

# A Little Guide for Parents on Home Schooling During Lockdown

Parenting in a Pandemic:  
Growing confidence in guiding  
learning in a home environment

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## A Little Guide for Parents on Home Schooling During Lockdowns



*Parenting in a Pandemic: Growing confidence in guiding learning in a home environment.*

*You do not need to be a teacher!*

*You don't have to be a perfect parent.*

*You don't need to be a home educator.*

### **What do you need?**

- *Developing confidence*
- *Attitude of belief in self*
- *Ideas for using your space*
- *Resources – What do you have?*
- *Strategies*
- *Planning*
- *Identifying your child's needs*
- *A Positive Behaviour System*
- *Patience: tons!*
- *Self Compassion*

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## Introduction

*Knowing how to home school is not something parents are born knowing. Even fully trained teachers and those working directly in education, may find themselves thrown as to how to navigate their way through these circumstances flung upon them. Balancing the emotional turbulence of the pandemic and all that comes with it is enough to throw us off kilter. Add to that the media diet of fear and breaking news, social media notifications and a constant stream of conflicting and ambitious information, it can be a minefield to know what to do for the best.*

*I would love to be able to give you a black and white, how-to piece on how to cope but every single household and differing parents within it will have varied circumstances and experiences. So, I had an idea that was fluttering around in my mind in the early hours of the morning. I could maybe note down in a simple way any experience that I may have accumulated over my career and personal life to bring together a brief practical guide to coping in this world we have now been catapulted into. It needed to be short, easy to skim and dip into, without holding too much academic waffle. This, I thought, would be tricky for me as I often want to elaborate and give explanation for the source of the knowledge and the reasoning behind. But we do not have time. The lockdown is upon us and I thought, a little bit of knowledge and guidance is better than nothing. So, thus I created this 'very' brief outline of the areas I feel might need some direction for us parents. If anyone reading would like clarification or further elaboration, I would be delighted to make additions in the coming weeks.*



*All writers are biased based on the very nature of humankind and I cannot presume that my household and background is the same as others. Especially during these divisive and tentative times, we will all be experiencing this pandemic differently with varying stresses and challenges to face and overcome. Therefore, I thought it would be worth giving you a little insight into my life, so you have a context.*

*My personal and professional life: I have two boys, a 5-year-old and a 4-month-old baby. I am currently on maternity leave and am in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of my Educational Doctorate (EdD). I am Head of Primary, Early Years & Prep for Teacher Training and SEND/Inclusion at The University of Buckingham. I am also the Mental Health and Well-Being lead. I enjoy training primary and secondary teachers and also Special Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) on a course that I had the honour to write and now lead on. I have taught primary and secondary aged children for many years and have a particular interest in emotional regulation, neuropsychology and positive behaviour practices. My background is in Psychology and I try to use this knowledge to inform my practice. I really hope to one day expand to also support parents as once we all begin to work together, I believe that is where the real magic begins.*

*I am very lucky to be in the position to have this knowledge at my fingertips and even so, it is still difficult in day-to-day life to manage the home-schooling expectations.*

*My hope is to write some words on a page that you might read, and it give you even the slightest bit more confidence in undertaking the challenges ahead.*

*You are now at home in your own individual situations, balancing plates, juggling balls and spinning emotions while you're at it. How are we going to get into the mindset to take on this in most effective way we can?*



### **3 things to emphasise:**

*You do not need to be a teacher!*

*You don't have to be a perfect parent.*

*You don't need to be a 'home educator'.*

I included this at the start but felt that it needed to be written again because we might need a little reminding of this regularly throughout the day, as sometimes our need to excel in all roles in our life might cloud our actions when we are trying to do best by our kids.

**You do not need to be a teacher!** Leave this job to the teachers. They are trained and will know how to professionally assess your child on return back in the education system (in whatever shape it looks like). You are not a substitute. You are a parent who will be temporarily home schooling, and this is a very different thing. If only you could get a quick easy training course to skill yourself up (see the rest of this guide ☺). Believe your child's teacher when they say you do not need to complete all the work set for home.

**You do not need to be a perfect parent:** Scratch that, you do not need to be perfect. Good enough is your best friend during this time and that that is okay. Consider the fact that I am writing this whilst my 4-month-old plays on the play-mat and at any second will need his milk. Slotting these moments in after finishing reading a chapter of Matilda, delegating the bedtime routine and concurrently holding ideas in my mind for formulating my doctorate literature review. Oh, I expect everything to be done to the most outstanding quality level and don't always let myself off the hook. This may sound familiar to you but may show itself in different parallel ways. I have learnt (and continue to learn) that if you don't check yourself, you will be setting yourself up to fail every single time before you begin.

So, leave expectations to the side and be realistic in what you truly want to achieve. You can only do so much, so clarify in your mind or on paper, what matters to you and what are your values moving forward? (Another good thing to check is whether it matches with your partner as differing approaches can greatly vary the potential outcomes).

*What do you want to achieve in the next week?*

*Academic learning? Emotional regulation? Work targets? Etc*

Set them now and only take actions towards them. Anything over and above is a bonus. You should feel a sense of achievement at the end of the week instead of failure.

**You do not need to be a 'home educator':** Unless you have decided to pull your child out of school permanently and begin formalised home educating, you do not need take on these expectations (see above, realistic expectations). Home educating is a fantastic idea for some, and if your personality and lifestyle lends itself beautifully to this setting for learning, then wonderful, but this is a temporary and very different situation we find ourselves in. We can learn so much from the strategies and ideas, yet we also have numerous constraints at this point in time. No access to groups, cultural outings or a collection of ready, carefully thought through resources.



What you are doing is keeping the **spark** of learning alive. You are a parent who is guiding your child in their learning journey, at whatever point that might be. Take them from point A (the first day) to point B (their return to school). Adding value through experiences, connection, development of your relationship, fun and yes, some curriculum knowledge along the way. But if you can maintain their love for learning that is enough. Progress is supporting them in resisting moving backwards. Shorter and simpler chunks of time may be more effective and letting yourself off many hooks, a necessity.





### Developing confidence

I hope that you can begin to grow your confidence in being at home with your child or children and feel able to add some value to their learning. Some is better than none. It is not all or nothing here but the congratulations for whatever input you can give.

A good place to start is to check yourself and your starting confidence level.

Feel at a complete loss

I've got this

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Where do you think you are on this line? Most of us will be somewhere in the middle, if not veering more to the left-hand side.

Have a check again at the end of reading through some of this information and if it moves even slightly up, you are going in the right direction and this might be considered a win.



## Attitude of belief in self

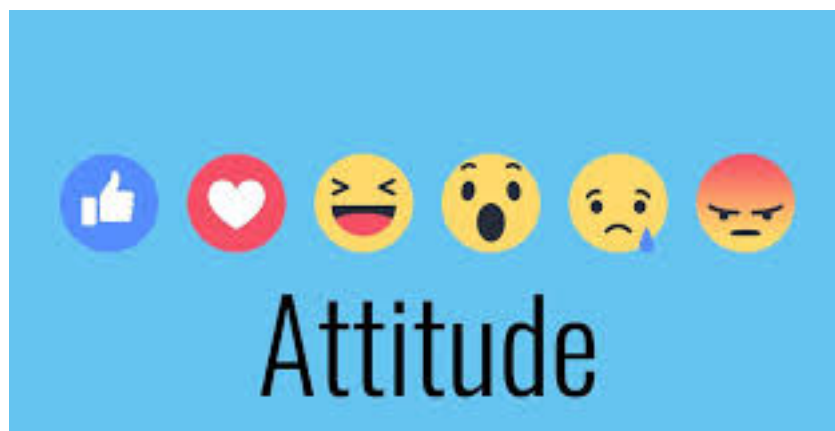
A lot of how we feel comes from our own perception of self and therefore if we do not believe we can ... we will not. Self-efficacy is the believe that we have the tools and skills to achieve our goals. So how do we raise this up if it feels flat? First, we need to know what our goals are and then map out our pathway for success. We need to assess the tools and resources at our disposal and check whether we have the motivation to achieve the desired outcome. Can we acknowledging our obstacles and be realistic, whilst also being aspirational? These actions may improve our chances of success.

If you're interested, please feel free to read my article on self-esteem vs self-efficacy for developing emotional literacy -

[https://barrycarpentereducation.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/concepts-of-self\\_laura-purser\\_nasen-connect\\_may-2020.pdf](https://barrycarpentereducation.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/concepts-of-self_laura-purser_nasen-connect_may-2020.pdf)

**Assess your skills** - What are your strengths and what can you use? Acknowledge your weaknesses and steer away. Pick what you will enjoy and do that. If you are having fun, then your child is probably too.

Try not to dig your heels in. If it isn't working. Stop and change. Sometimes we can make life harder for ourselves because we believe it is necessary. A voice in the back of our head tells us if we give in, give up, submit to demands, then we have failed. This isn't always true, so be conscious with your decisions and strategically move on if it becomes a battle. Remember to hold onto the main goal... keep the spark of learning. If this activity doesn't spark, find the next.





## What if...?

### Unforeseen Obstacles:

**Number and Age:** It is hard to get into a space ourselves where we believe it is possible to home school. Managing different numbers of children at different ages and temperament is a challenging task.



**Work and Time:** When you are working alongside it becomes impossible to try and do it the same way you would have done, so we need to adapt and carve out time. Priming is a great tool. Setting up expectations before you start and using timers. Children feel better when they know time is limited and they will have your attention 'after' you have completed what you need to do. Multi-tasking is hard! We are not going to get this right without practice and compromise and ultimately there will be many sacrifices made. As long as you make decisions using the best information you have at your disposal, you will have done good enough (see perfectionism).



**The Guilt of Shoulds:** Introducing lots of 'Shoulds' into our life adds to our emotional load and creates potential conflict in the decisions we make. Beating ourselves up continuously is a way of punishing ourselves for making a choice we have consciously made. It would help us to check if this bad feeling towards ourselves is really true or valid. Ask yourself – 'is the voice in my head getting in my own way?' If we can learn to trust ourselves and practice self-compassion, perhaps we could quieten the voice of 'should' in our heads and limit our guilt trips.



**Physiology of Stress:** Stress in our minds impact us physically and vice versa. Our nervous systems respond to stress in a way that evolution has designed for us. It is supposed to help us run away or fight a threat e.g., a lion in the cave times. Unfortunately, a hangover of this means we still respond the same way but instead of a lion, it is a great big pile of work.



When we or a child feels stressed, it is based in our perception of whether we think we can cope with the demands. The workload is not the stressor, but our belief to tackle it.

**Health:** Sometimes we do not feel well physically or mentally and this can be a massive challenge when trying to achieve numerous goals. Throw in home schooling and the stress levels ratchet up.

**Noise:** Noise does not mean bad behaviour. Some noise is creative, play or learning and we need to turn our minds to perceiving it as an extra stimulus. The house may be noisy and you may not be able to control it. However, you can alter the tone and consciously be aware of what kinds of noise is okay with you.



## Environment and Using Space Effectively

How does your home lend itself to learning? Look around at the space. How can you use it the most productively? Sometimes it is as simple as getting down to a child's level and walking around as if you are them to truly appreciate how the space feels. We forget sometimes as adults that furniture or clutter that we don't even see, can sometimes be moved easier than expected. Although it takes effort, it might be a simple rearrangement that changes everything about the atmosphere of the room.

Do you need a table? The right sized chairs? Cushions? Things stuck on the wall with white tack is a great way to go with little ones. Not to worry if you don't have lots of options, you can improvise with what you do have. The key is creating a calm area for learning. Does the room engage imagination? Is there anything you can stick to the walls that can support learning? Do don't need full on displays - post it notes or handmade key words are great. Is the room too warm or cold? Are they hungry or thirsty or need the bathroom before you start?



## Needs

Food, Drink, Exercise and Outdoor Play (for all ages!)



The colourful diagram above is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which emphasises that children's needs have to be met at the bottom of the pyramid before they can move upwards to the higher levels. Without the distractions of hunger or thirst and by ensuring warmth and a feeling of emotional safety, they will find it much easier to concentrate on learning. So as the parent, anything you can do to support the lower levels will only benefit both when attempting to introduce learning into the mix.

### **Starting the day with intention:**

How you wake your child up in the morning and your first words and tone will set the pace for the entire day. Think about the building of connection over breakfast as an investment into the easier day you will have once you settle down for learning time. Think about timings e.g., probably best not to do hardcore maths at 12.30pm when they are beginning to get hungry, and so are you. There will be much less patience to manage (See planning).

### **Don't forget yourself:**

What are your needs too? Make sure you are fuelled up for the day ahead and in-between. Nourishing yourself and own self-care will allow you the strength and energy to give. It is not selfish to invest in your needs as a way to feed the needs of others. You are a role model to your children. Show them that taking care of yourself matters and will help with well-being, learning and growth.



### Resource Audit

What do you have to use in your house? You can't use what you haven't got, so try not to dwell on the limits or constraints of your resources. Audit what you do have and plan accordingly. Other people count as resources too. If you have a dodgy internet connection or no connection, limited laptop access, with or without a printer, you won't consider planning with a hi-tech approach. Turn towards the low tech, paper and pen approach and gather a variety of tools that you can get your hands on. Big pieces of paper and coloured pens are your friends!

You may find long forgotten toys, old craft kits discarded or just plain old paper and pen that can be put to use. With young children, a box or an envelope is a game changer. Put something inside and build tension and magic and you will have them hooked.



Learning won't necessarily be limited by lack of tools. It is easy to forget that learning happens without record and is often invisible. The device used to get there does not make learning more or less valuable.

## Strategic Tools: What is in a teacher's toolkit?

We might as well borrow from the profession to help us. The Teaching Standards [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/665520/Teachers\\_Standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers_Standards.pdf) outline for teaching and learning to occur we need

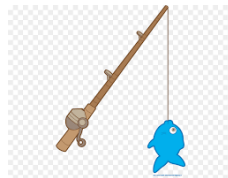
### The Gist:

- 1.) Build a rapport, positive relationship and an environment that supports learning.
- 2.) Create opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning.
- 3.) Have a strong grasp of subject knowledge
- 4.) Plan
- 5.) Differentiate - make it easier or harder depending on child's needs – make learning accessible for all.
- 6.) Assess what the child knows and what the gaps are and use this to plan future lessons. Give feedback to help children make progress.
- 7.) Manage behaviour through encouraging positive behaviour for learning
- 8.) Use resources effectively, such as other adults.



As a parent, I would add to this that being respectful of your child and giving them a voice and space to guide their own learning is essential. It can also be terrifying to hand over the reins. But it is so worthwhile a risk when we are trying to build intrinsic motivation. Meaning children need to want to learn. This will not always come naturally so we need to scaffold and sell the value of learning, scaffolding and guiding until they care for themselves. If we rely only on external pressures to complete an activity, learning becomes dictated and may grow into a struggle.

*How can you encourage your child to care about the thing they are learning? Consider how will it benefit them in their lives and context?*



Start by noticing their interests and using it as a hook to engage and reel them in!



## Planning

- Child Led
- Ownership of learning

### **How are you going to plan your lockdown, your week, your day, your hour, the next 10 minutes?**

Depending on the school your child attends, they will most probably be setting work for completion. Although this may or may not be compulsory. You will not usually need to plan from scratch. There are numerous resources out there for you to access, but it is knowing where to look for the high-quality stuff!

If you want to plan for yourself or compliment the school's work sent, think about how you might want your child's learning day to look like.

Start big and bring it in smaller. Ask yourself, what are the 5 top things you want your child to learn during your time at home? Make them big and aspirational. They can be school based related, or social or emotional or even something you wish they could do in the house. Life skills are extremely valuable, and we often do not have time to instil them as we would like.

This becomes your curriculum - now break this into weeks. A basic weekly table knocked out on Microsoft Word helps me plan.

*An example of this week: My 5-year-old was talking over dinner about how he wanted to learn about flying and this is what came from our discussions.*

TOPIC: FLYING WEEK – Year 1 Home Schooling										
	Maths	Reading	Writing	Science	Music	Art	PE	Humanities	Design	IT
Weekly Planning	Maths Seeds Tell the time	Christmas Challenge complete  School Reading books  Phonics assessment	Labelling and sentences  Capital, full stop, finger spaces, adjectives.	Researching flying bugs (Reading and IT)	Learn a song about flying  'Flying without wings'	Picture of flying bugs  'Paint'	Cosmic Yoga – flying  Dance to song  Just Dance  Outdoor Play	History of flying	Chocolate Pokemon moulding	Create PP of flying learning and present
Monday	Maths Seeds – 1 minute & arithmetic  Check Hour, Half, Quarter to and past	Christmas Challenge Part 1  Pokemon Chapter								
Tuesday	Maths Seeds	Christmas								

I will start to add some detail in as we go through, and it is drafted. Never finished, always scribbled over and changeable. Each day I will use planning as a guide but will not stick to in stone. It is the learning and not the recording that matters. We have the lovely luxury of not being accountable for every second of learning and the majority of what you do will happen throughout the day without you or your child realising it. In fact, I would go as far as to say the richest learning happens in this way.

There is a reason that they say that play is the best learning for children. Role playing and exploring the world and encouraging a sense of wonder and curiosity is best thing you can facilitate with you child (no matter the age). Even though these values are championed through the early year curriculum and into Key Stage 1, it is something many teachers believe would benefit Key Stage 2 and beyond. As parents, we can grab this learning knowledge and run with it.

We don't need to mimic a school curriculum but do what we know works for true deep learning.



### Setting Outcomes - What should they learn?

#### Set your Learning Objectives

#### Set your Success Criteria

Decide what you want them to learn. Think what they don't know when you start and what you want them to walk away knowing. Put it into child speak or an 'I can' sentence.

*'I can write a sentence using adjectives to describe characters.'*

*'I can mix colours when painting a picture'.*

*'I can label parts of the body'.*

These are the **learning objectives**.

The **success criteria** are the pathway – the stepping stones to get to your learning objective. What are the small steps they need to be able to do in order to achieve the outcome? e.g. 'I can hold a pencil correctly' 'I understand what an adjective is' 'I can write a sentence' 'I know what a character is'.



Keep it simple and small. The learning isn't the **activity**, so it doesn't need to be completed for learning to have happened. It is the journey that has value.

*Small progress...is still progress worth being celebrated.*

## Assessing

*What do they know? What are the gaps?  
What should I fill in? What should I do next?*

How do you know as a parent whether they have actually learnt anything you planned to teach them? How do you know where to even start? This comes down to asking **questions**. The right questions that give you the answers you need to make decisions about where to pitch the difficulty of the activities.

Always start with checking what they already know. They will always know more than you think they do. Actually, they will know more than they think they do!



You are a detective finding the gaps. These can be surprising, and you will find out interesting things about what you thought was common knowledge that your child doesn't know... yet.

### Teacher speak:

*Formative Assessment = Informing what you plan next - questions, quick check, learning happening in the moment*

*Summative Assessment = A summary of learning*

Use both to help you support your child to make quicker progress towards learning.



### Pitch: Too Hard or Too Easy?

How can we pitch the activity at the right level? We need to make sure it is not too easy (may lead to boredom) or too difficult (they give up). Both lead to problems with behaviour. Learning is optimised when you hit that balance of struggle and achievement. Don't rush in to give the answers. Ask a question and make it easier through promoting or more challenging through application to real life problem solving. Aim for building self-esteem and mastery with questions they know the answers to and then build stretch and challenge to encourage progress → moving to new knowledge and application to critical thinking.

## Feedback

Let them know if they are doing it right and help correct misunderstandings in a positive way. The tone and method of feedback is important to continued motivation. Sometimes drawing a smiley face or giving a tick helps perseverance. Whereas crosses or constant corrections of mistakes can inhibit continued engagement. Better to only comment on the small things you are focusing on... basically pick your moments and learn to let go of perfection.



## Growth Mindset and Perfection

Growth Mindset literature (Carol Dweck) will help you get yourself and your child in a frame of mind for perseverance when they are tempted to give up.

[https://www.ted.com/speakers/carol\\_dweck](https://www.ted.com/speakers/carol_dweck)

Very briefly, my tip is... if they say, 'I am no good at...', 'I can't'. You help them change the language to 'I need to practice', 'I can't do it... yet'. This shifts a fixed thinking approach to be more flexible and opens the door to learning. Therefore, they are more likely to experience success when they otherwise would give up.

This also can work for blank page syndrome. You know, when you go to start a piece of work and you want it to be good so you just can't begin. Encourage them to scribble, don't do it in neat, make notes all over it. Come away from 'good presentation' (unless that is the intended learning) and throw perfection away. It can be a hinderance to productiveness.



## **Special Educational Needs**

What are your child's needs? They may have a diagnosed label, they may not. You may suspect that additional support in certain areas will help them access learning better. You may have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place or a Pupil Passport that can guide your targets at home.

There is so much to be said and not much space in this format to do so. So briefly, if your child struggles with the lack of structure. Create a visual timetable to give them advanced notice of the day ahead to bring down potential anxiety. This can be mirrored with emojis for emotions to tell you how their feelings may change over time, so you can respond in kind.

<https://educationblog.buckingham.ac.uk/2019/12/10/navigating-your-inclusive-compass/>

There are numerous common, high incidence and clinical Special Needs (SEND). It may be best here to look at an inclusive approach in how we can adapt First Quality Teaching practices, at home.

Every child has a different need, and our job is to know them and tap into what engages their learning. Let's help by making the tasks accessible (see below some examples by subjects).



## Some Subject Examples -

**Reading** - Just listen to your child read. Look at pictures and ask them to describe it and what they think is happening the story. Read them stories. Ask them questions to check they understand. What comes next? What do you think would be a better ending? How did the character feel? Use phonics games to practice segmenting and blending sounds.

. <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>

<https://www.phonicsbloom.com>

[https://readingeggs.co.uk/?\\_ga=2.104045120.1555226489.1609776173-1771154790.1609776173](https://readingeggs.co.uk/?_ga=2.104045120.1555226489.1609776173-1771154790.1609776173)

**Writing** - Create frameworks and begin sentences with starters. Sentences with gaps for them to fill in. Drawing pictures and add labels. Fine and gross motor skill focus e.g., play dough, finger painting, chalking, shapes in shaving foam, picking up small objects.

**Maths** - Turn number work into practical e.g., using food for halving and doubling, cooking and using recipes. Use objects - something physical and tangible and visible to represent abstract ideas. Check place value understanding. <https://www.topmarks.co.uk>  
<https://mathseeds.co.uk>

**Science** - Nature and Forest Walks, Learn about themselves and the world. Investigations and wonder. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PHcnoYXHHY>

**Arts** - Link art to anything you are learning. Give them the tools and set it up... let them go! Don't expect kids to go and get the tools and independently do it. You set it up - extra investment = extra engagement. Move away from perfect copying and let them express things in their own way. Let them go outside the lines and try not to control.

**Music** - Sing!

**IT** - Use a computer to practice typing e.g. touch typing skills are invaluable <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr> Research what they find interesting and create a PowerPoint presentation.

**PE** - Dance and go outside



## Patience

You need it. Take moments to recharge and give yourself a break. Don't fight for learning. Wait until a better time presents itself. Work on building moments of connection.



## Positive Behaviour Management: Skills and Systems

**The Key Message** – Behaviour is a Communication:

*What is the need they are expressing and how can you meet it?*



You are a guide, not a prison warden.

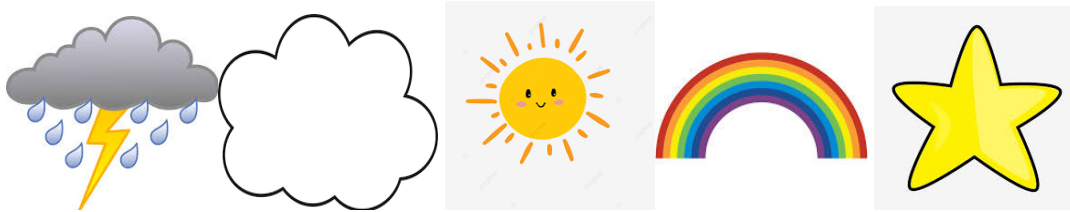
**Emotional Regulation** - An emotional burst needs some time to sit with until it burns out and then discussed in a safe place with a connected adult.

**Consistency** – If you say something... follow through!

**Containment** – Big feelings are scary, and we don't like them, we reject them. Allow your child a safe place to be okay with feeling anger. The thing that is not okay is the inappropriate and destructive way of expression, not the anger itself.

## Systems

A good place to start is to ask yourself what the current incentives and rewards you have in place?



Example: We have a chart matched to the school weather theme – We printed large colourful pictures a Sun, Rainbow, Star, White Cloud and Dark storm cloud. We stuck them to cardboard and using string and white tack, stuck them in a line on his bedroom door.

This has been invaluable as a visual reminder of how he is doing during the day. It is great for positive reinforcement of the good behaviours you wish to see and steering away from negative punishments. The white cloud becomes used as the warning. If he lands on the storm cloud that is an indication that there needs to be a considered consequence. We focus on working his way back up towards his goal of the star. In fact, we even added a magic star sticker to go even higher (which was his idea).

The thing that works really well is allowing the child to design the chart themselves as if it comes from them, their ideas and rules then they have investment in, it gives responsibility for the outcomes. It also doesn't feel as if something is being done to them. An added bonus is this can double as cross curricular learning e.g., an Art and Design or PSCHE lesson.

Each house will probably have their own examples of a 'system' to encourage positive behaviour. It is never too late to start to create one, no matter the age. Incentives and visuals work well... even with adults!



Once the system is secured, the stakes have been set and the tone laid down. Do children know what will happen if they are 'good'? Can they explain examples of the kinds of behaviours you would like to see? Have you got appropriate consequences for behaviours you do not wish to see? Watch for the 'bubbling' of behaviour and catch it. Give warnings coming down to their level and with eye contact. Consider your body language and be aware of whether it is aggressive and combative in nature or open and firm.



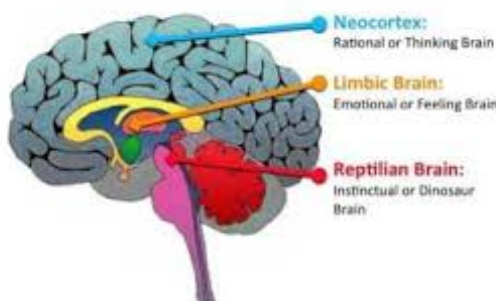
**Silence** is a magic tool. Sit in stillness and wait. They will do everything to get you to speak. A look can go a long way. If you speak less, they fill in the gaps. Listen and don't ask why or for explanations. They may not be able to tell you why they are doing something.

Remember Maslow's Hierarchy pyramid – Is hunger, thirst or a need for movement and space getting in the way of positive learning behaviour?

**Step back** and consider what went well in your approach and what can be improved next time.

**Reflect** back what they say – 'I can tell you are really angry right now'. When they feel heard they calm down.

### Dipping into Neuropsychology



When the brain is triggered, don't try reasoning or negotiating as they will be unable to engage until it calms. Once they say sorry and acknowledge the reason why – say 'thank you' and give them a long cuddle – without speaking and rubbing it in. Leave things for a while and move on until later in the day to reflect once emotions have calmed down.

## Emotional Regulation:

Naming emotion gives power and reduced frustration. A child can say, 'I feel angry' because they have the vocabulary to articulate it. It can be hard sometimes to identify how we feel and often it becomes anger or sadness as a mask towards something else.

I love using this scheme called Zone of Regulation which uses colours and the often the film Inside Out to visualise key emotions. <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>

What Zone Are You In?			
Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Disgusted Out of Control

If children can pinpoint for themselves what zone they are in, they can more easily begin to move between them. Help your child understand what is underlying a behaviour and support them through to the other side, so they are able to move into the green zone, ready for learning.



Note strategies they could use next time they find themselves moving towards the red zone. You can refer to it when you notice the signs.

Cosmic Yoga Zen does a lovely video on the Guard Dog which is very complimentary to understanding how your brain can get in the way of learning.



<https://youtu.be/so8QN9an3t8>



### **Confidence Check Revisited** –

Feel at a complete loss

I've got this

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

*Where do you think you are now on this line?  
Have you moved upwards... even a little?*



### **Last Thoughts...**

I like to think that some piece of information has resonated with you, even if it is just to reinforce what you already know. Good luck with this endeavour and remember that this is a temporary situation we find ourselves in. Ultimately, we have been given the unusual and unexpected 'gift' of time to spend with our children.

*And as always in parenting and life;  
we adapt, we grow, and we continue learning.*