doing something very unacceptable.

1. Create a neutral zone.

To create a neutral zone you need to first remove the child from the situation that is creating their unacceptable behaviour. This can be achieved in different ways. If it involves another person, the child may need to go into another room away from the person they are arguing with.

If it involves an activity, such as a computer game, turning off the computer can create the neutral zone.

2. Explain to your child why you have taken them to another room or stopped an activity, for example, "I turned off the computer game because you are bashing the controller and it's going to break".

3. Tell your child they can return to the activity once they are settled.

4. Try to stay calm and in control.

5. Take some deep breaths, show your child how to calm down. (Use this opportunity to calm down yourself - you will feel better and your child will be learning how to chill).

6. Once the child is settled (it can take a while) do the following:

- Let them know that you are pleased with them, "It's nice to see you calm down, thank you";
- Remind your child why you acted as you did, "You were being loud, and could easily have broken the controller";
- Allow the child to go back to the activity they were doing if they apologise for their behaviour. This may be to apologise for bashing the controller, making a mess, or they may be asked to apologise to the person they were being mean to.

Planning for high risk situations

This involves identifying high-risk situations and working out a plan of action in advance.

Follow steps:

Identify high-risk situations. These are situations where your children are likely to get bored or disruptive easily because there is little for them to do (e.g., travelling in the car, grocery shopping, visiting friends).

Identify suitable activities for each situation.

Discuss the ground rules for the situation with your child before you go and ask your child to select something he or she would like to take with them.

Generate an activities list for school holidays, weekends and other free time.

Help your child get started, if necessary by giving them suggestions.

Give your child attention periodically while he or she is busy doing the activity he/she chose.

At first you might like to give your child a back-up reward for behaving appropriately and obeying the rules.