



Building better futures
for children with disabilities



Supporting Positive Behaviour

What does the research tell us?

At Noah's Ark, we help parents, educators and teachers understand and manage challenging behaviours by using a Positive Behaviour Support framework. Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a collaborative approach for understanding and addressing challenging behaviour and is widely recognised as an effective method for understanding and managing behaviour challenges (Fox, Clarke & Dunlap 2013). PBS uses functional behaviour analysis (a method of gathering information about behaviour), individualised behaviour support plans and a focus on teaching skills to replace unwanted behaviours.

Research indicates that all behaviour has a purpose and that behaviour is learned (Dunlap et al., 2017). As such, Noah's Ark has a commitment to understanding what a child is communicating or getting out of their challenging behaviour (perhaps avoiding a task, gaining attention or being left alone) and developing a plan with families, educators and teachers to prevent unwanted behaviours and strengthen and teach desired skills.

Research also indicates that challenging behaviour can interfere with social-emotional and intellectual development and that relationships are important for children's social-emotional development (CDC, 2017; Lang et al., 2013).



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As such, Noah's Ark draws on a range of staff including psychologists, social workers and specialist teachers who work together with other Key Workers to support social emotional development. They provide an individualised approach to supporting children and key adults within their natural environments – home, early childhood settings and schools.

Evidence-based practices focus on prevention; such as supporting strong caregiver responsiveness, universal parenting strategies, strengthening child parent relationships and looking at environments and teaching methods in early childhood and school settings to support positive behaviour (Dunlap & Fox, 2009; Trivette et. al., 2010).

Research informs our understanding of strategies that are helpful in reducing challenging behaviour in children (Dunlap et al., 2017). Some of the many evidence-based strategies that are commonly implemented with children and families supported by Noah's Ark include:

- Choice making
- Using child preferences and interests
- Utilising schedules
- Providing structure
- Adapting the physical environment
- Changing how instructions are delivered
- Teaching social skills
- Teaching appropriate ways to communicate
- Providing positive reinforcement and motivation

Noah's Ark Key Workers explore these, and other evidence-based strategies with families, educators, teachers and the child to develop a specific plan of how to apply them into the child's everyday activities.



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What do families say?

In 2017, over 100 parents were interviewed by a Project Worker to hear their feedback about the way we work. Families highlight the individualised, collaborative and supportive approach to exploring and resolving challenging behaviours. Here is what we heard from families relating to their child's behaviour in the exit interviews, and more recently through individual feedback.

“Our Key Worker has helped us look at possible reasons for our daughter's behavior at home and kinder. This helped us see things through her eyes and helped us try to come up with solutions and strategies.”

“Our Key Worker has a very realistic, non-judgmental approach to working with parents and I feel safe to very honestly and openly bring up any difficulties I'm having parenting my child. I feel very strongly supported by our Key Worker, and as though we will jointly tackle the challenges as they arise. She has helped me to find very practical, usable strategies for my child's behaviours and I can definitely see results when those are applied at home or day-care.”

“Our Key Worker always had a great range of creative new play ideas which together we tweaked utilizing my sons needs/interests. I had never thought of using his interest areas as a strength to teach new skills.”

She (Key Worker) stuck with us to find things that worked for our family. That was what I valued the most.”



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Families also indicated how helpful their Key Worker was at supporting communication and implementation of strategies in child care, preschool and school.

“Our Key Worker has been such a valuable liaison between our child’s day-care centre and me at home. She works with me directly to find out how I feel that my daughter is going, and then works with the centre closely to help manage any challenges that we may be experiencing. She helps me to relay any concerns that I may have to the centre also, and to help them implement practical strategies to deal with the challenges.”

“Great flexible approach. I was working full time and it was wonderful that the Key Worker could still work with my child and day-carers. Key Worker was always great at communicating with me, so I could follow up at home too.”

Read more about what parents tell us about our programs on our website.

https://noahsarkinc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Family_Exit_Interview_Report_2017.pdf



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