

**Blanks advice regarding behaviour…**

The Blank model has important implications for the way we manage and talk about behaviour/challenging situations. It also ensures we have realistic expectations of a child’s understanding.

Children who present with language difficulties are often asked complex questions – which are above their level of understanding e.g.

* + **Why** did you do that?
  + **What should** you have done?

When this happens, children are at risk of:

* Not understanding what they have been asked
* Not being able to answer the questions effectively (if at all)
* Getting into more trouble for not responding appropriately
* As a result the situation may escalate and behaviour deteriorate

**It is therefore important to:**

* + **Adapt/modify the language we use** i.e. match to their language level
  + **Remember,** if a child is upset or angry; their ability to understand may **reduce further.**
  + **Remember,** if the questions are too difficult or the explanations given are too complexthe child **will not learn from the situation/experience and may become more upset and/or frustrated.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Blank Level** | **Say/Ask…** | **Avoid** | **If it is too hard** |
| **Level 2** | * Tell the child directly and clearly * What happened * How their behaviour has affected others * Describe appropriate behaviours using short, simple sentences | * Asking **why** questions * Negative statements such as ‘don’t run’ … try walk please’ instead | **Remember, if a child is upset or angry; their ability to understand may reduce.**  If the child does not understand or is unable to give a clear answer:   * Repeat the question and model the answer * Or, simplify the question by using a question/statement at a lower level of the blanks model |
| **Level 3** | * Ask the child to describe * What happened, * What people said * How others felt * **State** the justification **for**  the child i.e. *say* *why* they shouldn’t have done something | * Asking the child to justify their behaviour (**why** questions) * Negative statements such as ‘don’t run’ … try walk please’ instead |
| **Level 4** | * Ask level 4 questions e.g. * Why did you do that? * What made you do that? * What should you have done? * Why shouldn’t we ……? | * Putting pressure of the child to answer |

Adapted from: Language Builders – Henrietta McLachlan and Liz Elks (2012)