

**Are they ready?**

Behaviour change conversations will be much more effective if the parent is ready and motivated to make a change in the first place.

Remember the stages of change to help identify the parent's *readiness to change*:

**-Precontemplation**

**-Contemplation**

**-Preparation**

**-Action**

**-Maintenance**

**-Relapse - Relapse happens!**

*Reassure the parent that this is normal and help them get back on track.*

**Are they likely to make a change?**

Look out for cues that demonstrate that the parent *believes* there is a problem, *believes* they need to make a change and *believes* they can implement change into their lives.

**Behaviour changes are more successful when a parent believes they can make it happen. If they don't, they may not be ready. Have you considered any barriers in their lives that may be stopping them?**

Talk through their concerns with them. Remember – don't make them feel rushed! You may need more than one appointment until

**Make goals the SMART way!**

Help the parent create their own goals that fit into their daily lives. They are more likely to fulfil goals that they have personally implemented into their routine.

When agreeing on goals, think about what the overall intention is. What is the parent hoping to achieve?

***Help them to make their goals***

***SMART:***

**Specific**

**Measurable**

**Achievable**


**Realistic**

**Timely**

**Having Behaviour Change Conversations with Parents of young children**

**A mini guide to help you have constructive conversations**

Changing behaviour is not easy! But through effective communication, you can help parents to improve their children's oral health

<p><u>Consider your surroundings before you start...</u></p> <p>Distractions can affect the outcome of successful communication. Are there any distractions in your working environment that may affect your conversation? Here are a few to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Surgery noise e.g. radio</li> <li>-Layout of surgery</li> <li>-Overcrowded surgery</li> <li>-Time constraints</li> </ul> <p><b>Don't forget Information overload</b> can also be distracting – Try to focus on one oral health problem at each appointment.</p>	<p><u>It's not just what you say that matters!</u></p> <p>Improve your two-way conversation, by using the OARS approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Open questions</b></li> <li><b>Affirmation</b></li> <li><b>Reflective listening</b></li> <li><b>Summarise</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Think about how you are sitting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Have an open posture</li> <li>-Lean slightly forward</li> <li>-Make eye contact</li> <li>-Relax</li> </ul>	<p><u>Some Do's and Don'ts to help your conversations run more smoothly...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Refrain from doing all the talking</li> <li>-Collaborate with the parent, allow them to feel they can contribute to the conversation.</li> <li>-Don't make them feel rushed</li> <li>-Show empathy when needed and let them know you are listening</li> <li>-Allow them to identify their own motivations to change behaviour – they may need a bit of guidance, but with your help they will get there!</li> </ul>	<p><u>It's a two-way thing...</u></p>  <p>Although the dental team are keen to give parents of young children lots of information to help them improve their child's oral health - a conversation that only flows in one direction can sometimes have a negative effect.</p> <p>This <b>top down</b> approach can often be thought of as <b>victim blaming</b>, and though the intentions are to help and support the parent, this can potentially create a reversed effect.</p>
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