BIG FIVE Parenting Skill #2:

Kids’ behaviour is impossible to ignore… particularly if it’s poor behaviour. Parents generally feel badly, when their kids behave poorly and family-life can be hard to enjoy. Now I’m talking about occasional poor behaviour when kids such as when kids are tired & whiny; or developmental poor behaviour where kids are wearing L plates and test out your boundaries, as well as your patience. That’s part of being a kid!

Generally, it’s the job of parents to make our kids social and safe. That means, they need to learn to behave well (most of the time) around others, or at least they try to. Learning to behave well takes time for some kids so you have to work harder with some kids than others.

Effective parents understand that they need to be the bad guy at times, and they have a range of strategies at their disposal to teach kids to behave well.

Here are five practical ways to teach your kids to behave well:

1. Teach kids good manners: Manners is respect in action, and guides kids into appropriate responses in social situations.
2. Catch kids doing the right thing: Most kids want to please their parents so make sure your face lights up and your voice gets excited when they’ve behaved well.
3. Be a good role model: Kids learn what they live! Most social learning occurs through modelling so make sure your kids hear you speak and act in appropriate ways when you interact with them and others.
4. Practise social behaviours at home: Want kids to behave well in a restaurant? Then you need to practise social eating habits around the kitchen table eg: eat with your mouth closed, don’t talk with food in your mouth etc. The same principle applies for a range of other social behaviours eg: one person speaking at a time; use of a respectful tone of voice when speaking to others etc.
5. Use appropriate consequences when kids behave poorly: The link between children’s rights & their social responsibilities is reinforced when parents implement (or display a willingness) to put a respectful, reasonable and related consequence into action. Less talk and more action is the key here!

Okay, teaching kids to behave well is actually a range of skills, rather than just one skill. I thought it was so fundamental to effective parenting that I gave it a category on its own.

Article by Michael Grose -

Courtesy of your Positive Behaviour Support Coach, Pamela Filer