

# A parent asked us....

***“I’m finding Nazrin’s behaviour difficult. She doesn’t follow my instructions. It’s a real struggle for me - what can I do?”***

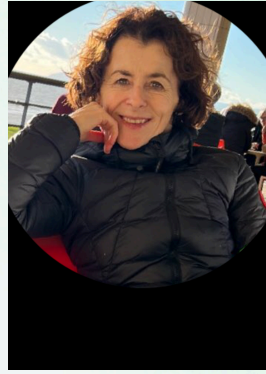
*The idea of this column is to say how we replied to a question from a parent on the spot. So, the answers are not exhaustive, but enough to respond to the query in the moment.*



**Priya Kanabar** has worked as a babysitter, childminder and dance-fitness teacher since 2013, operating her business in the Borough of Newham, East London.

Her book (*The Joys of Childminding*, October 2023) is full of the benefits to be gained from working within the early years sector. It marks a 10th anniversary celebration and her long term goal is to inspire more male practitioners to join the sector.

Her setting's focus is child-led planning, independent learning and a hands on, outdoors approach. Yoga, dance-fitness and various educational trips are some of the teaching elements used in her creative based setting.



Caroline Vollans is the lead writer and editor for Sheringham’s SPH. Caroline is a psychoanalyst and writer. She writes for Nursery World, family and the Foundation Stage Forum, and is author of *Wise Words: How Susan Isaacs changed parenting* (Routledge 2018) and co-editor of *Putting the EYFS Curriculum into Practice* (Sage 2023).

**Priya:** *Well, Nazrin’s only little and it’s all part of growing up - don’t worry, you’re not alone! When we ask the children to do things, we try to make sure they understand what we want of them. Also, we start small so that we don’t expect too much.*

**Nazrin’s mum:** So how would you get her to put away her toys? I ask her nicely and she just carries on playing and ignores me.

**Priya:** *I’d do the same as you and ask her nicely. But I think at this stage I’d want to get Nazrin to help tidy up, not to do it alone. So, you could say something like, “It’s time to get our lunch now (or whatever) – let’s tidy up. I’m going to put the train in the cupboard – what are you going to put away?” Saying it like this sounds like you assume she’ll do it - it’s different to saying, “Will you help me?” Also, you’re giving her a choice.*

**Nazrin’s mum:** So, basically, I clear up and just ask her to put one toy away?

**Priya:** *Yes, it’d be a good start for Nazrin, wouldn’t it? She’ll go from none to one!*

**Nazrin’s mum:** Well, that’s something I suppose. I’ll have to be very patient and remind myself to take it slowly (laughs).

**Priya:** *Well, it’s hard, but I think so. What about trying it and seeing what happens?*

**Nazrin’s mum:** Yes, I’ll have a go. Wish me luck though - she can be so stubborn.

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Priya: *Come back and tell me how it goes. You never know, she might put one away with no bother. If she does, after a couple of times of doing that, you could up it to 2.*

Nazrin's mum: *It'll be good for me to learn a bit of patience – I know where she gets her stubbornness from!*

Priya: *Don't worry, we'll get there in the end. We'll do the same thing here with some children so that Nazrin can see how it works.*

In this conversation, I started by immediately trying to help Nazrin's mum feel OK about Nazrin's behaviour – this seemed to help her feel less anxious and more relaxed.

I also moved away from the idea of an *instruction* – I didn't use the word but tried to make the whole thing more cooperative and gentler in tone.

I thought it was important to start with a small goal - this would take the pressure off both Nazrin and her mum. I think it came as a bit of a relief to Nazrin's mum to know that it was acceptable for Nazrin to only put away one toy.

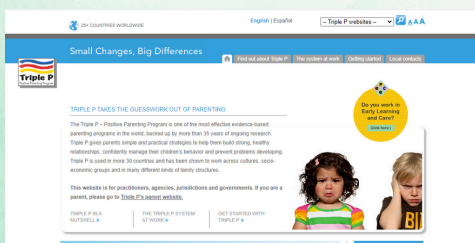
By asking Nazrin's mum to report back to me and by saying that we'd do some modelling, I emphasised our partnership. This is very important for all parents, especially those who are struggling.

***Children's behaviour is very different in childcare settings compared to home.  
Working closely, we can help bridge the gap.***

**By Priya Kanabar and Caroline Vollans**

### **Future advice I may recommend:**

A parenting course or support group. For instance, the [Triple P](#).



Linking up Nazrin's mum with another mum so that they can offer each other support.