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10 RULES FOR ENSURING CHILDREN DEVELOP ‘CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR’

........ and maybe what to do about it?

Damian Milton and Richard Mills

Piraeus, Greece
October 2017
$E=mc^2$...

It's not rocket science

Call Your Choice

07 4773 9990
Oscar Wilde

“The best way to make children good is to make them happy”
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

RULE 1. If you don’t understand me call me complex

That way it is all my fault and not yours: describe my attempts to communicate in derogatory terms such as ‘attention seeking’ or ‘manipulative’ – Take my things away from me or restrict my life further if I don’t change

• Try to understand me – see my point of view– not reduce me to ‘behaviours’
• Be respectful. Work hard to see ‘behaviour’ in terms of what the child is trying to say or is feeling
• Be kind – be patient – be persistent – be reflective. Behave ethically and fairly
RULE 2. If I get upset with you - get me put on medication

- Find out what might be the cause of the upset
- **STRESS IS HUGE- SENSORY ISSUES ARE HUGE**
- Recognise when the child is distressed to the point of losing control
- Give the child a way of gaining control of the situation - reduce confrontation
- *There is no medication to ‘treat’ challenging behaviour* and nasty side-effects that could make it worse
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

RULE 3. Take all decisions and control over my life—do not allow me to make choices

- Build trust and good relationships with the child
- Make choice and control possible over small day-to-day things such as what to eat where to sit/How long to sit etc.
- Encourage choice
- For most children visual (written) better than auditory (listening)
- Allow an escape route from stressful demands —situations
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

RULE 4. Do not give me things to do that interest me but make me work very hard on things that do not ….or things that I find difficult or really don’t like….

• Play to strengths - Recognise interests – encourage expertise and knowledge
• Use interests to reduce stress and provide opportunity (not just as a reward for ‘good behaviour’) 
• Recognise that intensive activity can be stressful and tiring 
• Recognise achievement and celebrate diversity
RULE 5. Do not teach me good habits about health or wellbeing. Give me a poor diet and no exercise - allow me to stay up late at night.

- Exercise and a healthy lifestyle can be interesting and fun – be innovative.
- Give information in ways that mean something to the child - enable them make choices.
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

Rule 6. Inflict your preferences and lifestyle on me
Ensure that my life is filled with your idea of fun- take me to places you enjoy – like busy shopping malls. Touch me when I’m least expecting it

- Work out individual preferences and enable access to them. Sensory issues can be VERY SEVERE
- Reduce the potential harm from ‘stress triggers’, such as noise, crowds, touch, and lighting. Allow quiet time
- Reduce language and confrontation
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

Rule 7. Ensure my life has balance - between boredom and sudden nasty surprises

• **Plan changes in advance.** Work to achieve a balance of relaxation, rest and work – with some fun too

• …..**Base it on the person’s own choices** and preference. **Do not rely on words alone,** written and/or visual schedules can help
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

RULE 8. Make sure I know you don’t like me very much.

Talk about me in hurtful ways – ignore me – be curt - bully me – talk about me as if I wasn't there

- Let me know that you are ‘on my side’.
- Tell me you are there to help me – I might not know
- Encourage people to see my good points - Talk about me in positive terms.
- Show me you care - Tell me when I do well – encourage me – be kind to me
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour’

RULE 9. Prevent me from ‘indulging’ in my own ‘coping strategies’ - ‘stimming’, pacing or rocking are things that I do to help calm me – so please physically assault me if I do this

• Recognise the importance of these activities to the child
• Give opportunities - e.g. rocking chair- swings - roller coaster
• Understand that we all have diverse needs. ....Intervene only if the child is suffering distress or harm and as part of an agreed plan. Take the lead from the child
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour

RULE 10. Expose me to things you know will stress me out so that I ‘get used to them’

- Avoid stressors. Help the child rehearse if inevitable (and avoid if too painful).
- Provide close support and gentle encouragement. Avoid confrontation
- Find ways to give the child control such as self-monitoring or access to a mentor
10 rules for ensuring children develop ‘challenging behaviour

RULE 11. Do not keep your word or promises
(such as having 11 things on this list and not 10!)

- Remember that children *may be literal* or not like vague or ambiguous language. Be precise
- It is important to *say what you mean* and *mean what you say*
- **Be direct ..... keep your word and promises**
Henry James

“Three things in life are important, the first is to be kind, the second is to be kind and the third is to be kind”
It’s not rocket science – anyone can do it … so why not you?
ten rules
for ensuring people with learning disabilities and those who are on the autism spectrum develop 'challenging behaviour'

...and maybe what to do about it

Damian Milton and Richard Mills with Simon Jones

https://www.pavpub.com/10-rules-for-challenging-behaviour/
Thank you

Damian Milton and Richard Mills

www.atautism.org.uk