



# No Blame, No Shame

When we realise that we are about to become parents for the first time, we also realise that life will never be the same!

We realise that we are about to become the primary carer for someone who is completely dependent upon us for all of the basic needs – we need to provide love and nurture their sense of belonging; we need to ensure that they have fun and learn how to enjoy life as they grow; we understand that their survival depends upon us (especially when they are really young). Whether we are ready to be a parent or not, we know that we can do it!

But two of the other basic needs – a child's need for a sense of freedom and self-direction, as well as their need for power over their own world – tend to test the very existence of our relationship with them (especially as they get older). They will test the boundaries and sometimes things go wrong! Mix in some adolescent hormones and outside influences that are often hidden from parents and suddenly we are playing in a whole different game and no one has given us the rulebook!

So, what can we do?

We can preload into our adult brains, some stored responses that we will draw upon when we get situations such as these – remember, you can't change anything that others do or say;

you can only make a choice about how you will respond!

And there is only one thing to remember – there is NO BLAME, NO SHAME for you as a parent ..... all messages are information and you are in complete control over what you do with that information so that you get the best outcome for all.

And let's be honest, sometimes, our children need to learn the hard lessons in life..... and whilst we advocate for our kids, it's definitely our job to help them learn!

So, what stored responses might you need?

Here's a start –

Situation	Emotional reaction: Blame/Shame response -	<p>Approach with curiosity to develop the stored response –</p> <p>In all of these responses, you are taking a breath and thanking the person for the information; always assume good intent.</p>
Your child has bitten another at daycare	'Well the other kid must have done something to my child!'	A quiet meeting with staff to help you understand what was happening at the time; a planned response and education for your child about how to deal with their frustration.
Your child is assigned a restricted play area because they have no hat	You storm up to the school and demand that the teacher be in trouble for isolating your child.	You establish an evening routine with your child to check they have all necessary equipment for the next day.
You take a call from a teacher because your child appears to have no food	You scream at the teacher and say 'of course I sent food, it's your fault for letting them eat everything in crunch and sip!'	You establish a plan to label or teach your child about what to eat when; have a conversation with your child about eating to check nothing else is happening/or to find out why they eat at school/tell staff they have nothing to eat; then form a plan with the teacher so the child can't play you against each other to get 'better food'; accept that teenagers often don't eat at school and that they will be ok – top up the pantry for the hungry child at the end of the day!
The school has called you three times in a week	You answer with 'what has she done this time!'	Start with 'It's great to hear from you again; how can I help' and then be considered about how you use the information – they might be calling with great news! Assume good intent.



You child tells you about an unfair teacher who is picking on them	You demand that your child's class be changed because of that awful teacher.	Converse with your child about what is happening, acknowledging whether your child is making it harder than it needs to be; coach your child in ways to respond to the world being unfair – it is going to happen!
Your child tells you about a friend's parent who posted on a social media comment about conflict in the friendship group	You confront that parent at the school gate about making comments about children and it quickly escalates to a fight amongst adults.	Check out the thread, without engaging or contributing to the problem; educate your child about social media risks, how to block, cyber safety – if your child is too young for the age bracket designated on the site, get them off it! Work with your child to know what they are up to online; inform the school and or Police if necessary
The Police appear at your door with your child	You answer the door with 'I knew you'd cause trouble' OR you start demanding proof that the Police handled your child well and divert the focus from the issue to the Police response	Assume good intent – they may be helping your child get home after they missed the last train!  If your child has made a mistake, help them to understand and accept responsibility – this happens through two way conversations, designed to fix up the stuff up and move on; consequences may be needed and the child should help decide what that should be.
The footy coach benches your child from a big game	You get angry with your child who is not good enough to play AND/OR you scream at the coach about how crappy the decisions they make are	Converse with the coach – hear what they are saying and work with your child to understand the decision.