# **Identifying triggers for unwanted behaviour**

It is helpful to keep a diary of unwanted behaviours. This can help identify potential triggers. Once these are identified, you can create a plan to help the young person to self-regulate.

Here’s an idea of what you may want to consider recording and why:

## Date and time behaviour occurred

You might see a pattern of behaviour emerging.  For example, a day of the week associated with a specific activity. Or a time of day when perhaps there’s a sugar low.

## What happened before

It’s important to record where the young person was. What the environment was like (for example, noisy, quiet, busy, bright)? Who else was there? What was everyone doing? Were there signs that they were becoming overwhelmed?

## What happened during the incident

What did the behaviour look like? How did other people (including you) react? Did it escalate and if so how and why?

## What happened afterwards

What did the young person do? What did other people (including you) do? How long did it take for the young person to become calm? Did they say anything about how they felt?

There is no need to record everything but what you do record could provide useful information. Recording it in a table might make it easier to identify patterns. There is an example below. You could use a notebook or white board.

# **Trigger diary example**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date and time**  | **What happened before**  | **What happened during**  | **What happened after**  |
| 01/03/24 3:30pm | We were at soft play after school. It was quite noisy, and kids were running around. | Another child accidentally bumped into my child. The other child ran off. My child became very upset and angry. I managed to remain calm, and we left. | They calmed quickly in the car. They were then upset that we couldn’t go back in. Later they said that the other child had behaved intentionally. We discussed other possibilities. |
| 08/05/24 7.30pm | I was trying to get him into the bath, and he was resisting. He ran around pulling his hair. | He refused the bath and emptied bubble bath over the floor. It took a long time for me to clear it up. | He didn’t have a bath. We were both upset. It took a long time to settle him for bed. |