



## UpCare simulation training for parents: Developmental characteristics of children 6-9 and 9-12 years old

### ***Physical & Psychomotor development***

In middle childhood, physical growth slows down and follows a more steady rhythm. Thus, height increases by about 5-6 cm per year and weight by 2-3 kg per year. At the age of 7-8 years the final myelinization of the Central Nervous System is completed. However, the maturation of the brain continues with the formation of new neuronal synapses (synaptogenesis).

*In terms of physical dimensions, there are large individual differences between children of the same age due to both genetic and environmental factors.*

#### Intact mobility:

- Riding a bicycle without training wheels.
- Ropes, runs fast, catches/throws away the ball, tumbles, goes down stairs
- Swimming

#### Delicate mobility:

- Writes well and with greater speed.
- Copies rhombus vertically and horizontally.
- Ties his laces.
- Can cut with a knife
- Assembles toys
- Draws more fully

Regarding the physical development of children aged 9-12 years, it is noteworthy that several physical changes occur, especially in girls, where around the 10th - 11th year, there is breast development and early menstruation may occur (being signs of impending puberty). There is also a considerable increase in muscular strength, almost doubling, as well as motor abilities, with boys usually having greater muscular strength than girls.



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## ***Cognitive development***

***Piaget's theory (1896 – 1980):*** The stage of concrete logical thinking (7-11 years). In addition, they master the concept of reversible change of the object to its original position, as well as the ability to decenter from their personal point of view and reflect on other perspectives of the subject.

- The child gives up the egocentrism and intuitive logic of infancy but cannot yet grasp abstract concepts
- He knows the time, days, months and seasons, when his birthday is, the time
- Consistently recognizes right and left.
- Analytical perception emerges, where the child not only notices the overall shape but also individual elements (e.g. in a landscape, the child sees not only the whole but also details).
- Cognitive logical schemas are acquired (e.g. inequality relations, concepts of weight, volume, etc.).
- He is able to combine, separate, rearrange and transform objects in his mind.
- At the same time, the capacity for deliberate memorization gradually increases.

## ***Language development***

- Reading and writing are mastered - Vocabulary (thousands of words) and grammar are developed
- Language is used consciously and expression is more precise (the degree of this development depends largely on school learning)
- The child's communication skills are improved.



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## ***Psychosocial development***

**Erikson's theory (1902-1994): stage (6-11 years old) Philoponia # Inferiority:** the child gains approval by his/her productivity, school performance, task taking, skill acquisition and loses it when he/she cannot respond.

- He develops consistency & keeps his commitments.
- Manages to complete assigned work.
- Expands attachment to teachers & peers, transitions from "I" to "We" and shifts focus to peers.
- Learning to cooperate & interact.
- Learns to make friends, but mostly with the same gender (at least until age 11). Gradually the number of children in the group decreases but relationships become closer and more stable. The first lasting friendships begin. The opinions of his friends become very important to him.
- He becomes more independent of parents and family.
- New interests outside the family.
- Development of emotional intelligence. The child analyses his own feelings but also understands the emotional fluctuations of others.
- The child begins to gain confidence in his/her abilities and develops self-esteem.
- The perception of the gender role is stabilized and stereotypical perceptions of the social role of gender appear e.g. men are believed to be strong, resilient, aggressive, tough, ambitious, dominant, possessive. For women, weak, emotional, caring, quiet and kind.

## ***Ethical development***

**Piaget's theory (1896 - 1980): Heteronomous morality (5-9 years old):** The morality of an act is judged by its consequences and NOT by one's intention or motives.



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**Autonomous morality (over 10 years):** rules begin to be questioned, no longer considered 'sacred' or 'inviolable' (any rule violation is not necessarily punished).

In the last stage of this period, the **pre-adolescent stage**, children have developed the capacity for self-evaluation and are able to give usually accurate answers about themselves:

- their performance at school
- their ability in sports
- how attractive they are perceived by other children
- how popular they are with their peers; and
- their behaviour, i.e. their capacity for self-control and consistency.

### **Conclusion**

This is an important transitional period during which children develop the skills they developed in the various domains during early childhood and chart a developmental trajectory towards mature independence and autonomy. The child leaves the close family environment and carefree play and enters the realm of wider social relationships and organised work.

- A period of intense cognitive development & development of social behaviour
- The child forms his/her own reality
- He or she constantly wants to learn and develop

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## UpCare simulation training for parents: School-age children's behaviours with violent content for the age period 6-9 years old

### ***When is a behaviour considered aggressive?***

When it disrupts:

- the normal coexistence of the family,
- the functioning of the school context,
- when it endangers the child or others
- and is not reduced by various forms of education.

The emotions that **trigger** aggression are **fear**, **frustration** and **anger**.

### ***Ways of manifesting aggression***

Child aggression can be expressed in different ways depending on age, cognitive level and socio-economic environment. The ways in which a child manifests aggression are as follows:

- Physical (hitting, kicking)
- Verbal (shouting, swearing, screaming)
- Psychological (threats, pressure)
- Destructive (destruction of objects or property)
- Passive aggression (ironic speech, rejection)

### ***Causes of aggressive behaviour***

The aggressive behaviour that children display is not instinctive or random. Instead, it is triggered by external factors and situations that create strong negative emotions in children. The reasons why a child may behave aggressively can be summarised as follows:

- **Types of parents:** strict parents have excessive expectations and demands, resulting in their children not being able to satisfy them. Concessive parents do not set limits, while indifferent parents neglect their children who demand their love and attention.



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- **Competition and comparison between siblings.**
- **Imitation:** imitation and observation of behaviour is a way of learning and acquiring skills. If children have aggressive parents or are exposed to violent role models, there is a significant chance that they will imitate and adopt violent behaviour.
- **Child abuse and neglect.**
- **Significant changes in the family context:** financial problems, disrupted parental relationships, a new member in the family, a move, etc. are events that cause tension and anxiety in children.
- **Television programmes and video games that promote violence:** these programmes reinforce the formation of an aggressive mentality and desensitise the child to aggressive acts.
- **Change of school grade:** the child's entry into different school contexts is an important transition as he/she is required to adapt to a new social environment. In this situation, aggressive behaviours may occur, especially in children who are not fully accepted by their peers.

### ***Behaviour by parents***

Parents should observe

- When the aggressive behaviour occurs, i.e. whether it occurs under specific circumstances or is a generalised behaviour.
- If it occurs in a single context (home, school, activity, etc.), there may be something going on that triggers this behaviour.
- If it is directed at a specific individual and if there has been a significant change or transition in the child's environment that has affected the behavior (moving, changing schools, changing grades, etc.).



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They should also...

- Let the child calm down before having any discussion with the child. If they try to talk to him while he is exhibiting the behavior, they will make the situation worse.
- It would be quite helpful if the discussion could take place in his favourite place at home. This will make the child feel more comfortable and relaxed, which will make it easier to discuss the behaviour.

#### Tips for parents:

- **Avoid physical punishment.** Do not respond to violence with violence.
- **Withholding the child's privileges or favorite activities.** For example, "we won't go on the ride we agreed to because your behavior was not appropriate."
- Parental cooperation with the school is considered essential especially when the child displays aggressive behaviour in both contexts. Parents and teachers need to have a joint approach to the child's behaviour.
- The child should be removed from the "audience". This is because very often aggressive behaviour is reinforced by the environment or is done for reasons of admiration.
- **Change the parents' behaviour.** It is very important for parents to change the way they behave towards their children. If a parent yells or hits their child they should expect them to behave in the same way. So it is not enough to tell the child what the right behaviour is, but they have to practice it themselves.
- **Parents should reinforce and reward their children's good behaviour.**

#### *Behaviors from teachers*

According to attachment theory, there is literature supporting the view that secure attachment to teachers can compensate for insecure attachment to parents.

Furthermore, a **good student-teacher relationship** can be protective for students at risk of negative school development.



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In particular, **closeness with teachers, low levels of conflict, optimistic expectations and caring** for children with behavioural problems **helps their adjustment** to the school environment.

Unfortunately, in some cases teachers treat their students in the exact opposite way by making derogatory and sarcastic comments, ridiculing them and characterizing them negatively. In this way, teachers continue the vicious cycle of negatively associating students with the important adults in their lives.



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## UpCare simulation training for parents: School-age children's behaviours with violent content for the age period 9 - 12 years old

According to Moutsanas (2019:4) "behaviour" is the sum of our internal and external body's reactions to stimuli in the environment and is manifested by the attitudes, actions and words we use to express thoughts, feelings and needs.

Most children develop by going through the same developmental milestones, but always at their own pace, so it is important to take into account each child's developmental trajectory, their learning processes, and the social norms that define behaviours before considering which behaviour is defined as 'normal' or 'problematic' (Moutsanas, 2019). Behavioural issues are therefore part of each child's emotional and cognitive development and are considered an expression of the interaction between the child and their environment (Moutsanas, 2019; Kourkoutas, 2015).

During school age, significant achievements in cognitive development are made and children try to perceive the world around them, communicate with significant others, resolve difficulties and form an image of themselves (Moutsanas, 2019).

As reported in the literature, boys tend to exhibit, but also receive, aggressive behaviour to a degree twice and three times that of girls (Gonella, n.d.; Christakis, 2007). Furthermore, boys seem to use physical violence either by being aggressive to other boys or girls, while girls usually only behave aggressively towards other girls using verbal violence (Christakis, 2007).

### Children may display:

- Argumentative behaviour (early adolescence, from the age of 11)
- Verbal behaviours (mocking, gossiping, use of abusive name-calling/comments, repeated teasing, blackmailing to extract material goods, etc.)
- Physical violence (deliberate hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, punching, etc. leading to injury)
- Theft and destruction of personal property



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- Cyber violence (with material shared on the internet of abusive or humiliating content, photos, faked or not, exposed on social media in the applications used by children such as Viber, Messenger, WhatsApp, etc., sending unethical messages, etc.)
- Social behaviour that leads to isolation and exclusion of individuals from groups, actions, the spreading of disturbing rumours, comments regarding origin, sexual orientation and any kind of diversity that someone may represent, etc.

(Motti-Stephanidi; Tsergas, 2000)

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## UpCare simulation training for parents: Causes and Consequences of Violence at home and school

The high-risk factors and causes of child abuse are complex because they are directly linked to cultural and social factors and are intertwined.

Extra-familial factors - causes refer mainly to socio-economic living difficulties (e.g. unemployment, poverty), limited family benefits and sources of support, quality of life, family environment, social exclusion, etc., while emphasis is placed on the respective societal norms regarding ways of upbringing, discipline and behaviour towards children.

On the other hand, abusive acts are directly linked to the personality and psychological/psychiatric condition of the parent (e.g. mental illness, mental retardation, addictions, etc.), socio-economic single parenthood, unwanted pregnancy, family upbringing, parental treatment and history of sexual abuse, gender power distribution, etc.

Among children various positive and negative behaviours are manifested. Some of them are aggression, teasing, mockery and **bullying**. Often the target is 'different', which can refer to any human trait, whether external or internal. For example, skin colour, gender, weight, ethnicity, school performance, social shyness.

At these ages, friendship and **acceptance** by peers is very important. That is why every child tries to identify with various characteristics and traits of other children, but in this process of identification, they may also adopt negative behaviours.

Many children fear **rejection** from their peers and this creates a permanent insecurity. All this fear, may lead these children to some strong behaviours and reactions towards others. From a lot of research, what is clear is that what influences a child in terms of the behaviour they will develop is the environment in which they develop.

### ***Factors/ Causes that can influence a child to use violence:***

- Dysfunctional family communication (low levels of verbal - expressive response and emotional neglect).



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- Intra-family conflict (disturbed, violent or poor relationships between members) and unclear boundaries.
- Lack of stability, support, affection and love within the home and at school.
- Parental overprotection (children feel they are the centre of the world, have everything and so then due to saturation, they are unmotivated and easily manipulated into various forms of violence).
- Fanaticism of the family or the people they associate with (religious, political, fanatic, racial, etc.).
- Anxiety, tensions, conflicts in the school environment (jealousy, wanting attention, wanting to be more popular), indifference/rejection by significant persons (parents, friends, teachers, coaches, etc.), loss/mourning.
- Television (shows, movies) and computer games in which violence is shown and children become familiar with it.
- Children who bully may at another time or place have been or still be the recipients of bullying and violent behaviour.
- Early puberty - Adolescence (hormonal and organic changes, strongly affecting emotion). A child who is struggling and needs guidance on how to manage anger, frustration, impulsivity and anxiety towards others.

***The effects of violence on children have serious consequences and have a decisive impact on their psychosocial development and evolution.***

**Children who are subjected to domestic or intra-school violence, either as victims or perpetrators, are affected by feelings of fear, anxiety and insecurity, resulting in:**

- Not wanting to go out during breaks or making sure they are close to teachers and offices.
- To be frequently absent from school (making various excuses to their parents, sometimes accompanied by crying).



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- Having torn or damaged clothes.
- Not wanting to be 'seen and heard' in the classroom.
- They are late coming to or leaving school.
- Show reduced interest and motivation (activities, academics, etc.).
- Display withdrawal, aggression, constant tension, changes in daily habits.
- Appear distracted, lonely.
- Anorexia, depression, psychosomatic symptoms (abdominal pain, vomiting, headache) , sleep disorders (insomnia, nightmares) , self-destructive mood and even suicide.
- Loss of money and/or personal belongings.
- Perpetrators are at risk of being removed from one school to another, even dropping out if necessary.
- Victims sustain physical injuries, such as marks/bruises on the body and/or face.
- Disability (mental/physical) and even death.
- Lack of self-esteem, altered personality.
- Feelings of guilt, shame and self-blame.
- Distraction and memory disorders often leading to learning difficulties.
- Adolescents leave home too early and join various gangs, which substitute for the family, giving them a (false) sense of community and security.
- Girls often develop an excessive suspicion of men and a negative attitude towards stable relationships in adulthood.
- Unwanted pregnancy.



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Children unfortunately do not talk about what may be happening to them, however unpleasant it may be. Either because they are afraid of their peers' reaction and of becoming a target themselves, or to avoid getting into trouble. In addition, many studies show that children believe that nothing will change even if they report it, so they choose silence.

Every child has the inalienable right to grow up in safety and with parents and teachers they can trust. Unfortunately, however, this 'privilege' does not apply to all children. Many of them are forced to live the nightmare of any form of violence, leaving indelible scars on their memory, body and soul. All abuse is experienced by the child victim as a powerful physical and psychological trauma that has an impact throughout his or her life.

### ***10 signs that a child needs help from an anger management specialist***

1. He cannot control his aggression and hits people after the age of 5.
2. He suffers frequent anger attacks, showing that he is carrying a large anger tank that has overflowed.
3. He is easily negative and contrary to what you tell him.
4. Cannot pursue a constructive solution to a problem and does not acknowledge his own responsibility in creating the problem. He constantly feels he is the victim.
5. Constantly loses friends by alienating adults or engaging in interpersonal conflicts.
6. He constantly thinks about revenge.
7. Threatens to do or does harm to himself.
8. Causes damage to property.
9. Repeatedly expresses hatred for himself or herself or someone else.
10. Harming younger children or animals



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## UpCare parent simulation training: Discipline vs punishment: which is more effective?

### **Meaning of the word "Discipline"**

Obedience to:

- Principles
- Rules
- Laws
- One's orders

True discipline is identified with the concepts:

- Guidance
- Education
- Encouragement

The goal is **self-improvement**: The creation of an internal locus of control the empowerment of internal motivation and emotional self-regulation.

### **Positive discipline as a future-oriented tool**

Positive discipline aims at prevention by modifying the environment (adding, removing or changing the space), using the example of parents as a model (children who yell at them also yell at others when they get angry) and the reinforcing message - e.g. "The trip was very pleasant and safe today when you talked and played calmly in the car").

Even when the child's behavior is not desirable, consistency and repair are sought.

For example, if the child spills his juice on the floor, age-appropriate cleaning up the damage alone or with us is repairing, not punishing.

Not going to the swings because he didn't do his homework on time and there is no time left until the evening routine is a consequence, not a punishment.



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Not eating ice cream because he spilled the juice or because he didn't do his homework on time is punishment - consequence is not related to behavior.

### ***Methods of discipline***

The choice of the method of discipline varies according to

- **with the developmental level of the child,**
- **age,**
- **his/her personality.**

In case of failure of one method, it is recommended to change and choose another more effective method.

Of the various techniques suggested, a parent should consider ONLY those methods that seem right and appropriate for the child's age, level of understanding and character.

If a method is not having the effect the parent hopes for or is no longer effective, it may need to be changed. After all, we are only talking about a set of tools, from which each parent can choose which one works for him or her. Tools different from each other, each suited to different circumstances.

### ***Suggested methods of discipline***

#### **1. Disapproval of unacceptable behavior.**

Parents should show their disapproval of the child's inappropriate behavior in a way that does not create a vicious cycle.

For example, a child who hits and the parent yells is likely to continue hitting and the parent will continue yelling. It is good for the parent to calmly express their feeling and be a role model who suggests another way of behaving.

#### **2. Counting.**

The parent counts, giving the child some time to stop the inappropriate behavior.



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### 3. The break.

The parent removes the child from the active activity and explains that with this behavior, the child cannot participate in the activity being done. It is important, when the child is ready, to let the child back into the action. In this way, the message is given that we are not enabling the behavior not the child as an entity.

### 4. The indifference to the behavior.

The parent is completely indifferent to their child's behavior that has been previously labeled as unacceptable. In the first instance it can lead to an exacerbation and increase in inappropriate behaviour. However, gradually, it works because children are in great need of their parents' attention and cannot tolerate their indifference.

### 5. Consequences.

There are the **natural** and the **artificial** ones. The parent explains to the child that every action has certain natural consequences (natural consequences of the action). At the same time, the parents need, in cooperation with the child, to set a logical consequence as a result in case a rule or limit is not observed. The consequences set should always be proportionate to the misbehaviour. They should not be punitive to the child and will not be imposed if the child is willing to cooperate. For example, if the child spills his/her juice down, age-appropriate cleaning up the damage alone or with us is a **repair**. Not going to the swings because he didn't do his homework on time and there is no time left until the evening routine is a **consequence**.

### 6. Rewarding the desired behaviour.

**Rewarding the positive** is more effective as a method of discipline than disapproving the negative. To receive the maximum value that it can, reward must be **direct, specific, sincere, consistent**, and **oriented to the here and now**, to what is happening. **It is also important that the parent insist on recognizing the child's effort and not just his or her success.**



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## ***Punishment***

- And while discipline is a tool, punishment is a weapon. Punishment is an immediate but temporary way of a superficial way of dealing with behavior that is labeled inappropriate.
- Punishment scares the child, hurts, humiliates, shames the child. In the short term, however, the child is forced to comply, but the improvement is fictitious. This compliance is due to fear.
- Punishment does not point out the error.
- It is a kind of fine imposed on a person for misbehaviour or for breaking certain rules which he or she is required to observe.
- It is a parent's reaction to a child's behaviour. In fact, it may even act as a reinforcing factor.

For example, a child who rolls down on the carpet, yells and hits, for some reason seeks the attention of his parents. By punishing him, he at least enjoys their negative attention. This often results in the systematic repetition of the bad behaviour in order to gain the parent's attention.

## ***Types of punishment***

1. **Physical punishment** spanking, slapping and generally any form of physical contact violence by parents towards their children.
2. **Exclusion from privileges.**
3. **The time out technique.**
4. **The emotional withdrawal of the parent.**
5. **Intimidation** of the child with metaphysical creatures (e.g. ghosts, ghouls, bogeymen, etc.).
6. **Forcing the child to memorize texts and copy a sentence multiple times**



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### ***Comparing punishment and discipline***

<b>Punishment</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
Based on rewards and punishments	Based on relationships
Focuses on behaviours	Focuses on the character
Aims to control	Aims to connection
Uses fear to terrorise	Uses love as motivation
Teaches the “What” - RULES	Teaches the “Why” - VALUES
Results in remorse and guilt	Results in self-confidence and identity
Aims to perfection	Aims to maturity
Focuses on short-term results	Focuses on long-term results



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## UpCare parent simulation training: The example of the parent

A role model is defined as a person who acts as an example, whose behaviour is imitated by others. Parents are a key role model for their children and influence their behaviour through biological (genes) and environmental (parenting style) factors. However, this does not mean focusing only on the negative effects. There is a plethora of positive effects that parental behaviour can have on children's development. (For example, educated parents foster in their children a love of learning. Confident parents have children who feel confident in their abilities. Also, happy couples who communicate with each other learn proper communication with others and with their children). (Karantia, 2011)

The role of parenting can create feelings of frustration, as sometimes parents question their adequacy in this role or enter into a process of comparison with the concept of the "ideal" parent as they have it in their minds (Yovazolias, 2010). The concept of this 'ideal' parent does not exist, however parents who accept themselves and strive to continuously improve and learn can more easily be a positive role model for their children (Tsirogiannidou & Platsidou, 2011; Yovazolias, 2010).

From infancy, humans begin to perceive themselves and define themselves through the caresses, touches and 'holding' of the other person who cares for them and is important to them. He defines his body, feels that he occupies a certain space and so, knowing this, he is able to begin exploring the wider environment, knowing the significant other who will be there when he needs him. (Dolto, 2000)

Based on the above, it appears that parents influence their child's behaviour through biological (genes) and environmental (parenting style) factors. However, this does not mean focusing only on the negative effects. There is a plethora of positive effects that parental behaviour can have on children's development; for example, educated parents foster in their children a love of learning. Confident parents have children who feel confident in their abilities. Also, happy couples who communicate with each other learn to communicate well with others and with their children. So, the parental role model can prove to be a highly effective "tool" for proper parenting.

It is well known that children observe the people around them, unconsciously make them as role models and behave by imitating their various ways. Bandura studied the phenomenon of imitation through an experiment with the Bobo doll:



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**Experiment:** They studied 72 children who observed an adult acting aggressively towards the inflatable doll, with the result that later when they were left alone with the doll they imitated the violent movements they had previously observed.

Thus the power of learning through observation of others was demonstrated and then social cognitive theory was formulated. Learning through observation is particularly important during childhood and extremely powerful. (McLeod, 2023)

Walsh's model (2015) says that directly, through interaction with parents, and indirectly through routine and family activities, children learn. At the same time the opportunity to develop intimate. Routines or customs enhance the sense of identity and group identity and develop authority and meaning of life (sense of belonging). Quality family time enhances a sense of security and a sense of support among members. (Walsh, 2015).

Although parents and children's close environment are the most powerful role models and models of behaviour, it seems that they are not the only ones. Television role models, violent television programmes and violent computer games have been found to be linked to children's aggression. Nowadays, the phenomenon of increased internet use, where in addition to the positive effects there are many negative consequences especially in the use by children. Therefore we will give a little more importance to this, in relation to the position of the parent as a good example. It is recommended to parents: First of all they themselves should be careful in using the internet as a good role model virtually at least. Teach the child careful program selection; watch the programs with the child and discuss the content with the child Teach the children how to judge and evaluate the programs. Reduce the amount of time spent by the child on media use overall to no more than 1-2 hours per day. Spend time with children and not use television as a 'babysitter'. Encourage alternative activities. Encourage the educational and creative potential of the media, etc. Generally a reminder of issues that help in a smooth child-parent relationship. (Prokopaki, 2011).

As adults we need to encourage children and in every way to emphasize their self-esteem, to support them in failure, but without belittling others.

Negative, cosmetic and comparative adjectives do not achieve a positive effect, especially in a state of frustration.

Parents should initially encourage children to talk about their feelings, understand and identify them. Expressing negative feelings and understanding them, however, can



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significantly reduce the internal tension the child feels. It is very important that children are taught alternatives to manage their negative emotions.

We seek to demonstrate to them that their world is important to us. We show interest in the people, places, and events in our children's lives. We take some time at school and in our children's extracurricular activities.

Parents' cool and calm attitude towards aggression is the first step in teaching a child to control himself.

Boundaries, however, must be clear, unambiguous and consistently enforced.

Teach the child conversation, dialogue and other effective ways to resolve differences and calm himself (breathing and relaxation exercises).

Finally, watch TV programmes and games with the child. When you see a violent scene on TV or aggressive behaviour, discuss with the child the consequences and alternatives.

**Forget about the incident after it is over:** By reminding your child of past instances of aggression on his or her part, you are not teaching your child the acceptable way to behave. Instead, you are reminding him of the way to become aggressive again. (Karantia, 2011)

Parents who set a good example, use patience, firmness, consistency, and loving guidance can help a child deal with and manage his anger and aggression in an effective and creative way! (x.h., 2019)

Encourage them to engage in free play, sports and art.

Experts argue that the lack of free play from a child's life can lead to some mental or emotional disturbance, especially on a personal level but also on an interpersonal level. (Prokopaki, 2011)

Free play facilitates communication between parents and children and strengthens their relationship, as parents have the opportunity to understand how children perceive the world around them. The child learns to share, to wait their turn, to resolve conflicts, to negotiate and understand the feelings of others and through this, learn to respect others and themselves. He learns concepts such as cooperation, sharing, self-discipline, and appreciation. This offers a unique opportunity to learn the social rules and conventions that



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also exist in the adult world. Through play we can discover our authentic selves, he says. Let's discover it together! (The importance of play, Vaizidou H., 2019)

Engaging in some kind of artistic experience on a daily basis - either as a viewer or as a creator - changes the biochemistry of the brain, that is, it starts to regulate the nervous system in a way that changes how we feel" - initially 20 minutes a day is suggested.

"They build stronger prefrontal cortex skills, such as executive function and memory. They are able to better regulate their emotions." (Ristani, 2023) As Susan Magsamen states, "Children who use the arts are better problem solvers."

A very important piece worth mentioning is for them to stop being the perpetual joke makers and entertainers of their children and to de-clutter their own boredom first. "We've learned to consider our children's boredom a personal failure, and we do whatever it takes to overcome the boredom moth," says Kim John Payne.

"Children need time to themselves, to turn off the switch to the outside world, to daydream, to 'listen' to their thoughts, to discover their personal interests," Teresa Belton emphasizes. (Antonopoulou, 2023). Boredom, brings inspiration and then creation, that is, life itself. So let's let children be bored and keep in mind that children seek love and care from their parents, even through negative behaviors.

"Children want people close to them with much love, who will not bully them or restrict them in teaching, but will set a good example and wish them secrets...And when they do misbehave, take some pedagogical measures, but do not force them." St. Porphyry the Caucasian

"There is something simple that parents can do in this time of crisis to help their children: turn off the television and open their arms." (Varvogli, 2018)

***Always remember that children learn by observing other people and imitating their behaviors . Be a positive role model. How?***

- Recognize when you are angry, frustrated or just tired
- Talk to others about your feelings respectfully
- Solve your problems by talking after you have calmed down, without violence
- Learn to manage your stress and control your anger
- Talk out loud to yourself about a problem and how to solve it



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### ***How do I help my child resolve conflict?***

- Here's the problem. Outline the situation.
- Choose an alternative solution.
- Evaluate all the solutions.
- Balance the situation.
- Learn from experience.
- Everything can be dealt with

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## UpCare parent simulation training: The profile of the effective parent

Many parents face various problems with their children.

Some feel they have lost control, others feel they don't know how to play the role of a parent, and still others don't know how to communicate with their children. Because of these difficulties, an inability of parents to communicate with their children and a hostility of the children towards the parents develops.

But parents must have the skills to raise children who are responsible, self-disciplined and cooperative. They can establish and maintain a comprehensive, meaningful relationship with their children, based on respect and acceptance.

***What does a parent need to have in order to have a meaningful relationship with their children?***

**Acceptance:** some child behaviors can be easily accepted, while others cannot. This has as much to do with the parent, the child and the situation. It is important for parents to acknowledge at all times what they are feeling. A child may feel if the parent shows insincere acceptance. Where the child encounters acceptance that seems false, the child receives conflicting messages, is in a dilemma, and feels frustration and anxiety. Some of the child's behaviors can be easily accepted, while others cannot. This has as much to do with the parent as it does with the child and the situation. It is important for parents to acknowledge at all times what they are feeling. A child may feel if the parent shows insincere acceptance. Where the child encounters acceptance that seems false, the child receives conflicting messages, is in a dilemma, and feels frustration and anxiety.

**Who has the problem?** A key principle is for parents to understand whose problem each problem is.

*e.g. The child is fooling around while the parent is in a hurry.*

When the parent owns the problem, the parent should try to modify the behavior that is causing it. Behaviors of the child that are not acceptable to the parent are those that interfere with the child's rights or prevent the child from getting his or her needs met.



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When the child owns the problem, his or her needs are not being met, he or she is unhappy or frustrated. The child may experience problems in his or her own life, independently and outside the parent's life.

Parents are often tempted to intervene and solve the child's problem without letting the child find his or her own solutions.

### ***When the child has the problem.***

**The communication of acceptance:** A child who experiences parental acceptance can grow, develop, make constructive changes, learn to solve problems, and become creative. When a parent shows acceptance to a child, it gives the child the freedom to share his or her feelings and problems. Acceptance must be expressed and actively manifested, with or without words.

**Parent-child communication:** One of the most effective ways of responding to children's emotional messages or problems is simple communicative openings, inviting them to say more. "I understand," "Tell me about it," "Would you like to talk about it?", "This seems to be important to you."

**Active listening:** an even more effective way of responding to children when they have a problem is active listening. It is a way of engaging the sender and receiver of the message, where both are actively involved in the conversation. A child communicates with their parents when they have a need, when they want something, when they have a feeling about something, when they feel discomfort, when they are upset about something.

When a parent receives a message from a child, he or she should be able to understand its meaning. It is important to understand it accurately, without misinterpreting it.

**Benefits** of active listening. Children are freed from disturbing emotions when they express them openly. Children are less afraid of negative emotions. It makes it easier for the child to solve problems. It makes the child more willing to listen to his/her parents' thoughts and ideas.

### ***When the parent has the problem.***

Certain behaviors of the child affect the parent and threaten the parent's needs.



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The messages sent by parents in these situations are solution messages, telling the child what the child should, ought to, or must do. They may be messages of command or guidance, warning or reprimand, admonition or instruction, advice or offering a solution. *"Turn off the music," "You shouldn't act like that," "Why don't you go outside and play?"*

Other messages may be critical of the child and may include blame, interpretation, name-calling or humiliation. *"You're spoiled", "You're stupid", "Good kids don't do that".*

**ME - Messages "I don't like to play when I'm tired"** The ego-message is parent-oriented and states a fact about the parent.

**"If you don't stop doing that , then..."**. The you-message is child-oriented and is perceived as an evaluation.

The Me-messages consist of three parts:

1. A description of the unacceptable behavior.
2. The parent's emotion.
3. The specific effect the behavior has on the parent.

They are honest and much less threatening than the implication that there is something wrong with the child. They place the responsibility on the child to change their behavior. They help the child to grow as they show the child that the parent trusts him or her to deal with the situation and respect his or her needs. Honesty and openness foster intimacy - a truly interpersonal relationship.

### **Change of environment.**

Changing the environment is used most with infants and toddlers as a way of changing unacceptable behavior.

1. Enriching the environment with interesting activities
2. Reducing environmental stimuli especially before bedtime and mealtime
3. Simplifying the environment to make it easier and safer
4. Limiting the child's space
5. Ensuring a safe and more secure environment
6. Substituting one activity for another
7. Preparing the child for changes in his/her environment through discussion



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## 8. Early planning

### ***Parent-child conflicts.***

All parents face situations where neither confrontation nor changes in the environment change the child's behavior. These situations are unavoidable and essentially involve conflicts between the needs of the parents and the needs of the child. Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. It exists in every relationship.

How conflict is resolved is perhaps the most critical factor in parent-child relationships.

Usually conflict is resolved in one of these ways:

In one case, the parent decides what the solution should be and communicates it to the child. If the child does not like the solution, the parent tries to convince the child or to make the child conform by using force and authority. The child is not motivated to implement the solution, is coerced and feels anger and resentment, while the parent finds it difficult to enforce his or her decision. In the other case, the parent may or may not have a solution. If he has one, he can persuade the child to accept it. The child has his or her own solution and tries to persuade the parent to accept it. If the parent resists, the child tries to use his or her power to make the parent comply, who eventually relents. The child learns how to use outbursts of anger to control the parent and learns that his or her needs are more important than anyone else's.

**Conflict resolution.** Conflicts are resolved without one person winning and the other losing. Both win because the solution is acceptable to both. In a conflict of needs situation between parent and child, the parent asks the child to cooperate with him or her in a joint effort to find a solution acceptable to both. One or both may offer possible solutions. They evaluate them and eventually make a decision on a solution acceptable to both. There is no need to "bring the other down" nor is authority required to enforce compliance.

**The "no-defeat" method is effective because it creates greater motivation for the child to carry out the decision.**

The child is involved in the decision, is committed to the solution and feels the need to carry it out.

Solutions found together are more creative and effective. They meet the needs of both parent and child.



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When the parent and child agree on a solution, they do not compete with each other, their relationship is strengthened and they respect each other's needs.

It encourages the child to think. The child feels trusted and treated as an equal by the parent.

#### **The steps of the No Defeat method:**

- Recognition and identification of the conflict. Identification and identification of the conflict. Important to express needs clearly, telling parents what feelings they have or what is bothering them. With active listening, the child's needs will also become clear.
- Finding feasible solutions. "What could we do?" Parents listen to the child's solutions first, without belittling or judging or commenting negatively. Important to hear all alternatives and all ideas as possible solutions.
- Evaluate alternatives. "Which one seems better?" Parents are honest in articulating their own feelings. They delete solutions that are not acceptable to the parent or child and narrow down to one or two that seem best.
- Deciding on the best solution. If there were open and honest exchanges of ideas, often a clearly better solution emerges from the discussion. "Are we all satisfied with this solution?" Decisions are not immutable; they can be tested. Parents make sure it is fully understood that everyone agrees and is committed to carrying out the decision.
- Implement the decision. How the decision will be implemented is specified in some detail, such as who will do what and when.
- Monitoring to evaluate the implementation of the solution. Verification with questions such as "How does the decision work?" "Are you still happy?" After testing, the original decision may be modified.

A prerequisite of the no-defeat method is effective communication. First, active listening is required for the parent to understand the child's feelings and needs. With the parent's ego messages, the child knows how the parent feels and what the parent's needs are.



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If they don't find an acceptable solution, they continue the conversation, even the next day. They think of other solutions. They discuss the difficulty and look for possible other things that are bothering or hindering them.

If the child does not keep the agreement, the parent deals with the child directly and honestly, without accusations or threats.

It is important for the parent to show strength and firmness, especially if they have previously been very permissive with the child.

The child is willing to change his or her behavior when it is clear to him or her that what he or she is doing is actually preventing someone else from getting his or her needs met. He needs to understand that his behavior has a tangible and concrete effect on the parent.

Parents teach values to their children when they live their lives according to them, not when they force children to live by certain rules.

### **What can parents do when children get angry and fight?**

1. Help children to calm down
2. Help the children to think about why they are angry
3. Help each child think about the other's feelings
4. Tell the children how you feel
5. Help the children to choose the best solution to the issue that has arisen
6. Praise your children when they solve an argument between them without violence
7. Tell your children that you accept their anger but do not accept violence it is normal to be angry but not normal to hit others



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