

**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.**

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