

# DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN

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# CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOUR DISORDERS

Children who are described as behaviour disordered tend to engage in socially unacceptable behaviour more often, at a more intense level, and for longer durations than "ordinary" children. e.g. Most children are occasionally aggressive but behaviour disordered children are likely to be aggressive more often, at a more serious level, and for longer periods of time.

Furthermore these children tend not to have learned to respond to the usual social cues used to control behaviour such as intermittent praise, threat of punishment, reprimand, pressure to conform to social norms etc.

This means that behaviour disordered children tend to not only have more than other children, but also they don't respond as well to the usual techniques that the teacher uses successfully with the majority of other children. It is the fact that the child doesn't respond as well to the teacher's usual control techniques as much as the actual behaviour that often makes the teacher so frustrated and at a loss as to what to try next. Fortunately most "behaviour problems encountered at school are not that serious that their behaviour can't be managed with a behaviour management programme and a determined teacher.

Such children, even by the time they are 5 or 6 have often learned a great deal. They have learned to persevere with unacceptable behaviour in order to get their own way. They have learned to ignore social cues and pressure to conform. They have learned to manipulate and bargain at a very sophisticated level. They have learned to what extent they can control their parents and teachers, They have learned to try out all their techniques on every adult who tries to correct their behaviour.

The teacher who intends to improve such a child's behaviour needs courage, determination, perseverance, a whole range of strategies and tactics - and deserves a medal.

## GOOD LUCK!

## WARNING!

These children are  
hard work

## WHAT THE TEACHER NEEDS IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THESE CHILDREN.

In order to succeed with these children a teacher needs;

- to have a positive attitude towards the child and his education rather than thinking its so unfair on the teacher and that such children should not be allowed to attend regular schools.
- to take responsibility for changing a child's behaviour rather than hoping some specialist will come in and "cure" the child. There aren't any magic cures and if anyone is going to improve the child's behaviour it is the classroom teacher.
- to be able to keep the child's behaviour in perspective - it is hardwork, and stressful but having to tolerate such a child for a year is not the end of the world.
- to be able to "turn off" from the child and his problems when the child goes home for the day (consider exercise, doing a favourite activity, giving yourself a little reward for persevering).
- to be patient, and tolerant, yet firm and consistent, and not be too upset over a few setbacks.
- to be able to laugh about it all when it is over.
- to be able to plan and implement behaviour management programmes.
- support from colleagues and the school administration (ideally a person who can quickly come and help resolve a crisis situation).

**NB** *There aren't any easy answers, no quick solution, no magic cures, and no ideal answers somewhere else.  
The best answer usually involves a lot of hard work right here ... so better start digging.*

### DO'S AND DONT'S WITH PROBLEM CHILDREN

#### DO'S

**Do** be positive and give lots of positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour.

**Do** be flexible and take a problem solving approach.

**Do** forget about problem child when you are not at school.

**Do** spell out expected behaviour, rewards and punishments clearly.

**Do** be prepared for setbacks.

**Do** be consistent and persevere.

#### DONT'S

**Don't** threaten or promise what you can't deliver.

**Don't** become emotionally involved.

**Don't** worry about the child's future.

**Don't** think you have to solve all the child's problems.

**Don't** take it personally.

**Don't** think you are a failure as a teacher.

**Don't** give up.

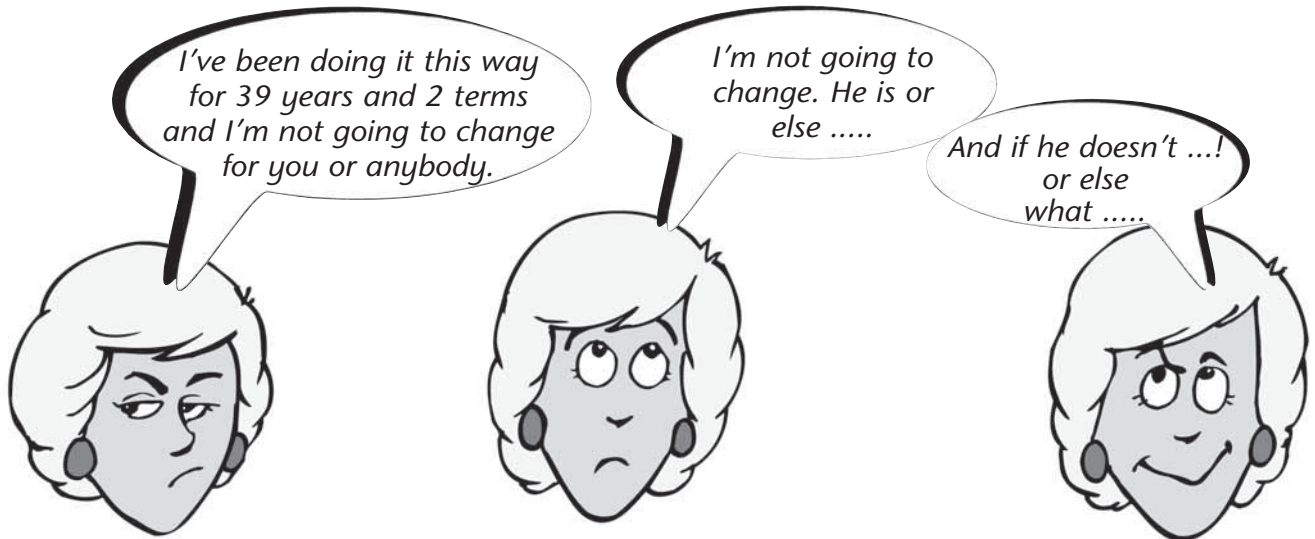
## **GOOD ADVICE**

# **BE FLEXIBLE**

**GOOD  
ADVICE**

Regardless of the cause of the child's behaviour, he (she) is causing you problems and is unlikely to leave your school.

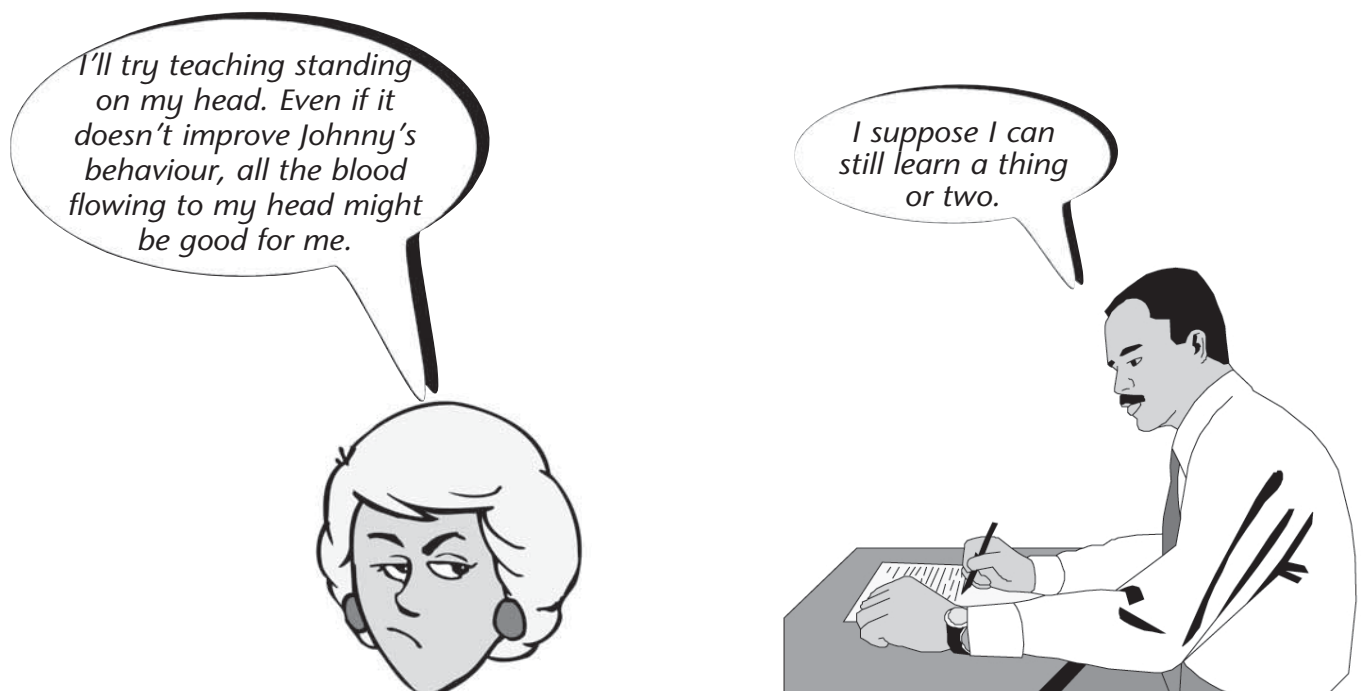
Therefore, be flexible and be prepared to try different ideas to solve the problem.



### **Advantages**

1. You remain sane
2. You learn new skills
3. The child's behaviour improves.

# **BE A PROBLEM SOLVER**



# IDENTIFY HOW YOU FEEL

**What** is the child actually **doing** that is causing you such concern?  
And how often? **Be Specific.**

He's not doing anything at all - that's the flaming trouble.

My stomach is always in knots because about 3 times a term he throws a real tantrum.

Mrs Frazzled calm down and tell me what he is actually doing

**TANTRUM**

He's always disturbing others.

After being on edge all day I don't have any energy left to do anything for myself.

I'm uptight because she makes me feel an inadequate teacher.

She's defiant.

I'm worried

He gets into fights.

He swears at me.

She looks at me funny.

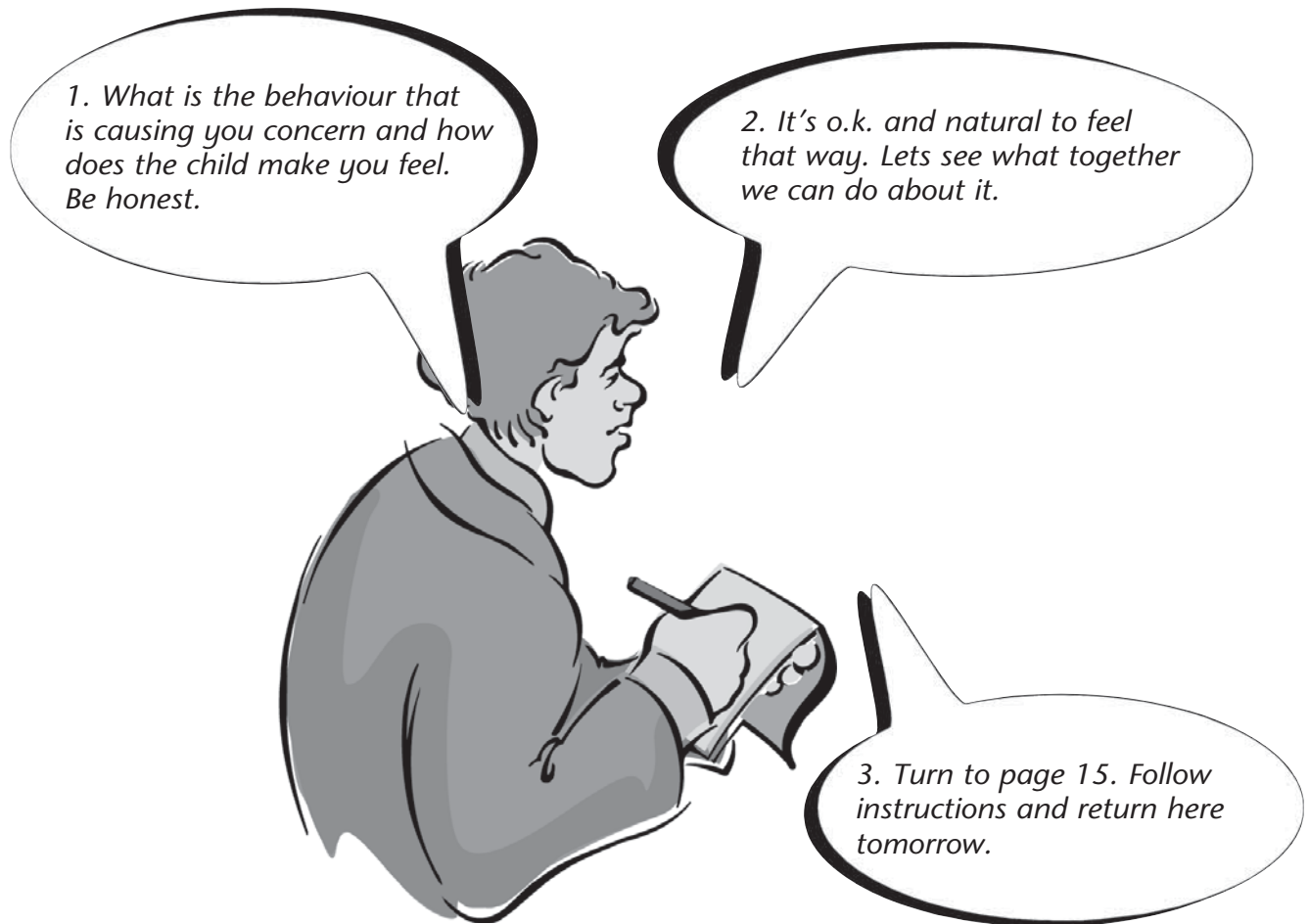
I'm really a bit scared of him.

He's got a snotty nose...and nits...and smells...and wants to sit on my knee.

**NEW ENTRANTS**

# LET'S START TO IMPROVE THINGS

**SUMMARY  
PAGE**



## DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

### Steps involved in changing behaviour

- Step 1: Specify behaviours causing you concern
- Step 2: Collect data
- Step 3: Analyse data and plan intervention
- Step 4: Implement intervention strategy
- Step 5: Collect further data to evaluate progress
- Step 6: Modify programme if necessary, if not slowly phase out programme

# SPECIFY BEHAVIOURS

Be specific about behaviours causing you concern.



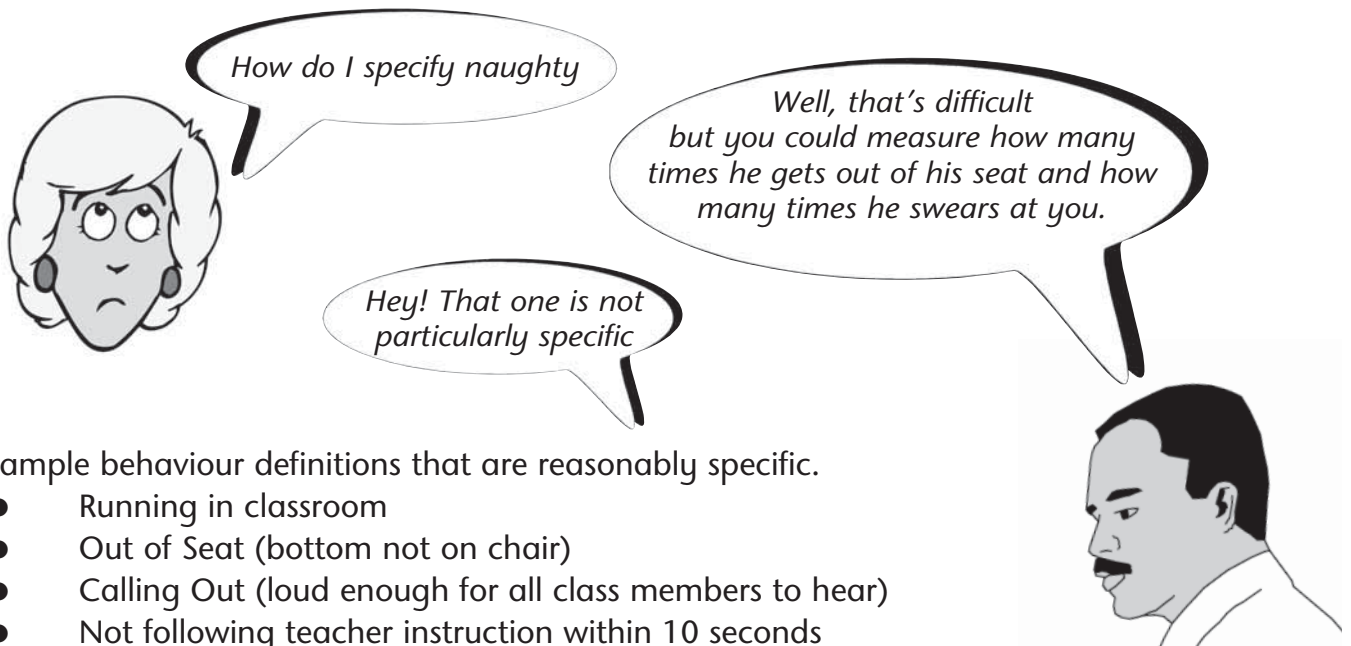
List the 2 behaviours causing you most concern.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  Great definition

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Can you observe and record each instance of the above behaviours happening?

If yes ✓ each one. If no try to rewrite them in a more specific way..



Sample behaviour definitions that are reasonably specific.

- Running in classroom
- Out of Seat (bottom not on chair)
- Calling Out (loud enough for all class members to hear)
- Not following teacher instruction within 10 seconds
- Hitting, pushing, kicking other children
- Taking another child's belonging (includes borrowing without permission)
- Verbal abuse (unpleasant tone and content)
- Answering back to teacher