

Children Who Behave at School But Not at Home

Do you have a child who behaves like a little angel at school or nursery, but takes on a totally different personality at home? If you do you are not alone. A lot of parents can identify with this problem.

Here are some pointers that can help improve your child's behaviour at home:

- . Understand what is happening at school
- . Understand what is happening at home
 - . What you are doing well
- . Reduce your response to flare ups
- . Take it one thing and one day at a time
- . Discuss the problem with your child
 - . Set appropriate consequences
 - . Be consistent in your actions
 - . Praise good behaviour
 - . Make time for quality time

Let's look at each of the points in more detail:-



1. Understand What is Happening at School

There are a couple of reasons why your child may behave well at school. To start with they may not have the confidence to challenge the authority of their teachers in the way that they are able to stand up to you at home.

Another reason is that by behaving well they may attract praise and a generally positive response from their teachers. As they enjoy this response they are prepared to behave well to make sure it continues.

2. Understand What is Happening at Home



In a nutshell you are locked in a power struggle. Perhaps over time your child has worked out that by kicking up a fuss they get what they want. Even if they don't get their own way they may get more of your attention when they misbehave than they do at other times.

Tiredness can play a big role too. When children are younger they set off for school or nursery when energy levels are at their highest. By the time you pick them up batteries are running low. Make a note of what time of the day flare ups occur. If you think some of it may be down to tiredness ensure some relaxation time is built into the day.

3. What You Are Doing Well



In case you think the whole situation is bad there are clearly things that you are doing right as a parent. In addition your child has learnt the skills required to behave well and get the attention they need at school.

They have learnt a lot of these skills by modelling their behaviour on yours, so the situation may not be anywhere near as bleak as you might think it is. Your child is able to behave well for long periods of time. This behaviour can be transferred to your home too.

4. Reduce Your Response to Flare Ups

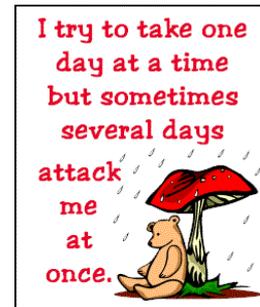


The key to reducing the number of flare ups that happen at home is for your child to learn that bad behaviour is pointless. If they learn they will not get their own way and they will not get the attention they are seeking, flare ups will subside.

If necessary, put distance between you and your child when a flare up happens. Walk away and take yourself to a different part of the house. Tell them you will have nothing to do with them until they have calmed down. Don't let your child get under your skin and light your fuse, so that they get the response they are after.

In many ways they are playing a game. If you lose your cool they win the game. By keeping calm and not reacting you remain in control.

5. Take it One Thing and One Day at a Time



Just like any other behaviour that you are trying to change it can take time to have an impact. Rather than trying to change everything all in one go identify one element of your child's behaviour that you would like to change the most. Once you have identified what you would like to change, start to work on one specific element.

Trying to change too much at any one time can be counter productive. Changing a lot of behaviours at the same time can overwhelm your child and increase frustration and anger.

As you work on improving the situation be prepared for days when it feels like no progress is being made. Be prepared to take a step back, write off bad days and be ready to go again tomorrow.

6. Discuss the Problems With Your Child



Talk to your child. Try to get a better understanding of why they behave in the way that they do. If you can understand what frustrates them the problem is a lot easier to solve.

Let them know that the way they behave is not going to get them what they want from now on. For this to work, you need to be able to back up this statement with action. If the first time they behave badly you give in they will soon work out that what you say means little.

7. Set Appropriate Consequences



Consequences should always be a last resort. Regular punishments soon lose their sting no matter how strict they are. If you punish every minor incident too harshly you will find yourself handing out consequences all the time.

Discuss the types of consequence that bad behaviour will attract with your child. It is important for your child to know what the boundaries are and what happens if he or she crosses them.

CONSISTENCY
IS THE KEY!

8. Be Consistent in Your Actions

Always apply an agreed consequence if behaviour merits it. If you need to, always walk away from your child if a flare up starts. Clearly you can't do this if you are out in public, but you can do it in your own home.

It is also very important that you and your partner are consistent in your actions too. If one of you caves in to bad behaviour your child will soon be playing one of you off against the other. Not only will this mean there is no impact on your child's behaviour, it will also lead to friction between you and your partner.



9. Praise Good Behaviour

When you ignore bad behaviour you are making sure your child sees no benefit in behaving badly. The flip side of the coin is to make sure you praise good behaviour. This helps to encourage the behaviour you want to see. Your child will see the praise as a reward. This makes it likely they will spend more time behaving as you want them to instead of behaving badly.



10. Make Time for Quality Time

As well as praising good behaviour make sure you spend quality time with your child. This gives them the attention they need without resorting to negative behaviour.

Summary

By using a combination of the techniques discussed in this article you should find flare ups at home are diminished. Reward the behaviour you want to see and play down the behaviour you do not want.