**Behaviour management by Peter Hook and Andy Vass**

This book teaches us that firstly to enable us to manage behaviour effectively we need to be able to manage our own emotions first, if we are calm and rational then we will be at our most effective. Using positive emotions will help us to build safety and trust, by using our own emotional management we can be a good role model for the children around us.

The most effective way to manage behaviour is to establish boundaries with children of all ages, as a professional it is our role to explain clearly to the children in our care what kind of behaviours are acceptable. As an adult and a professional we have the right to set the agenda so that:

* A focus on learning is positive
* Children can feel safe both physically and psychologically
* Everyone is treated in a dignified and respectful way

We need to always remember that our style of managing behaviour will have a direct impact on our learners, we therefore should always model the kind of behaviours we expect to enable our learners to copy. We should understand that we cannot directly control the behaviour of children in our care but we are able to control some elements.

It is important to remember to that when using sanctions to control behaviour it will not actually change the behaviours being displayed, any sanction issued needs to be effective as this will then limit the behaviour long enough for us then to be able to reward the new desired behaviour, this will have a direct impact on preventing further negative behaviours reoccurring. The most important message is to remember that it is actually rewarding positive behaviour that will change negative behaviour.

Giving emotional feedback is the most effective form of reward, a simple smile, a please and thank you and gestures such as a thumbs up will have a much greater impact on our learners and encourage more positive behaviour within the classroom. It’s important to remember that we need to invest to receive, by showing our learners respect we are more likely to be treated respectfully ourselves. We need to take time to understand the children in our care to enable us to establish a good working relationship.

When negative behaviour does occur it is important to separate the child from the displayed behaviour and always make it clear that it’s the behaviour and not the child that you are being critical of, they need to know that what they do is not the same as who they are as this will give them hope to change the negative behaviours.

When addressing behaviour it’s important to remain focussed on the primary behaviour and not get distracted by secondary behaviours they may use to divert attention from what you actually wanted to discuss in the first instance. Behaviours such as sighing, moaning, eye rolling and eyebrow raising are often used to gain attention from others and therefore distract you from the primary behaviour. If the child does this it is important to remain focussed and ignore, keep your body posture and language relaxed and reaffirm your message calmly and clearly before setting them back on task and moving away.

To help build positive relationships and encourage positive behaviours it is important to build confidence in your learners, catch them ‘being good’ wherever possible as this will build self-esteem. Publicly praise the learners on task whilst ignoring any off task will hopefully encourage those off track to strive for the same positive praise. Always be consistent in your approach and make sure everyone in the class knows the ‘class rules’. By giving private and assertive reminders of the rules can be very effective, by referring to them as ‘our rules’ you de-personalise the discipline transaction it will remove the ‘because I said so’ which some children see as a challenge and escalate their negative behaviours.

Sometimes we will be faced with persistent, repeated low level behaviours that are frustrating and annoying but it’s important not to let it become overwhelming, giving short and simple instructions will help to:

* Focus on the key issue
* Identify the problem
* Resolve the problem

Be clear about the choices within the classroom, give a clear choice of either comply or receive an already agreed consequence. Either or choices can reduce the chances of behaviour becoming confrontational. Do not use repeated warnings as it will encourage a child to continue pushing boundaries and is not effective.

It is important to allow a child to have some ‘compliance time’ as it will reduce confrontation and allows an older learner to ‘save face’ with peers, therefore once you have given your instruction give them time to process and act on it. They may at first not comply but choosing to ignore will give them an ‘out’. It is important not to dwell on discipline and once delivered move your attention away from the undesirable behaviour as soon as possible.

It is important to remember that we can all have a bad day and children are no exception to this too and therefore they may have a day in which they will not respond positively to any low level interventions you put in place. On occasions like these it’s important to allow a child to use ‘time out’ strategies to give them time to settle, calm and refocus before re-joining learning.