

Proactive Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviours

Tip Sheet for Parents

We understand that supporting your child with school work while at home can be tough, especially during periods of high-stress and/or if you feel you do not know the academic content well yourself. No matter how well you understand the content, there are strategies you can use to prevent challenging behaviours. Here are some tips to assist you and your child in being successful at completing school work while minimizing the occurrence of challenging behaviours related to school expectations.

Involve your child in setting the schedule. Children are more likely to engage in learning when they have input on decisions. Work together to create a schedule that includes a morning routine, times for school work, and times for breaks.

Minimize distractions. This helps children stay engaged in learning rather than avoiding the work at hand. Put technology that is not needed to complete the school work away (such as cell phones and tablets), ensuring it is out of reach. Have learning materials handy, such as pencils, erasers and calculators.

Offer choice. Providing the opportunity to make choices gives your child a sense of control and independence. For example, give your child the choice of which subject to work on first, or which question to start with.

Break down the work into smaller sections. This can help reduce frustration that occurs when the work initially appears to be too overwhelming to complete. Identify smaller tasks or steps within the work, and tackle them one at a time.

Use visual supports. Visuals can help children in understanding the work that has been given, and the expectations being placed on them. For example, make a list of the tasks to be completed for the day and check them off as they are finished; or use a timer to show them how much time is left before they can take a break.

Reward positive behaviour. Rewarding children when they engage in good behaviours encourages them to continue to engage in similar ways. For example, do something fun together after your child completes their work, or give them back the technology that had been removed to reduce distractions while they were working.

“Challenging behaviour is behaviour that occurs when the demands of the situation exceed the students capacity to respond”
—Dr. Ross Greene



Although these simple strategies may help to set your child up for success, your child may still experience difficulty and display challenging behaviours.

If you need further support, please reach out to local community support services:

Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca
-Autism and Children's Mental Health Services
<https://thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca/>

One Kids Place
-Autism Services
<https://www.onekidsplace.ca/>

Children's Aid Society
<https://www.parnipcas.org/>

Helpful resources to check out:

NNDSB Mental Health Team
-Mental Health Check-Ins
<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/we-are-here-to-help/>

School Mental Health Ontario
-How to Support Your Child's Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic
<https://smho-smso.ca/covid-19/parents-and-families/>

Government of Canada
-Parenting During COVID-19
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/parenting-during-covid-19.html>

The Psychology Foundation of Canada
-Tips and Strategies for Parents
https://psychologyfoundation.org/Content/Parents/Children_4-13_Tips_and_Strategies.aspx

UNC FPG Child Development Institute
-Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times
*Although this is an autism resource, the content can be applicable to all children
<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/sites/afirm.fpg.unc.edu/files/Supporting%20Individuals%20with%20Autism%20through%20Uncertain%20Times%20Full%20Packet.pdf>