



Shoalhaven Managing Children Program (SMCP)

5. Catch your children being good

Children can't behave and misbehave at the same time. So, the easiest way to reduce the amount of problem behaviour your children show is to increase their good behaviour. (see [Praise and encourage cooperative behaviour](#). (Refer to [Tip 13 Changing problem behaviour - Praise and encourage cooperative behaviour](#))

Parents often are so busy looking out for misbehaviour that they overlook their children's good behaviour. Most of us were brought up by parents who took being good for granted, but jumped in to correct us when we misbehaved. We can all too easily take on those values from our parents. So, it takes a real effort to change your mindset to be on the lookout for good behaviour.

Some ways to help you do this are:

- put a "Catch them being good" reminder sign for yourself on the wall of the family room or other parts of the house where your children spend a lot of time
- keep a record of how many good things you saw them do during the day (simple tally marks on a calendar will do, or you could have a separate record for each child)
- choose particular new good behaviours you want each child to show and look out especially for those behaviours.

You can also help your children remember to do the right thing by catching them with a camera. Have the camera handy and take their photo doing the right thing. Look out for good things that you wish they did more often, e.g.:

- Billy and Suzie sitting quietly together watching TV
- Marie packing her toys away before dinner
- Shane washing his hands before meals

Digital cameras make it easy to print the photo and label it, but you can do it with a film camera too. Stick the photos up where your children can see them. As they see themselves doing good things, so they begin to think of themselves as good children. Not only does it [build self-esteem](#) (Refer to [Tip 2 Helping children's emotional development](#)) but also encourages them to do more desirable things. If they think, "I'm a good kid", then they will also think, "I do what good kids do." And that's what you want them to do.