

Tamaiti (child) behaviour

Tamariki (children) can behave in ways that their parents find very difficult to deal with. Many of these behaviours are simply part of a child's learning how to be independent.

Sometimes difficult behaviour happens just because the basics are out of kilter. Not enough sleep or physical activity, or too much screen time can have a bigger effect on our tamariki's behaviour than we realise.

More than anything, tamariki and young people simply want positive time and attention from their parents. Difficult behaviour usually gets parents' attention, while children who are entertaining themselves just get left to get on with it.

If your tamaiti (child) learns that misbehaving or acting out is an effective way to get the attention they need, they may do so more often.

A good way of changing behaviour is to spend time each day doing something with your tamariki that they want to do. It will help to join in with their choice of activity, even for a short time.

It's also important to find ways to be positive, such as praising good behaviour.

Sometimes tamariki behave badly because something happening in their life is too much to deal with. Maybe they're trying to deal with bullying, grief, conflict between their parents or another very distressing situation. Acknowledging their distress and getting help with the issue can improve their behaviour.

Parenting children with difficult behaviour can be challenging, so take time to look after yourself as well. Getting enough sleep, physical activity and reducing your stress can help you control your reactions to bad behaviour.

It can be helpful to let tamariki know you're aware you don't always get things right. You could work together on change. "Do you know what, I can get really angry sometimes and I know that can be hard for you. I reckon we should look to find some ways to be better at staying calm."



Tips for improving behaviour in tamariki (children)

There are several ways you can work to improve the behaviour of your tamaiti (child).

A wee bit of time each day

This is where the TV and screens go off and you spend some time with your tamaiti, doing something they want to do.

This doesn't mean spending money! It might be playing with their dolls, figurines, LEGO or trampoline. Your job is to allow them to lead the activity and play along.

It can take a bit of time and practice to enjoy playtime with our tamariki (children), but when we do it sends some really important messages, such as:

- I enjoy spending time with you
- I value what you do.

Flip things to the positive

Sometimes when we feel annoyed with our children, it can be really hard to look for good things to say about them. But saying something positive can be a total game-changer. We all love to hear good things about ourselves and when behaviour has become a tad challenging, it can be because of a negative cycle...

It's important to remember that our children don't know any other way because they're still learning.

The trick is to really look for the positive.

- Playing with their siblings – "Hey buddy, you're being really kind to your sister, thank you."
- Giving you something you've asked for – "Thanks for doing what I asked, high five!"
- Helping you out – "I really appreciate you helping me like this. Thank you."

- Sometimes it really helps to hone in on a behaviour you're keen to change.
- If they're getting angry. look for the times when they're being gentle and calm in any situation. "You're really calm right now, I love that."
- If they're hitting, look for times when they're not. "You look like you're enjoying the cat/ your sister/time with me and you're being really gentle. That's so great."

Acknowledge their feelings

Being frustrated, angry, overexcited or disappointed can be the pathway to out-of-control behaviour. Acknowledging the smaller feelings before they escalate can be one way to let them know that you understand, you're listening to them and that their feelings matter. While this means you don't have to fix it and sometimes can't, it goes a long way towards letting tamariki know they aren't alone in their emotions – and can really help them manage them.

Be firm, fair and friendly

Set some household rules. For example, "We're kind to each other" and "We use gentle hands and feet". Talk to your tamariki about what these rules mean.

Be consistent and make sure the consequences for breaking them are appropriate and fair. Stay calm – model how you want your children to behave.

Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) Newsletter Public Health Nursing Service

Spring 2022/Summer 2023

Public health nurses are Registered Nurses who work with children/tamariki (and their families/whānau) on any health-related concerns. Public health nurses have access to health resources, information and provide a free, mobile and confidential service.

This newsletter is available on our website via this link: www.cdhb.health.nz/phns

Stay water safe

Learn to swim

It's important you and your children are able to swim. Swimming lessons are available for all ages and levels of ability. Swimming is enjoyable, low impact and one of the best types of exercise available. For more information, contact your local public swimming pool - usually through your local council.



Always supervise children near water

Keeping a watch on your children when they're near water is the single most important precaution you can take. Proper supervision in and around water means a responsible adult keeps children in their care both within sight and within reach at all times.

At the beach

Understanding how waves, wind and tides affect conditions at the beach is vital to keep yourself and others safe from danger. Some beaches in Christchurch are patrolled by surf lifeguards. On patrolled beaches, surf lifeguards put up yellow and red flags. The area between the flags is constantly monitored and is the safest place to swim at the beach.

watersafety.org.nz



Supporting tamariki to keep cool and well this summer

With warmer days coming in and end of year preparations beginning it's a great time to look at some wellbeing for your tamariki and kaiako, to help you reflect on all the positives from the year. Sparklers have put together some fabulous resources that can help you reflect and enhance those positive feel good feelings.

For kaiako you can try the Team Meeting Wellbeing Workbook or My Wellbeing Workbook (or both!). You can complete in a team meeting or do an activity a night at home both available here <https://sparklers.org.nz/teachers-educators/your-wellbeing-workbook/>

Your tamariki can try Gratitude - Whakawhetai O'Clock. Perfect for helping tamariki reflect on their day, week or year. This activity is also perfect to take home and include in newsletters for some school holiday fun! This activity is available here <https://sparklers.org.nz/activities/gratitude-oclock/>

The Sparklers team love to see, hear and share about how their activities are used! You can provide feedback at <https://sparklers.org.nz/contact/> or laura.brown@cdhb.health.nz and I can pass it along.

The warm sunny days also mean we are having more contact with those UV rays. Our friend at the Cancer Society, Amanda Dodd, has provided us with some information around how you and your tamariki can stay SunSmart this summer;

"With the summer season on its way our thoughts turn to summer fun and outdoor adventures.

The Cancer Society of New Zealand encourages people to be SunSmart when Ultra Violet Radiation levels reach 3 and above but especially from September to April between 10 am and 4pm. This means: slip into sun protective clothing and slip into shade; slop on a broad spectrum sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30; slap on a wide brimmed hat and wrap on some sunnies.

Combining these SunSmart actions rather than just relying on sunscreen will give you and your family better protection from harmful Ultra Violet Radiation (UVR)."

Want to stay cool and well this summer?

Check out this resource for some top tips: <https://www.cph.co.nz/resources/stay-cool-and-well-this-summer/>



Tips for managing fussy eaters

Eat together

Mealtimes are an important opportunity for role-modelling. If your child sees you eating healthy food, they're more likely to eat it too. Keep mealtimes relaxed and calm. Ask your child about their day rather than talking about food. Offer your child the same food the rest of the family is eating but make sure each meal includes at least one food your child already accepts. Avoid preparing separate meals. We eat the most in the first 10 minutes, so avoid long mealtimes. Try to finish the meal within 20 to 30 minutes.

Avoid distractions

Turn off the TV and other devices and put away toys so your child can focus on eating. Avoiding these distractions also allows family members to talk to each other.

Let them eat to their appetite

Children have small tummies, so offer them three meals and two to three snacks at set times each day. They need a gap of at least a couple of hours without eating to feel hungry for their next meal. If your child doesn't eat at every opportunity you provide, that's okay. It's normal for children's appetites to vary from day to day. Offer drinks halfway through and at the end of a meal so your child doesn't fill up on drinks.

Give praise and avoid a power struggle

Pressuring your child to eat can make them feel anxious and less likely to try new foods. Encourage your child with positive prompts rather than a question they can say "no" to. For example, "You can try the peas" rather than "Can you try the peas?". It can help to praise your child for at least one thing they do at every meal. This could be good chewing or biting, good sitting, good food exploring, and so on. Use "Do" language. This tells your child the behaviour you would like.

For example, replace "Stop throwing" with "Food stays on the table".

Repeat, repeat, repeat

Don't assume your child doesn't like a particular food after a few attempts. It often takes 10 to 15 times for a food to be offered before it's accepted. If at first your child says "yuck", you can say "You're still learning about that food". If your child refuses a food don't force them to eat it. Just take the food away without saying anything. Try to stay calm, even if it's very frustrating.

Make food fun and easy to eat

Prepare foods in a way your child can manage. This might be puréed or cut into small, easy-to-chew bites or strips. Never leave your child alone while eating.

Finger foods may be easier to manage and can offer more enjoyment and independence

Include a variety of shapes, colours, and textures – a cookie cutter works well. Create imaginative names for foods. For example, "trees" for broccoli or "X-ray vision" for carrots.

Reward your child with treats other than with food

If children associate positive memories with sweet food, they'll want more. There are many other ways to reward children. If the tips above don't help and you're concerned about your child's eating, talk to your GP or practice nurse. They may refer you to a dietitian.

[Healthinfo.org.nz](https://www.healthinfo.org.nz)

Cough in children

Coughing is common in children, especially when they are preschool age. A cough that lasts longer than 4 weeks is not normal and may be a sign of more serious disease.

Key points to remember about coughing in children

- causes of cough include colds, asthma and chest infections
- secondhand cigarette smoke commonly causes children to cough even when they are well
- you need to see a doctor if your child has had a cough and a fever, is working hard at breathing, or the cough has lasted more than 4 weeks

Many children will continue coughing for about 3 weeks after a simple cold.

How common is coughing in children?

- 10 to 20 in 100 preschoolers will cough for 3 weeks or more following a cold. Even children without a cold may cough on average 10 times a day but maybe not every day, and usually not at night.

When should I seek help for my child with a cough?

Go to the doctor if your child has a cough and:

- is working hard with their breathing
- is breathing fast
- has a temperature higher than 38.5 degrees Celsius
- isn't speaking normally or can't finish a whole sentence because of their coughing or breathing
- has wheezing or whistling in their chest
- the cough started very suddenly - they may have choked on something
- the cough started very suddenly and they have a skin rash - this could be an allergic reaction
- you are worried

If your child has had a daily cough for longer than 4 weeks, take them to the doctor.

