**Top tips for difficult times**

* When your child shows challenging behaviour try to look like you are calm, don’t show any emotion to your child.  Using a slower and lower tone of voice is calming. Just watch your child for safety and if needed calmly move them away from danger without making a big deal out of it.
* If you can, swap with another adult for a few minutes to help you have a break and stay calm. It is not personal or your fault and sometimes just a different person can help your child too. Be consistent in how you respond with others in your house
* Try to give short, positive not negative instructions e.g. ‘hands down’ (instead of ‘no hitting’)
* Help your child to ask for what they want (use symbols, offer two or three choices of objects )
* Try to give your child attention – talk, play, hug etc – when they are behaving well. When they are not behaving as you want, try not to look at them or talk to them (whilst making sure they are safe)
* Use visuals to help your child understand. You may need to show your child what you want them to do before they can do it or show them how they can play with a toy.
* Use a visual timetable of what is happening during the day or a ‘First…then… ‘ board. Try to have an activity your child likes for the ‘then’ if they don’t want to do what you are asking them to do first. Give warning of an activity finishing and give your child time to respond. If you haven’t got symbols then try drawing them
* Have a safe, calm space and help your child to use this if they become upset (start by guiding them there if they are not too upset to move. Show how to use it yourself – pretend to be upset and go to that area). They could be given a symbol (e.g. ‘Me time’)to help them ask to go there (or try an object e.g. a soft toy) Your child may find too much noise and too many people difficult. Maybe try ear defenders if, for example, a baby is crying a lot.
* If your child is starting to get upset try to distract them or if possible remove anything that is causing them to be upset. Distract by singing, offering a toy etc.