

AGPS – Parent Workshop  
11/12/2024  
Topic : PDA

To summarise the questions and we shared -

Q - Chores & housework; how to be low demand when bedrooms & belongings need to be dealt with?

- Establish the non-negotiables and create a family culture of 'this is how we do it' which adults are seen to model for the child.
- Rules don't need to be seen as rules, but appropriate choices can be referenced using declarative language (statements, comments and observations) such as  
'we can't leave glasses on the stairs, it could be dangerous'  
'let's try and see if we can pick up the rubbish in our bedrooms today'  
'let's not forget to bring dirty plates down or we won't have any clean ones to use'  
'I wonder how I can put all these things away when they don't belong to me. I'm not quite sure where they go but maybe somebody else will know'

Q - Different ways to convince a child to do a task?

- (Some relevant examples above)
- Is there a way to gamify the task? Racing against best time, making a task fun or interesting can help.
- Announce what *you* are going to do - they might join you!
- Try to keep calm so that your child can mirror this, it might be better to step away for a few moments if you notice you are becoming frustrated.
- If it seems appropriate, acknowledge how they feel but explain why a task needs doing, then ask whether they have another solution.

Q - How to manage emotions when an ask is refused?

- Is there a way to soften the refusal?
- Could a 'no' be 'yes but/when/after' ie. a later point in time or at a different place, if it can't be immediate.
- At the point of needing to refuse something, can it be phrased differently – 'we can't do that today but would you like to do it tomorrow or on Saturday?' 'That's a great idea, I'd love to do that! I wish we had time today but since it's too close to bedtime shall we set a reminder for tomorrow so that we don't forget?'
- We can help a child to make sense of a big emotion by attempting to label the feeling, for example 'I can see you are clenching your fists, I'm wondering if you might be feeling angry or frustrated?' – we can talk about emotion coaching in a future workshop.

Q - Bedtimes, when asking 'can you get ready for bed' first comes avoidance then getting upset/angry.

- Can we explore why this is happening for a child?
- Have fears and worries been thought about.
- Have we allowed enough time to wind down after screen use
- Are adults rushing and feeling stressed at bedtime – can we make time for sharing a book or other calming activity together before settling down.

## Key thoughts:

- Consider the use of checklists to reduce demands
- Work collaboratively with your child when possible (perhaps creating a checklist together for the morning and evening that all are comfortable with, to condense multiple tasks into one, placed somewhere visible)
- Picking battles can mean drastically lowering expectations, instead celebrating smaller wins
- Less said is sometimes better; this could involve putting a pile of clothes by the bed rather than verbally demanding a child to get dressed.
- Other times explanations are needed, perhaps to offer reassurance around fairness and justice.
- Positive noticing and feedback to build self-esteem and resilience can make a huge difference over time
- Provide narrow choices that are all reasonable options, when something needs to happen (thinking of the example of opting for a flu vaccine at school, *or* during a doctors appointment instead)
- Some children like a predictable order of things; aim to notice and use this to support your child in building skills. This can reduce anxiety, minimising the need for demands once they are able to initiate the set of tasks independently.
- Occasions and celebrations might be helpful in some ways (shall we go and see what the Elf has done last night is less likely to cause anxiety for a child than being woken up and told they are going to be late for school if they don't hurry up)
- Some children may respond well to adults 'gamifying' demands; for example racing to be the quickest, particularly when there is an opportunity to win!
- Repeat tasks can be written on keyrings/tags – what can be done in 10 minutes? Can we beat our last record?
- PDA requires a personalised approach, responding to individual needs of your child at a given point in time is key to support them effectively.
- When things have gone wrong or haven't worked, revisiting with a partner or friend can be helpful in finding future solutions.
- Mindful activities can be enjoyed together, which will strengthen the parent-child connection and boost both parent and child wellbeing. Sometimes it is better to notice they are wobbling and spend time playing with Lego or colouring instead of placing any further demands on a child - this can help to calm their nervous system.
- It is incredibly important to look after yourselves as parents & caregivers, making time to do things you enjoy isn't always easy but it will benefit not only you but also your child.
- Aim for good enough, not perfect - all any of us can do is try our best!