

# ParentZone Pods - Episode 6: How to respond to our kid's behaviour

## **[0:09] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Welcome to ParentZone Pods at Anglicare Victoria, we've been working with parents to support their experience for over 20 years. Parenting is the toughest and most important job you'll ever have. Hi, I'm Laurie. And with me is Anita.

## **[0:24] Anita Weber**

Hi Laurie!

## **[0:25] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

And we appear in group facilitators at parents own. This podcast reflects our work with parents and the many conversations we have had over the years.

ParentZone acknowledge and pay our respect to the traditional custodians of this land we are recording on today, both the Wurundjeri and the Bunwooroong people of the Kulin nations, we also pay our respects to elder's past, present, and future. In this episode, we're going to talk about discipline and ways we can actually positively discipline our children, we're going to discuss behavior, and what it really means what our children really trying to tell us. Then we'll cover positive roles, and how we make them work in our home. So Anita, let's talk about our children's behavior, and why they behave in ways that drive us crazy.

## **[1:16] Anita Weber**

Well, children simply behave, and they behave in ways that they find gets them what they want. If a behavior works, if they get rewarded for it, by our attention, they're going to repeat it and children learn from the reactions of the people around them. So yeah, children will behave well if they can

## **[1:35] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

And what gets in their way?

## **[1:36] Anita Weber**

Many things. So it could be unclear or vague instructions from the parents, for example, "Be careful," what does that mean?

## **[1:43] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

True,

## **[1:44] Anita Weber**

Or it could be not knowing what is expected of them expectations that might be too high. So they just they know that they can't meet those expectations. For example, they might not be to our standard, you know, we might ask them to make their bed over and over and over again.

## **[1:58] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

I've been there

## **[1:59] Anita Weber**

Then they refuse to do it. Or our rules might change, and they just don't know, whether they are behaving well or not.

**[2:07 Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So it's a bit of miscommunication then.

**[2:09] Anita Weber**

Certainly is we need to think about our discipline as a process of teaching and allowing our children to take responsibility for their actions. And in order for them to choose to behave well. They need to know what's required of them. They need to know what those rules are, what the consequences are. And most of us have experienced a different approach, which is really where we're punished for our bad behavior.

**[2:32] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So can I ask what is the difference between punishment and discipline?

**[2:36] Anita Weber**

So I'll take it the other way. So discipline is the process of teaching. It's allowing our children to learn from their mistakes and to take chances and to make good choices. Whereas punishment is the parents taking responsibility for the child's behavior, and punishing them for being bad or for doing the wrong thing. It's more or less us getting our revenge on their behavior, which puts us in conflict with having a really harmonious relationship.

**[3:03] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Okay, so when we're talking about discipline, and we're really talking about how are we teaching our children to behave?

**[3:08] Anita Weber**

Yeah.

**[3:09] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Okay. So when the child does continue to bounce on their couch? Are they a Naughty Bear child?

**[3:15] Anita Weber**

Not necessarily behaviors, communication? So what are they actually trying to tell us about how they feel?

**[3:20] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

While I'm thinking that they've got lots of energy that they need to get out?

**[3:23] Anita Weber**

Yeah. And so we may need to help them find the alternative. Or they may actually be trying to express an anger or fear or a desire for our tension.

**[3:32] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So what I'm hearing as you as you're trying to separate that child from the behavior, so it's all intertwined.

**[3:38] Anita Weber**

Yeah. So let's look at the context and what's happening for the child as well as have we been very clear in our rules. So we start to think about the consequence, and we start to think more logically about what's going on rather than thinking that the child is deliberately doing something to upset us.

**[3:53] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Yes, I'm pushing buttons, which you often hear,

**[3:57] Anita Weber**

It's okay, for kids to make a mistake, we actually still love them and care for them. We just need to think about and know our own triggers and how we respond. And are we actually reinforcing that need.

**[4:09] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So often in our parenting groups, when we ask participants what their rules are in their homes, they often can't tell us that sort of reside in our heads, don't they? And we identify the role when they are broken.

**[4:20] Anita Weber**

And can you imagine what that's like for a child? The idea of the child jumping on the couch, that's a really common thing that comes up and often think well, what's their rule? What guides them when they make that choice and it might be okay to jump on Nana's couch, but it's not okay to jump on mum's friend's with a really nice house. But at only Jackie's we can jump on the couch because my cousin jumps on the couch to with his sneakers on. But oh, I got into loads of trouble when I jumped on the couch and I had buckles on my shoes. And the other thing is, you know to making a choice and with that, sometimes the consequences change. One parent might just tell you off, but the other parent might really yell.

**[5:00] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So I can see this could be really confusing for our children.

**[5:04] Anita Weber**

Yeah, how do they make a choice?

**[5:05] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So how do we make it clearer for them? What's a more positive way that we can approach this?

**[5:10] Anita Weber**

Well, we need to have a very clear rules that really outline our expectations of how to behave in certain situations, we need to communicate those rules to our child, they need to understand and know so we need to make sure that they do. And we also actually need to tell them what they can do, not what they can't do.

**[5:31] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Okay, so this is really important as tell us a bit more about well about that.

**[5:35] Anita Weber**

Imagine the experience, we as adults, we often make those choices, we know what the rules are, and we know how to follow them. We make choices, whether we're going to follow them or not. For instance, if we're driving, and we're in a hurry, or we're running late, we make a choice. We know that there's consequences if we speed but we make a choice. And people make that choice all the time, to speed knowing that they're going to get a fine if they're caught. But you know, if we're in an unfamiliar area, for instance, and we're wanting to park our car, because we've got an appointment somewhere, and we've just found a park in a residential street, we might Park they're not knowing what those rules are in regards to parking in that area, and be really, really angry and confused when we come back to our car to a car fine. So it's very similar to our children when they don't know what the rule is, or the expectation that we as parents impose a consequence, when they don't know what they've done. Right or wrong.

**[6:33] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Yeah, I could see that happening quite a lot in my house, yeah, that conflict arising because it's not clear.

**[6:39] Anita Weber**

Yeah, we're more likely to go how unfair it is that we've got this fine, when we didn't know that we were doing the wrong thing. And so in the first place, so we really need to be clear. What do we expect? What are those rules? And if we have positive rules that tell children how to behave, that makes it so much easier for them to make those choices.

**[7:00] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So let's finish on an example. Can you walk me through one Anita?

**[7:04] Anita Weber**

So imagine we're on a walk with our child in the park. And our rule might be, don't run, but we need to put that in a more positive spin to it. So we might be, pleased move slowly and carefully near the edge, or we always walk across the road. Or if you need to run, meet me at the tree. So we're actually providing some different scenarios for that same situation, that child's desire to run, that we're meeting that in alternative ways.

**[7:30] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

So you're still addressing their needs. But it's not going to cause conflict this way.

**[7:35] Anita Weber**

And look, and really important, when our children are trying to meet our expectations, when they are trying to follow our rules, that we actually need to praise their attempts, we need to provide very specific praise. For instance, if we've asked them continuously to put their bike away when they're finished with it, we actually need to let them know that they've done a great job putting it away when they have done so. Or even thanks, and showing gratitude for their attempts, you know, letting them know that you've noticed.

**[8:03] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

And I guess that reinforces that behavior for next time.

**[8:05] Anita Weber**

Yeah, we're letting them know how we want them to behave.

**[8:08] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Okay, great. So we've learned a lot in today's episode. So we've talked about discipline and different ways that we can actually use it in a positive way with our children, and how we can use positive roles in our home to replace those negative roles with the nose and don'ts that we sometimes use.

**[8:23] Anita Weber**

Yeah, and to help our children choose to behave well.

**[8:27] Laurie-lee Arrowsmith**

Yeah. If you feel this is hitting home for you, and you'd like to have more information about the groups that we run at ParentZone, Google Anglicare ParentZone for more information, or check the show notes where you are listening now.