1. **CBF Challenging Behaviour Workshops**
   
   Various training programmes aim to reduce the rate and severity of challenging behaviour to improve quality of life for children with intellectual disabilities and those supporting them. Challenging Behaviour Foundation workshops also promote partnership between family carers and school staff. The workshops, based on the principles of positive behavioural support, are delivered by two facilitators experienced in behavioural approaches, one of whom is also a family carer.

   See [http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/training-consultancy/cbf-training/training.html](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/training-consultancy/cbf-training/training.html)

2. **2011 Evaluation of Workshops**

   The first formal evaluation of CBF workshops was based on questionnaires completed by 82 family carers and teaching staff members before and after the workshops. It found statistically significant benefits for both adults and children following the workshops:

   - Reductions in the perceived frequency, severity and management difficulty of challenging behaviours
   - Improvements in the emotional wellbeing of family carers and teaching staff
   - Increased understanding about the causes of challenging behaviour

3. **2012 Evaluation of Workshops**

   This investigated workshop outcomes through an in-depth exploration of changes in the behaviour of children and changes in the emotions and knowledge of adults. It also explored whether family carers had changed their responses to supporting challenging behaviour and to evidence any broader changes in the quality of life for families and individuals.
4. Interviews with Parents
Five parents who had completed the workshops around two months prior to interview were interviewed in-depth by Dr Nick Gore of the Tizard Centre. The parents were assured that taking part was voluntary and anonymous although the evaluation would be written up. 30-40 minute interviews were conducted by speaker phone at a time convenient to parents.

5. Characteristics of the five parents’ five disabled children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Diagnostic Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Autism and Severe Learning Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Autism and Epilepsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Autism and Severe Learning Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cri du Chat Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Down’s Syndrome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Sample Size
This evaluation was drawn from a small sample of participants and so some caution should be exercised when generalising the results. However, it is an in-depth investigation of the lived experiences of parents and the results provide some convincing accounts of meaningful change.

The full version of the evaluation report contains extensive quotes from the parents and an explanation of the methodology and a discussion of the findings.

7. Before the Workshop
Parents were asked to describe the needs of their child and their behaviours that have been challenging in the past. These included

- Aggression - ‘Physical abuse or throwing things’
- Self-injury - ‘Excessively picks his skin’ ‘Head banging, door banging’
- Non-compliance - ‘Just sits down on the floor and does not move’

In recent years, the severity, management difficulty and impact on families had increased. Despite the high level of challenging behaviour experienced by all parents, whilst some parents had managed to access a range of courses, others had not received any training.

None had attended training about challenging behaviour

Parents described their initial expectations about attending workshops. Most had an open mind to attending and some curiosity. However they had reservations that the workshops might be unhelpful. One parent thought the workshops would provide guidance on the use of physical interventions but it was explained that this was not within the scope of the workshops.
8. **Engaging with the Workshops**  
Parents had positive impressions when attending the first workshop. This contrasted with their initial concerns about the workshops and with their other experiences of training or support. There was considerable praise for the trainers. Parents said their frank and open approach was refreshing and helpful as well as their expertise. They also liked being in a group with people who had experienced similar challenges.

9. **Gaining New Knowledge**  
Parents gained increased knowledge about challenging behaviour from the workshops. This included a firm recognition of the need to analyse the environment and systematically record events related to episodes of challenging behaviour. Parents could now talk about challenging behaviour itself as an expression of needs.

Parents described the importance of preventing challenging behaviour by responding early and more fully appreciated the importance of alternative means of meeting a child’s needs in order to reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviour. They applied this knowledge to better understand and support their child, with increased awareness of events that triggered challenging behaviour.

They also had a greater appreciation of the communication role of challenging behaviour. These insights were achieved by viewing the world more from their child’s perspective.

10. **Strategies Gained from the Workshops**  
Parents detailed strategies they had implemented that built upon the principles of support covered in the workshops. For some this meant developing more effective ways of de-escalating situations to better ensure the safety of their child and others. Parents had begun to change aspects of the environment or interactions with their child.

Methods of encouraging desirable behaviours through reinforcement were discussed. Many parents had further increased their child’s opportunities for self-expression and understanding of the world around them since the workshops. Some parents described new ways they were using to help their child manage their emotional states.

11. **Changes in Behaviour**  
A number of parents indicated that strategies they had developed were effective in meeting their child’s needs and managing challenging behaviour. Some found dramatic changes in the frequency of their child’s behaviour following the workshops. Most reported that some degree of challenging behaviour continued in one form or another.

Parents also said their child had developed further positive behaviours since the workshops and reported positive emotional changes.
12. Improved Family Life
Parents highlighted ways in which changes in behaviour had begun to benefit family life. This included having more time for leisure activities and being better able to access the community. Parents reported a positive change for relationships within the family home.

13. Parents Feeling Better
Some parents reported improvements in their own emotional states. Some associated this with the support gained from spending time with parents and professionals who had experienced similar challenges. This seemed to help parents reframe their own situation and emotional reactions and they reported a positive change to how they experienced challenging behaviour.

14. Enhanced Relationship with School
Many of the children had attended their school for a number of years. All parents reported close and longstanding relationships with staff. They commented on the value of being able to work in partnership with school staff during the workshops. Parents had new insights into work and experiences within the school environment.

Parents and teaching staff had been encouraged to attempt new ways of communicating between home and school since the workshops and were anticipating further meetings.

15. Suggestions for Developing the Workshops
Parents made suggestions to improve the workshops. One was about training in physical restraint. A further suggestion was the workshop being arranged to focus on children whose developmental level, presenting needs and behaviours were more closely matched.

Whilst positive changes had been experienced there was concern about how this might be maintained in the future and the need for additional parenting support. One suggestion was for ideas learnt from the workshops to be more formally recorded and used as a shared parent and teacher resource in the future.

ALTHOUGH THE ABOVE CAPTURES THE MAIN MESSAGES FROM THE EVALUATION, PLEASE SEE THE FULL EVALUATION REPORT FOR FULL DETAILS

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation
October 2012