



## LINK BETWEEN EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR

Emotions and behaviour are linked. Sometimes the link is clear but at other times it is not obvious, consistent or predictable. Examples of this are, we smile and laugh when we are happy or excited but we can also do this when we are nervous. We cry when we are upset but also when we are happy. We can tremble with excitement but we can also tremble with fear. An example of a clear link is when you refuse to buy the toy or clothes your child wants and because of this she has a tantrum. A less obvious link could be when your son becomes disinterested about school and you eventually discover that he has had a fight with his best friend.

The most important thing to remember is that a change in your child's behaviour represents a change in your child's emotions. When changes in behaviour are positive we tend to be happy about them and rarely think about the reasons for the change. However when the change is a negative one it merits close attention and it is worth taking time to think about it first before reacting, especially thinking about the possible emotions that are driving the change.

### For example:

- Could your child be experiencing stress?
- Has your child behaved like this before and if so what caused the change last time?
- Is he aware of his behaviour and has he given you any explanation for it?



### 'Understanding alone is 70% of the solution and sometimes the only solution needed'

*Michael Quinn Family Caring Trust 2003*

Once you have understood and established the link between the behaviour and the emotions, try to decide how you can bring about a positive change.

### The following suggestions may help:

- Set clear behavioral boundaries
- Encourage regular chats with your child about the things in his life and his feelings about his life in general
- Try not to expect too much from him because he is unlikely to be aware of the full range of emotions that influence his behaviour. Try naming his feelings e.g. 'you are feeling sad or you are angry about that', this will help him to understand the links between his emotions and behaviour over time.
- Before jumping to conclusions too quickly think about the simplest explanation first. Also give consideration to all aspects of his life e.g. home life, school and his friendships.
- Remember developmental stages bring about changes in behaviour. One example of this is just before starting primary school some children become more assertive in their behaviour which can take parents by surprise.

Remember that all children are different and you might need to adapt some of these ideas before you try them in your family, for further advice contact your local Health Visitor or GP.

*Frances Byatt-Smith RN RHV BA Psychology*

[Click here](#) for our feature - 'Fighting between Siblings'

[Click here](#) for our feature - 'Encouraging good behaviour'

[Back to parents home page](#)

