



Developmental Training Programmes

---

# *Parenting*



Child Assessment Services



DH

# **I. The causes of behavior problems mainly include:**

## **1. Temperament:**

Every child inherits different genes from their parents and they might develop innate personality at birth. There is no good or bad in temperament, for example, some children are more enthusiastic, some are quieter, and some children are more emotional, just like siblings have different personality.

## **2. Ability:**

The developmental speed and ability of each child is different. For example, some children's language development is slower than others. They cannot fully understand the verbal instructions of others, as a result, they cannot complete the task or can only finish it partially. It seems that those children have fluctuating performance. In other scenario, children may appear to be “uncooperative” to their parents even they seem to understand the instruction. This is owing to their difficulty in memorizing the entire instruction, or weakness in gross and fine motor skills. Therefore, it is very important for parents to give appropriate instructions according to their children’s abilities, so that they can follow easily.

## **3. Environmental factors:**

Parents are the first teachers and role models of their children. They learn from their parent’s behavior. The environment in which children grown up has a great influence on them. For

example, if parents often use corporal punishment, children may learn to hit people. Therefore, it is precarious to use physical punishment as strategies to teach children, which not only hurt their body and spirit, but also make them learn to use violence to solve problems in the long run. On the contrary, a harmonious family environment is favorable to the development of children's positive personality and temper.

#### **4. Inconsistent disciplinary methods:**

When disciplining children, all family members should try their best to cooperate and use the same methods. Consistent disciplinary method should be used when dealing with children's negative behavior. In addition, individual requirement for children should also be the same, such as asking them to eat by themselves, expressing the need to use the toilet etc. In doing so, the children's sense of security will be greater, and it will be easier for them to follow instructions.

## **II. Prevent the occurrence of misbehavior**

"Prevention is better than cure." If parents can use the following skills in daily life, it can help children develop good habits. Knowing that they can find someone to help when they are in difficulty, it can reduce their frustration and temper tantrums. When children learn to play independently, they become less dependent and more confident.

### **1. Be a good role model**

Parents can be good role models so that their children can learn from them in daily life examples.

### **2. Praise**

Everyone likes to be praised, and praising is a powerful tool. Children can feel that they are valued and they will repeat the behaviors that their parents appreciated. Good habits can then be developed over time.

### **3. Arrange interesting activities**

By arranging interesting activities, it can keep children occupied and reduce the chance in losing their temper. Interesting activities are creative and novel, but at the same time should be safe and appropriate for age. In doing so, you can prevent your children from disrupting others out of boredom. In addition, parents can also bring one or two pieces of mysterious toys that are easy to carry in handbags or hide them at home. When parents are busy, such as cooking or listening to a phone call, you can take out these prepared mysterious toys and let your children play.

### **III. Managing undesirable behavior**

If parents have tried their best to prevent tantrums, but behavior problems cannot resolve, you can use the following skills.

#### **1. Planned ignoring**

This skill is to deliberately ignore their attention seeking behaviors, such as lying on the ground when throwing tantrums, making strange noises, or making strange looks. After a while, they will stop when they cannot get their parents' attention.

#### **2. Setting rules**

Be clear when you set rules and make sure your children understand the rules so that they can follow. Here are some basic principles when setting rules. Firstly, the rules must be specific and clear and be appropriate to your children's ability; Secondly, parents should use positive wordings, such as "go slowly" instead of "don't run". In addition, parents can use drawings or photos to give better illustration. For example, post a picture of the child putting the shoes in the shoe cabinet as a reminder on the shoe rack. Thirdly, don't set too many rules, 2-3 rules would be enough; Fourthly, the rules need to be followed by the whole family.

### **3. Bear the consequences**

If the parents have set some rules or given some advices, and their children's behavior problems have not improved, parents should take away their privilege which fits the situation. For example, children play toys or throw toys in inappropriate ways and they continue to do so despite instructions, parents could put the toys away for 5-15 minutes depending on the age of the children. If children drink or eat snacks with inappropriate manner and without improvement after reminder, parents should put away the food for 5 minutes; except for activities such as mealtime or doing homework. Another example is that the parent has agreed with the children that they can get certain reward after completing tasks, but they fail to complete the task, so they have to bear the consequences and cannot get the reward.

### **4. Quiet Time**

If the child's misbehavior is further escalated or worsen, such as continuing to lose his temper, destroying objects, hitting others etc., parents should help control his emotions and calm down. Parents should say to the child calmly: "You didn't listen to mum / daddy, you have to be quiet for 2 minutes, and I will call you after the time." Depending on the age of the child, the period can be 2 to 5 minutes, the child can sit or stand but stay close enough so that you can observe if your child is doing anything dangerous. The quiet time period not only cut off the ongoing misbehavior, such as hitting people, pushing people, grabbing toys, etc., but also give the child and parents some time to calm down

everyone's emotions. The quiet time period does not need to be too long, but the child should be quiet before he leaves the time-out space and get back to his activities.

## Prevent behavior problems

- Be a good role model

- Praise

- Arrange interesting activities

## Approaches to behavior problems

- Planned ignoring

- Setting rules

- Bear the consequences

- Quiet Time

If you want to get more information about the child development, please visit our website:  
[www.dhcas.gov.hk](http://www.dhcas.gov.hk)

Without the consent of the Department, any content of the booklet cannot be reproduced.



