

Supporting Children's Behaviour

Children are 'behaving' in everything they do. Running, laughing, eating, playing – all these are examples of behaviour. When we talk about behaviour, though, we usually mean behaviour that we find challenging.

It is part of every parent's role to guide their children, so that they grow up understanding what behaviours are acceptable and useful. Every Therapist and Teacher on our team is mindful of this important job that parents do, and can discuss this with you as a natural part of your work together.

If you feel Positive Behaviour Support program could help your family, please talk to a Plumtree team member.



Almost every child will challenge their parents at some stage, with behaviour that is puzzling or hard to manage. Your Therapist/Key Worker or teacher will be happy to talk with you about why your child is behaving this way, and how to help them learn a different way to meet their needs. At Plumtree, we provide training for our staff in Positive Behaviour Support, which means focusing on ways to teach and guide behaviour, rather than punishing the child.

Sometimes a behaviour can pose more of a problem. For example, a child may be hurting herself or others, or may be screaming for long periods to get what she wants. You have tried over time to address this behaviour without success. Perhaps your Plumtree team member has also tried, but feels that a more intensive approach is needed. When this happens, you might like to consider a **Positive Behaviour Support** program, which involves a thorough Functional Behaviour Assessment (see below), an individual Behaviour Support Plan and guidance to put strategies in place.

What is a Functional Behaviour Assessment?

All behaviour has a purpose or function for the child. It helps the child to meet a need. Sometimes this function is obvious. For example, if Sally runs away from her mum when she runs the bath, it might be clear that Sally is trying to avoid bath time. But the function of behaviour is not always easy to understand. A Functional Behaviour Assessment gives parents a clear understanding of exactly what is happening, and why. They can then plan an approach which meets the child's needs and has a high chance of success.

If Sally keeps trying to avoid bath time, even when her mum tries hard to make it fun for her, an assessment might help her family look deeper into the behaviour. Why does Sally want to avoid the bath? What is it about the bath that bothers her? Does she avoid water in other situations? Once they understand the behaviour, her family and therapist can choose strategies which are relevant to what the issues really are for Sally. This way, they will avoid the 'hit and miss' effect that often happens when behaviours are not fully understood.

For more information about our PBS program, please speak to your Therapist/Key worker.

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