

Parent Forum 14.10.2022 – Focus: Behaviour

Our first Parent Forum focused on behaviour and reflecting upon our current practice. We were fortunate enough to have attendance from a fantastic group of our parents, who represented children from Years 2, 3, 4 and 6.

The school have recently joined a Behaviour Hub programme, which is to aid us in continuing to develop the excellent behaviour at PaWS. This was acknowledged by Ofsted in January 2022: ‘Pupils are calm and focused in class, and learning is rarely disrupted by the behaviour of others. Pupils are taught and encouraged to behave well.’

A quote from one of our parents about their experience at the forum:

*‘Thank you for today. I found it really reassuring and encouraging to know my children are at such a nurturing and open minded/forward thinking school with such lovely people!’*

Some of the parent feedback was to share the minutes from this forum so this is a summary of the discussion points and upcoming actions as a result of these:

Discussion Point	Actions to follow
<p>Discussion around language used when children may be struggling with behaviour. This language links to the school’s work on Zone of Regulation.</p>	<p>School to share with parents the consistent language/scripts that staff use in school to support validating emotions and helping to regulate.</p>
<p>A presentation was given by Jennifer Clarke, who is a parent and a counsellor at Stonewater Counselling. Jennifer is very knowledgeable about understanding and supporting behaviour in children. The presentation shared a wide range of information, including how behaviour is always some form of communication and looking at positive ways to validate emotions in order to support children. This links well to the school’s approach to social and emotional development and our work on Zones of Regulation.</p> <p>The group were unanimous in their suggestion to forward this presentation to all parents.</p>	<p>Parent forum to be offered with a focus on sharing Zones of Regulation information and strategies.</p> <p>Zones of Regulation resources to be sent to parents for use at home if helpful, following the Zones forum.</p> <p>Email presentation from Jennifer Clarke.</p>

*life in all its fullness*

<p>The following book was recommended by another parent: The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read by Philippa Perry.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/Book-Wish-Your-Parents-Children/dp/0241250994">https://www.amazon.co.uk/Book-Wish-Your-Parents-Children/dp/0241250994</a></p>
<p>PaWS Parent Reps:</p> <p>We are hoping to get a team of parents together to support us with our ongoing developments and strengthening communication.</p> <p>We would like at least 1 or 2 parent reps from each year group.</p>	<p>Information about this role will be sent out next term.</p>

### Our next Parent Forum:

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November – 10:30-12.**

- We will discuss the revised Behaviour Policy
- We will complete a learning walk around school for parents to observe lessons, break times and offer feedback on what they have seen.

If you would like to attend our next forum, please complete the following form:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xGwK50oXzkuJXKHE7K3MTg1\\_intWm8dOh8GXZfovB\\_1UQUtBWjA1OTJUTIVWUkJWN0lJTlhLUktWMy4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xGwK50oXzkuJXKHE7K3MTg1_intWm8dOh8GXZfovB_1UQUtBWjA1OTJUTIVWUkJWN0lJTlhLUktWMy4u)

Just a reminder that if you have not yet completed our pupil and parent survey on behaviour, this can be found here. The deadline is Friday 21 October:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xGwK50oXzkuJXKHE7K3MTg1\\_intWm8dOh8GXZfovB\\_1UQkkzNTNPWktFWUZER0tQMTEyNkdWNTQ3Ny4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xGwK50oXzkuJXKHE7K3MTg1_intWm8dOh8GXZfovB_1UQkkzNTNPWktFWUZER0tQMTEyNkdWNTQ3Ny4u)

If you would like any further information about these forums, please do not hesitate to contact: [kkerr@pevenseyschool.org.uk](mailto:kkerr@pevenseyschool.org.uk) or [ldelaney@pevenseyschool.org.uk](mailto:ldelaney@pevenseyschool.org.uk)

Kind regards.

Mrs. Kelly Kerr  
Deputy Headteacher

Mrs. Lorraine Delaney  
Deputy Headteacher / Inclusion Lead

The background features several concentric circles in light grey, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large red speech bubble shape is centered on the page, containing the title and author information.

# Behaviour in Children

By Jennifer Clarke at Stonewater Counselling




All behaviour is  
communication

In children and adults alike, all behaviour is an expression  
of what's going on inside for that person at that time

# Impulse Control

The pre-frontal cortex, which is the part of our brain that acquires information from our senses and generates thoughts and actions in response, does not fully mature until we are about 25 years old

So, the part of the brain that receives sensory information and creates reactions is physically not developed in children. They cannot see things the way adults see them, they cannot anticipate outcomes the way adults can, they cannot regulate their emotions the way we can, and they cannot control their reactions the way we can. Any expectation from us, for our children to be able to do these things, is unreasonable of us

The background features several concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A prominent red speech bubble is centered on the page, containing white text. The speech bubble has a rectangular top and a pointed bottom. The text inside is centered and reads: "This is why toddlers can have such extreme 'tantrums'. They cannot regulate themselves. It is our responsibility to do it for them. First, by regulating ourselves, and then offering our 'calm' to them".

This is why toddlers can have such extreme 'tantrums'. They cannot regulate themselves. It is our responsibility to do it for them. First, by regulating ourselves, and then offering our 'calm' to them

## Reframing our perspective

- **Example:** Imagine you were having a really hard day. You didn't sleep well; your children didn't sleep well either and were irritable and uncooperative for the morning routine and you struggled through the day trying to be pleasant with your colleagues and do your job well. Then, when you got home, you dropped your phone and smashed the screen because you were carrying too much in from the car. You swore out loud and your spouse said, 'Calm down!' 'You shouldn't have been carrying that much in one go!' 'Now we have to fork out for a new screen/phone!' 'Go into another room, if you can't keep your bad language to yourself, I don't want you in here with me!' 'Come back when you've calmed down and thought about what you did!'.
- How would that feel?
- Would you feel comforted in your time of emotional difficulty?
- Would your spouses' words help you to 'learn a lesson' for the next time?
- Would you feel that your awful day and feelings as a result were being validated?
- Would your bad mood disappear or improve quickly?

There is nothing empowering about shame, and no one ever learned a positive lesson through shame or feeling like a bad person

- Or:
- Would you feel invalidated?
- Would you feel misunderstood?
- Would you feel angrier?
- Would you feel ashamed of yourself?
- Would you feel alone/isolated with your pain?
- Would it damage the trust and safety of that relationship?





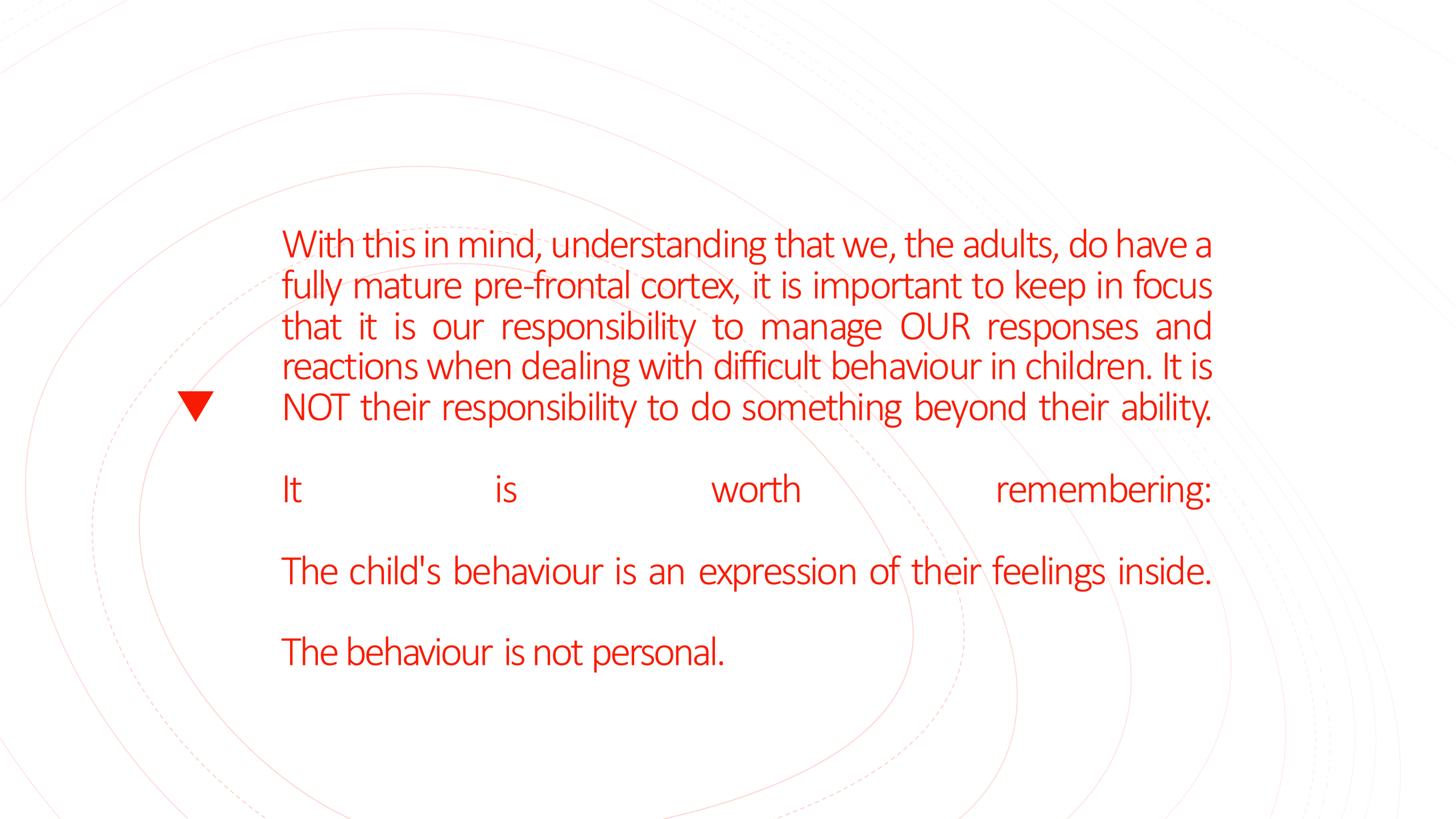
The only thing worse than  
feeling bad, is feeling bad alone

## Validation: A 'super-tool'

Imagine instead your spouse didn't take your anger personally (because it was not about them, it was your expression or communication of your difficult day) and they said:

'Wow, it looks like you've had a hard day. That's so frustrating about your phone screen, I'd be annoyed too. We will get it fixed. Do you want a hug?'

- How would that feel instead?
- Would you feel validated?
- Would it soothe and comfort you to know you weren't being judged or condemned?
- Would their lack of condemnation encourage you or give you permission to be careless with your phone in the future or make you want to carry on swearing in anger?
- Would it nurture the safety of that relationship?



With this in mind, understanding that we, the adults, do have a fully mature pre-frontal cortex, it is important to keep in focus that it is our responsibility to manage OUR responses and reactions when dealing with difficult behaviour in children. It is NOT their responsibility to do something beyond their ability.



It is worth remembering:

The child's behaviour is an expression of their feelings inside.

The behaviour is not personal.

There is no such  
thing as a 'bad'  
child

There are just:

- Angry
- Confused
- Scared
- Tired
- Hurt
- Impulsive
- Overstimulated

Children having a hard time and expressing their feelings the only way they know how to in that moment.

As the adults, we owe it to every one of them to keep that at the forefront of our minds when dealing with their behaviour.



## Other Possible Reasons for Bad Behaviour

- A learning difficulty/ neuro diversity – possibly undiagnosed
- A difficult home life
- Abuse/Trauma
- Anxiety
- Depression



A child is never behaving badly  
without an underlying reason

As adults responsible for them, it  
is our job to approach their  
behaviour with curiosity, not  
condemnation

'What's going on for this child?'

# Lying

All humans seek unconditional positive regard. We all want to be seen in a positive way for who we are. This is why children lie. They wrongly believe that the truth will push the adults away. It is a defensive behaviour, coming from an instinct to protect themselves and protect the connection they have with their adults.

In order to stop lying, the child needs to feel that telling the truth is safe. That it will be received more positively than the lie. So, we need to welcome all the children's truths with kindness and compassion.

We can offer a  
different  
viewpoint about  
lying

- Some questions to ask a child who has lied to promote critical thinking and remove shame:
- 1. How do you know the difference between a lie and the truth?
- 2. Why might someone tell a lie?
- 3. What might happen if someone tells a lie?
- 4. How might their lying make their friends/family/teachers feel?
- 5. What could they do instead?



## The Flip Side of Needing Unconditional Positive Regard

This is also why some children who behave well act the way they do – they want to please us. This can sometimes mean they are masking their real feelings, which we should be aware of, as it can mean they are learning to base their self-worth on this positive feedback.

We should not want children to be people pleasers, instead we should encourage them to express all aspects of themselves.

A 'good' child needs to feel comfortable expressing their 'bad' feelings too, to be their authentic self and therefore grow into a more emotionally sturdy adult.

## Holding a child's big feelings

Some children will learn from their caregivers that their feelings are 'too big' for others to tolerate. When caregivers react negatively to crying, complaining, shouting and anger in children, the children learn that those feelings and the behaviour that follows, are intolerable to us, and they try to suppress them. The feelings don't disappear, though, and come out in other ways – hitting, bullying, people pleasing etc. It has also been proven in many studies that suppressing negative feelings can lead to depression in adulthood.

This brings us back to validation. When a child is expressing their feelings, the first thing we can do to de-escalate that child is validate their feelings. There is often no need to offer any solutions and correcting the child in that moment will not help. The teaching can come later.