

Checklist of Positive Behaviour Management Strategies

As a team, discuss which of the following strategies are presently being implemented in your program. Are there any that could be used more effectively or extended or modified? Identify 1 or 2 to target as a team in the next 4 weeks.

The boxes may be used to identify which strategies are already in place.

■ Yes No Partly

Prevent the Behaviour:

- Display a **visual timetable or schedule** that the children can refer to. Communicate changes visually as well as verbally.
- Set group **rules** and display them visually. State them positively: what you want the children to do, rather than what the children should not do. Communicate the rules clearly and frequently.

e.g., “When you are inside you walk.” or “Keep the sand in the sandbox.”
- Give clear **instructions**. Remember to use the child’s name, get down to their level and use positive language. Always be prepared to help the child follow through!
- Do not phrase requests as choices when you want the child to take a specific action, for example, do not say “Would you like to come inside to play now?” if continuing to play outside is not an option.
- Plan smooth **transitions** by providing the child or group of children with a **warning** (e.g., verbal, timer, song, lights, visual or picture).
- Set **limits**, for example, the number of children who can be in specific play areas such as dramatic centre, block centre, creative centre, and especially where the amount of equipment and space is limited.
- Create **private and quiet spaces** for children to relax, think, or rest.
- Define **boundaries** by breaking up large and open spaces using shelves, tables and other furniture. Make sure areas are large enough for children to play comfortably.
- Reduce or eliminate loud noise**, active play or anything that is over stimulating in situations where children need to relax.
- Offer **choices** to a child who may be having difficulty initiating, deciding or settling to play:
 - give choices of activities, songs, books, snack items (verbally or with visual supports)
 - assist to start and complete activities;
 - invite another child to assist.
- Work with children’s **strengths and interests** to promote and reinforce desired behaviour: build in success by providing activities that are motivating and achievable.
- Use language that is appropriate for the **child’s developmental level**. Reinforce a child’s understanding by adding gestures, signs, pictures, or symbols as needed.
- Try to **reduce wait times** or fill them with activities, such as finger plays, songs or simple games.
- Create effective **small groups** to increase the success of an activity or skill, to reduce waiting times and give children more direct attention.

Teach New Skills:

- Teach **conflict resolution** skills. Prompt children to use words rather than physical contact (e.g., “Tell Nazir, it’s my turn”).
- Teach a new skill that **replaces** the problem behaviour, gives the child the same “pay-off” and is more acceptable.
- Build children’s **skills**, especially communication, social and play skills. For example, how to ask for help, request a turn, wait, take a turn, enter a group, join in play, use friendly talk.
- Use plenty of **repetition** to teach new skills and visuals to support the learning.

Change the Results:

- Comment** frequently and specifically when children are behaving appropriately,
e.g., *“Thanks for putting away the tractor, I really appreciate that”*.
“That will be a great painting to take home, Paulina”.
- Consider using a **reinforcement system**, such as stickers to reward a child or children for their positive behaviour. Remember to fade out the system and replace with more natural forms of social encouragement.
- Join play that is getting unruly or out of hand to **refocus or redirect** it.
- Be alert to **warning signs**, such as tensed muscles, statements such as *“I might knock that down”*. Redirect a child before behaviour escalates.
- Only state a consequence you are prepared/able to **follow through!**
- When behaviour is clearly non-compliant, give the child responsibility for their actions. Avoid a power struggle by stating that the child is making a choice, and then calmly follow through the **logical consequence**.
- Use **attention and ignoring** strategies.
- Stay calm** when addressing children’s challenging behaviours.

Other:

- Get **staff agreement** on the language that will be consistently used to give children warnings and feedback on their behaviour.
- Establish **consistency** in behaviour management strategies between staff, and between the family and staff if possible.