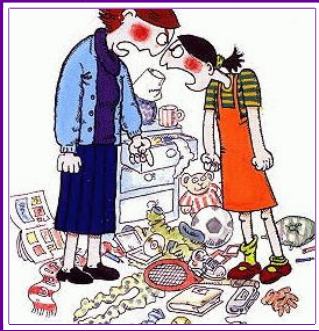


## Parenting Tips 4 Changing Behaviour

### IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS...



**Key Point 1: Children do not distinguish between positive and negative attention. To them all attention is rewarding and it is usually easier to get attention by mucking up than by doing the right thing.**

If you are trying to change a child's behaviour you have to change your focus.

**Key Point 2: Praise works better than punishment. You may have found that nagging, yelling, demanding does not get things done and makes for angry kids and frustrated parents. If you are expecting your child to do a task or behave in a certain way that is totally age appropriate make it their responsibility to do it, not yours. By nagging, yelling, or worse, giving in, you are the one doing most of the work.**

Just a side point on yelling and smacking. If you expect your child not to yell at people or smack other people then do not yell at them or smack them. Children mirror the behaviour they see. It is possible to

get their respect without yelling and smacking)

### Using Behaviour Charts.

1. Behaviour charts are simple to make. Get as much input as possible from your child. Explain to them that you are making the chart so that they can earn rewards for all the good things they do and to help you both focus on the positive things. Make the chart as a 20 step track—it can be a race track, a track through the jungle, a fairy princess path or any other track that your child may choose. Divide the track into 20 squares and number them. Mark on the start and the finish and decorate the chart with your child. Make a counter with them and blue tack on the back to stick to the track. Place the chart somewhere that the child can clearly see it and where you will be reminded to



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## Changing Behaviour Continued...

- comment frequently about how well they are doing with it.
2. Negotiate with your child what reward they will earn at step 5, 10 and 15, with a bigger reward at 20. Rewards must be something the child thinks is worth working towards (don't use sugary treats).
  3. When they do the right thing go over the top with praise (be specific about what you are praising) and let them move the counter on the chart.
  4. When they are doing the wrong thing, if possible, give them a warning, remind them that they are working for reward points and if they stop the behaviour then reward them with a point. If the behaviour is too bad or they do not stop, then use time out. Points are never taken away.
  5. Behaviour charts work well with almost all ages. Remember, small steps, don't try to change everything in one go and make it reasonably easy to begin with so they feel they can achieve
- points or they will give up and not try. A young child may be expected to earn roughly 5 points a day. Treats from the \$2 shop work well for younger children. For older children the points may be harder to earn but the rewards can be larger and 20 points might earn them a trip to the movies or phone credit etc. Remember children will often be prepared to work hard for special time with a parent or caregiver, which is the cheapest option.
6. Get everyone involved with the child to respond in the same way and with the same words, to the undesirable behaviour and the desirable behaviour.

**Special Note:** If a child has become used to getting attention from a bad behaviour and suddenly it is not getting the desired result they may try harder (ie behave worse) for a while to get the result they are used to. Do not give up, be consistent, eventually they will learn that they have to behave well to get the attention they crave.

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