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## TITLE

**Behavioural Problems in Children – Methods to Prevent  
and Manage through Good Parenting and Ayurveda**

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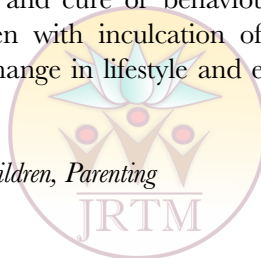
## TITLE

## Behavioural Problems in Children – Methods to Prevent and Manage through Good Parenting and Ayurveda

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Behavioural problems refer to improper expressions of conduct, code or etiquettes. These are becoming more evident in recent years in rural as well as urban regions due to poor parenting. Ayurveda is not only a mere medical science but a life science too, which has widely described *Sadvritta* (good conduct) and *Satvavajay* (psychotherapy) which can be applied in this context. **Aim:** The review aims at highlighting the concepts of prevention of behavioural problems of children through various ways of good parenting by applying the principles of Ayurveda. **Materials & Methods:** The data collected for the present study was through classical literatures of Ayurveda from 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, journals and research works related to good parenting and child psychology and counselling experiences of the author. **Observations:** Major causes of behavioural problems in children includes genetic predisposition, environmental factors, parental neglect, *Pragyaparadh* (intellectual blasphemy) and *Dushita Ahara* (unhealthy diet regimen). If there is delay in tackling these problems at early stages, these may turn into psychiatric illness later. *Achar Rasayan* (measures to rejuvenate behaviour), *Sadvritta*, *Satvavajaychikitsa* are the measures of good parenting to make balance of *Raja* (Agitation)-*Tama* (Lack of concentration, laziness). Ayurveda also advocates the need of following good conduct in day-today life, which is essential to prevent behavioural problems. The measures adapted for parenting helps in prevention and cure of behavioural ailments at initial stage which require change in lifestyle of parents and children with inculcation of morals and good habits at later stages. **Conclusion:** In the nutshell, parenting, change in lifestyle and environmental issues are directly concerned with behavioural problems in children.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda, Behavioural problems, Children, Parenting*



## Introduction

According to World Health Organization, mental health disorders are one of the leading cause of disability worldwide.<sup>[1]</sup> Behavioural problems of children are becoming common and around 6 million children are affected by various behavioural problems<sup>[2]</sup> and in India, it is 33.4%.<sup>[3]</sup> Poor parenting is one of the most common causes for manifestation of behavioural problems. Aggressiveness, impulsivity in children has increased in many folds as compare to few decades ago.<sup>[4]</sup> For development of child's personality, the relationship with parents must be strong, friendly, with good faith and understanding among themselves. <sup>[5]</sup> Ayurveda advocates interventions such as simple moral principles and the right conducts under the heading of "*Sadvritta*". *Achar* means behaviour and *Rasayan* means rejuvenation, thus *Achar Rasayan* are the measures following which results in rejuvenation of body and mind, following these measures thoroughly can prevent behavioural problems up to much extent. <sup>[6]</sup> It is the need of the hour to explore the role of Ayurveda in present context because if not treated timely, psychiatric illnesses may arise. <sup>[7]</sup> Democratic balanced parenting is necessary to create responsive, high educative, happy and caring society. <sup>[8]</sup>

The article aims at doing a root cause analysis of behavioural problems and to highlight possible role of good parenting and Ayurvedic principles to tackle the same.

## Material and Methods

This review is based on data from classical literatures of Ayurveda from 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, selected research works related to good parenting and child psychology published in international journals from 1966 till date; and counselling experiences of author.

## Observations

## Role of Parental Behaviour:

The prevalence of children with behavioural problems is comparatively very less in whom good parenting is provided. <sup>[9]</sup> In other words, love from parents, guidance related to high moral limits work as preventive factor in children. It is also observed that, parenting is an overwhelming process where parent has to play so many roles at a time with responsibility and care which has a direct impact on child psychology. <sup>[10]</sup>

### Role of Diet:

On the basis of correlation between diet and psyche which is mentioned in classical texts of Ayurveda, it is observed that up to some extent diet is directly responsible for developing behavioural problems. *Rajas Ahara* such as spicy, fried, salty-sour food stuffs and *Tamsik Ahara* which includes stale, *Viruddha*, non-vegetarian, garlic, onion added food may result in aggressive behaviour in children. [11] The ancient phrase also conveys the message of behavioural way as per diet.

### Prakriti (Constitution) & Psyche:

*Vataj* constitution persons are slim having dry hair & skin etc., while *Paittik* constitution people have medium built, short tempered and brilliant. *Kaphaj* constitution persons are overweight, slow, inactive. [12] In table 1 the probable relation between *Prakriti* and causes of behavioural problems which was observed in clinical practice has been summarized.

**Table no.1: Relation of *Prakriti* and the causes of Behavioural Problems in Children**

Type of <i>Prakriti</i>	Causes found
<i>Vataj</i>	Parental neglect due to poverty, addiction, step parents & unawareness of behavioral way with mental health
<i>Pittaj</i>	Above causes except step parents, intellectual blasphemy, over protection, stressful environment, quarrelling family disputes
<i>Kaphaj</i>	Genetic predisposition, delayed marital age-elderly primi, illiteracy, pampering, addiction & lower socio-economic status, poor sharing-caring of parents due to their busy schedule.
<i>Dwidoshaj</i>	Above all reasons

In many cases, it is observed that over protection, pampering is equally responsible to cause these types of conditions. Now a day, parents have little time for their wards and it's a routine picture seen in urban as well as poor class society. Addiction, greed and impatience in young generation is increasing and affecting the psyche of parents. *Sanskara* or etiquettes adoption is a slow process to be followed by children. It is also observed that for healthy psyche of children, parents have to become a role model for their wards as the visible way of behaviour is easily grasped by the children. In Ayurveda too, *Acharya* have emphasized on good peer circle, proper way of dietary, lifestyle regimen. [13]

### Discussion

Psychological development takes place with the interaction of natural endowment and the environmental factors. [14] Parents should trust the children by which they feel free to share their frustration which may distract them if not handled properly. [15] Parents should also guide for time management by motivating to do self-work, small task by which they can become self-reliant, amiable and eager beaver by which parents can save their time and energy also.

*Acharya* Charak has intended to follow control on mind, senses, remain calm and give up the triggers of intellectual blasphemy. [14] For the prevention aspect of behavioural problems, *Aachar Rasayan*, *Aptopadesha* [Advice of elders], *Sadvritta* are very much essential in today's era. [16] Health is dependent upon both physical and mental aspect, these two can inter-relate with each other if not taken care at appropriate time. Therefore, good conduct, diet and deeds are essential to remain healthy. [17]

Ayurveda advocates the importance of *Doshaj* (bodily humours) balance to keep good mental health. A child of *Vatik* constitution may present with ill temperament and undesired act, while *Paittik* and *Kaphaj* constitutions do not become victims for psychic disturbances easily as they are endowed with skilful intelligence and judgment. Impolite behaviour of *Rajoguna* and on the other hand depressive nature of *Tamoguna* can be made out in a *Vataj Prakriti* child as minor psychic disturbances. [18]

### Measures to control Mental constituents:

*Rajasguna* is activator of action, *Tamas* is checker and *Satva* is responsible for expression. The equilibrium of the above three mental faculties is essential for normal psychological set up. [19-20] A little quantity of proper *Tamoguna* in the form of self-realization is essential for better psychic built. *Satvaguna* in an individual can be increased and *Raja*, *Tama* are decreased with the help of *Yadyna* (Rituals), *Japa* (chanting), *Bali* (Sacrifice), *Jarna* (Ail) etc; *Sadvrittappalan* (adaptation of good behavior/conduct) and utilization of *Medhya* (memory enhancer) medication helps in improving *Dhee* (grasping), *Dhriti* (concentration), and *Smriti* (memory). [21] Pampering, eating habits of fast food containing preservatives and additives, overuse of gadgets, adoption of western lifestyle is directly concerned with behavioural problems. *Acharyas* have mentioned what to do and what not to do in the context of maintaining mental health in terms of good parenting through these Ayurveda principles. [14,22]

**Benefits of good parenting:** It ensures safe, assertive discipline with realistic expectations. It creates positive learning environment, provides interactive caring, unconditional love and manages misbehaviour. Parents should be a good role model and should set limits, explore talent and skills, become problem solver and responsible. **Counselling:** It sorts out the problem with proper compliance to grievances which in turn helps in preventing psychosomatic or psychiatric illnesses. [23]

Table 2 demonstrates the solutions for commonly encountered behavioural problems in children, which can be clinically practiced.

**Table no. 2 common behavioural grievances with their compliance**

Sr.No.	Common behavioral problems	Solution by counseling + Good parenting
1	Impulsive behavior, annoyance, Aggressive, irritable behavior, To black mail/frighten to parents	Try to understand child's concern, if unnecessary take strict action and be firm on decision in spite of his/her loud cry
2	Misbehavior, abuse	Stop talking, First explain with love the reason behind the decision, otherwise punish
3	Sudden mood swing, remain depressed for long period on small issues, impatient, low tolerance	Counseling to develop emotionally strong, practice to prevent/control conflict by love & care
4	The habit of blaming others	The showcase of good habits or bad things avoided by child revolve to target in front of others in a positive way. Inspiration by praise helps to get rid of the bad habits
5	The habit of making rubbish, throwing things here and there	Make him responsible, independent also. Aware & educate the child about importance of neat and cleanliness
6	Lazy or irresponsible	Explain the value of time, counsel the child with love, make habit of task oriented work with time limit
7	Low concentration in study, Exam phobia, negativity, depression, forgetfulness, low grasping	Boost their confidence, take weekly test to improve academic progressive, tips to memorize and enhance grasping by imagination and memories, explore an importance of study, develop interest motivate them, awards for good marks
8	Neglect to advise of elders	Counseling, explain their betterment by adopting advise
9	Passion of playing only	Make time table of daily activities and strictly follow
10	Excess use of TV watching, video games	Explain the side effect of over straining of eyes, value of time and studies
11	Food choosy if not given remain hungry	Comprehend the value of nutrition and health-food pyramid, counseling with example
12	Negative thinking	Appreciate child's achievement, boost self-confidence and encourage
13	Self-low esteem/confidence, introvert	Inspire and motivate the child with love and care. Make good environment, praise in front of others, encourage on small achievements
14	Considering wrong concept of elders	Slowly increase the confidence of child, give secure feeling counseling with good example, don't compare
15	Over study (studious and over sincere), book worm but lacking in particle wisdom	Techniques to get relax, meditate; explain with example, try to engage in other co-curricular activities.
16	To give up the positive good efforts, no consistency of trying	Explain the role of hard work, give examples of spider, ants; untiring efforts of scientist Einstein. Imagine the dream of success.

There are many ways to tackle such problems such as play therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy and stress, time, anger management, [24-26] but counselling is the most common and easy way to not only find out the causes but also cure them efficiently in early stage without any medication. [23] *Nidan Parivarjan* (Elimination of cause) is an important tool in *Chikitsa* (therapy) which can be sorted out through counselling. [27]

Ayurveda principles may help by relaxing brain and releasing good hormones; by keeping away agitation, anxiety, irritability, anger etc. to facilitate good conduct in daily life. However separate evaluation of these concepts is needed to establish their role in maintaining mental health. [28] Counselling with judicious way can be used in day today's practice, at home by mother or guardian as well. Parent's support is always needed at every developmental phase rather a whole lifespan specially during seeking advices in conditions of taking difficult decisions.

## Conclusion

Ayurveda principles such as *Sadvritta*, *Achar Rasayan* and *Satvavajay* can be applied as a way of good parenting which has a great potential to prevent behavioural problems in children. The necessary and prompt preventive care must be given to avoid the upcoming problems related to mental health. Along with Good parenting, detail counselling and guidance to parents is must as it is safe way to prevent such problems at initial level without many interventions. Additionally, it is one among the best non-pharmacological means to tackle behavioural problems.

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