

# Hitting the pause button

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The biggest obstacle to good discipline is getting angry or upset as a parent. So rather than reacting automatically, which may be negative and escalate the situation further, try to hit the pause button? This is a way of remaining calm and taking a step back from reacting in a habitual way. Instead, it gives you time to:

- Tune into what's going on – for you and your child
- Consider the situation – what might be causing this behaviour?
- Take a moment to put yourself in the child's shoes
- Think about a strategy that is likely to help to manage the situation. For instance, what might be a better way to respond or what has worked well in the past?

Often when we respond habitually, we are reacting from a position of high emotional arousal and our behaviour in these moments can often be overly punitive, harsh, dismissive and unhelpful, this runs the risk of:

- Undermining our position as parents
- Modelling an unhelpful way of coping
- Being disrespectful
- Communicating a message to the child that does not necessarily promote their self esteem
- Evoking difficult feelings such as feeling guilty or like a failure as a parent and so on, which can in turn trigger a different series of behavioural responses where we try to overcompensate for our behaviour, which often can leave a child feeling confused and uncertain.

## **To support you in hitting your pause button:**

- Take a moment to pause before you react
- Focusing on your breathing may help you to do this – e.g. become aware of the sensation of your breath as it moves into and out of your abdomen (putting your hands on your tummy can be helpful)
- You may want to explicitly model staying calm in frustrating situations by taking a deep breath and saying “I can calm down” in front of your children
- It may also be useful to ask yourself: what is helpful right now?

***The golden rule when dealing with misbehaviour is to remain calm and respectful as by doing this, you remain in control and show your child how you want him to behave.***