

Discipline cheat sheet

1. Without adult consistency there is no predictability, and this impacts the sense of safety and security – build simple daily routines into the day ONE AT A TIME
2. Consistent attitude and behaviour from the adult gives an inner security to the child and helps to provide the structure for a FRIENDLIER ENVIRONMENT which benefits everyone.
3. Use understanding of their feelings – the child will be showing you by their body language and verbal tone how stressed or scared they are – look past the words. This recognizes their feelings are important.
4. Use words to name the feeling, 'Poor you, you are feeling so worried/ scared / angry/ sad – keep it simple. In time, the child will be able to link the feeling to the name even if they cannot say it back – what goes in is more than what comes out.
5. Give a time warning. In 5 min (hold up fingers), 'We are going to get ready to leave – we will put our coats on'. Whenever possible use gesture such as holding up the coat, hand signals such as pointing or using fingers to indicate number to reinforce what is being asked.
5. If the child is angry/sad/ at you, acknowledge this, 'You are angry at me because it is time to go, you really want to stay, but the 5 minutes is up, and we are leaving now'.
6. Leave/ finish/ return in the time frame you have set – this builds trust and predictability – YOU MEAN WHAT YOU SAY.
7. Always communicate specific essential limits. There should be no doubt in the child's mind what is acceptable or unacceptable.
8. Target an alternative, 'I am not for hitting – the sofa/ cushion is for hitting'. This acknowledges the feeling behind the action and gives the child an alternative choice.
9. Step 8 can take lots of repetition to build a child's acceptance of self-control and self-direction. Giving a developmentally appropriate action that lets the child release negative feelings without causing harm and the subsequent fear of retaliation. When the child is acting out, their behaviour often regresses to that of a younger child.
10. Patience is needed to allow the child to understand the limits are firm and they have a choice in how they react. Use a kind and firm tone of voice and apply limits in the HERE AND NOW – children cannot link limit setting to past behaviours. Behaviours at school should be dealt with at school and behaviours at home should be dealt with at home.

5 WAYS TO AVOID MORNING MELTDOWN

Big emotions start running through the child's system when they are rushed.

Emotional Intelligence is still a work in progress and may not be at the same level as their age or cognitive ability.

The child's way of communicating their emotions is BEHAVIOUR. This can mean they are scared, angry, sad, excited, or a mix of all. Tell them you can feel more than one feeling at once.

By acknowledge their feelings, and letting them know its ok to be muddled up, you will help them manage how they feel:

1. Tell a simple story that helps them VISUALISE the aspects of the day that you anticipate will cause anxiety.
2. ALWAYS end the story with them coming home to YOU.
3. Tell them is ok to be scared, angry, sad, (name the emotion) re assure them that you will manage it together, and you can both work on helping other people to understand too.
4. Take their picture with your mobile and let them see that you have them with you all times. Put a kiss in the palm of their hand so they can tuck it in their pocket.
5. Put your perfume/aftershave on the sleeve of their jumper and tell them when they miss you to smell it and remember you LOVE them.

Remember at times, it can be difficult dealing with something new, but we can help the child manage by staying emotionally connected and giving them the language to describe what they feel inside their bodies.

Remember it's ok for parents to feel stressed too, but we can talk to others to find a way to get support to manage our feelings or write them down in a journal. Then it is easier to help the children manage their upsets and stresses.