



**Strategy: Rules, Praise and Ignore**

**Step 1 Making Rules Positive:**

* Rules should be positive, short and memorable. There should be no more than 3 or 4 rules.
* Sit with the child and talk about unwanted and unkind behaviour.
* Put these into 3 categories and then rephrase them positively. For example, *“no hitting”* becomes – *“Kind hands”. See example below of 3 golden rules:*

1. Be kind and friendly 2. Look after toys 3. Be Safe

**Step 2 Teaching the Rules:**

* For the first few weeks talk about the rules at every opportunity with the children.
* Teach and discuss with the children which aspects of their behaviour are in keeping with the rules and which are not.
* Tell parents about your plans and encourage them to be involved and follow the same principles at home.

**Step 3 learning to give descriptive praise for acceptable behaviour:**

* Try to give praise every time you see the child keeping to the rules.
* By praising acceptable behaviour you are giving the child attention for the right reasons.
* Do not use general praise such as good boy or good girl because the child may be unsure about what they are being praised for.

**Step 4 Ignoring low level behaviours:**

*(This could include shouting out, defiance, hyper activity when not appropriate and general attention seeking and distraction behaviours.)*

* Ignore behaviours as much as possible. This is particularly effective when a child is seeking your attention.
* Lavish them with praise quite quickly after they have stopped the unwanted behaviour. This will reinforce the idea of positive behaviours equals positive attention.
* Use other techniques before a child reaches their *tipping point* (escalation of behaviour). Take them outside for a walk or engage them with something motivational and fun.

**Managing Behaviour:**

* Reinforce golden rules and the reason we have these rule. If the child is old enough to understand empathy, you may talk about how their behaviours can make others feel sad, angry and upset etc.
* Use a visual card without verbal communication to reinforce the expected behaviour from the child.
* If the behaviour persists, ensure your voice sounds firm yet caring, label the behaviour that is unacceptable “Stop, we have kind hands”. Offer alternatives to the behaviour *e.g. “if you want to throw things, we can throw bean bags into the bucket”.*
* At this point, adults should offer a consequence as opposed to a punishment. A punishment is not allowing the child the opportunity to change their behaviour. A consequence is about telling the child what will happen if they do not stop an unwanted behaviour. For example, *“I asked you to stop hitting, now trains are finished”.* Adults should adjust their language to be simpler for children with a lower understanding of language.

***Please remember to work alongside parents and share information with them on a daily basis. Consistency is the key to managing behaviour. Remember, it is not the child that changes, it is our strategies that need differentiating to the child’s needs.***