

# Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos

Put up as welcome page.

Welcome, conduct ice breaker and make introductions.

**The aim of this training is to enable participants to provide support for children to develop positive social and behavioural skills.**

*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

Barnardos

Use as part of introductions and overview of session.  
Best after the initial ice breaker.

Introduce 'We Want to Learn' activity at this point.

## *Outcomes of the Training for Participants*

- They will understand the factors that influence the development of social and behavioural skills in children.
- They will be better equipped to identify the factors leading to challenging situations with children.
- They will be able to identify and develop a variety of strategies that will provide children with the supports that they need to develop better social and behavioural skills.

*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos

Take each outcome singly, discuss briefly and give examples from the work that will be done. Each point will dim as you move on to next one.

**Factors that influence:** An example could be looking at some of the theorists, for example Bandura and social learning.

**Identifying factors/causes:** Discuss the practical work to be covered, for example looking at conflicts within groups as a source of tension for children.

**Identifying strategies and responses:** Discuss how there will be practical work related to each individual participant, providing a range of strategies to give them a full 'toolbox' that they can draw from, including identifying their typical response style.



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos

## Understanding Challenging Behaviour

### *Some possible causes:*

- Needing attention
- Distancing themselves from painful situations
- Seeking control
- Achieving revenge for a perceived injustice
- Expressing their feelings through actions rather than words
- Raising the tempo
- Avoiding some other situation



**Getting attention:** This is normal. Young children have a strong need for physical attention such as smile or a hug. Attention preferences vary from child to child and within children over time or depending on what else is going on for them.

**Distancing** themselves from painful situation, such as separation or bereavement.

**Raising the tempo:** Children can be so used to a heightened situation such as a conflicted family background that they can seek to raise the tempo so that it feels 'normal' or what they are used to at home.

**Seeking control**, where they may not have it in other areas of their life.

**Avoiding** some other situation - perhaps they don't like a group activity so they try to disrupt it.

**Achieving revenge** for a perceived injustice such as not being given chance to play with an item, or not being invited to participate in giving out food.

**Expressing their feelings through actions** rather than words, either not having learnt this skill, or being so overwhelmed with emotion that the skill is overcome by a need to lash out in some way.

## Understanding Challenging Behaviour: *Analysing possible causative factors*

- Complete the observation checklist, asking what the child is achieving by this behaviour.
- Look at the possible factors affecting the child. Is it...

### ? *The Childcare Setting*



### ? *The Adults/Staff in Charge*

### ? *Child and Family-centred Factors:*

- ▶ *physical*
- ▶ *developmental*
- ▶ *emotional*
- ▶ *social*

**Childcare Setting:** Are the environment, transition times, routines too flexible/rigid?

**Adults/Staff in Charge:** Style in parenting or leading; tolerance levels; staffing pressures; training levels; consistency; expectations; agreed boundaries; have not really heard or understood the child.

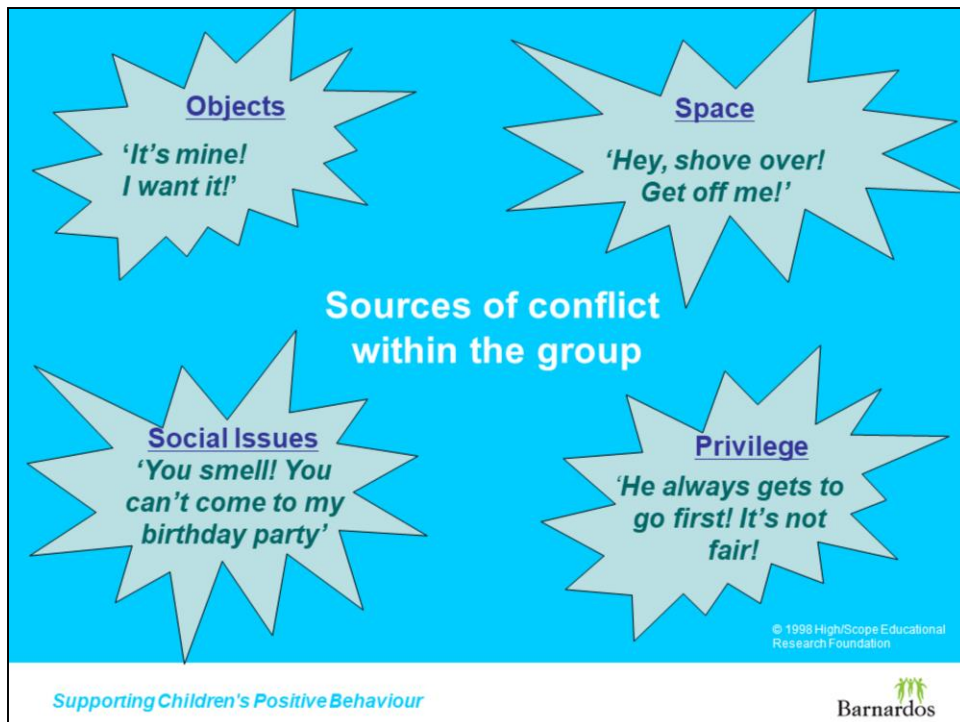
### **Child and Family-centred Factors**

**Physical:** Tiredness; allergies; puberty; health issues such as illness; inadequate diet, hunger.

**Developmental:** Expressing themselves inappropriately such as by temper tantrums; developmental delay; perceptual difficulties in processing information; language delay; frustration – needs more stimulation [gifted child]; not ready for this particular activity.

**Emotional:** Home events: new sibling; separation and loss in family; other traumatic event; temperament of child – for example, may prefer small groups to large ones.

**Social:** Child unused to other children; unfamiliar with setting; child doesn't know the way things are done, limits and boundaries.



**Objects:** Fighting over same item, perhaps child has not yet learnt how to share; perhaps they are angry and think the other person has had it long enough; perhaps they own the item and don't want to share it.

**Space:** Someone intruding too close to their work area; perhaps putting their work at risk; perhaps they feel like being alone for a bit; perhaps there is not enough space or they are working in a spot that people pass through or need to reach over.

**Social issues:** They may only want to be social with certain people; they may be shy of others; there might have been some issue with the other child previously; there could be racism, unconscious prejudice.

**Privilege:** Child may have been waiting for turn a long time and become frustrated; may rightly have noticed that other child does get to go first a lot for whatever reason.



It is very important to be aware when children appear to 'over react' in a situation or have too strong a reaction to something that happens in your setting.

If this happens be sure to look behind at possible external causes. Having a good connection to children's families gives you an insight into what may be causing difficulties for the child. Equally, if parents feel able to open up to you and share with you, then you will know about issues of possible concern to the child and you can be prepared to offer appropriate support to them.

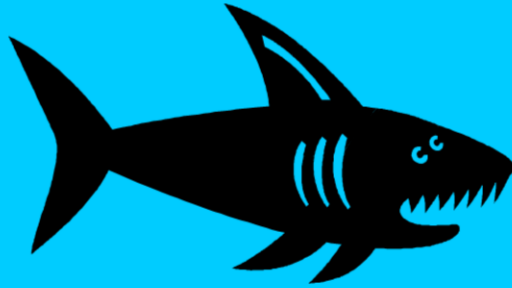
Finally, noticing their over-reaction enables you to be sensitive to them, be easy on them and to let them know that you understand and empathise. You may not be able to solve the problem (parents' separating, witnessing domestic violence) but you can be a support to the child.



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos

## The Shark



Jumps right in and solves  
children's problems for them...

'We'll do it my way, or no way'

© 1998 High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

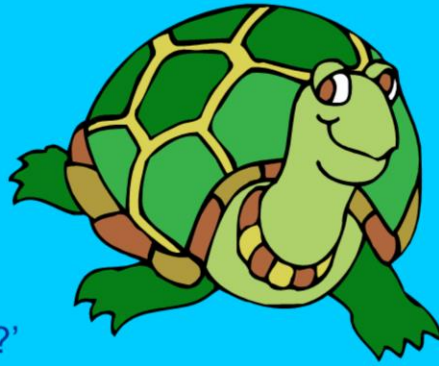
 Barnardos

This person is strict with the group, controls its actions and pushes the group to complete the activity. This is called an **authoritarian** style of leadership.

## The Turtle

Avoids or ignores  
the problem...

'Conflict? What conflict?'



© 1998 High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos

This person will give minimal guidance to the group, let them get on with it and largely ignore the problems that emerge. This is a typically **laissez faire** management style.

## The Owl

Acknowledges the problem or conflict and engages with children in problem solving



© 1998 High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

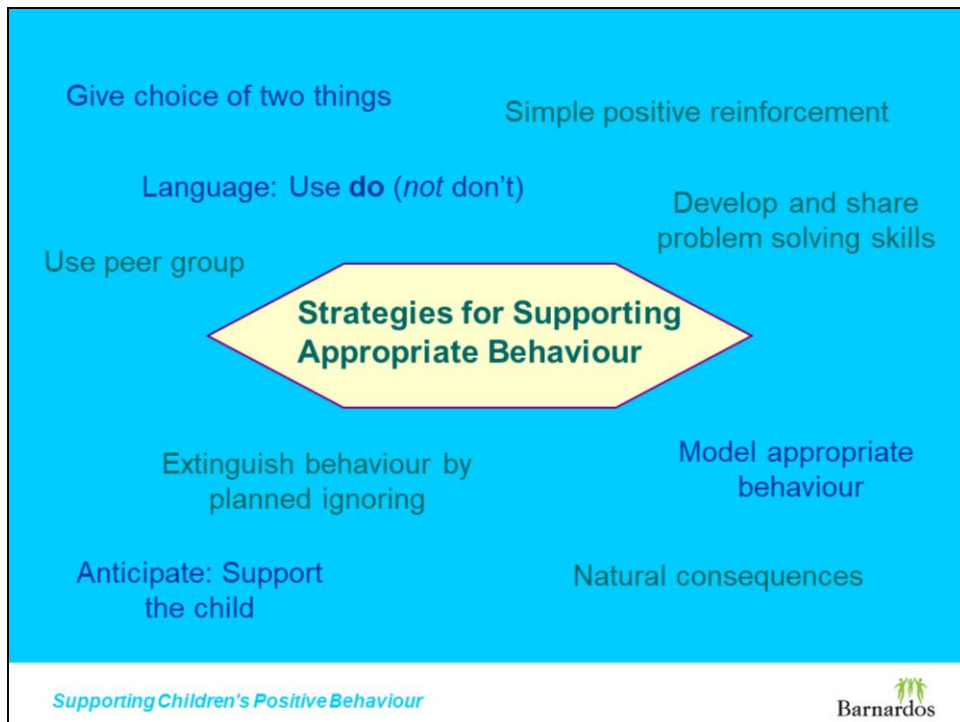
 Barnardos

This person will explain very clearly what is required and act supportively. They will provide encouragement, especially with any problems or difficulties. This style is **democratic** and participative.



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

  
Barnardos



- Give a **choice** of two things to a child who never does what they are asked; when young children are unable to hold a **third opposing thought** and will focus on the either/or.
- Use **positive reinforcement** such as hug, smiles, spend time with child or near child watching or listening as this increases positive behaviour. It is immediate in small children but takes a bit more time as children grow older. It needs to be **consistent** and has to be **specific**. Over time remember to do it at intervals for intermittent reinforcement.
- Use 'do' instead of 'don't' **language** to modify behaviour, for example 'please sit down' rather than 'don't run around'.
- Use **peers** for positive reinforcement, for example if a child is not joining a group say something like 'that's great, most of you are sitting in the circle' and then invite the one who is not sitting.
- Model appropriate behaviour**: with child; with the other staff members; with parents; with the other children.
- Extinguish** behaviour by **planned ignoring**. This needs to be discussed with other staff; be consistent and reviewed for effect.
- Allow **natural consequences** where possible to allow the child to develop their own sense of responsibility.
- Support the child** when getting into difficulties: intervene in advance of possible difficulty, such as noticing the early stages of tussles over equipment, or a child using/doing something that may be hard for them – they might need some quiet observation and readiness on part of adult to step in and support/help.
- Allow **natural consequences** where possible to allow the child to develop their own sense of responsibility.
- Encourage children's **problem-solving skills**.



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

  
Barnardos

## How to be an OWL: *High/Scope's Six Steps for Resolving Conflict*



- Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
  - Acknowledge children's feelings
    - Gather information
      - Restate the problem
    - Ask for ideas for solutions, choose one together
  - Be prepared to give follow-up support

*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

  
Barnardos

- **It is important to stop** any kicking, biting. Calmly repeating to child/children that 'kicking hurts, it has to stop'.
- **Acknowledge each child's feelings** in suitable language 'it hurts when you are kicked', 'you seem to be feeling very angry'.
- **Gather information** encouraging each child to speak separately, in turn, going from one to another.
- **Restate the problem** in your own words and check you have gathered information correctly, asking for clarification if needed.
- **Ask for ideas for solutions.** With support, children will suggest ideas and be more likely to follow through when they do. However, be sure both parties have agreed to the solution picked.
- **Be prepared to give follow up support.** It might be that one of the children has not fully resolved their feelings so it may be necessary to revisit some of the steps; or the children may need help to start following up the solution.



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

  
Barnardos

## Prevention and Reduction Strategies

### Use observation and analysis tools

- Checklist
- Factors affecting child



### Communication

- Let children know **what** you want them to do - and **how** to do it
- Model positive language, expressing feelings

### Conflict management

- Learn to de-escalate conflicts
- Model problem solving with colleagues
- Help children learn problem-solving skills

Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour

Barnardos

The best and most effective way to deal with most conflictual situations is... to prevent them! Easier said than done? Prevention is the key to success. Instead of simply reacting to situations, get into the habit of trying to see what might be behind it. Use the **Checklist for Behaviour** in addition to your observations of children to gain a better understanding of what and why. The checklist includes a list of questions, including: Is the child behaving appropriately for their age/stage of development? What exactly is the child doing – describe/observation? How long has this/it/these been going on? When did it start or become noticeable? How often does it occur?

In your setting you need to clearly communicate what it is you expect from children, for example asking children to 'be good' is meaningless. What does 'being good' mean? It's a very abstract concept and is not helpful. It is better to talk in concrete terms.

By bringing conflict right into the curriculum, we can demonstrate to children that solutions are always possible. We can use 'I' statements and teach children to do the same. We can use gentle body language so we physically bring a calm approach to situations. We can learn from our colleagues and enjoy problem solving instead of avoiding it. Also, to

calm someone down who is upset, a simple technique is to match their breathing while facing them, then slow yours down till calmness is achieved.

## Prevention and Reduction Strategies

### Planning:

- Use your curriculum to prevent situations arising.
- Examine your daily routine – Is it working? Is it consistent? Is it balanced (adult-led/child-led)?
- Reduce the number of transitions – plan them to make them engaging, fun, active.
- Remove 'waiting' time.
- Review your materials and room layout – Is there... enough stuff / enough space? Is it ...interesting / stimulating?
- Use group activities to promote pro-social behaviours.



Use observations to identify if there are particular parts of the day when conflicts arise. If there are, you may need to change the routine to either get rid of the part of the routine in which conflicts are happening or reduce the time children are involved in that part of the routine, for example, many childcare staff identify that children get restless after snack time or before outside time.

If you can take the approach that conflict situations offer children learning opportunities then dealing with it and managing conflict dealing becomes a very interesting part of your curriculum.



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos

## Gaining Deeper Understanding from Theory

- Using conflict and challenges for creating new cognitive structures and skills
  - Social learning concepts
  - Child versus adult thinking processes
    - *Concrete thinking*
    - *Egocentricity*
    - *Limited verbal skills*
    - *Physical expression of actions*
    - *Striving for independence*
    - *Single channel attention*

Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour



**Conflict and challenges:** Use the ideas of the various theorists on the handout *Understanding Challenging Behaviour* to discuss using conflict and challenges for creating new cognitive structures and skills.

**Social learning:** Refer to the handout on *Understanding Behaviour and the Role of Childcare Practitioner*. Discuss Bandura and Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner.

### Children versus adult thinking:

**Concrete thinking:** Young children will need to keep sight of disputed objects to help them to problem solve as abstract reasoning or ability to use ideas and symbols as examples has not developed.

**Egocentricity:** There needs to be opportunity for children to gradually learn about others' feelings and develop empathy [which starts to show towards end of second year].

**Limited verbal skills:** Allow adequate time for understanding what the child is trying to convey.

**Physical expression:** Young children feel [and act!] with their bodies and gradually learn to use words instead of actions.

**Striving for independence:** Natural wish provides strong motivation for children to want to do things by and for themselves – allowing space, time and opportunity will encourage and support this.

**Single channel attention:** 'One thing at a time only' thinking up to approximately the age of seven means that a child is not ignoring you but is just concentrating on whatever is their current focus. Adults can balance more than one thing at a time in their attention span.

Thank  
you!



*Supporting Children's Positive Behaviour*

 Barnardos