

Supporting children with difficult behaviour requires patience, consistency, empathy, and a structured approach. Here are effective strategies to help:

1. Understand the Root Cause

Look beyond the behaviour: Difficult behaviour is often a sign of unmet needs, trauma, anxiety, or communication difficulties.

Identify triggers: Keep a behaviour diary to spot patterns — what happened before, during, and after the behaviour?

Consider underlying conditions: Conditions like ADHD, autism, attachment issues, or emotional trauma can influence behaviour.

◆ 2. Build Positive Relationships

Be consistent and nurturing: Show care and interest regardless of their behaviour.

Use positive reinforcement: Focus on what the child is doing well and praise small improvements.

Create a sense of safety: A child who feels safe and secure is less likely to act out.

◆ 3. Use Clear Boundaries and Routines

Set clear expectations: Children respond well to consistent rules and consequences.

Be predictable: Routine helps children feel in control and reduces anxiety.

Follow through calmly: Apply consequences in a calm, neutral tone — not as punishment but as a result of choices.

◆ 4. Teach Emotional Regulation

Name emotions: Help children identify and express their feelings with words ("You seem really angry. Want to talk about it?").

Model calm behaviour: Show how to handle frustration or disappointment in a healthy way.

Use calming strategies: Breathing exercises, sensory breaks, or safe spaces can help children self-regulate.

◆ 5. Work With Parents and Professionals

Communicate regularly: Share concerns and successes with parents/carers.

Use support services: Involve school counsellors, behaviour specialists, or CAMHS if needed.

Create a support plan: Work as a team to ensure consistency across home and school.

◆ 6. Avoid Power Struggles

Stay calm and firm: Avoid arguing or reacting emotionally.

Offer choices: This gives children a sense of control and can de-escalate situations.

Pick your battles: Focus on the most important behaviours to change.

◆ 7. Promote Positive Behaviour

Reward systems: Use sticker charts, praise, or small incentives to encourage good behaviour.

Teach social skills: Role play or use stories to help them learn cooperation, empathy, and communication.

Focus on strengths: Engage children in activities where they can succeed and feel proud.