

# What is positive behaviour support?

FOR PROFESSIONALS



Positive behaviour support (PBS) is a person-centred approach to reducing behaviours of concern. PBS supports kids by removing environmental triggers and teaching them new skills, which enable more appropriate behaviours.

All behaviours serve a purpose. Behaviours of concern can therefore be reduced when we understand what kids are trying to achieve or convey by using them. PBS makes behaviours of concern less likely by removing the things that trigger or reward behaviours of concern, and teaching kids new skills to increase desired behaviours.

## Main aims

PBS aims to understand the individual by focussing on supportive and proactive strategies. This means that caseworkers, practitioners, carers and kids should develop plans and strategies together.

PBS should be based on individual and holistic assessment to support positive outcomes for kids in out-of-home care.

One of the fundamental aims of PBS is to increase quality of life with an emphasis on increasing feelings of safety and security for kids in OOHC.

## Key concepts of positive behaviour support

There are six key concepts of PBS, which guide practice around behaviours of concern:

- behaviours serve a purpose - all behaviours, including behaviours of concern, allow needs to be met. This means that all behaviours serve a purpose. It's important to identify the function of each behaviour of concern in order to suggest more positive alternatives.
- behaviours are contextual - behaviour is related to the context / environment in which it occurs. It's important to identify what environmental features support the behaviour of concern in order to know what environmental changes will lessen the behaviour.
- behaviours of concern have positive equivalents - behaviours of concern can be transformed into more positive, or functional, equivalents. It's important to understand how environmental features can be changed, and new skills introduced, to ensure needs are met in a more positive way.

- new behaviours must be reinforced - new behaviours and skills must be positively reinforced to ensure they are maintained. If a child's needs are consistently met through positive behaviours, they are less likely to use behaviours of concern.
- behaviours of concern may reoccur - adults implementing PBS should have response strategies in place. Strategies such as prompting, distraction and redirection may be considered. Adults should be ready to reinforce these strategies, and retry strategies that have worked in the past.
- communication is critical - successful PBS needs consistent communication between all stakeholders. Behaviour change requires a united approach by carers, practitioners and caseworkers.

Using PBS strategies, adults can support kids to understand and manage their emotions, communicate their needs effectively and build important life skills to reduce behaviours of concern.