

# Managing Challenging Childhood Behaviours

Managing the behaviours in a young child can be challenging and exhausting for parents. Every child is different as a result what works for one child does not necessarily work for another. Parents also have their own unique personalities and this may make it a challenge to manage their child's budding personality if it is different to theirs, or maybe more so if its the same. Parents also have the additional responsibilities such as work, other children, relationships with partners, and it can be difficult to find time for their own basic needs to be met. Challenging childhood behaviours can make parenting seem quite overwhelming, but there are some tips that can help parents to manage them with less stress for both parent and child.

## Developmental Regression



Regression, which simply put involves behaving in a way that is younger or needier than before, is common in children and usually short-lived. Children are generally hard-wired towards progression or moving forward with their development, and are usually very pleased with themselves when they master a new skill. However, new skills can sometimes lead to less support or attention than they would like. Sometimes new skills can be associated with new risks. So being able to walk, a wonderful new skill for a baby, is often associated with being lifted less. It can also be associated with falling over and getting hurt. Neither is a desirable outcome. The addition of another child, especially a younger child that needs more support, can trigger regression. The child may display behaviours of a child with greater needs to redirect the attention of a parent or caregiver.

Regressive behaviours may take the form of baby talk, refusal to walk, feed him or herself meals or perform other tasks that they have already shown that they are able to do. They may ask for help in some cases. Children may also cling to a caregiver more or be tearful when required to do tasks that they had previously mastered.

Children who are showing regression should not be ignored. Parents and caregivers should show that they notice the regression but children should never be shamed or ridiculed when they show

regression. Creative play including role play with your child can help a child to show or express the root cause for the regression.

They should be reassured of the love and affection of caregivers, and encouraged to show mastery of the skills that they once had. They should be praised when they do. Boundaries and limits must be set, especially of regression is associated with tantrums. Unacceptable behaviours are never to be encouraged.

Regression usually lasts for a few weeks at most, and resolves with the appropriate parental response. If regression lasts longer than this and if it is associated with other significant changes in behaviour, a review by your child's healthcare provider is recommended.

