

# Reducing Challenging Behaviours

## What are behaviours?

Behaviours are the ways in which a person acts in response to a stimulus or situation. Behaviours can become challenging when they are persistent, intense, or frequent, and impact negatively on a person's day-to-day functioning. Common challenging behaviours include non-compliance, tantrums, destroying property, or becoming aggressive and hurting themselves or others.

## Why is it important to address challenging behaviours?

Challenging behaviours can severely limit a child's ability to integrate into society (e.g. play and learning) and increase stress on the family. Children with unaddressed emotional and behavioural problems are at risk of developing mental health difficulties. Some challenging behaviours such as aggression and self-harming behaviours can also place the child and others around them at risk of being harmed.

## Top tips for reducing challenging behaviour

### Ask yourself "What is he/she trying to tell me with his/her behaviour?"

Every child and situation is unique. Knowing the reason for your child's behaviour can help you to decide on the best way to respond to your child.



### Stay calm and be patient

Staying calm will help you to think and make better decisions about how to respond without adding more stress to the situation.



### Reduce challenging behaviours by reducing potential triggers

Think about what triggers your child most. For example, if your child is triggered by unexpected changes, making the change expected will likely reduce challenging behaviours. This may involve telling him/her about the change ahead of time, using visual charts to remind him/her of the upcoming change, and letting him/her know what to expect.



### Support effective communication

Visual aids are often useful as a communication support. For example, you may use an activity photo to show your child what he/she will be doing or allow your child to make requests by giving you a picture of the item he wants.



### Consider the impact of other stresses (e.g. sensory, emotional, social)

Children may experience additional stresses such as sensory overload, bullying, and difficulties with learning.



If you have any further concerns about your child's challenging behaviours please discuss with a member of your clinical team, a health professional or contact CliniKids on (08) 6319 1133.