

CUT IT OUT! Behaviour Is Communication

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Behaviour is communication. If you expect children to act like adults, you really need to CUT IT OUT! Emotional maturity needs to be nurtured in our children so that they can develop healthy ways of expressing themselves and take thoughtful action to get their needs met. Children are immature and they will scream, bite, hit and have temper tantrums when their needs aren't met. To develop mature moral values, a child needs to: Have the ability to recognize his own feelings, express them appropriately, hold back hurtful actions which might result from those feelings, and meet his needs in ways which do not harm either himself or others in the long run. Most adults are still working on this.

When your child misbehaves ask yourself. How was he feeling?

afraid, aggravated, agitated, alarmed, angry, annoyed anxious, apprehensive, bewildered, bored, concerned, confused, dejected, depressed, detached, disappointed, discouraged, distressed, embarrassed, exasperated, exhausted, fearful, frightened, frustrated, furious, guilty, helpless, hesitant, horrified, horrible, hurt, impatient, indifferent, intense, irate, irritated, jealous, lonely, mad, mean miserable, nervous, overwhelmed, panicky, passive, pessimistic, reluctant, resentful, restless, sad, scared, sensitive, shocked, sleepy, sorry, startled, surprised, suspicious, troubled, uncomfortable, unhappy, unsteady, upset, uptight, weary, withdrawn, worried

Every feeling points to a need. Can you match the feelings to a need?

Needs to be met in relationships:

acceptance, affection, appreciation, clarity, closeness, community, company, consideration, distance, empathy, equality, fairness, honesty, inclusion, love, protection, reassurance, respect, support, trust, understanding, warmth

Personal needs:

achievement, accomplishment, autonomy, choices, comfort, contribution, creativity, dreams, emotional safety, freedom, goals, integrity, justice, meaning, order, peace and quiet, physical safety, play, self-worth, sense of self, time alone.

Is there something that can be done that will help your child meet his needs and the needs of others? Remember, limits protect your child's autonomy and the autonomy of others. This feeling and need chart might be helpful for you too.

**Living In Families
Effectively**