



Have you observed any of the following behaviour among young children that you may know?

- Getting annoyed frequently or nervous
- Often appearing angry
- Usually putting the blame on others
- Refusing to follow rules
- Arguing and throwing temper tantrums
- Having difficulty in handling failure
- Stealing attractive toys and stationary from friends
- Inability to focus on any task for a long period
- Recurring use of abusive language
- Aggressive behaviour
- Lying or crying to get what they want
- Running away and hiding somewhere to express anger and catch the attention of parents.
- Throwing food, toys or other objects to express anger.

peers, culture and mass media impact behaviour. A child may also imitate the behaviour of parents, elders, teachers, peers and caregivers. Problem behaviours are maladaptive.

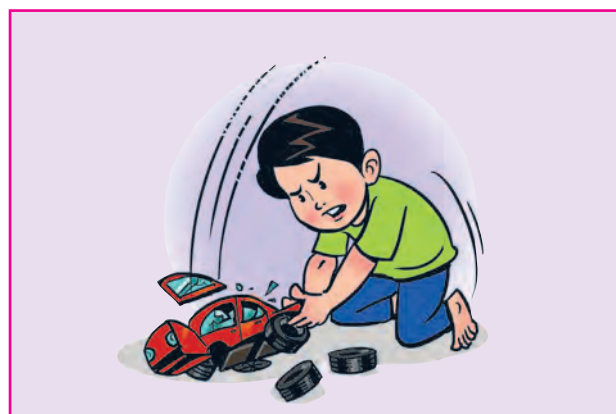
Problem behaviour are those that are not considered 'typically acceptable'. Every child occasionally exhibits disruptive behaviour. However, problem behaviour refers to a consistent pattern among the children. The same can be managed by proper handling.

8.1 Meaning of Behavioural Issues

Behaviours, which create obstacles in personal growth and social adjustment, are called behavioural problems.

8.2 Behavioural issues commonly issues seen in Children

A) Aggression



Picture 8.1

Do you know?

According to a study conducted at the University of Bristol (September 2019), there is an association between an intake of paracetamol during pregnancy and hyperactivity, attention problems and difficult behaviour patterns.

Early childhood is known a 'problem age'. For example, A child who is well behaved in front of parents suddenly becomes the school bully when out of sight, indicating that he/she might be suffering from a number of personal problems. Children behave in different ways in different situations. Family, school, neighbours,

Aggression is an actual or threatened act of hostility, usually unprovoked by another person. If aggression is not handled properly it may turn into antisocial behaviour. Preschoolers may show aggressive behaviour since they have limited language expression, get frustrated easily

and are unable to express themselves. They may often engage in 'instrumental aggression' or behaviour involving hitting, kicking or shouting to obtain a desired object. Children are also likely to imitate the aggressive behaviour of parents. A child usually starts showing aggressive behaviour around the age of 2 years. It reaches a peak at the age of 3 years.

Causes

- Feeling insecure or jealous.
- Dominating and strict parents who use physical punishment.
- High expectations from parents and lack of proper guidance.
- Constant interference from adult.
- Parents who model aggressive behaviour.
- Difficulties in dealing verbally with anxiety and frustration.

Handling

- Help the child to express his/her emotions.
- Identify the triggers of aggressive behaviour.
- Stay calm while a child expresses himself/herself.
- Find an appropriate reward for good behaviour.

B) Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums are uncontrolled outbursts of anger seen between the ages of two to four years, the peak period being three years after which they gradually decline. They are expressed by hitting, kicking, biting and breath holding. Before the age of four it is seldom viewed as a problem behaviour but if it continues beyond that age it may indicate a problem. As language skills improve, tantrums tend to gradually decrease.



Picture 8.2

Causes

- If the child is seeking attention.
- When a child is very tired.
- When he or she does not eat adequately.
- If a child is uncomfortable.
- If he or she does not have opportunities for outside play.
- When a child has been imposed with too many restrictions or over indulgence.
- When a child lacks opportunity to control his/her emotions.
- If parents are unable to fulfil demands.

Handling

- Adequate attention and support of security provided by the parents.
- Parents should make sure that the child is not acting or being over dramatic.
- Parents should ignore the tantrum.
- Reward a child for acceptable behaviour.
- Parents should have enough control over their own behaviour.
- Parents should also consult their doctor to get their child checked for any physical problems that may be contributing to the tantrums.

C) Non Co-operation

At the age of three and half years, children usually start showing co-operative behaviour. When children consistently refuse to co-operate, there may be some specific causes behind this behaviour.

Causes

- A given task may be beyond a child's capacity and ability.
- Instructions may not match a child's understanding.

Handling

- Encourage free play.
- Model empathy and co-operation.
- Provide opportunities to each child to take turns.
- Assign a simple responsibility to every child in a group.

D) Rivalry



Picture 8.3

Rivalry is a desire to compete with others or to excel over others. Jealousy, competition and fighting between brothers and sisters may be due to rivalry. Sibling rivalry usually continues throughout childhood. Problems may usually start after the birth of the second child in the home. Rivalry is not healthy when children get aggressive or nasty, disrespect or dominate others or face failures and frustrations.

Causes

- Arrival of a baby in the family.
- Constant Comparison.

Handling

- Avoid comparison between children.
- Accept the children's individual talents and success.
- Set children up to co-operate rather than compete.
- Teach children positive ways to get attention from each other.
- Plan family activities that are fun for everyone.
- Ensure that each child has enough time and space of his/her own.

E) Quarrelling



Picture 8.4

Quarrelling is an extension of aggression. The act of aggression happens individually, where as quarrelling involves two or more individuals. In quarrelling both the children are charged with negative emotions or one of them plays the defensive role. Quarrelling may happen at any given age. It is a natural act, which is seen whenever a person is provoked. A child may hit, kick, bite, pinch or push. These actions are not socially acceptable. Similarly, a child may react by screaming or abusing. A child may also throw objects, toys or snatch them from others.

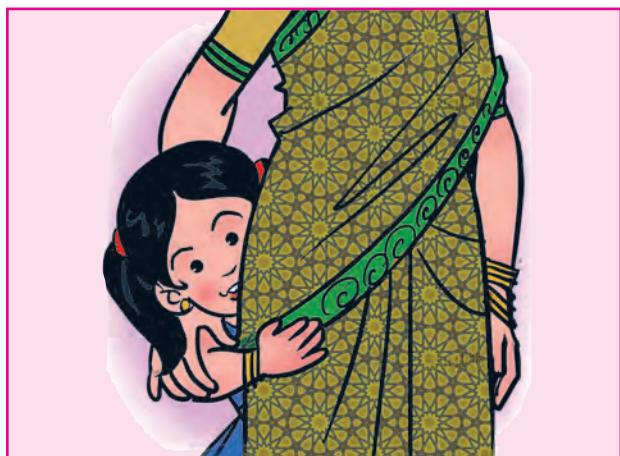
Causes

- Dominating friends or peer group.
- Jealousy towards friends or siblings.
- Teasing and bullying by friends or significant others.
- Anger provoking situations.
- Dislike for sharing toys.

Handling

- If children are quarrelling because they do not want to share their toys, adults must guide them in an appropriate manner.
- Divert children's attention from the cause of quarrelling.
- Avoid poking fun at a child or offer proper guidance if they are teasing each other.
- If a child exhibits quarrelsome behaviour constantly, it is important to find the underlying cause.
- Avoid comparison between children.

F) Shyness



Picture 8.5

It is a form of behaviour expressed when a child withdraws himself/her self from a social situation. A shy child is anxious or inhibited in unfamiliar situations or when interacting with others. A shy child is much more comfortable to watch the action from the sidelines rather than join in. Constant and severe shyness affects the development of a child negatively.

A child may express shyness around the age of 5 or 6 months. This usually continues till the age of 3. Shyness is typically seen in a child with low or no self confidence. Such children avoid social situations and people, eye-to-eye contact, lack fluency of language, are highly anxious and have very few friends.

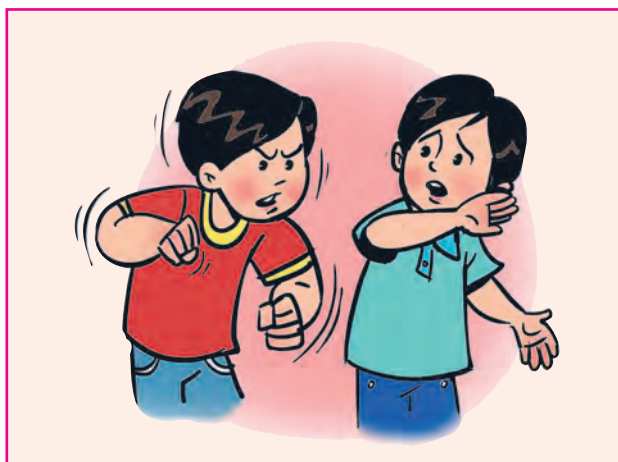
Causes

- Fear of strangers or an unfamiliar situation.
- Feelings of insecurity.
- Authoritarian disciplinary methods.
- High expectations from parents.
- Overprotective parenting style.
- Harsh measures used for punishment.
- Constant criticism.
- Fear of failure.

Handling

- Assign some simple responsibilities to children e.g. tidying up toys, putting their shoes or clothes in place.
- Get children involved in small group activities / situations.
- Provide opportunities to interact with people.
- Use desirable disciplinary methods.
- Avoid overprotection.
- Praise the child for his/her achievement.
- Avoid labelling a child as 'shy'.
- Be supportive, empathetic and understanding.
- Model confident behaviour and lead by example.

G) Timidity



Picture 8.6

Timidity stems from a fear of social situations. A timid child will always avoid social situations, functions or group gatherings. Usually a timid child will avoid interaction with people, have minimal or no communication with others and avoid public situations and places.

Causes

- Comparison between children.
- Authoritarian type of discipline.
- No opportunity to socialise and to be a part of different social situations.
- Punishment given not appropriate to behaviour.

Handling

- Use a democratic type of disciplining technique.
- Avoid punishment particularly physical punishment.
- Provide guidance, motivation and encouragement.
- Set reasonable expectations.

H) Bedwetting

Bedwetting is typically seen more as a social disturbance than a medical disease. Bedwetting can damage a child's self-image and

confidence. Most children achieve some degree of bladder control by 4 years of age. Daytime control is usually achieved first, while night time control comes later. Bedwetting refers to involuntary urination during sleep in children over the age of five. Bedwetting may occur at any point during the night but usually occurs during the first few hours of sleep.

Types of Bedwetting

There are two types of bedwetting: primary and secondary.

a. Primary Bedwetting :

It means bedwetting that has been ongoing since early childhood without a break. A child with primary bedwetting has never been dry at night for any significant length of time.

b. Secondary bedwetting :

It refers to bedwetting that usually starts after the child has been dry at night for a significant period, at least 6 months.

Causes :

- **Emotional problems :** A stressful home environment, as in a home where the parents are in constant conflict, sometimes causes children to wet the bed. Major changes such as starting school, arrival of a baby or moving to a new home and other stresses may also cause bedwetting. Children who are being physically or sexually abused may sometimes begin to wet the bed.
- Hereditary factors
- Neurological disease.

Handling :

- Avoid blaming, punishing or ridiculing the child.
- Be patient and supportive. Reassure and encourage the child often. Do not make an issue of the bedwetting each time it happens.

- Do not discuss the bedwetting in front of other family members.
- Help the child understand that the responsibility for being dry is his or hers and not that of the parents. Reassure the child that you want to help him or her overcome the problem.
- Limit intake of food or drinks with caffeine and avoid salty snacks and sugary drinks especially during the evening.
- Encourage the child to use the toilet regularly during the day (every two to three hours)
- Encourage children to use the toilet 15 minutes before bed time and again right before going to bed.
- Make sure your child is getting enough sleep.
- Do not punish your child for accidents as this can increase stress, feelings of shame and lead them to hide their bedwetting. Instead, have your child help with clean up as much as they are able to.
- Sometimes children steal because their needs are not satisfied.
- Authoritarian discipline.

Handling

- Avoid over reacting to the situations.
- Parents should be consistent while disciplining.
- Parents should explain the difference between stealing and borrowing to the child.
- Parents should provide love and security in the family.
- Discuss and explain to the child that it is wrong to take something that belongs to someone else.
- Parents can suggest to the children that they can ask for things they want.
- Parents should make every effort to communicate effectively with their child.
- Parents should praise their child for being honest.
- Parents could consult a counsellor if the stealing is chronic.

I) Stealing

Stealing means taking somebody else's belongings without their knowledge. Children may begin to steal between the ages of 5 and 6 years, commonly stealing things from the house, neighbourhood and school. Before the age of 5 or 6 years, the concept of personal property is likely to be poorly developed, so taking away other children's possession may not be meaningfully regarded as stealing.

Causes

- Children steal when they feel 'I deserve to get this' and have not got it.
- Feeling of insecurity.
- Rebel against injustice.
- Sometimes children believe that stealing is adventurous.
- Sense of excitement.

J) Screen addiction :

Children can easily have access to smart phones, laptops or i pads in comparison to new toys as they are found in every home. Since they have not reached the age at which they are capable of making rational decisions, they can easily be addicted to them. Working parents usually provide their children with smart phones for practical reasons of safety and security. However, children with smart phone addiction are likely to show problems in both mental and physical development.

Problems in mental development relate to emotional instability, attention deficit, depression and anger while Physical problems include visual and auditory impairment, obesity, body imbalance and lack of brain development.

Screen addiction among children is likely to be continuous throughout the lifetime leading to more serious and harmful effects. Hence, efforts of parents and society to prevent this addiction are extremely significant.

Handling :

- Parents should strive to spend more time with their children doing meaningful activities.
- Children have poor control over themselves hence, they are in need of appropriate parental control.
- Proper education should aim at preventing screen addiction and over use of smart phones.
- Parents should realize the strong influence of screen addiction on their children and take necessary steps to avoid the same.



Reflection / Darpan

Which specific activities can you suggest to limit the use of 'screen time' in children?

Revise the points

Behavioural Issues

| Sr. No | Behaviour Problem | Causes | Handling |
|--------|-------------------|---|---|
| A | Aggression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling insecure or jealous. • High expectations from parents and lack of proper guidance. • Parents who model aggressive behaviour. • Difficulties in dealing verbally with anxiety and frustration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the child to express his/her emotions. • Identify the triggers of aggressive behaviour. • Stay calm while a child expresses himself/herself. |
| B | Temper Tantrum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the child is seeking attention. • If he or she does not have opportunities for outside play. • When a child has been imposed with too many restrictions or over indulgence. • When a child lacks opportunity to control his/her emotions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate attention and support of security provided by the parents. • Parents should ignore the tantrum. • Reward a child for acceptable behaviour. • Parents should have enough control over their own behaviour. |

| Sr. No | Behaviour Problem | Causes | Handling |
|--------|-------------------|--|---|
| C | Non co-operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A given task may be beyond a child's capacity and ability. Instructions may not match a child's understanding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model empathy and co-operation. Provide opportunities to each child to take turns. Assign a simple responsibility to every child in a group. |
| D | Rivalry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrival of a baby in the family. Constant Comparison. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid comparison between children. Set children up to cooperate rather than compete. Ensure that each child has enough time and space of his/her own. |
| E | Quarrelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jealousy towards friends or siblings. Teasing and bullying by friends or significant others. Anger provoking situations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divert children's attention from the cause of quarrel. If a child exhibits quarrelsome behaviour constantly, it is important to find the underlying cause. |
| F | Shyness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of strangers or an unfamiliar situation. Feelings of insecurity. Harsh measures used for punishment. Constant criticism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities to interact with people. Avoid overprotection. Praise the child for his/her achievement. Avoid labelling a child as 'shy'. |
| G | Timidity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authoritarian type of discipline No opportunity to socialise and to be a part of different social situations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a democratic type of disciplining technique. Avoid punishment particularly physical punishment. Provide guidance, motivation and encouragement. Set reasonable expectations. |

| Sr. No | Behaviour Problem | Causes | Handling |
|--------|-------------------|--|---|
| H | Bedwetting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional problems. Hereditary factors. Neurological disease. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid blaming punishing or ridiculing the child. Be patient and supportive. Help the child understand that the responsibility for being dry is his or hers and not that of the parents. Reassure the child that you want to help him or her overcome the problem. Encourage children to use the toilet 15 minutes before bed time and again right before going to bed. |
| I | Stealing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling of insecurity. Rebel against injustice. Sense of excitement. Sometimes children steal because their needs are not satisfied. Authoritarian discipline. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents should be consistent while disciplining. Parents should explain the difference between stealing and borrowing to the child. Parents should provide love and security in the family. Parents should make every effort to communicate effectively with their child. Parents could consult a counsellor if the stealing is chronic. |
| J | Mobile Addiction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children can easily have access to smart phones. Working parents usually provide their children with smart phones for practical reasons of safety and security. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents should strive to spend more time with their children doing meaningful activities. Parents should realize the strong influence of smart phones on their children and take necessary steps to avoid the same. |

Glossary

Aggression : An actual threatened act of hostility, usually unprovoked by another person.

Bedwetting : Involuntary urination during sleep in children over the age of five.

Behavioural issues : Behaviours which create obstacles in personal growth and social adjustment.

Chronic : persisting for a long time or constantly recurring behaviour.

Maladaptive : Not having the ability to change to suit different conditions.

Primary Bedwetting : Bedwetting that has been ongoing since early childhood without a break.

Quarrelling : An extension of aggression.

Rivalry : A desire to compete with others or to excel over others.

Secondary bedwetting : Bedwetting that starts up after the child has been dry at night for a significant period, at least 6 months.

Shyness : A form of behaviour where a child withdraws from social situations.

Stealing : Taking somebody else's belongings without their knowledge.

Temper tantrum : An uncontrolled outburst of anger seen between the ages of two to four years.

Timidity : Fear of social situations.

Exercises

Q. 1. Select and write the most appropriate word from the alternatives given.

1. Early childhood is known as a age.
a) emotional b) learning
c) problem
2. An uncontrolled outburst of anger is called
a) quarrelling b) temper tantrum
c) aggression
3. If is not handled properly then it may turn into antisocial behaviour.
a) aggression b) temper tantrum
c) non co-operation
4. A form of behaviour where a child withdraws himself from social situation is called
a) shyness b) temper tantrum
c) non co-operation

Q. 2. Match the pairs :

| A | B |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Temper tantrum | a) Jealousy |
| 2) Non co-operation | b) No eye to eye contact |
| 3) Quarrelling | c) Complicated instructions |
| 4) Timidity | d) Extension of aggression |
| 5) Rivalry | e) Hitting, kicking, breath holding |
| | f) Punishing/ ridicule |

Q. 3. Identify the odd word.

Stealing, Aggression, Rivalry, Temper tantrum, Lying, Learning disability, Non co-operation

Q. 4. By considering the first corelation complete the second corelation.

1. Temper tantrum: Uncontrolled outburst of anger::Shyness: ?
2. Aggression: Hostility:: Rivalry:?

Q. 5. Explain the following terms.

1. Temper tantrum
2. Stealing
3. Aggression
4. Quarrelling
5. Rivalry
6. Shyness
7. Timidity

Q. 6. Read the following and write answers to questions asked.

Aggression is an actual or threatened act of hostility, usually unprovoked by another person. If aggression is not handled properly then it may turn into antisocial behaviour. Preschoolers have limited language expression, they get frustrated easily and they are not able to express themselves. As a result they may show an aggressive behaviour pattern. Preschoolers often engage in 'Instrumental aggression' or behaviour involving hitting, kicking or shouting to obtain a desired object. Children imitate the aggressive behaviour of parents. Child starts showing aggressive behaviour at the age of 2 years .It reaches a peak at the age of 3 years.

1. Describe aggression with a suitable example.
2. When does a child shows aggressive behaviour?
3. What are the reasons contributing to aggressive behaviour?

Project / Self Study

Observe five children who have a behavioural issue. Describe their behaviour briefly.

