

THROWING TANTRUMS



POSITIVE PARENTING MANUAL

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In this manual, the term “mother/father/parent” is used for convenience. It applies to all those with a caring role, including grandparents and extended family members, foster carers, etc.

Acknowledgements

This publication is adapted from the original work of Ms. H.P.C Wasantha Pathirana MSc. (University of Kelaniya) M.A. (University of Kelaniya) B.A. (Special) University of Colombo, and we thank her for her contribution.

Positive Parenting manual booklets

1. Talking Back
2. Fighting with Siblings
3. Neglecting Schoolwork
4. Household Chores and Responsibilities
5. Returning Home Late
6. Setting Limits on the Use of Digital Devices
7. Fussy Eaters
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9. Relationships
10. Staying Awake Past Bedtime
11. Substance Abuse
12. Gender

The icons in this book depicts the following to its readers



Think a Minute



Point To Remember



Important Lesson



Practical Advice



Question



Write Your Thoughts

INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PARENTING

What is Positive Parenting?

Positive Parenting is not restricted to a method, a set of rules, or a style; it is a belief, a way of living. Children should be treated with respect, free from fear of violence and shame, and guided with loving encouragement. The very first step to become a positive parent is to adjust one's thinking, by improving your own knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills. To achieve this, parents must be willing to reflect on themselves and their role as parents, do their best to complete all the activities; and use the new information in their daily interactions with their children. Parents will learn that communication is a crucial way to ensure an ongoing relationship with their children.

Positive Parenting Manual

This manual allows us to begin thinking about how we can bring up a child without inflicting/causing physical harm. This method is known as positive parenting.

This manual focuses on specific tools such as:

- How to establish goals for you and your child
- How to spend quality time with your children
- How to express yourself and enable your child to express their feelings in a safe environment
- How to use praise and reward
- How to give instructions and establish household rules
- How to redirect and ignore negative behaviours
- How to use consequences and establish cool down times
- How to resolve conflicts

By repeatedly referring to this manual, you will gain a sound understanding of the different methods available to discipline your child.



**What positive parenting is:**

- Positive parenting is about long-term solutions that develop children's self-discipline.
- Positive parenting is clear communication of expectations, rules and limits.
- Positive parenting is about building a mutually respectful relationship with your children.
- Positive parenting is about teaching children life-long skills.
- Positive parenting is about increasing children's competence and confidence to handle challenging situations.
- Positive parenting is about teaching courtesy, non-violence, empathy, self-respect, human rights and respect for others.

What positive parenting is not:

- Positive parenting is not permissive parenting.
- Positive parenting is not letting children do whatever they want.
- Positive parenting is not about having no rules, limits or expectations.
- Positive parenting is not about short-term reactions or alternative punishments to slapping and hitting.



A common complaint among parents is that their children are not obedient.

"This child is very disobedient. S/he never listens to anything we say." "S/he always does what we ask her/him not to do. Not in the least bit obedient." Are statements like these made in your family? Do you feel that your children are disobedient?

In your opinion, what characteristics are typical of a child who is obedient? A child who is inclined to be disobedient?

List them separately.

Disobedient	Obedient

Compare your column on obedience with that of another parent's column on obedience. Have a discussion on this. You most probably will see both similarities and differences between the two lists.

Reflect on your own parenting style and consider how you contribute to this behavior.



The differences highlight that what we consider as obedience/disobedience is a relative factor. This just means that the way you think of it is different to the way someone else thinks about it.

Once you have a clear understanding of the key behaviours you want to see or change, try out the strategies below to address these behaviours and support your child to think and act independently.



1. Make a list of what is considered good and bad behaviour at home, the boundaries of these behaviours as well as the consequences of not adhering to the boundaries. Depending on the age of your child/children, do this together with them. Display this list at home in a place where everyone can see.
2. Appreciate and praise the child every time s/he displays good behaviour. The love you show towards your child must be unconditional and positive.
3. Also note, we should disapprove and dislike the wrongful behaviour of the child, not the child himself.

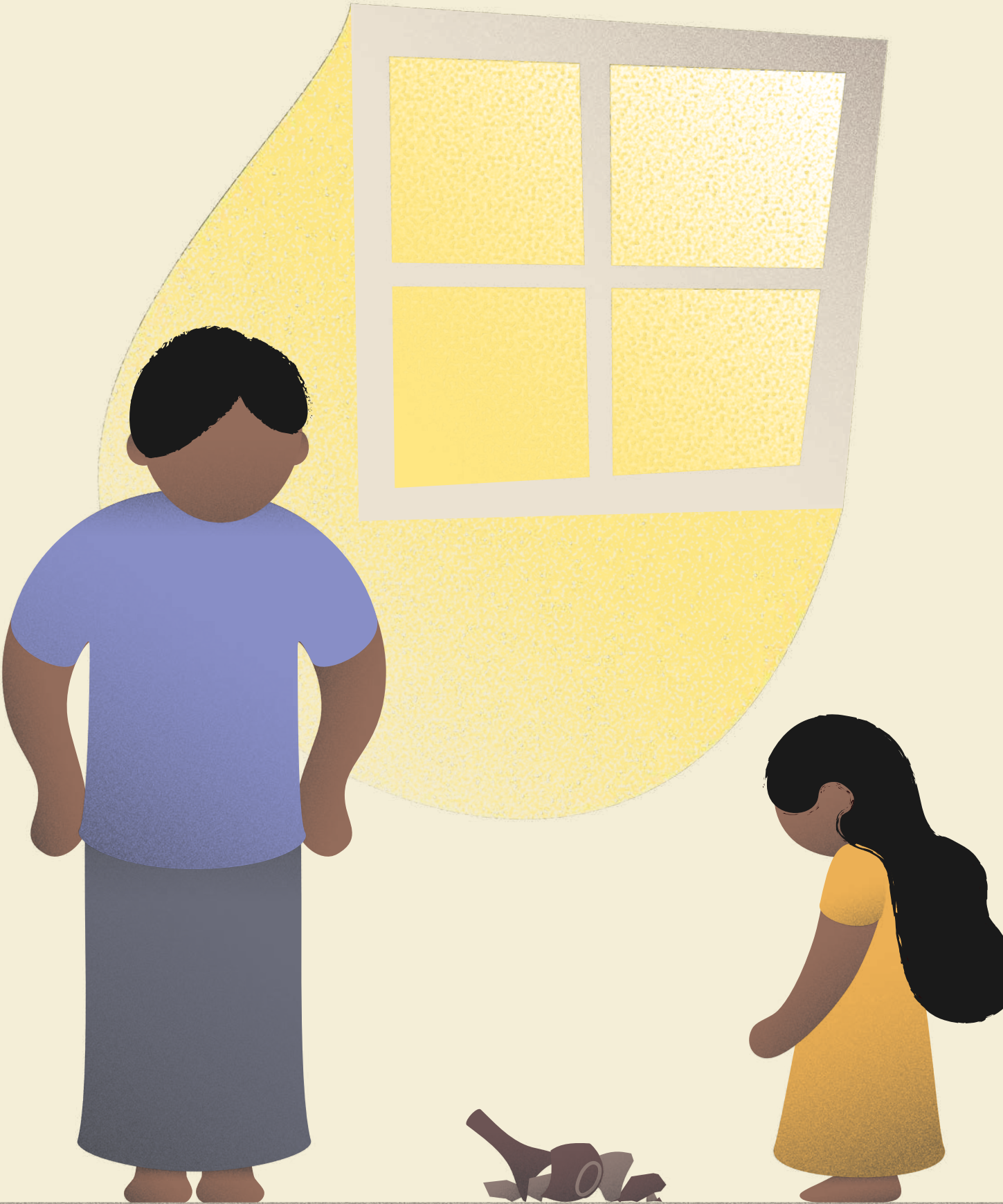
At times, parenting can be difficult! So, it is important to keep in mind that these positive parenting techniques take time and patience to be successful. It cannot be achieved in one day. If they don't work today, remember to try again tomorrow. It is important to be consistent in your parenting approach and being consistent is the only way your child may be able to understand what you are trying to communicate.

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THROWING TANTRUMS



As your child enters the toddler years, you'll start to notice many changes in their behaviour. They start to talk more coherently, can eat alone, can run, get dressed and they might also throw tantrums with big emotions. In fact, many parents dread the toddler years because this is when meltdowns are most common. However, children this age throw tantrums for very good reasons and it's not because they are "bad" or "naughty." If parents understand why toddlers throw tantrums, then they should be able to minimize their occurrence and manage them when they happen.

**Let us now
look at this
short story.**



After lunch was over, Nuwan's daughter Malika, started to repeatedly ask for some chocolate cake. Nuwan kept refusing. In response, Malika started to shout and cry, throwing things across the room and ran to the next room. Nuwan ran after her and saw that a flowerpot that was kept in the living room had broken into pieces and was scattered all over the floor. He also saw a few broken toys lying on the floor. At first, Nuwan froze upon seeing what was going on. He stood there taken aback and

confused, unable to fathom why his child was behaving like that.

Nuwan, barely able to recover from the shock, shouted at Malika "Daughter, stop that at once! What has gotten into you? Stop it!" As Nuwan shouted and got closer to Malika, she continued to throw whatever she could get her hands on.

Feeling helpless, Nuwan ran to the cupboard and took out a bar of chocolate to try and calm Malika down.

Activity



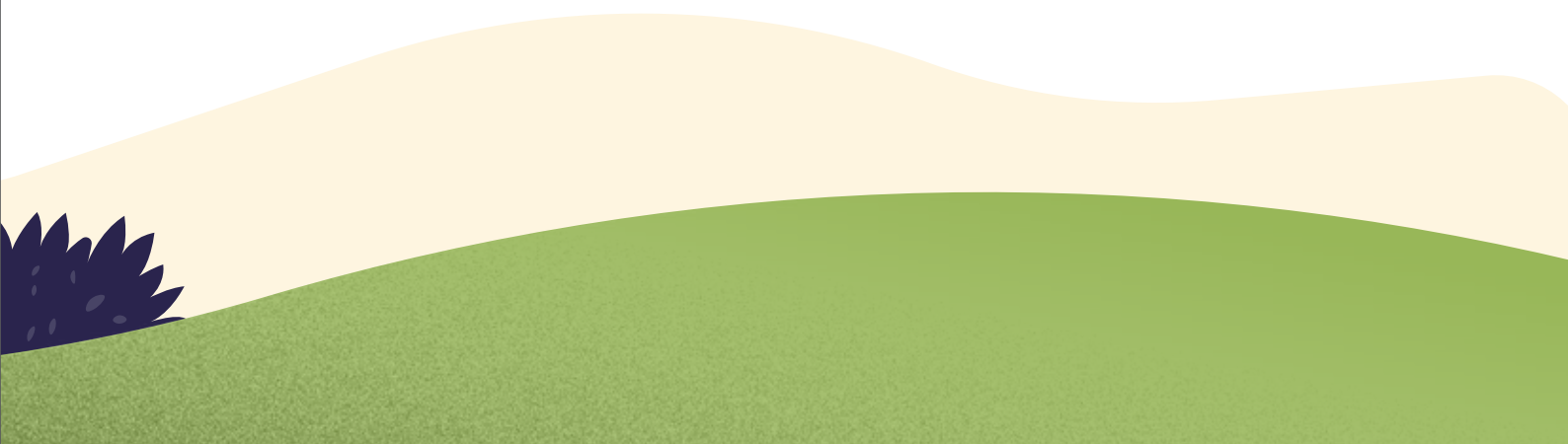
Has your child ever thrown a tantrum similar to how Malika did in the story?



How often do these tantrums occur and for what reasons?



How could Nuwan have responded differently to Malika's tantrum?



Why do children throw tantrums?

A tantrum usually involves difficult or uncontrollable behaviour by the child, like screaming, wailing, kicking, rolling around on the floor, or stiffening their whole body. Tantrums are quite common among children between the ages of one and three.

At this age, a child's social, emotional and language skills are only just starting to develop. They are testing boundaries to see what parents will and won't allow and trying to be more independent. Toddlers also do not yet have the words to express complex emotions like frustration and anger. So, tantrums are often how they may express or deal with these feelings because they still have not learned more appropriate ways to do so.

Certain factors could trigger these outbursts:

- Strong, overwhelming feelings like anger, shame, sadness, fear and worry.
- Hunger, overstimulation, stress and sleepiness.
- Situations they cannot control or cope with, like wanting chocolates when in the supermarket or someone taking away their favourite toy.

Parents should keep in mind that a child won't throw a tantrum on purpose and, as they grow older and learn how to self-regulate their behaviour and emotions, you will probably see fewer tantrums.

If your child's tantrums do not decrease as they approach their primary school years, please speak to a health professional for advice. Please note that if your child has special needs, you might need specific information on how to manage their tantrums. The [Ayati Centre](#) at the University of Kelaniya has professionals who could help you.

How can parents reduce the likelihood of tantrums in their child?

1. Prepare your child before going to places that might trigger a tantrum

There are some places – like the supermarket – that trigger tantrums in children. If it's not possible to leave your child at home when you need to visit such places, you could avoid a potential tantrum by talking about the trip before you go: "We are going to the market to buy vegetables today and won't be buying chocolates. But you can select any fruit you like." Ensure you have a strategy to deal with a tantrum, should one occur.

2. Establish a routine

From as early as when your child is just a few months old, try to establish a consistent daily routine for them. This will help your little one learn what to expect and they will get a sense of comfort from the security a routine offers. Stick to the routine as much as possible, especially naptimes, bedtime, and mealtimes. Young children tend to get angry or upset when sleepy or hungry.

3. Avoid overstimulation

Excitement is another big feeling that toddlers might not know how to handle yet. And when a child is over-excited or overstimulated, a tantrum could follow. For example, watching too much TV could overstimulate a toddler as can being in an environment that is very noisy, colourful or crowded.

4. Talk about emotions

Label emotions, especially the big ones, and teach your child how to deal with them appropriately. For example, if your toddler throws a plastic jar across the room out of anger because they couldn't open the lid, you could say "Did you throw it because you couldn't open it and felt angry? Let's go and get it and I'll help you open the lid."

5. Praise good behaviour

Offer plenty of praise, love and hugs when your child shows good behaviour, like sharing or following instructions.

TIPS on managing a Tantrum

Despite all your efforts, sometimes, tantrums are unavoidable. Here's what to do and not to do when your child is having a meltdown:

- Never verbally or physically punish your child during or after a tantrum. This will only make matters worse by distressing your child more.
- Stay calm and try to distract them. If you shout or get excited when your child is distressed, it could make the situation worse. Show them something interesting or remove them from the situation.



- Try to calm your child down by holding them or gently talking to them. If they reject this and the tantrum worsens, never leave them alone. Instead, stay near them until they are calmer, and you can comfort them. However, if you think your child is going to put themselves in danger, such as by running to the road, then you should restrain them by holding them firmly until they calm down.
- Introduce the **cool down period**:
 - » A Cool Down is an opportunity for your child to calm down after s/he has broken a household rule through an aggressive behaviour.
 - » A Cool Down should be appropriate for the age of the child i.e. 2 minutes for a 2 year-old, 3 minutes for a 3 year-old and so on. You may have to sit down with your child in the cool down, especially if they are very angry and upset.
 - » Remind your child that the Cool Down is a consequence of not following a household rule before you tell them that they must take a Cool Down.
 - » Parents should stay calm when telling their children to take a Cool Down.
 - » Give your child a choice: Cool Down or Consequence.
 - » Plan your consequence in advance and make sure you can follow through with it.
 - » Consequences should be connected to the behaviour.
 - » After the Cool Down, involve your child in positive behaviour and praise your child for it



What if your child refuses to cool down?

- Try to redirect your child's attention first.
- Try not to pay attention to the tantrum and ignore it. Ignoring is a group effort. Everyone in the family must join in.
- Remember to use your calming strategies when ignoring a tantrum.
- Be prepared for your child's response to grow more agitated when you start ignoring a specific demanding behaviour.

Example:

"No Amma, I won't take a cool down! I won't sit on the mat"

"Duwa , you have two choices, you either take a 5 minute cool down or you won't be able to have your pudding after dinner"

- When the bad behaviour ends, PRAISE the next positive behaviour immediately.

Example:

"You have made a good choice Duwa. Now you will be able to eat your favourite pudding."

Keep in mind



Children have tantrums because they do not understand 'no' and how to handle frustration. Tantrums are a child's way of telling you that they are very frustrated.

If you yell at them or hit them, they will only feel more frustrated and frightened.



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Notes



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