

## **Ignoring Negative Behaviour**

Busy parents often get into the habit of paying attention to their children when they are behaving in a way they do not like. Children really like attention and will quickly learn that if they behave in a certain way adults will notice them. The more attention you pay to the behaviours you don't like the more they will repeat them as there is a reward - your attention!!

The most effective way of reducing behaviour you don't want to see is to ignore it. If they are **fussing or crying** and **you know** it is for your attention, ignore it, turn away and be busy. As soon as they are quiet turn back and say you like it when they talk to you without fussing. If they speak rudely/with attitude turn away and be busy. If they are old enough you can explain briefly that you do not like it when people speak rudely to you and you will talk when they speak politely/in a nice way and then turn away until their tone of voice is polite. Things may get worse initially but used consistently ignoring really works.

**It is important that when your child does behave in a way you like that this is the time you pay attention. Catch them being 'good'.** Give them jobs helping you show that you like being with them at these times. Notice them when they are behaving well and tell them exactly what it is you like, e.g. I really like it when you talk to me so nicely, you sound so grown up/look at you playing so gently with your toys/sister, you are so sensible, etc.

You do not have to pay attention all the time, in fact this becomes too demanding on a parent and it is possible that the child will not learn that they cannot always have instant attention. Pick your times and notice when they are playing quietly and tell them that you are so pleased with them that in 5 minutes you would like to come and play with them for a little while until you have to - do a job/get some food, etc. Try hard to keep to a real five minutes. Consistently used this will teach a child how sometimes you have to wait for adult attention. The time can then be built up gradually.

With the consistent strategy of ignoring the attention seeking fussing and paying attention to behaviour you like, you will change your behaviour and theirs. If you ignore instead of being cross you will become calmer and more in control and your child will react in a similar way. Children copy and model their

behaviour and attitudes on what they see and hear. It can be difficult to change what you have been doing for some time but keep trying and it will work.

Good Luck

If you need to talk further about this please contact the EPU on (01724 296679)