

Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance

How to approach behaviour support in the Early Years

This guide will help you to consider the steps to take and processes to follow when managing behaviour that challenges.

Behaviour that challenges

Since the pandemic, early years settings have reported that they are experiencing an increase of behaviour that challenges, likely impacted by Covid and isolation. This guide has been designed to support with the steps to take and processes to follow to support a child exhibiting challenging behaviour, as well as their family.

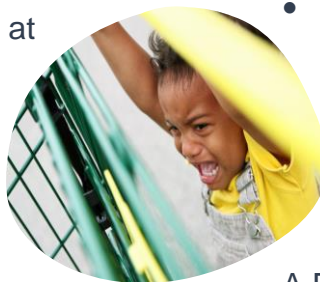


Talking to parents / carers

If you are noticing a change to a child's behaviour, the first thing to do is speak with the child's parents/carers. Approach this conversation sensitively and with a positive statement '... had a lovely time playing in the sand today, he xxxxx However he got quite upset when....' This will help you to find out:

- Have there been any changes at home which may be resulting in the behaviour?
- Are the parents/carers noticing these behaviours at home?
- Any potential strategies the parents/carers might have in place at home which can be mirrored at the setting?

These early conversations create opportunities to address the behaviour early, gaining parents/carers cooperation and planning support together.



Initial behaviour strategies to implement

Remember, children are learning to manage their behaviour and their own feelings.

- Have clear and consistent boundaries in place
- Have a clear and consistent routine in place
- Use positive praise
- Use 'proximal praise'
- Have clear and consistent consequences in place
- Use visual supports at all times
- Use individual reward charts / reward systems
- Refer to your provision's Behaviour / Child Protection / Safeguarding Policies

Record Keeping

- Keep detailed records of behaviour incidents (ABC / STAR charts)
- Create a behaviour support plan, together with the child's parents/carers, where everyone agrees with the strategies and plan going forward
 - Meet with parents/carers regularly to share behaviour updates, including celebrating successes, no matter how small!

Behaviour Support Plan

A Behaviour Support plan will help you to:

- Outline the child's behaviours that are challenging

- Acknowledge the triggers for these behaviours
- Decide the preventative measures that can be taken to avoid these behaviours occurring
- Plan the strategies to implement, should these behaviours occur
- Have regular meetings with the child's parents/carers to share and update the plan as necessary

Creating A Behaviour Support Plan

Everyone involved with the child's care should be involved in creating a behaviour support plan. Using your ABC / STAR charts to determine triggers of behaviour, follow these 8 points to make a plan:



- Write a description of the behaviour(s)
- Work out the reasons for the behaviour(s) – these would be evident when completing ABC / STAR charts
- Write **proactive** strategies to help the child stay happy and calm. Think about what new skills the child may need to learn to help them in the future e.g., a sign for “finished”, to wait for 30 seconds etc
- Recognise the early warning signs/triggers of the behaviour (when a child becomes anxious) and think about how to respond when you see these. This is the **'active'** part of the plan
- Record the **reactive** strategies (what to do when the behaviour occurs) to keep children safe
- Record the **'recovery and de-escalation'** strategies (what to do after the behaviour). We need to be careful here as there is a risk of the behaviour escalating again
- Get agreement from all the key people in the child's life
- Review the plan. Is it working?

What Else?

- Signpost the family to the support available at the Children and Family Centres

- Discuss a possible referral to Early Help with the family
- Seek advice for your setting's allocated Early Help Co-ordinator
- Signpost the parents/carers to the Educational Psychology Service's drop-in sessions for parents/carers
- Seek advice from other professionals, this could include your allocated Area SENCO/EYs SEND Advisor
- Consider introducing individual ['Happiness Boxes'](#) for specific children
- Consider if any referrals to health services might need to be made to support the child further. This must be discussed with the child's parents/carers
 - Ensure all practitioners working with the child are aware of the strategies and plans in place for the child and are following these to provide further consistency
 - Encourage setting wide positive behaviour – think about how staff talk to each other, body language etc
 - Maintain eye contact with the child and use their name in positive, gentle conversations

Useful links and Contact Information

[Waltham Forest Local Offer](#)

[Waltham Forest Local Offer – Early Years](#)

[Waltham Forest Educational Psychology Service](#)

[Waltham Forest Children and Family Centres](#)

[Waltham Forest Early Help](#)

Earlyhelp@walthamforest.gov.uk

[Understanding and Supporting Behaviour Guidance and Webinar](#)

SENDEYFS@walthamforest.gov.uk

[Place2Be](#) Parenting advice from child mental health experts. Practical tips to support children's wellbeing and manage behaviour