

• ROCK • PAPER •
SCISSORS •

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CREATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Children exhibit a whole range of behaviours, and all their behaviour has a meaning and a purpose. There are creative behaviours that we can foster, by creating an environment to let them flourish.

Creative behaviour to encourage:

- Play
- Creative risk taking
- Independence
- Collaboration
- Mess
- Fun
- Experimentation



These creative behaviours can develop into creative habits:

Inquisitive

- Wondering and questioning
- Exploring and investigating
- Challenging assumptions

Persistent

- Sticking with difficulty
- Daring to be different
- Tolerating uncertainty

Collaborative

- Co-operating appropriately
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Sharing the product

Disciplined

- Crafting and improving
- Reflecting critically
- Developing techniques

Imaginative

- Using intuition
- Making connections
- Playing with possibilities



PLAY

Play is a particularly important behaviour to encourage because it 'improves the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children' and 'through play, children learn about the world and themselves'.¹

Play definition:

'Play encompasses children's behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development - not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live'.²



BEHAVIOUR TO ENCOURAGE

We often want children to behave in ways that we would never behave as adults.

Put yourself into the shoes of a child:

- How would you feel if you were told to be quiet by another person?
- How would you feel if you were always asked to share your favourite things?

As adults we can sometimes find it difficult when children exhibit behaviour that we find difficult to respond to, but it's important to ask the questions:

- Are they being noisy or are they excited and engaged?
- Are they being naughty or are they being curious?
- Are they being messy or are they experimenting with the materials?

Instead of being on the look-out for 'misbehaviour', we can try to reframe their actions from a child-centred perspective.

For example:

- 'They are doing the best they can with the tools and knowledge they have been given.'
- Children are simply trying to figure out ways to interact with the world around them based on past experiences.
- Some children might need more support and guidance with their social and emotional development.^{1,3}

How can I encourage creative behaviour?

- 'Do not stress about mess.
- Do not compare their art to yours or each other's'. Individuality is
- positive.
- 'Embrace their designs and ideas without always making
- suggestions for change.
- Share their stories, artwork, plays, and other projects with a broader audience.
- Give them the independence to choose what they want to do and how they do it.
- Encourage them to experiment'.
- You can notice their actions without expressing your own opinion. "Oh, you chose to use black and white!" or "I see you wanted to make a BIG energetic drawing today!"
- You can offer praise for their work but also praise their effort. "You really concentrated on making that drawing."
- Ask questions about their artwork and choices as a conversation starter.
- Take an interest in the activities they enjoy.⁴



ADULT BEHAVIOUR

The most important thing you can do as an adult is demonstrate 'positive behaviour' through showing compassion, respect, kindness, warmth, and dignity to every child.

Children pick up the behaviour of the adults around them so if you're interrupting someone, you're showing them that behaviour is okay.

Being calm helps the children be calm. If you're stressed, they'll sense that and their stress levels will heighten.

What should I model?

- Active listening
- Treating everyone as unique
- Praising children
- Being aware of your own bias
- Avoid overreacting
- Regulate anger and avoid being intimidating or condescending
- Avoid shouting as it nearly always makes the situation more volatile.

WHAT IS BEHAVIOUR THAT CHALLENGES?

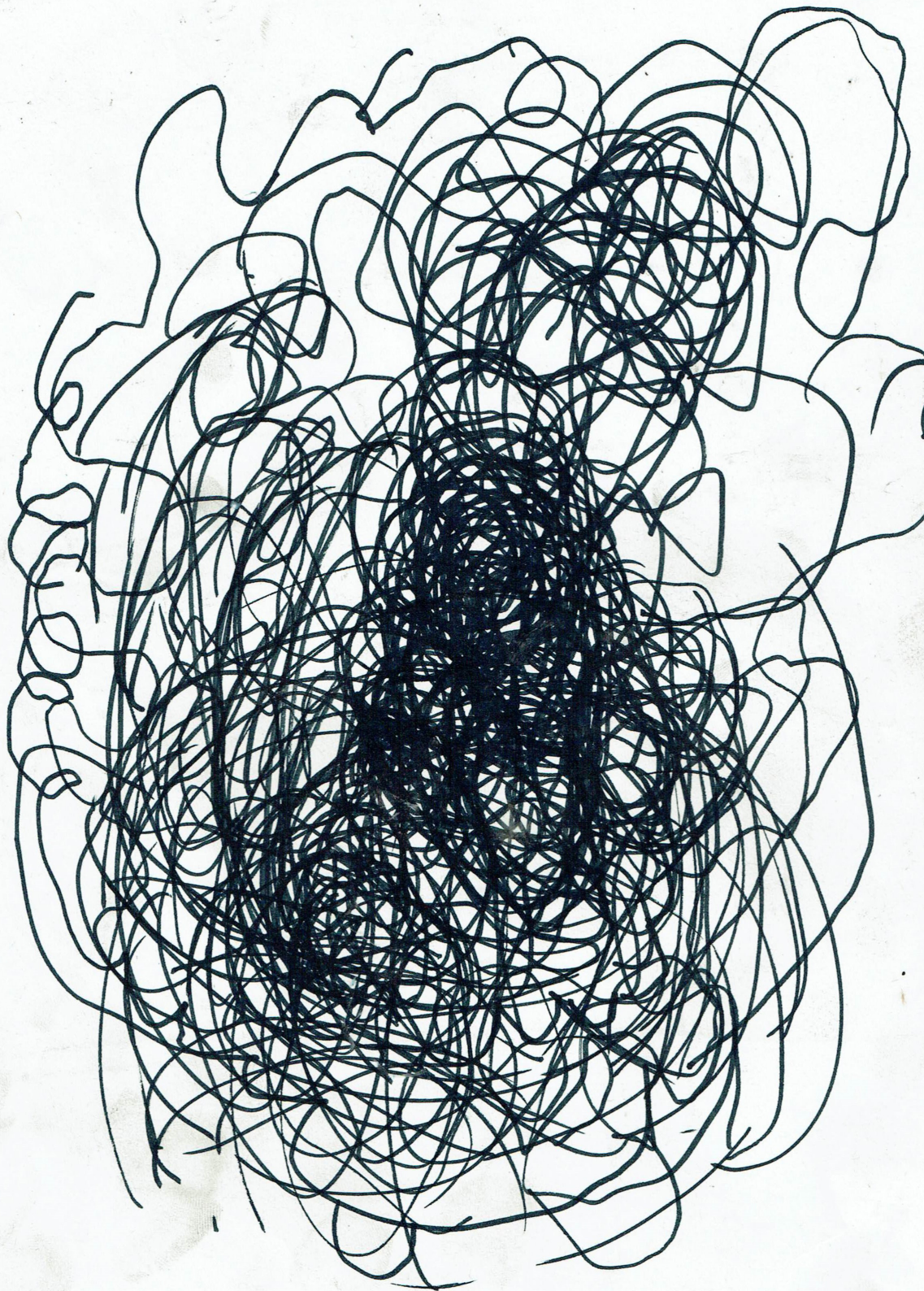
Children can all experience behaviour that challenges.

This describes behaviour that poses harm to the child or to others.

Behaviour that challenges can occur when a child:

- Is unable to communicate their needs.
- Does not have their needs met.
- Feels a lack of control or comfort.
- Seeks a specific response e.g., adult attention.

The phrase 'behaviour that challenges' centres the experience of the child. We avoid using the terms 'bad behaviour', 'difficult behaviour' and 'challenging behaviour' as they centre the experience of the adult and negatively label children. A child can easily be written off as 'difficult' or 'naughty', but often this avoids getting to the cause of their behaviour and means the dynamic is likely to continue. Offering praise, respect, understanding and positive adult attention will often reset the balance.



Behaviour that challenges can be verbal, non-verbal, physical or a combination. Every child is different, so their behaviour responses will be too.

Examples of behaviour that challenges:

Non Verbal

- Clenching fists
- Deliberately silent
- Pointing in someone's face
- Standing in someone's personal space
- Rocking
- Walking away when being spoken to
- Aggressive posture

Physical

- Injuring others/themselves
- Head banging
- Hitting/Biting/Kicking
- Damaging objects
- Hair pulling

Verbal

- Abusive language
- Screaming
- Name calling
- Arguing
- Making threats
- Shouting

PAIN & BEHAVIOUR

If children's basic physical needs are not met their behaviour will be disrupted.

A common reason for behaviour that challenges is physical pain and discomfort. This could be a chronic pain, a recent injury but, also being hungry, needing the toilet etc. It can be very difficult for children to regulate their emotional response when they are in pain. Therefore, it's important to keep a particular eye on children who you know or can see are in pain.

Scenario

A child is attending a workshop but at playtime they fell over and are unusually withdrawn. They get stressed during the session, start shouting and burst into tears.

Ways to support and de-escalate

- Prevent their increased stress by showing kindness as soon as you know they're in physical pain.
- Show empathy, respect and genuine praise.
- Provide a quiet space and acknowledge their emotions.
- Offer drawing as a way to calm down and to express their feelings.

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We want to create an environment where children can thrive safely. This environment can be created through establishing boundaries such as risk assessing and tone setting.

RISK

Risk assessments help to prevent things going wrong. They may seem tedious but actually allow for a creative environment to flourish!

For example, children can engage in risky, large scale, collaborative, messy activities if the conditions are considered. Furniture needs to be moved out of the way, cables and large-scale paper need to be taped down, dangerous tools will need to be supervised etc. You can explain to the children to be careful and make space for each other, as well as ask them what they need to work well/safely.



TONE SETTING

If you start a project where the environment is welcoming, calm and respectful, the children are more likely to engage, listen and feel safe to be themselves.

How do I set the right tone?

- Having the space organised in advance to reduce your stress.
- Welcome children on arrival or bring them to the space.
- Learn their names.

Work with them to set some intentions e.g.

- "In this room we are all artists."
- "We must stay in the space to keep us all safe."
- "Let an adult know if you need the toilet."
- "Listen when others are talking and expressing themselves."
- "We want to all have fun today!"

BOUNDARIES

We must create boundaries with children to keep them safe. As adults we need to support especially if their behaviour causes harm to themselves or others.

What types of behaviour challenges?

- Name calling / bullying / discrimination
- Becoming violent to others or themselves
- Disrupting others engagement
- Leaving the space alone.



What should I do?

- Take a second to breathe and observe before jumping in.
- Try to be calm and objective.
- See the conflict from all angles and find practical solutions that balances everyone's wishes.
- Think about what may have triggered the behaviour rather than look at the behaviour at face value.
- Offer children choice within boundaries.
- Acknowledge feelings.
- Don't worry, these are easier said than done and we won't always get it right!

"It's ok to be angry sometimes. Do you want to show the paper how angry you are by drawing a really angry picture!"

"I can see you are frustrated. Let's work together to think of a way to calm down."

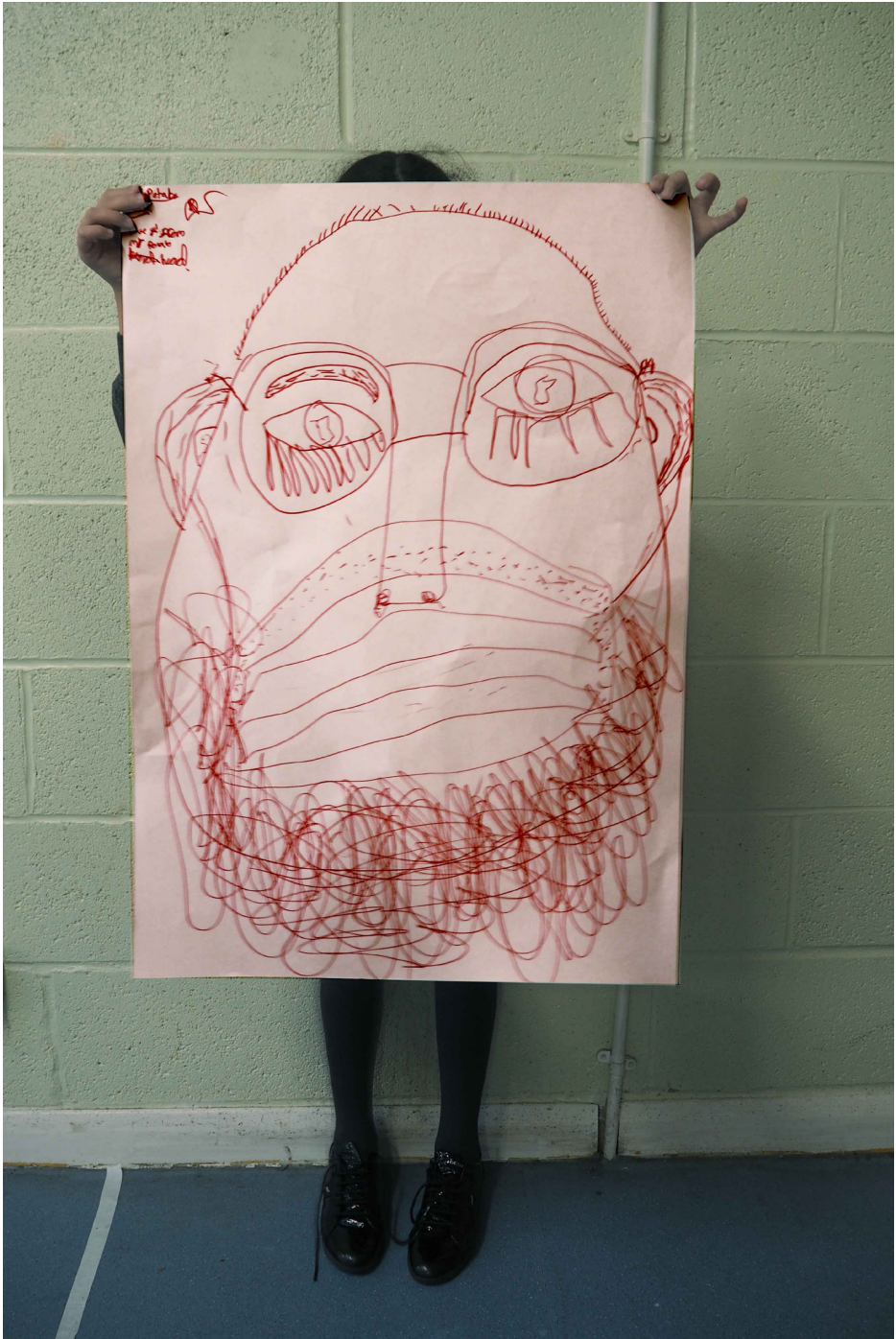
"You can't leave the space alone. Would you like to go next-door with an adult to cool off or stay in the room with everyone?"

DE-ESCALATING AGGRESSION

- Take note as soon as you see a child becoming agitated.
- Ask how you can help and what they need to calm down.
- Offer them a quiet place to take a break
- Remember to use good eye contact and their name
- If their anger continues to increase, validate their emotions by explaining you can see they're upset/angry/disappointed.
- Take them out of the situation and allow them to calm down in a safe place and emphasise you can work through the problem together once they've calmed down.
- Quietly mention to a member of the team, their teacher, parent or carer if present so you are not alone.

Physical Interventions

Preventing a child physically should be absolutely avoided, unless a child is at risk of seriously harming themselves or others.



Sketch
of a face
with
glasses!

CHILDREN WHO LEAVE THE SPACE

Children love to explore! They may be curious and leave the space. Engaging with them with something playful helps capture their attention.

They love to push boundaries especially if bored, which can lead them to leave a space as their needs are not being met. Leaving the space means they're more likely to get adult attention.

What should I do?

- "You need to stay in the room with everyone."
- "Follow me and show me what you'd like to play with!"
- Stay close to them.
- If it's difficult to lead them back, try making it into a game, e.g., playing 'chase' back into the room!
- Find them a safe place to explore instead.
- Giving them praise and attention especially if they return into the space.
- You can stand in the doorway without blocking the door. Never lock the door.
- Alert Drawing Room staff if the situation becomes dangerous e.g., child leaving the building.



SAFEGUARDING

Please refer to Drawing Room's Safeguarding Policy for further information or ask if you are unsure of anything.

When should I be concerned?

- If a child shows signs of abuse: emotional, physical, sexual, bullying or neglect.
- If a child becomes withdrawn, uncharacteristically aggressive, more anxious or has unexplained behaviour or personality changes.

What should I do?

- If a child discloses (tells you) something or displays behaviour that is concerning, you need to notify the safeguarding lead straight away .
- Relay your concerns to Drawing Room's safeguarding lead: Betsy Dadd (Learning Curator). If unavailable, please check in with Drawing Room's safeguarding officer: Genevieve Miller (Learning Coordinator).
- You do not have to have 'the answer' but may have witnessed or heard something that doesn't feel right. In this case, it is your responsibility to pass on any concerns to the correct person, in confidence.

Every child deserves to be safe and secure.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

REFERENCES

- Understanding Bullying and Discrimination in Children and Young People, Skills Network, CPD
- TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Behaviour that Challenges in Children (RQF)
- Improving Children's Learning Through Play, Educare, CPD
- Children's Perspectives on Play, Open University, CPD
- The Gentle Discipline Book: How to raise co-operative, polite and helpful children, Sarah Ockwell-Smith, Piatkus
- Reflections on Children's Mental Health - A ROCK PAPER SCISSORS Artist Forum with Matilde Rahtz, NHS Mental Health Nurse and Kate Tidman, Occupational Therapist, October 2021
- Play/Work! - A ROCK PAPER SCISSORS Artist Forum with Playworker Penny Wilson, December 2022

Footnotes

1. How Play Helps Children's Development, Nidirect
2. What is Play? Susan Isaacs, X Play Scotland
3. Children Don't Misbehave, Kristen RB Peterson, Instagram
4. 4 Ways To Foster Your Child's Creativity, Jenna Fletcher, Psych Central
5. Strategies for De-Escalation, Lexington Services.

Drawing in its simplest form — leaving a mark on a surface — is direct and instinctive. ROCK PAPER SCISSORS puts children at the centre and explores with them, their teachers, schools and families, what drawing can be and uncovers ideas through the act of drawing. This extensive programme spans afterschool clubs, in-school projects, teachers' assemblies, family studios and holiday clubs — working holistically across different structures within children's lives.

This toolkit has been put together in response to our experience of ROCK PAPER SCISSORS, to better equip ourselves and the team with approaches to support children. It has arrived out of conversation, research and training however training is an ongoing learning curve alongside all those we work with. We thank all children, teachers, teaching assistants, artists, workshop assistants and parents who we have met through ROCK PAPER SCISSORS for coming together and sharing knowledge.

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DRAWING ROOM

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