



Brilliant Minds Psychology

# Parent Tip Sheet

## Anger in Children

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Anger is a normal emotion. Everyone feels angry at times. However when we are angry too often and it is causing problems we need to address it. When anger is occurring at home, we often need a family approach, as often there are many different factors that may be influencing your child's expression of anger. This tip sheet aims to help get you started on understanding and helping your child reduce anger.

### What Triggers Your Child's Anger?

Keep a diary or notebook and write down your observations. Observe your child and write a list of the situations and things that tend to make him/her feel angry. In this notebook or diary, also write down your parent reaction and any other factors that may be occurring. For example, running late for school, too much noise, and transition from favourite activity to another activity less enjoyable; having to do chores, not getting his own way or losing a game etc.

### **Reduce & Manage Triggers by changing what occurs just before Mr Anger Visits.**

If your child is displaying a high level of aggressive behaviour or anger is visiting too frequently it may be important in the short term to reduce some of the triggers. This is often the most effective way and developmentally appropriate to address anger while children are still learning skills in emotion management.

This means that we can try and change what occurs just before Miss or Mr Anger usually visits.

For example, if anger is visiting your child in the morning – have a look at what is going on based on the above step and what could be changed to reduce the trigger. E.g., if it is to do with siblings, create clear rules and structure for the time of day that is 'high risk' (i.e., when he /she is most likely to be angry).

For example, if children are usually in the same room straight after school when anger visits, change this, have children in their own spaces for a period of time while they are relaxing at the end of the school day. If the problem occurs while playing outside, structure the outside activities that require more parallel type play such as riding a bike. **The key is to break the cycle.**



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If the morning rush is a trigger, try waking up a little earlier. Ask yourself as the parent “What do I need to change?” Check in with yourself, have you started to express anger as well such as yelling, screaming. Are you giving unclear instructions? Try thinking about what you can do to make the high risk time a little calmer.

If your child is most likely to get angry at the end of the school day; try introducing a new routine or change prior to the anticipated event. For example, if your child gets angry as soon as they enter the car upon pickup, you may try introducing some distractors, such as an afternoon snack, some games in the car (e.g., I spy). It is essential to state clear rules or expectations.

### **State Clear Rules or Expected Behaviours.**

Tell Your Child What to Do Instead. Sometimes as parents we focus on telling our children only **what not to do**. It is very important to be very clear and not assume that your child knows what to do. Tell your child ‘**What to Do**’. Be clear with your child in terms of expected behaviour. E.g., “In the car we use our friendly and quiet voices”.

### **Look for Exceptions – Increase Attention to times when your child is behaving**

When it comes to emotions, we have to be careful not to only give our child attention when our children are misbehaving. Make extra time to focus on exceptions, that is times when your child is behaving in desirable ways!

It is essential to praise and give attention during these times. If your child feels constantly corrected or criticised this does not have a positive impact on the child-parent relationship.

Focus on your child’s area of interest, and spend quality time with your child on areas they enjoy.

**Praise & Acknowledge** Praise and acknowledge your child when they are having wins! “ You stayed calm in the car today – well done!

For more help on this topic contact us at Brilliant Minds Psychology

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