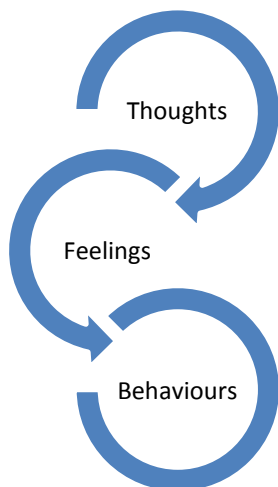


Behaviour: Practical Suggestions for Home and School

The Child Brain Injury Trust is a national charity supporting anyone affected by childhood acquired brain injury. The following information has been developed to help the reader understand more about brain injury and some of the associated issues. Every effort has been taken to ensure the information is accurate and up to date. If you require more immediate support or assistance please contact our **Helpline 0303 3032248** or email helpline@cbituk.org where we will be able to respond to your specific enquiry and offer support.

Behaviour: Practical Suggestions for Home and School

Recognising that things have changed and making sense of what is happening around you can be difficult following a brain injury. This difficulty is often expressed through a change in a child's behaviour. As a parent you might want to talk through the issues with someone who understands such as another parent or one of the Child Brain Injury Trust's **Regional Child and Family Support Coordinators**; to arrange a home visit or for more information please contact our **helpline 0303 303 2248** or email helpline@cbituk.org



Every child is different and will respond differently but here are some practical suggestions that you might want to try in response to a child's behaviour:

Prevention rather than reaction

There is a greater likelihood of preventing specific behaviours from occurring if you can identify what triggers the behaviour. It may be useful to ask the child what makes them angry or upset, for example by asking them to rate how they feel in a certain situation on a scale of 1 to 10. You may wish to make a note of these to see if there are patterns over time. Once the triggers are known, it might be possible to avoid or manage those situations.ⁱ Sometimes

suggesting an alternative activity or place when you notice the specific behaviour can be helpful.

Reacting after the event is less helpful because it means that you have allowed the behaviour to take place. Also, your child might not be able to understand why you have reacted the way you have. When reacting to behaviour it is important to have a structured neutral response so as not to encourage the behaviour by being too positive or by getting angry yourself.ⁱⁱ

One method to help with behaviours is the ABC approach:



Antecedent: Any stimulus that precedes a behaviour; something that the child can hear, feel, see, taste or smell

Behaviour: The response that the child displays; anything the child says or does after the antecedent;

Consequence: Stimulus that occurs after the behaviour; Anything that the child will or won't receive following the child's behaviour, praise, attention, a sticker, a lolly

Be consistent

It can be more effective to focus on changing one behaviour at a time rather than trying to solve them all at once. Being consistent, so that all family members and teachers respond to the child's behaviour in the same way each time, is key to changing behaviour. ⁱⁱ Giving in from time to time delays the process and can make the behaviour worse. Being consistent will lead to improvements over time even though at first the behaviour may get worse. It is important not to give up at this point.

Positive reinforcement

Reacting to and praising good behaviour, and ignoring negative behaviour, is a more effective way of increasing good behaviour than telling children off or punishing bad behaviour. ⁱⁱⁱ Remember to tell the child when you are pleased and why as it may not be clear to them. This is known as specific praise. ⁱⁱ

Measure progress

Changing the way a person acts and responds to situations takes time, and it can be easy to think that the steps you are taking are not working.

It can be helpful to keep a diary or chart to record:

- The specific behaviour

- What happened:
 - Before the behaviour. (There may be a specific time, place or event that triggers the behaviour)
 - During the behaviour
 - After the behaviour. (What the consequences were for the child)

- Your approach to the situation

It may also be useful to share this data with school to identify if such behaviours only happen in one context or happen at both home and school.

Hopefully this will help to highlight the triggers and possible ways around them as well as help you see changes over time.

The Child Brain Injury Trust has developed a series of online presentations (Webinars) that may help you better understand some of the issues, frustrations and subsequent behaviours your child may face following their brain injury. Access to these presentations is available free of charge to families and schools and can be accessed via our online catalogue at:

<http://childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/how-we-help/learning-events/>

For more support, contact us on our helpline 0303 303 2248 helpline@cbituk.org

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ⁱ <http://www.headway.org.uk/Emotional-and-Behavioural.aspx>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.scope.org.uk/help-and-information/education/behaviour-management>

ⁱⁱⁱ Yody BB, Schaub C, Conway J, Peters S, Strauss D, Helsing S, Scott MS. Applied Behavior Management and Acquired Brain Injury: Approaches and Assessment. Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation: 2000. 15(4);1041-1060