

Including me!



Active Ignoring

Most parents will say that they have tried to ignore certain behaviours but that this approach has not worked. 'Active' ignoring however is slightly different and is an effective way of reducing children's behaviours which irritate or annoy you. It works well with behaviours such as:

- Whining
- Interrupting
- Swearing
- Sulking
- Tantrum
- Constant complaining
- Shouting

Start by choosing just one of these behaviours until you are confident with the approach. Every time the child displays a behaviour that you want to discourage, you need to *actively* ignore it.

Active ignoring

- Eyes - Look away from child's eyes
- Body - Turn away from child's body
- Timing - Ignore immediately - as soon as the child starts to display the behaviour.
- Emotion - Keep a neutral expression on your face. Do not show how angry, annoyed or irritated you are. Take a couple of deep breaths!
- Action - Doing something else emphasises your lack of attention in the behaviour - pick up the newspaper, straighten the pictures, put on the headphones.
- Voice - Calmly tell the child that you are ignoring him. You can use phrases like 'I am not going to listen to you until you stop crying'.

- Praise - As soon as the child stops the behaviour or shows a behaviour that you like, respond to the child.

The behaviour will get worse before it gets better. This is because the child has got used to getting a reaction from you for the behaviour. The fact that you are no longer reacting will mean that the child will continue to misbehave for a short time before he realises that you are not paying any attention, so be prepared to stick to it! There may be times when it seems impossible to ignore. Try to plan ways to stick to it.

Reminders

- Ignore the behaviour as soon as it starts.
- Tell the child that you are ignoring him.
- Do not look at the child.
- Turn away from the child.
- Focus your attention on something else.
- Keep a neutral expression on your face.
- Stay calm.
- Praise as soon as the behaviour stops, or one that you like starts!