



You can help your child by rewarding them for behaving well. For example, praise them or give them their favourite food for tea. If your child behaves well, tell them how pleased you are. Be specific. Say something like, "Well done for putting your toys back in the box when I asked you to." Don't give your child a reward before they've done what they were asked to do. That's a bribe, not a reward.

- Avoid smacking

Smacking may stop a child doing what they're doing at that moment, but it doesn't have a lasting positive effect. Children learn by example so, if you hit your child, you're telling them that hitting is OK. Children who are treated aggressively by their parents are more likely to be aggressive themselves. It's better to set a good example instead.

Things that can affect your child's behaviour

- Life changes – any change in a child's life can be difficult for them. This could be the birth of a new baby, moving house, a change of childminder, starting playgroup or something much smaller.
- You're having a difficult time – children are quick to notice if you're feeling upset or there are problems in the family. They may behave badly when you feel least able to cope. If you're having problems don't blame yourself, but don't blame your child either if they react with difficult behaviour.
- How you've handled difficult behaviour before – sometimes your child may react in a particular way because of how you've handled a problem in the past. For example, if you've given your child sweets to keep them quiet at the shops, they may expect sweets every time you go there.
- Needing attention – your child might see a tantrum as a way of getting attention, even if it's bad attention. They may wake up at night because they want a cuddle or some company. Try to give them more attention when they're behaving well and less when they're being difficult.

Extra help with difficult behaviour

Don't feel you have to cope alone. If you're struggling with your child's behaviour:

- talk to your health visitor – they will be happy to support you and suggest some new strategies to try
- visit the Family Lives website for parenting advice and support, or phone their free parents' helpline on 0808 800 2222
- download the NSPCC's guide to positive parenting or call their free helpline on 0808 800 5000

Information obtained from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/dealing-with-difficult-behaviour/>

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