



Shoalhaven Managing Children Program (SMCP)

14. Don't react - Choose what you respond to

Children often persist in uncooperative behaviour because of the reaction it gets from adults. So, to stop this behaviour, **don't react to it**. Wait for your child to cooperate with your instruction.

You will need to monitor your child carefully to see when he or she **stops** being uncooperative. **As soon as your child does what you asked, praise (See Tip 13 - Changing Problem Behaviour 2. Praise and encourage cooperative behaviour) him or her for doing it.** This is the most important part of the strategy. Notice that what you are not responding to is **uncooperative behaviour**. You **are** responding to your child. Throughout the process, you need to monitor closely and be on the lookout for that cooperative behaviour that you want your child to show.

There are some things you must deal with to keep your family safe. You must deal with a child who runs onto a busy road or starts hitting a younger brother or sister. At these times, you need to give **minimal attention** to your child while dealing with the misbehaviour and making sure that your child and everyone else is safe.

The thing to do is to stay calm, don't say any more than necessary to the child, and speak quietly. When your child begins to behave acceptably again, immediately praise your child for calming down, being quiet etc.

Minimal attention is really handy when you are dealing with two children at once and one is misbehaving:

- Praise the child who is behaving well for doing whatever it is that the other child is **not** doing (e.g. playing quietly, playing fair, sharing etc.) Praise positively, e.g.:
"Good boy Billy for sharing"
(**not** "Good boy Billy for not hogging the toys".)
- When the other child begins to behave acceptably again, praise **that** child for quieting down, accepting the rules of the game, sharing, doing what you asked, etc.