

Top Tips for Parents of 5 - 12 year olds

- Stay calm and in control
- Try not to give attention to negative behaviours but give attention to the things you want to see more of
- Make sure all praise given is tangible - instead of saying 'I am pleased with you' try and follow it with the reason, 'I am pleased with you because you have put your shoes back on the rack'. That tells them what you would like to see more of
- Avoid shouting, nagging and labelling etc as this will always escalate situations
- Try to help to identify how your child is feeling by saying 'I'm wondering if you are feeling angry, upset, frustrated' and/ or 'I can see you are feeling angry/ upset/ frustrated' etc
- Try not to focus on the behaviour but what the reason behind the behaviour could be e.g. hungry, tired, bored, frustrated, worried etc
- Try to notice/ log what the triggers are for your child and what time/s of day seems to be a problem
- Once you recognise the triggers start to problem solve/ think about strategies to manage these e.g. if your child always comes out of school grumpy/ angry they may just be hungry and need you to take them a snack/ drink
- When things start to escalate try to distract your child early on by suggesting an activity or 'time in' with you
- Use empathy 'I know it's hard when.....' or 'I can understand why you are cross/ upset about that'
- Avoid punitive consequences or consequences that are unrealistic e.g. cancelling Christmas or no birthday presents etc. Instead, try to use natural consequences - for example, if they break something in temper, then they have to clear it up and it doesn't get immediately replaced
- Tell your child what you want them to do, not what you don't want them to do e.g. 'walk please' instead of 'don't run' or 'kind hands please' instead of 'don't smack/ hit'
- Use limited choices to give your child some control e.g. 'do you want fish fingers or sausages for tea?' or 'we are going for a walk, do you want to wear a coat or a jumper?'
- Be specific about the behaviour you want from your child. Talk with your children about what kind/ nice/ appropriate language or behaviour is e.g. do our children know what constitutes 'good' behaviour? What does that look like? We have to ensure that they know what is expected of them
- Choose your battles! Be realistic about expectations and ask yourself if what you are doing/ saying is helping or hindering the situation

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- Let your child/ren know the boundaries and expectations ahead of an activity. For example if your child demands a toy in the supermarket every time, before you enter the supermarket, set the rules e.g. they are allowed one treat, and they will need to stay with you at all times in the shop to earn that treat/ reward
- Talk to your child each morning about what the day will look like, use now and next and try to keep some routine and structure; this helps children feel emotionally safe and secure
- If your child is upset or frustrated etc offer a hug
- If your child needs time to calm down try sitting on the sofa/ floor with them, instead of sending them to another part of your home
- Try to prioritise/ spend some quality time with your child/ren every day if you can (even if it's only for 10 minutes before they go to bed)
- Go for walks, to the park or on bike rides as time outdoors is really important for physical and emotional wellbeing
- Suggest blowing bubbles or lying down and blowing a tissue up in the air to encourage calming breathing techniques
- Use mindfulness apps (there are ones for adults and children). This can help to regulate emotions
- Try to look after yourself and do things that make you happy/ keep you calm as most of the time when things feel challenging with our kids it's linked to our own wellbeing/ resilience

Useful info/ websites

www.thinkuknow.co.uk - staying safe online (phone, tablet or computer)

www.internetmatters.org - staying safe online

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/> - mental health and parenting advice

www.familylives.org.uk - parenting advice/ info

www.add-vance.org - parenting advice/ info linked to ADHD/ ASD

SPA/ CAMHS 24 helpline 0300 777 0707 - advice/ referrals for mental health and emotional wellbeing

Childline 0800 1111

Samaritans 116 123

For more information on support from HABS or related agencies please visit

www.habsfamily.co.uk