

## BEHAVIOUR YOU DON'T LIKE

Children learn exactly what 'bait' to use to 'hook' their parents into dealing with their problems or arguments, and they have discovered that parents often do exactly what their children expect them to do.

### Four common ways of misbehaving:

1. **Attention seeking** – keeping you busy with them. They will refuse to eat, or start arguing – probably not even aware that they are seeking attention.
2. **Power contests**- refusing to eat or settle into bed at night may be a way of testing to find out what limits there are.
3. **Revenge seeking** - if you constantly 'win' and your children 'lose' they may seek ways of getting even with you – 'go away', 'I hate you' etc. Can occur from 18 months onwards.
4. **Showing inadequacy**. -very discouraged children may believe they are incapable of learning to swim, get dressed etc and may then refuse to even try. As a result they often get extra attention and find that more is done for them. Doesn't normally occur until a child is three years old.

We often react to misbehaviour in 'fixed ways'.- perhaps the way our parents or carer's used to as that is the only model most of us have had.

1. **Stop rewarding misbehaviour**, give less attention to it, take a new different approach instead.
2. **Trying a new approach** can help you to be more affective, withdraw from power struggles, acting instead of talking and giving positive attention when it is not being expected.
3. **Children discover that misbehaviour is 'noticed'** and gets them extra attention – and they prefer negative attention as opposed to no attention at all.
4. **Misbehaviour needs an 'audience'** and you are no longer providing an audience when you're silent or when you turn your attention away.

**SKILL PRACTICE:** *How did your parents deal with misbehaviour when you were a child? Do you think this has influenced how you react? Do you think you act in similar ways to them or by doing the opposite?*

**PLANNING: Look after yourself:** If you do not deal with the anger, stresses and tensions in your own life, it is easy to take them out on a child. Children do not need stressed parents. When you are stressed what can you do? Leave the room, count to 10, ask for help, get some fresh air.

**A NEW APPROACH:** How will you deal differently with one misbehaviour this week? What exactly will you do or not do, say or not say?