

## PSG Parenting Seminar on 21 May

### **- Understand How to Manage Challenging Behaviour**

*When you look at your child, what do you see?*

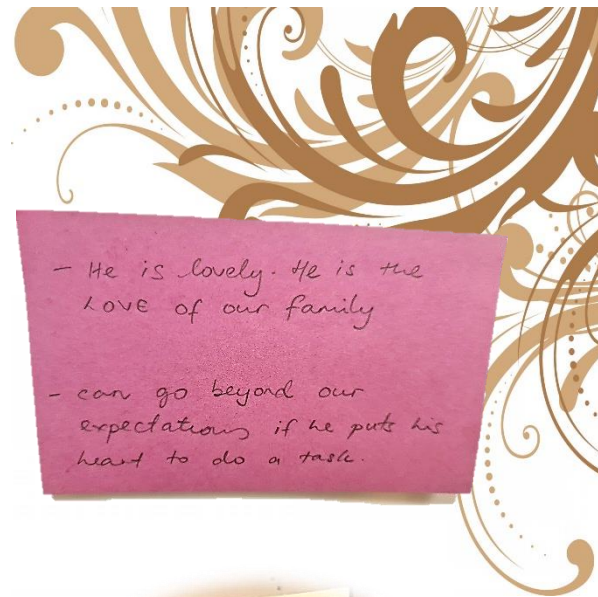
Ms Chloe, the Associate Psychologist, began the seminar by encouraging parents to write down some qualities that they admire about their child, as well as their challenging behaviour. As the parents pen their thoughts, it reminds them of how special their child is and how he/she warms their hearts.

Indeed, the key to managing a child's behaviour is to understand him/her. A behaviour is often a means for a person to communicate his/her thoughts and feelings. Ms Chloe encourages the parents to observe, not just the behaviour itself, but also what happened before and after, to understand what the child is "saying" through his behaviour.

Next, Ms Chloe introduced some strategies that emphasise meeting a child's unique needs and building on his/her strengths. Punishment lacks long-term sustainability and is strongly discouraged. She highlighted the difference between reinforcement and bribery. Reinforcement is a reward that is decided beforehand, and given before any negative behaviour. Bribery, on the other hand, is a "reward" given in response to challenging behaviour. Bribery could end up encouraging the child to misbehave to get what he wants. Parents should also discern whether the child is throwing a tantrum or having a meltdown by observing him. Each calls for a different response. During a meltdown, verbal response, eye contact, and further demands should be avoided.

After the escalation stage, parents should reflect on what has happened, and consider their responses to the child, for example, their tone of voice, the attention they have given, and whether they have been consistent.

It is such a refreshing sight to see all the parents and staff interacting with one another in person during the small group discussions. What a startling contrast to our online sessions!



### **REMEMBER**

- (1) PREVENTION: Manage expectations, provide positive reinforcement**
- (2) MANAGEMENT: Meltdown vs tantrum, reduce/eliminate demand**
- (3) REFLECTION: What happened before, after, and ask yourself *how was i?***