

Brief Tips Sheet – Managing Challenging Behaviour



- **Control Yourself** – In any situation you can't force control upon the other person or force a change in behaviour; what you can control is how you respond and react. By learning strategies to remain calm and in control of your behaviour you begin to influence how your child responds in return. Model the behaviour you expect. If a parent loses control and gets angry the child learns that this is how to respond to frustration or annoyance. If a parent shouts or smacks when their child is shouting, hitting or being angry they are demonstrating the same behaviour rather than modelling a different way of managing difficult situations.
- **Respond clearly and concisely** stating your position, the reason for that position and offering positive options - An argument can only occur if you engage in it. By stating your position (No, I can't give you £5) giving a reason (I can't afford it) and a positive option (we can discuss this further when you have calmed down) you make a clear message with an option the child can take without losing face so that you were in control of what you were prepared to accept in the situation and in control of what positive option(s) you offered the child, they were in control of choosing to accept the positive option(s) or choosing to continue to try to get their own way. DON'T engage in an argument; just state your position and the positive options and repeat this like a broken record if they continue to try to get a different response. (If the child accepts this or offers a good, acceptable negotiation great, if not move onto the next step)
- **Remove yourself from the situation** – As mentioned previously an argument can only occur if you engage in it. This is the time to focus on staying in control of yourself and not being drawn back into an argument. The child may well say and do almost anything to try and entice you in; they may call you names, damage property, shout or swear. You have stated your position and are sticking firmly to knowing whatever happens you are not backing down. If they carry their behaviour out through to the end they will discover it didn't work.
- **Discuss The Incident** – Discuss incidents when you are all calm. This discussion can involve you stating how the situation made you feel using 'I' statements rather than saying 'you made me feel...' Alternatives for future situations can be discussed at this time & praise given relating to some part of the incident you are discussing (it could be they calmed quickly, or they apologised, or demonstrated they were sorry) remember to praise the effort (For example: 'I really appreciate you coming and saying sorry I know it isn't always an easy thing to do')
- **Make sure you have support** and that the child is aware of the support you have. It could be a partner, family member, friend, professional, parenting support group, etc...



If you would like support or just to find out more information visit www.yourspacewestsussex.co.uk and search for the **West Sussex Parenting Project**