

# Lack of explicit behavioural teaching behind rise in problems: expert

The sharp rise in aggressive, anti-social behaviour in Australian society is fundamentally linked to the lack of explicit behavioural teaching in the home and classroom, and requires parents to step up their own parenting skills, according to a leading early childhood specialist.

Davina Sharry, Director of Powerful Parenting Australia, says it is unacceptable that children of kindergarten and early primary school age are being punished or suspended from schools because of unacceptable behaviour. Ms Sharry says this is because little is being done to explicitly teach behaviour skills to children or integrate preventative behaviour management programs into the home or education system.

“What we are seeing is that most schools and parents are using the same methods to deal with defiant or oppositional behaviour that were being used 15 to 20 years ago, and with today’s child they simply don’t work,” Ms Sharry says. “Children need more than time-outs and punishments. These antiquated techniques do not address behavioural issues, and do not give children the behaviour skills they need to become socially competent.

“Behaviour is complex and until we get away from this idea that to manage behaviour we have to ‘do something’ to the child I believe we will continue to struggle with behaviour. The unprecedented levels of antisocial behaviour we are seeing today stand as testament to the need for a new way of managing behaviour.



“My message to parents is they can not sit back and rely on school to fix behaviour, or wait to see if behavioural issues are fixed over time. Parents must take responsibility for their child’s behaviour regardless of what is or isn’t happening at school as behaviour can, and often does, get worse.”

Ms Sharry says that the social environment today is one in which being anti-authority, defiant or even aggressive or bullying towards others is not only seen as acceptable, but admirable. Powerful Parenting Australia has invested the past 5 years specifically designing a proactive behaviour management program to help parents respond to antisocial behaviour in a way that will bring about change, as well as teach children the behaviour skills they need for social success.

“Reactive Behaviour Management is based on the premise that behaviour is a series of punishable offences, and that children will modify their behaviour when an adult reacts. Rather than change their behaviour however, many children simply ‘serve their time’ and return to their old patterns of behaviour.

“Children today need to learn the behaviour skills they lack. To learn, they must be taught. As parents it is your responsibility to make sure this learning takes place. Powerful Parenting Australia believes it’s time to put the naughty mats back in the cupboard where they belong, and to focus on skilled, effective, and powerful behaviour management.”

Ms Sharry says the Powerful Parenting Australia 12-step program is focused on the entire family achieving genuine change together. “It covers everything from creating a home environment to succeed with behaviour, explicitly teaching behaviour skills and highly effective communication techniques to responding to behaviour with meaningful consequences,

developing a relationship of love with your child, building self esteem, evaluating the quality of the school environment and striving for change yourself as a parent.

“Our program is based on years of research and success working with children of all ages, from three years of age to upper primary. Regardless of the behaviours you are dealing with, this ‘parent-and-child’ training program will cater to your child’s individual needs, and will work.”

Today’s children are vocal, discerning, demanding and savvy, and the way they behave has become one of the greatest challenges facing educators, parents and society in general. Ms Sharry believes modern children understand their rights, readily challenge and oppose authority and often refuse to cooperate.



**Explicit Teaching: Children and parents benefit when children learn the behaviour skills they need.**

“We believe children are not learning the behavioural skills they need. It really is time for parents to take back control and succeed with their behaviour management by explicitly teaching children the behaviour skills they deserve for the long term.”

For further information, contact:  
 Davina Sharry  
 Powerful Parenting Australia  
 PH + 61 (7) 3399 9996 M: 042 385 2211  
[davina@powerfulparenting.com.au](mailto:davina@powerfulparenting.com.au)  
[www.powerfulparenting.com.au](http://www.powerfulparenting.com.au)  
[www.facebook.com/PowerfulParenting Australia](https://www.facebook.com/PowerfulParentingAustralia)