

TOP TEN TIPS FOR BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL SKILLS

1. REWARDS AND PRAISE

Notice good behaviour in your child; positive reinforcement is crucial when it comes to the development of social skills.

2. CONSISTENCY

Follow through on consequences and make sure you and your partner back each other up. Don't make up or change rules as you go. Always reinforce important rules in your household.

3. ROUTINE

Try to create a routine in your family life that is manageable and incorporates play time. It is important for children to have outdoor time to rid them of energy that they have built up.

4. BOUNDARIES

Be clear about rules and expectations of behaviour that is acceptable and not acceptable. Never give in to whining or yelling from your child.

5. DISCIPLINE

Be brief and firm. No negotiating! Use the 1-2-3 Magic technique. Avoid being emotional when disciplining your child- this will only make the situation worse for

everyone. Do not speak to your child like a 'little adult'. Instead, minimize the use of words and direct your child to a time-out area.

Remember: repeated negative reactions don't work with any child.

6. WARNINGS

Give your child warnings about what to expect so they can prepare themselves. This is very important during transition times and can make change more manageable. Don't interrupt play and expect your child to be reasonable about it. Also give warnings before discipline so he/she has the opportunity to correct the unwanted behaviour.

7. EXPLANATIONS

Always model appropriate behaviour and tell your child how you want them to act. Teach your child how to play and how to treat possessions such as their toys. Always be brief and clear in your explanations.

8. RESTRAINT

Don't give in every time your child wants a new toy. Rewards do not always have to be in the form of material goods. Instead, rotate toys and include positive praise for good behaviour. Be sure to monitor what your child is watching on television and how much time is being spent in front of the TV.

9. RESPONSIBILITY

Teach your child the skill of sharing and how to take turns. Model this behaviour and praise your child when you see them doing this during play. Encourage them to use their words and if their language is limited, teach them to use visual symbols and cues such as shoulder tapping to get one's attention.

10. RELAXATION

Don't forget to enjoy your child. It's okay to not always like what they do but during those happier moments, be sure to play with your child, read them a story and give them a hug, reminding them that you love them unconditionally.