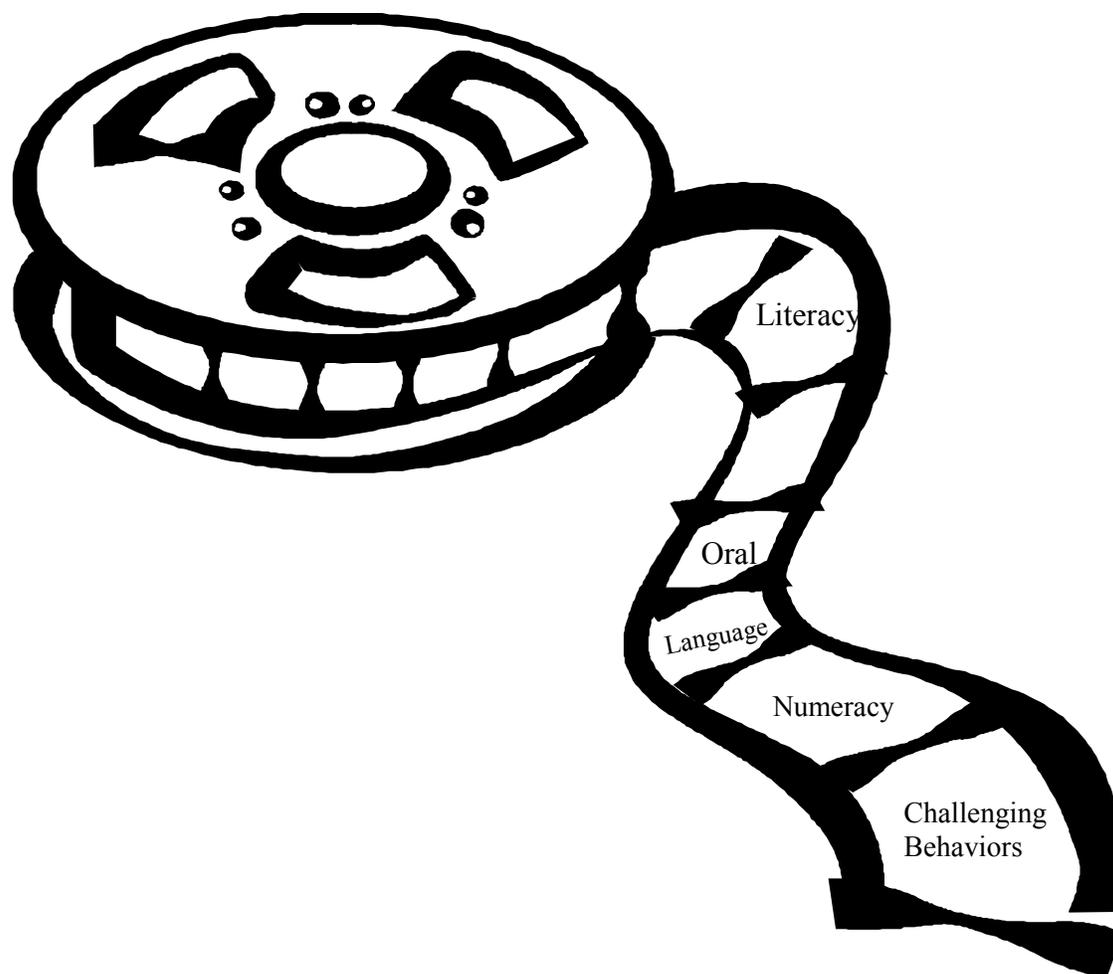


# Project REEL



## Resources for Early Educator Learning

# BUILDING FATIGUES

to remember about young children's learning:

1. Children learn best in a social setting.

**Therefore,** avoid independent seat work.

2. Children learn best through play.

**Therefore,** immerse them in a richly active play and avoid worksheets.

3. Children learn best when they are allowed to approximate adult behaviors.

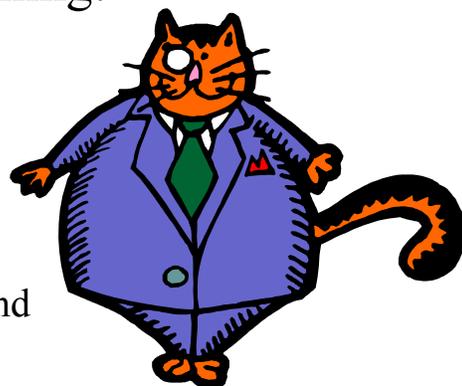
**Therefore,** demonstrate adult practices and accept children's attempts at those adult practices **as if** they were already conventional efforts.

4. Children learn best in an atmosphere of respect where their dignity is protected.

**Therefore,** establish appropriately high expectations for children, focusing on positive guidance instead of punishment.

5. Children learn best when they have daily opportunities to use diverse social, language, literacy, and numeracy practices and receive extensive feedback from the caring adults in their classroom.

**Therefore,** offer children time to use new ideas and respond to them in ways that enriches their understandings.



**Project REEL: Workshop 1**

**A FOCUS ON SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS**

“I’ve come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a person’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a person humanized or de-humanized.”  
(Haim Ginott)



<b>Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (Birth to Age Three)</b>
<b>SECTION 6: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b> <b>Component: Self-Concept</b> <b>Component: Self-Control</b> <b>Component: Cooperation</b>
<b>LEARNING EXPECTATIONS:</b>
<b><i>0-4 Months:</i></b>
Expresses comfort and discomfort (0-4 mos.)
Expresses enjoyment and unhappiness (0-4 mos.)
Regulation (0-4 mos.)
<b><i>5-8 Months:</i></b>
Expresses feelings (5-8 mos.)
Expresses preferences and interests (5-8 mos.)
Regulation (5-8 mos.)
<b><i>9-12 Months:</i></b>
Shows likes and dislikes (9-12 mos.)
Pays attention and responds to name and images of self (9-12 mos.)
Tries to manage own behavior in certain situations (9-12 mos.)
Demonstrates awareness of others (9-12 mos.)
Recognizes images of family members (9-12 mos.)
<b><i>13-18 Months:</i></b>
Shows preferences, likes, and dislikes (13-18 mos.)
Developing independence (13-18 mos.)

Tries to manage own behavior (13-18 mos.)
May interact with another child for a short period of time (13-18 mos.)
<b>19-24 Months:</b>
Expresses wishes, worries, and fears (19-24 mos.)
Explores the environment to find out who he is and what he can do (19-24 mos.)
Tries to manage own behavior (19-24 mos.)
Watches and plays briefly with other children (19-24 mos.)
<b>2-2 ½ Years:</b>
Shows an emerging sense of self (2 – 2 1/2 yrs.)
Gaining sense of mastery and achievement (2 – 2 1/2 yrs.)
Growing ability to manage own behavior (2 – 2 1/2 yrs.)
Plays beside other children (2 – 2 1/2 yrs.)
Can share some pretend play themes (2 – 2 1/2 yrs.)
<b>2 ½ - 3 Years:</b>
Growing competence in accomplishments of self-care (2 1/2 – 3 yrs.)
Gaining skill in identifying and expressing feelings (2 1/2 – 3 yrs.)
Demonstrates emerging ability to manage behavior (2 1/2 – 3 yrs.)
Shows capacity to play cooperatively with other children (2 1/2 – 3 yrs.)
Responds to other children’s feelings (2 1/2 – 3 yrs.)

<b>Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (ages 3-5) Aligned with The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5</b>	
<b>Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (ages 3-5)</b>	<b>The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5</b>
<b>SECTION 6: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Component: Self-Concept</b>	
<b>Component: Self-Control</b>	
<b>Component: Cooperation</b>	
<b>Component: Management of Self Within the Learning Environment</b>	
<b>LEARNING EXPECTATIONS:</b>	
<b>3 – 4 Years:</b>	
Shows greater comfort with independence and increased feelings of self-worth (ages 3-4)	See #s 1 & 5
Shows positive self-esteem (ages 3-4)	See #s 2 & 10
Verbalizes feelings, needs, and wants (ages 3-4)	See #3
Manages own behavior with increasing skill (ages 3-4)	See #s 4 & 11)
Gains control over impulses (ages 3-4)	See #s 11 & 12
Shows willingness to follow simple rules (ages 3-4)	See #9
Engages in cooperative play with other children (ages 3-4)	See #10
Shows increasing ability to understand the feelings of other children (ages 3-4)	See #11
Shows increasing willingness to work out problems with peers (ages 3-4)	See #13
Is willing to participate in group activities (ages 3-4)	See #s 7 & 8
<b>4 – 5 Years:</b>	
Uses words and seeks adult help when needed to resolve conflicts (ages 4-5)	See #s 4 & 13
Participates in the group life of the class (ages 4-5)	See #s 8 & 12
Demonstrate self-confidence (ages 4-5)	See #5

Follows simple classroom rules and routines and uses classroom materials carefully (ages 4-5)	See #s 7, 8, & 9
Shows empathy and caring for others (ages 4-5)	See#11
Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner (ages 4-5)	See #22
Shows some self-direction (ages 4-5)	See #5
Attends to task and seeks help when encountering a problem (ages 4-5)	See #24
Approaches tasks with flexibility and inventiveness (ages 4-5)	See #23

## Objectives for ECE Learning:



### Early Childhood Educators will:

- ✓ Value the critical impact of adults on children's behavior.
- ✓ Demonstrate an active awareness of the relationship between social-emotional development and challenging behaviors.
- ✓ Identify specific strategies for promoting Social-Emotional Development.
- ✓ Identify specific strategies for dealing with Challenging Behaviors.
- ✓ Apply these strategies in a variety of settings.
- ✓ Determine where more focus/support is needed when a child presents a challenging behavior.
- ✓ Identify resources for supporting social-emotional development and dealing with challenging behaviors.
- ✓ View behavior within a developmental context using the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards and *Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum*.

## Supporting Research for Trainers:

- 📖 Aldridge, J., Eddowes, A. and Kuby, P. (1998). No Easy Answer: Helping Children with Attention and Activity Level Differences. Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.
- 📖 Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Training Modules (see Web site: <http://csefel.uiuc.edu>).
- 📖 Greenman, J. (1988). Caring spaces, learning places. Redmond, WA: Exchange Press.
- 📖 Joseph, G.E. & Strain, P.S.(2003). *Building positive relationships with young children*. Retrieved June 21, 2006, from Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: <http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu/modules/module2/handouts/2.pdf>
- 📖 Kaiser, B. and J.S. Rasminsky. (2003). Challenging Behaviors in Young Children: Understanding, Preventing and Responding Effectively. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- 📖 Marion, M. (2003). Guidance of Young Children (6th Ed.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- 📖 Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.
- 📖 <http://www.interventioncentral.org/>

**NOTE:** Unless otherwise referenced, the information in this session is from the Center for the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (<http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu>)

## Workshop Content:

### I. The Critical Impact of Adults on Children's Behavior.

Challenging Behavior is any behavior that:

- Interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play
- Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults
- Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure  
(Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003, p. 9)



#### Activity: Hot Button

1. Have participants identify children's behaviors that "drive them crazy" or "push their buttons."
  - a. Put a small pile of yellow construction paper circles (yellow "hot button" disks) on each table, and have participants individually fill in their "hot button behaviors" on separate disks. Each participant can complete several disks.
  - b. Ask for volunteers to name some of the behaviors that push their buttons. Keep going until you have an extensive list.



2. Ask participants to think of children who they have worked with who have these types of behaviors.

- a. Then have participants talk about how they felt when they were working with that child or how they felt when people were sharing their list of behaviors that "pushed their buttons."

- b. As they say these things, write them on the flip-chart paper or a blank overhead. They will most likely say things like: "It makes me frustrated." "I feel like I don't know what I am doing." "It makes me mad." "I feel like a failure." "It makes me want to get another job."

- c. Once you have a long list, make the point that it is difficult to be effective with children when you are feeling this way. It is important to plan a strategy for dealing with these situations. How does it affect your interactions with children when they engage in these behaviors? Participants might say they avoid children when they act like this or that adults interact in a not-so-pleasant way after children engage in these behaviors, etc.

- d. Let's talk about how we can use this emotional signal as a positive thing—it tells you that you need to think of positive ways to deal with the situation (e.g., focusing on the positive, asking for help, reframing).

e. Examples of Upsetting Thoughts and Calming Thoughts:

Social-Emotional and Challenging Behaviors

Upsetting Thoughts:

"That child is a monster. This is getting ridiculous. He'll never change."

"I'm sick of putting out fires!"

Reaction to Child:

"If you keep acting that way you're going to end up in prison!"

"I'm sick of you acting this way. How many times to I have to tell you \_\_\_?"

Result: Often behavior escalates.



Calming Thoughts

"This child is testing to see where the limits are. My job is to stay calm and help him learn better ways to behave."

"I can handle this. I am in control. They have just learned some powerful ways to get control. I will teach them more appropriate ways to behave."

Reaction to Child:

"You seem really mad. Let's talk about this to find something you could do to make this better."

"You seem frustrated. Remember, we've talked about some other ways you can let us know your feelings."

Result: Ability to de-escalate behavior.



Upsetting Thought

"I wonder if Wal-Mart is hiring?"

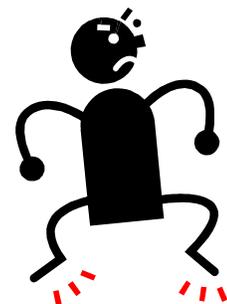
"He ruins everything! This is going to be the worst year of my career."

Reaction to Child:

"I don't have to put up with this. I can find another job!"

"You're the worst kid I've ever had to deal with. I need to call your Mama and tell her just to take you home!"

Result: Often behavior escalates.





### Calming Thoughts

Social-Emotional and Challenging Behaviors

"I feel like nothing I'm doing is working right now – I need to get some help."

"Having him in my class is going to be a challenge, but I'll bet I can learn a lot."

### Reaction to Child:

"Natasha, Ms. Sue is going to work with you right now."

"I'd better pull out my Project REEL stuff during naptime!"

Result: Ability to de-escalate behavior.

Talk about the fact that if we reframe our thoughts we can engage in more positive interactions with children and use these as opportunities for growth.

3. Have participants take each of their "yellow hot buttons," re-read it, and consider how they can reframe the behavior to interact with the child to build a positive relationship with him or her. For example, one might consider: "If Delroy starts to whine when he can't get his shoes on or off, or his bookbag stored in his cubby, I will teach him how to ask for help in a more appropriate way."

4. Make the point that there are individual and culturally based beliefs that affect our attitudes about challenging behavior.

a. What pushes one individual's button might be very different from what pushes another individual's buttons.

b. Past experiences with children, training experiences, and level of support for dealing with challenging behaviors are just some of those factors.

c. Also, culturally based beliefs affect our attitudes (e.g., what skills we expect children to engage in independently at certain ages, how we expect children to interact with adults, etc.).

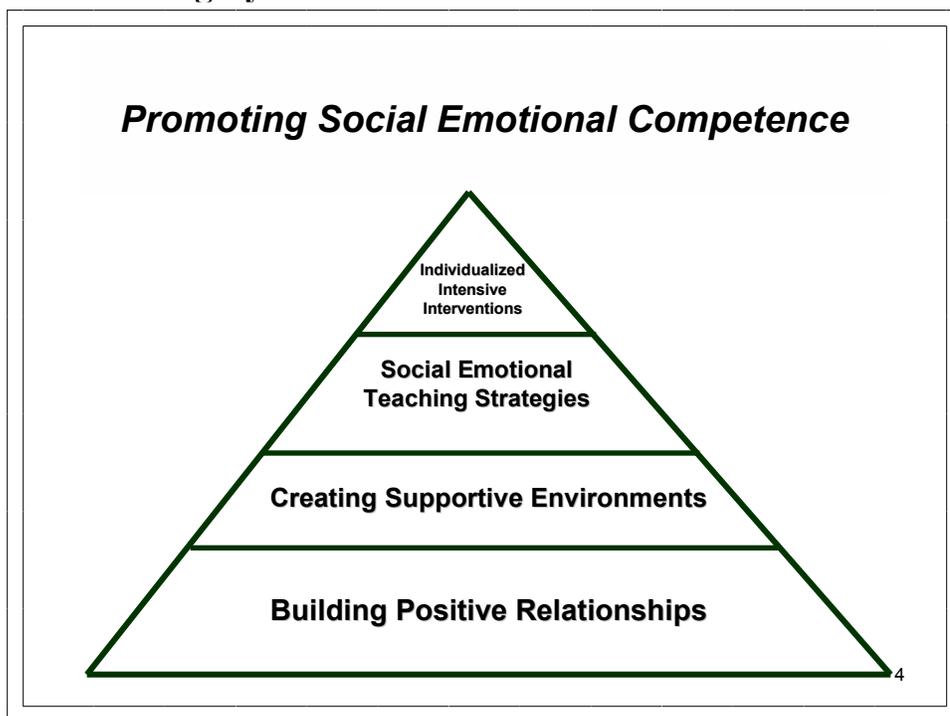
5. Talk about how important it is to use a team approach. It is especially important in terms of providing support to those who work with children with challenging behaviors every day. What resources are available to participants?

### **Practical Application for Specialists:**

- Use "Hot Button" Activity with your participants – modify if necessary.
- As you spend time with participants – listen for these kinds of comments. Point out the calming thoughts/reactions that you hear. Model these when you hear upsetting thoughts/reactions.



## The Teaching Pyramid



**B**uilding Positive Relationships - Relationships form the foundation of the triangle and are necessary for everything else we do.



**C**reating Supportive Environments - Well-designed environments support children's appropriate behaviors and make it less likely that children will need to engage in challenging behavior. In addition, they teach children expectations and promote their engagement and interactions.



**S**ocial Emotional Teaching Strategies - Talk about the importance of teaching children the skills that they need so they don't have to use challenging behavior.



**I**ndividualized Intensive Interventions - When we do all of this, we are less likely to need to design intensive, individualized interventions. The success of individualized interventions depends on the extent to which the other levels of the pyramid have been addressed.

## Building Positive Relationships with Children, Families and Other Professionals

### Practical Application for Specialists:

Be good listeners. Give participants the opportunity to vent – listen without commenting even when you disagree. (Example: “That child is a monster. This is getting ridiculous. He’ll never change. I’m telling you – I’ve been here for 15 years and I’ve seen it all. There’s nothing that will work with him. I’ve tried all those things you told me to do and he’s still acting the same!”)



### Positive Relationships with Children



**“Building positive relationships with young children is an essential task and a foundational component of good teaching.”** –Joseph & Strain

“Whenever a teacher responds to one student, [all of the other students in the room] learn a lesson.” Goleman, 1997, p. 279)

**These “lessons” are enhanced for young children when adults let them know they are cared for; children pay greater attention to adults who they trust and who they perceive as warm and nurturing (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003).**

## Why is it important to build positive relationships with children?

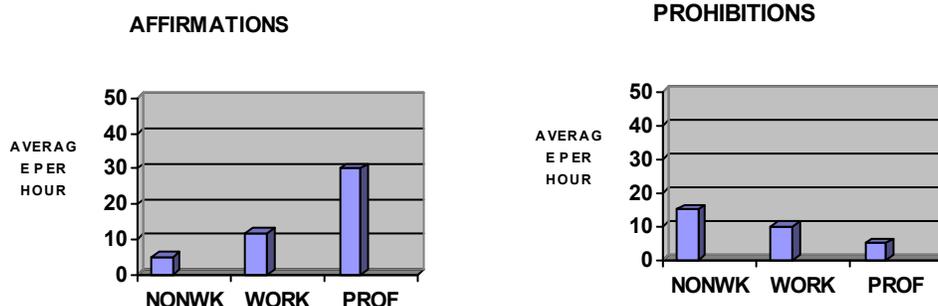
- ◆ Creates a safe environment for children
- ◆ Ensures that all children, even those with the most challenging behaviors, have access to ongoing positive relationships
- ◆ Fosters children’s cooperation and motivation
- ◆ Positive preschool experience and warm and open relationship with teacher are “protective factors” for child – associated with academic and behavioral problems in school.
- ◆ “Time-saver” – building relationships on the front end may save time and effort in assessment and intervention strategies.
- ◆ Increases influence on child’s behavior



## Early Childhood Educator Role

- Observe
- Talk with others who know the child (family, other caregivers)
- Positive, affirming statements to all children. Children from lower socioeconomic homes appear to be *in particular need* of affirming statements (e.g. statements such as, “try it again; I think you can do it!”, “it sounds like you really liked that!”, and “oh, you don’t like to hold that toy”). Relative to higher socioeconomic homes, these children receive *significantly more* prohibitory statements from parents (e.g., statements such as “I can’t believe you’re doing that again!”, “stop that!”, “you can’t do that right!”)

Hart and Risley (1995) conducted research with families of varying socioeconomic levels: professional, working, and non-working class. The following results were obtained:



“Piggy bank” example: affirmations – making deposits in the piggy bank; criticism – withdrawal. For child who has had few affirmations, there may be nothing in the bank – criticism is equal to writing bad checks.



Recognize that it is easier to build relationships with some children than with others - those who may be most difficult may need the positive relationship most.



### Early Childhood Educator Payoff

- Child is easier to teach and has less challenging behavior
- More positive feeling about skills and effort – may even like job better
- See child gain skill in building positive relationships
- Get to know the child

### Activity:

- Select a partner
- Brainstorm a list of things you could do to build or strengthen relationships with children.
- From that list, identify 2-3 things you are going to work on in order to build stronger relationships with the children in your setting.



## Practical Strategies for Building Relationships

*Play is an important context for building relationships with children. Play gives the adult an opportunity to follow the child's lead, comment on what the child is doing, and build on positive interactions.*

It is easy to spend most of our time giving directions and correcting behavior, but play provides a context for focusing on more positive behaviors and interactions and promoting children's social skills and emotional development.

- Pay attention to each individual child.
- Give children one-on-one positive attention.
- Joke and laugh with children.
- Know what interests each child and talk to the child about that interest.
- Respect each child's approach to situations and people.
- Don't be afraid to be wrong and to talk with children about it.
- Give hugs, pats, and handshakes.
- Talk to the child seriously when the topic is serious or important to the child.
- Tell children what makes you feel happy and sad and ask them to respect your feelings.
- Ask children to tell you what makes them happy and sad and respect their feelings.
- Speak to children at their eye level.
- Greet children by name when they enter the classroom each day.
- Show children that you are happy they are there.
- Learn and remember personal information about children (e.g., best friend's name, pet's name, type of pets, sibling, activities they do outside of school), and use this information in your conversations with them.
- Use positive reinforcement in a meaningful and respectful manner. Tailor positive reinforcement to the individual needs/likes/preferences of the child.
- Give children genuine choices, and assist them in following through with their choices. (Note: Give choice only when there is a choice. Example – “Would you like to sit at the round table or the rectangle table?” *not* “Would you like to have lunch now?”)
- Show respect for children's cultural, linguistic, and religious beliefs.
- Speak respectfully about children's families.

- Listen to children when they speak to you and respond appropriately to their questions.
- Spend time with children doing what they love to do.
- Play with children on their level (both physically and emotionally).
- Smile at children.
- Respond to children consistently.
- Greet every child at the door by name.
- Have a conversation over snack.
- Listen to a child's ideas and stories and be an appreciative audience.
- Send positive notes home.
- Provide praise and encouragement.
- Share information about yourself and find something in common with the child.
- Ask children to bring in family photos and give them an opportunity to share it with you and their peers.
- Post children's work.
- Have a "Star" of the week who brings in special things from home and gets to share them during circle time.
- Acknowledge a child's effort.
- Give compliments liberally.
- Call a child's parents to say what a great day she or he were having in front of the child.
- Find out what a child's favorite book is and read it to the whole class.
- Sharing days.
- Make "all about me" books and share them in the book center.
- Write all of the special things about a child on a T-shirt and let them wear it.
- Go to an extracurricular activity with the child.
- Learn a child's home language.
- Give hugs, high fives and thumbs up for accomplishing tasks.
- Hold a child's hand.
- Tell a child how much they were missed when they miss a day of school.

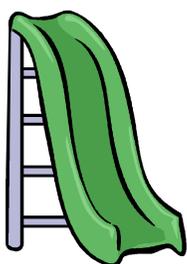
## Supportive Environments

**“The most anxiety-producing settings are usually those with ill-defined roles, those in which we feel we have no control over our part, or those where we have no role at all” (Greenman, 1988).**

*“Perhaps that quality, that elusive yet vital quality that lies at the heart of creating classroom community is the teacher – a teacher who fully expects brilliant thinking from every child every day and creates a world to support that expectation.”*  
--Ellin Oliver Keene

To Create Supportive Environments we must consider that the learning environment:

- ◆ Involves all settings for children.
- ◆ Includes the physical environment, how time is structured, and expectations for behavior.
- ◆ Must be rich in opportunities for exploration and discovery.
- ◆ Influences the way children (and adults) behave.



**Fully implementing Creative Curriculum requires that participants pay a great deal of attention to the learning environment, so these may not be new concepts. However, thinking about these issues in terms of how they relate to preventing challenging behavior and promoting social emotional development may be new.**

Some environmental design issues that will help teach children behavioral expectations include (1) **the physical design of the environment**, (2) **schedules**, (3) **routines**, (4) **rules**, and (5) **how activities are planned and structured**.

### **The Physical Design of the Environment - Developing Interest Areas/ Learning Centers**

Learning centers are areas where materials are used and stored together. When developing learning centers for any age keep in mind:

- ✓ Wet/messy areas should be together.
- ✓ Active and quiet areas should be separated.
- ✓ Boundaries create separate areas.
- ✓ Clear pathways make easy access for children.
- ✓ Visibility – must be easily supervised



For older toddlers and preschoolers:

- ✓ Create centers where children can function independently.
- ✓ Plan for 1/3 more children than enrolled.

### **Managing Learning Centers**

**Learning centers will work in your setting ONLY if they are well managed. Well-managed learning centers:**

- ✓ Have enough materials for the number of children in the center.
- ✓ Are easily supervised.
- ✓ Allow for children to work independently.
- ✓ Have clear guidelines and expectations for use.



**For older toddlers and preschoolers:**

- ✓ Have a set number of children who may be in the center.
- ✓ Have a system of management that helps children to know which center is available to them.

## Routine & Schedule

**A daily schedule for all children has some things in common. It has:**

- ⌚ Predictability
- ⌚ Flexibility
- ⌚ Careful planning
- ⌚ Balance of active and less active activities
- ⌚ Planning for transitions

### Infant Schedule has:

Individual schedules to meet the needs of each child and family.

- ⌚ Routines
- ⌚ Coordination with home schedule.

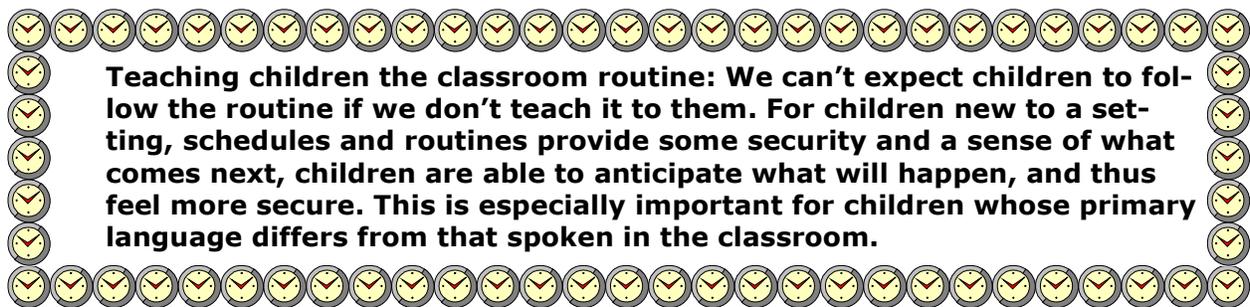
### Toddler Schedule has:

- ⌚ Balance to avoid overstimulation.
- ⌚ Clear, regular routines.



### Preschool Schedule has:

- ⌚ Balance between child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities.
- ⌚ Short blocks of time for whole group; large blocks of time for small group and individual activities



**Teaching children the classroom routine: We can't expect children to follow the routine if we don't teach it to them. For children new to a setting, schedules and routines provide some security and a sense of what comes next, children are able to anticipate what will happen, and thus feel more secure. This is especially important for children whose primary language differs from that spoken in the classroom.**

## Rules and Limits – Stating Expectations for Desired Behavior

**Authoritative caregivers have high expectations and support children in behaving appropriately. They:**

- Focus on important things.
- Encourage respectful treatment of others.
- Tell children what ***to do***, not what ***not to do***.
- Use clear, simple wording for rules.
- Limit rules to **five**.
- ***Keep children safe and healthy.***

### Transitions

**Planning for transitions with toddlers and preschoolers is essential to preventing chaos. Transition times may be thought of as “times of change” in the classroom.** (Examples: whole group to centers, lunch to nap, inside the classroom to outdoor play.)

Transition Tips:

- ⓐ When changes are necessary, **prepare children for those changes** (making announcements at opening circle, using visual prompts on a posted schedule indicating a change (e.g., a stop sign on top of an activity that is not going to happen as planned), and reminding children about the changes as often as possible).
- ⓑ **Minimize the number of transitions** that children have during the day.
- ⓒ **Plan transitions** so that there is a minimal amount of time spent in transition and that children are highly engaged as much as possible during the transition.



*Transition Strategies – games, songs, chants, fingerplays used during transition times. There are a number of books and websites that offer transition strategies that are appropriate for young children.*

**Positive Guidance Strategies:**  
Behavioral guidance strategies that are primarily focused on punishment are not as effective as approaches that combine rewards, praise, and consequences for inappropriate behaviors (Marzano, 2003).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
★ (Note: Positive Guidance ★  
★ Strategies are introduced in ★  
★ this session. Each of the next ★  
★ sessions will provide a focus ★  
★ on one or two strategies.) ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

🔔 Develop Reasonable and Fair Limits: Rules encourage self-control, protect the health and safety of children, and encourage respectful treatment of others.

🔔 State Limits Effectively: Tell children what to do, not what not to do; be as positive as possible.

🔔 Communicate Limits to Others/Review Limits Periodically: Communicate limits to everyone who walks into the setting; communicate information on limits to parents.

🔔 Use Natural and Logical Consequences: Punishment focuses on the misbehavior, does not teach more appropriate behaviors, and may cause misbehavior to worsen. The use of natural and logical consequences that occur immediately and relate to the behavior can result in a change to more appropriate behavior.

🔔 Help Children Accept Limits: Go to the child and get the child's attention; give reasons for the limits.

🔔 Encourage Children's Efforts to Accept Limits and to Be Cooperative or Helpful: Encourage the behavior becoming "self-encouraging" (develop ways that a child will find new behavior so attractive that she will eagerly comply); observe children to determine whether they have learned what they need to learn and whether they have accepted a limit; recognize and encourage a child's efforts.

🔔 Teach Helpful or Appropriate Behavior: Teach children behaviors that will help them the most. (Ex: How to ask for something; how to listen and not interrupt; how to join a group; how to complete work and put things away; skills for participating in a group; mealtime manners; how to wash hands properly.)

🔔 Set Up Practice Sessions and Give "On-the-Spot" Guidance: Give children a chance to practice what you tell them; provide guidance to practice.

🔔 Ignore Behavior (Only When It is Appropriate to Do So): Ignoring inappropriate behavior can extinguish the behavior. Dangerous or hurtful behaviors cannot be ignored.

🔔 Listen Actively: Focus on what the child says and the feelings behind the words without interrupting, then feedback perceptions of the feelings.

☞ Change Something About a Context or Situation: Change the physical setting; increase or decrease options available to the child.

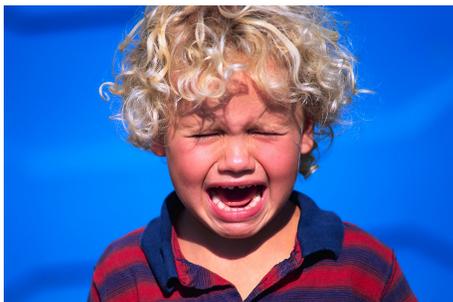
☞ Redirect Children's Behavior – Divert and Distract the Youngest Children: Distract the child and get him involved in different (appropriate) behavior.

☞ Redirect Children's Behavior - Make Substitutions When Dealing with Older Children: Give a child an appropriate substitution for a behavior. Recognize Signs of Stress, Anxiety, or Strong Emotion; Prevent Overstimulation and Teach Calming Techniques: Children often have difficulty controlling themselves when they are under stress. Teachers can recognize this and help the child by preventing overstimulation and teaching the child ways to calm down.

☞ Help Children Save Face and Preserve Their Dignity: No matter what the discipline technique used, the teacher needs to help the child move beyond it and get on with classroom activities.

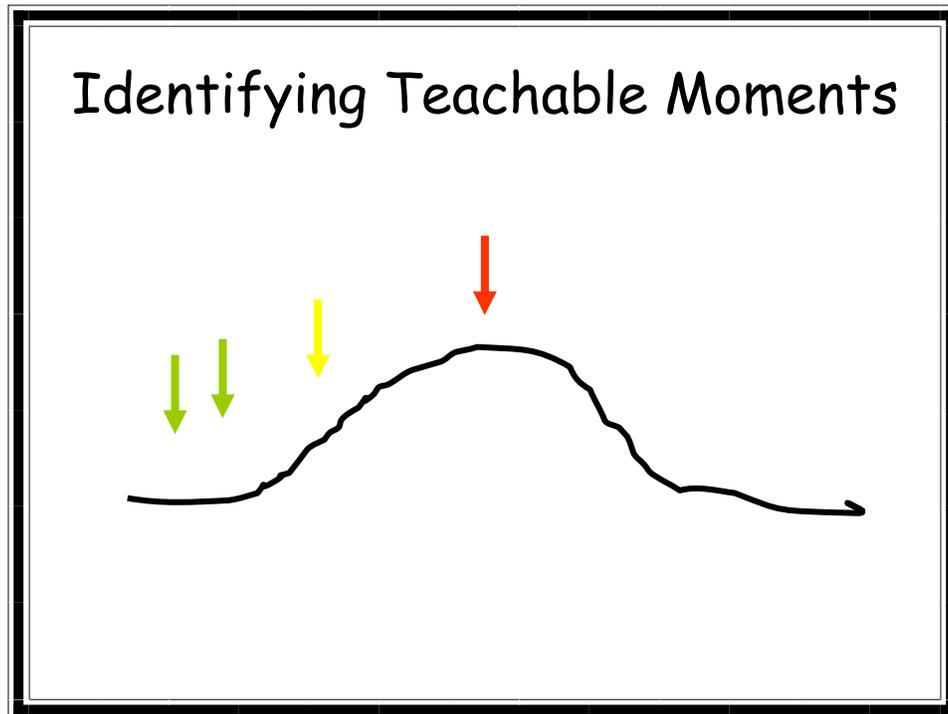
☞ Teach Conflict Resolution (Problem-Solving): Conflict is inevitable and can be a learning experience; develop and teach strategies where all can win and no one loses.

☞ Recognize Signs of Stress, Anxiety, or Strong Emotion; Prevent Overstimulation and Teach Calming Techniques: Children often have difficulty controlling themselves when they are under stress. Teachers can recognize this and help the child by preventing overstimulation and teaching the child ways to calm down.



### III. Strategies for Promoting Social-Emotional Development.

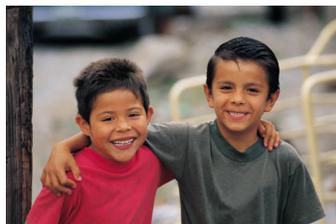
Describe a typical challenging behavior as it happens in the child care setting. Use the “Teachable Moments” chart to illustrate this scenario.



For example, a boy is playing with blocks and doing fine (first arrow on the left). More children come to the block area (second arrow on the left), and the boy and another child want the same block (third arrow). When the other child grabs the block, the boy hits the child and takes the block away (arrow at the top).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Point out that it is at the crisis (top arrow) that teachers often try to teach new social skills.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Generate ideas about what teachers might say (e.g., “Use your words.” “Hitting is not okay.” “Say you’re sorry.” “Ask nicely if you want something.” “Get an adult if you need help.” “Calm down.”).</li> <li>b. Discuss how these are all great social skills lessons—but the problem is that it is not a very effective teachable moment.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Describe the reasons why it is not a very effective teachable moment.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The challenging behavior already happened.</li> <li>b. The child is upset and agitated.</li> <li>c. The challenging behavior worked with little effort.</li> <li>d. The child may find a “lesson” from the teacher reinforcing.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Ask “When are effective teachable moments then?” (Answer: At the two arrows at the left-hand side.)</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

Teachers must have effective teaching strategies to teach young children friendship skills, following rules and directions, increasing emotional vocabulary, ideas for controlling anger and impulse, problem-solving skills, and ideas for dealing with common peer problems.



Teaching these strategies requires the solid foundation of a positive relationship between teacher and child AND an environment that facilitates the teaching of these skills. We cannot jump to this part of the pyramid without attention to the first two layers.

## What Behaviors Lead to Friendship?

Several behaviors that young children engage in during play with each other are directly related to having friends - children who do more of these behaviors are more likely to have friends. These specific behaviors include the following:

- ▶ **Giving Suggestions (Play Organizers).** With preschoolers, play organizers are usually “Let’s” statements, such as, “Let’s play trucks.” Often these “Let’s” statements are followed by suggestions about roles (e.g., “You be the driver.”) or specific activities (e.g., “Roll it to me.”).
- ▶ **Sharing Toys and Other Materials.** Sharing takes many forms among preschoolers. Children with friends make requests. (Example: “Can I have some paint?”) They also oblige share requests from others. (Example: Giving the child the paint she has asked for.)
- ▶ **Being Helpful.** Young children like to help adults. We can teach them to help their friends in a variety of ways. Children can help each other onto or off of an apparatus; they can tell or show a friend how to do something; or they can assist someone in distress.
- ▶ **Taking Turns.** Waiting for a turn is a very difficult task for young children, but turn taking is an important skill to learn. Look for opportunities to help children develop this skill in ways that are developmentally appropriate. (Examples: Computer – Laminated list with children’s names and clothespin or clip that can be moved down as each child has a turn will provide a visual cue to children as to when their turn will come. Use a kitchen timer or hour glass to help a child know when his turn is over and it is another child’s turn.)



Recognizing Emotions in Oneself and Other**Enhancing Emotional Vocabulary:**

Increasing the “feelings vocabulary” to include more complex feelings words allows children to make finer discriminations among their own and other’s feelings, which in turn allows them to be better interpersonal communicators. Adults can increase children’s feelings words by teaching different feeling words and definitions directly; incidentally in the context of conversation and play; and through special activities.

**Activity:** List feelings words for preschoolers. How many did you think of? Count up the number of positive and negative feelings words. Focus on both the positive and negative words.

Adults can teach feeling words directly by pairing a picture or photo of a feeling face with the appropriate affective label. Preschoolers are better at recognizing feelings with drawn pictures at first then progressing to photographs. Children’s books are an excellent way to label feeling faces with children. Many books are written explicitly about feelings and contain numerous feeling words while others prompt discussion that can lead to the introduction of new feeling words. Some of these included in the Project REEL book sets are:

- 📖 *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, Doreen Cronin
- 📖 *Horton Hatches an Egg*, Dr. Seuss
- 📖 *Owen*, Kevin Henkes
- 📖 *Peter’s Chair*, Ezra Jack Keats
- 📖 *Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, Mo Willems
- 📖 *Wemberly Worried*, Kevin Henkes
- 📖 *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse*, Kevin Henkes
- 📖 *I’ve Lost My Bear*, Jules Feiffer
- 📖 *Olivia and the Missing Toy*, Ian Falconer
- 📖 *Two Bad Ants*, Chris Van Allsburg
- 📖 *The Giving Tree*, Shel Silverstein
- 📖 *Mr. Carey’s Garden*, Jane Cutler
- 📖 *A Letter to Amy*, Ezra Jack Keats
- 📖 *Dear Mr. Blueberry*, Simon James
- 📖 *A Chair For My Mother*, Vera B. Williams
- 📖 *Owl Babies*, Martin Waddell
- 📖 *Leo the Late Bloomer*, Robert Kraus
- 📖 *Honey, I Love*, Eloise Greenfield
- 📖 *Harriet, You’ll Drive Me Wild!*, Mem Fox
- 📖 *Webster J. Duck*, Martin Waddell
- 📖 *She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl*, Eloise Greenfield
- 📖 *Go Away, Big Green Monster*, Ed Emberley
- 📖 *The Salamander Room*, Anne Mazer
- 📖 *White Rabbit’s Color Book*, Alan Baker

### ***Suggestions for Teaching Feelings Words:***

**Direct teaching**—(e.g., use pictures or photos of feeling faces with the appropriate affective labels)

**Indirect teaching**—(e.g., provide emotion labels as children experience various affective states – “you’re happy” - “you’re frustrated”)

**Play “how would you feel if?”** – (e.g., talk about or have children act out typical situations that happen when children are together and then talk about “how would you feel if this happened to you?”)

**Checking in** – (e.g., children can “check in” each morning by picking a feeling face picture that best depicts their affective state and sticking it next to their name. Children can be encouraged to change their feeling faces throughout the day as their feelings change.)

**Feeling dice and feeling wheels** - (e.g., make feeling dice by covering milk cartons with paper and drawing different feeling faces on each side. Children can toss dice; label the feeling face and describe a time they felt that way.)

**Pass the hat:** The teacher cuts out pictures that represent various feeling faces and places them in a hat (or large envelope) that is passed around the circle as music plays. When the music stops, the child holding the hat picks out a picture designating an emotion and is asked to identify it, express how they look when they feel that way, or describe a time when he or she felt that way.

**Feeling hunt:** The teacher puts “feeling face” pictures up all around the room (and around the building if possible). Children can be given child-size magnifying glasses, and they walk around looking for different feeling faces. When they find one, they label it and tell a time they felt that way. An expansion of this activity is to provide each child with a “Feeling Face BINGO Board” and they can cross out faces on their boards as they find them around the room.

**Mirrors:** Children are given small hand held mirrors at circle time or small group. As the teacher reads a story with many feeling words in it – the children make the face to the corresponding affective expression while looking at themselves in their mirrors. Then, the children put their mirrors down and show their peer their “feeling face.”

**Changing faces:** During small group time, children make paper plate faces. The teacher attaches the “mouth” and “eyebrows” to the paper plate with brads. This allows the child to change facial expressions on their plate by changing the mouth from a smile to a frown, and the eyebrows from facing in (angry, frustrated, etc.) to out (worried, scared, surprised, etc.). Children can color the rest of the faces. The teacher can then read a story and pause after key incidents and ask the children to show how they would feel by changing their paper plate face appropriately.

**Singing:** “If you’re happy and you know it...”: Teachers can add new verses to “If you are happy and you know it” as they introduce new feeling words to the class

- If you’re happy and you know it, hug a friend
- If you’re sad and you know it, cry a tear – “boo-hoo”
- If you’re mad and you know it, use your words “I’m mad”
- If you’re scared and you know it, get some help, “HEEEELLLLPPP!”
- If you’re silly and you know it, make a face, “BBBBLLLUUUUHHHH!”

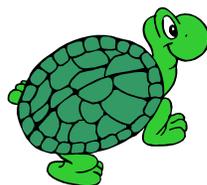
**Teach How To Calm Down, Control Anger and Impulse:**

Often we tell children to “calm down,” but they may not know what this means or be aware enough of their own feelings to be able to calm down. We can help them by giving them a specific strategy for “calming down.”

**“The Turtle ”**

What happens when a turtle is scared or upset? He goes into his shell. We can teach children to go into their “shells” by teaching them to behave as a turtle does:

1. Stop!
2. Pull head in.
3. Pull arms and legs in.
4. Take three deep breaths.



Practice this with children – provide examples of situations where they might become “turtles” and let them follow the steps. Let children know that the teacher will help them by giving the prompt “turtle” when this technique is needed.

**Teach How to Problem-Solve:**

**Children are not developmentally capable of using thought to control their behavior until approximately seven years of age. Younger children are completely reliant on adults’ modeling of the skills listed below.**

Four Steps in Problem-Solving:

- ▣ What is my problem?

Children should be taught to pay attention to their feelings as a first step in problem solving. When they are experiencing a negative emotion (e.g., anger or frustration), this feeling is the cue that they have a problem. This is why teaching young children an emotional vocabulary is an essential prerequisite skill to being an effective problem solver

- ▣ What are some solutions?

After children recognize that they have a problem, they next need to describe the problem. Adults and/or puppets can model the problem for children. Children can practice by looking at cards depicting a problem and describing what the problem is. Initially, children will need guidance to reframe defining the problem as the other person’s problem (“They won’t let me play.”) to their problem (“I want to play with them.”). This reframing, although subtle, will help children generate more appropriate solutions

▣ What would happen next?

Young children need help generating multiple alternative solutions to interpersonal problems. A lot of time should be spent directly teaching children alternative solutions to common problems and having children generate solutions independently. At this point in the instructional process, the key is to teach children to generate as many solutions as they can think of rather than thinking of a solution that will work best. Describe how young children need to spend time learning to generate alternative solutions.

After children have experience generating multiple alternative solutions to problems, they can begin to evaluate consequences. This strategy can be communicated to children in terms of “What would happen next?” Three questions can guide a child’s decision to determine if the consequences would be good or bad:

- Is the solution safe?
- Is the solution fair?
- How would everyone feel?

Understanding consequences can best be taught to children through role-plays. Children can generate a solution to a problem and then act it out with a puppet. The teacher can then prompt the child to think: Did anyone get hurt? Was it fair? How did you feel? How did the other person feel?

▣ Give the solution a try!

At this step, children are taught to act on the best solution that they generated. They are also taught what to do when a solution doesn’t work. When a prosocial solution doesn’t work, children can draw upon the other solutions they generated earlier that they believe will have positive consequences.



**Adult caregivers can keep in mind five steps as they assist young children in the problem-solving process: (1) anticipate problems, (2) seek proximity, (3) support, (4) encourage, and (5) promote.**



**A**nticipate problems - Expect problem situations to arise in your setting and be available to support children when a problem occurs.



**S**eek proximity - Be close enough to begin prompting a child through the problem-solving steps.



**S**upport - Young children will need support from the teacher to remember the problem-solving steps and to stay in the situation.



**E**ncourage - It is almost a certainty that even good solutions don't work all of the time. So, children need to be encouraged to keep trying at generating alternative solutions.



**P**romote - The last task to supporting a child's "in the moment" problem-solving efforts is to reinforce the child's success. This kind of promotion can be done in informal and formal ways. Examples: give children high-fives, thumbs-up, a wink, verbal praise, hugs, and so on. Plan mini-celebrations when a child has done a great job of problem solving. These mini-celebrations send a clear message to all of the children that peaceful persistence at problem solving is valued.

#### IV. Specific Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviors

#### V. Apply these strategies in a variety of settings and

#### VI. Determine where more focus/support is needed when a child presents a challenging behavior.



“Most of my children do well most of the time. But, there are a few—usually one or two—who don’t respond to my usual routines. And, I also have to remind myself that even my ‘good’ kids have problems from time-to-time. I’ve learned not to expect what I do to work 100% of the time with 100% of my children.” (Veteran family child care provider, 7 years experi-

#### Challenging Behavior – Definition

**Challenging Behavior is any behavior that:**

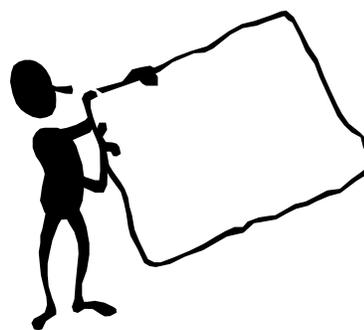
- Interferes with children’s learning, development, and success at play
- Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults
- Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure
- (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003, p. 9)

#### Activity

1. Have participants list behaviors they have encountered that would be considered “challenging” according to the definition (i.e., persistent behaviors that are unresponsive to the use of good guidance procedures).

2. Ask participants to list interventions that they have tried for these types of behaviors and describe whether the interventions were effective.

3. Ask participants whether the interventions were implemented in a systematic way—for example, according to a written plan developed based on the function of a behavior.



## General guidelines:

- ❖ Behaviors that may be “at-risk of interfering” may include behaviors that are developmentally appropriate but still unacceptable (for example, a two year old who bites another child), **when demonstrated repeatedly**.
- ❖ Refers to behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures (i.e., procedures related to positive relationships with children, creation of a supportive environment, and systematic teaching of social and emotional skills).
- ❖ Refers to behaviors that are persistent and severe and that are unresponsive to strategies that would normally work with most children.
- ❖ Challenging behaviors may also include behaviors that involve harm to self and/or others. Also, the possibility of abuse may also contribute to the demonstration of challenging behaviors. It is noted that there is not one behavior, alone, that predictably suggests abuse. Careful documentation of multiple behaviors over time is important in situations in which the possibility of abuse is suggested.
- ❖ The development of intensive individualized instruction and interventions is included at the top of the Teaching Pyramid. They are used after other components of the pyramid have been carefully examined.



## Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

### What is PBS?

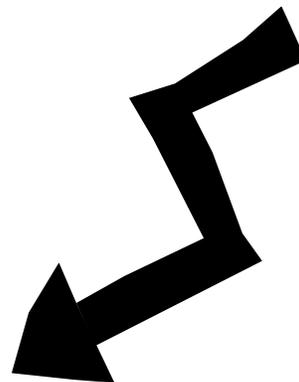
- Positive Behavior Support is an approach to developing individualized interventions based on identifying the purpose/function/message that is communicated by a challenging behavior.
- In order to develop an intervention or instructional plan individualized to a particular child, we have to identify the message that a particular child may be communicating through a behavior(s)

### When is PBS used?

- PBS is used as an approach to intervention when components from all other levels of the Teaching Pyramid have been considered. That is, PBS procedures would be used **only** after first thinking about factors related to building positive relationships, creating supportive environments, and fostering social-emotional development.
- PBS procedures are helpful **after** all other levels of the Teaching Pyramid have been reviewed as possible places for “intervention” to occur. For example, Ryan pushes Robbie during a center activity where there is only one container of markers available. The “intervention” might involve making more materials available in this center (Creating Supportive Environments) rather than developing an individualized plan for Ryan.

**Activity**

1. Label 4 containers: green circle, yellow circle, red circle, railroad crossing arm (clip art available online).
2. Explain the labeling system:  
*Green – ignore behavior*  
*Yellow – behavior must be addressed but is not harmful*  
*Red – behavior must be stopped*  
*Railroad Crossing Arm – immediate intervention and support is required*
3. Write behaviors on index cards. Examples: biting, hitting, yelling, calling teacher's name, leaving the room, spitting, masturbating, taking a toy, throwing, pulling hair, tantruming, kicking, etc. Include a few extreme behaviors such as threatening to kill self or others, bringing knife, stabbing child with pencil.
4. Turn cards face down and have a participant choose a card and determine which container would be most appropriate for this behavior.
5. Discuss reasons for placement in a specific container.



**Why PBS?**

- Positive behavior support is an approach that is different from the usual way challenging behaviors may be addressed. Rather than having a general intervention for all behaviors or one intervention for a behavior, PBS attempts to identify what a particular behavior means for a particular child. For example, rather than always relying on time away as a consequence for pushing, PBS strategies provide guidance in individualizing an intervention plan.
- PBS relies on a proactive approach—or a plan to prevent challenging behaviors—rather than an approach that is reactive—responding to a behavior when each time it occurs.
- Rather than relying on a “quick fix” solution, PBS approaches challenging behaviors from a systematic framework. PBS is based on replacing a challenging behavior with another behavior. Typical approaches are only oriented toward getting the challenging behavior to stop.

### **How is PBS used?**

- Positive behavior support is based on the idea that challenging behaviors are a form of communication. Thinking about challenging behaviors as ways to communicate messages puts the adult in a problem-solving position.
- Messages communicated through challenging behaviors are typically communicating one of two messages: "I want to get something" or "I want to avoid something."
- Some of the reasons children may communicate through behavior:
  - Children who may not have the language skills necessary to communicate appropriately and may use challenging behavior to tell us what they need to say;
  - Children who have limited social skills or who have learned that challenging behavior will result in meeting his or her needs may also use challenging behavior instead of language;
  - The challenging behavior may "work" for a child in gaining access to something (i. e., obtain) or in avoiding something (i. e., escape)
- PBS focuses on identifying the *form* of a behavior and the *function* of a behavior. The form of a behavior refers to the specific behavior that the child is exhibiting. The function of a behavior refers to the specific message (i.e., "I want" or "I need to avoid").
- A specific behavior might have different functions for different children. For example, Anna might hit to communicate she wants to leave a situation whereas Dylan might hit during play as a way of requesting a turn in play if he does not have appropriate play skills.
- A child may want to obtain:
  - Adult attention
  - Attention from other children
  - An object, activity, or person
  - Help
- A child may want to avoid:
  - Task Demands
  - An Activity
  - Social Interactions

**Activity**

Using the scenarios that follow, answer these questions:

What is the possible function of the behavior?

How did you determine the function?

What gave you information to determine the function?

Would it be enough to know the behavior (for example, Hannah crying and hitting her head ) in order to figure out the function?

What helped you identify the function?

A. Evan is playing with Duplos. He tries to attach a block to his stack of 3. He can't quite get the blocks to connect. He looks up at a teacher and begins fussing. He holds the stack of blocks up, looks at the blocks, and looks at the teacher. The teacher helps him put the blocks together.

B. Hannah is sitting in her high chair with nothing on the tray. Her mother is stirring her oatmeal. Hannah begins crying and bangs her head on the back of the seat. Her mother says to her, "It's not cool enough, honey, just a minute." Hannah stops crying when the oatmeal is placed on her tray.

C. Tim is riding a tricycle on the bike path. He sees a child move to the sandbox where he had just finished building a roadway. He leaps off the tricycle and tackles and then hits the child. A child care provider comes over to intervene. She comforts the child and she scolds Tim. Tim goes to the sandbox and continues construction on his roadway.

D. Madison is in housekeeping putting on high heels and a hat. Emily moves into the area and selects a purse from the dress-ups. Madison shouts "no" and bites Emily. A child care provider tells Madison to go to the thinking chair and then takes Emily to the bathroom to look at the bite. After 4 minutes, Madison leaves the thinking chair and returns to housekeeping. She grabs the purse Emily had selected and continues to play. Emily leaves the bathroom with the child care provider and then begins an art activity where the teacher is present.

**How is the function of a behavior determined?**

- All behaviors have a function for a child, even though it may not be immediately apparent. Some behaviors seem like they occur “out of the blue for no reason at all.” However, if we spend time looking at what is happening around the behavior, we can often figure out the causes or triggers for a behavior.
- Some behaviors may be related to a medical condition or a past event. In these situations, the function of the behavior will not necessarily be apparent from what surrounds the behavior. For example, children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder may be impulsive and have difficulty paying attention. Or, a child who experienced a traumatic event outside of the childcare setting may be fearful in the setting without apparent reason.
- We have to use context to figure out the function of a behavior. One helpful format to use is the following:

Trigger	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence
Sam is asked to come to the circle. Adult provides a physical prompt to move him to the group.	Sam resists, cries, and then hits the adult.	Adult moves away from Sam and allows Sam to choose another activity

As shown in the scenario, there are triggers in the environment that affect the behavior. Sam is asked to come to circle (trigger); he resists and hits the adult (the behavior) and then the adult lets him find something else to do (the maintaining consequence).

Using the previous examples, identify the triggers, behaviors, and maintaining consequences.

A. Evan

Trigger	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence

B. Hannah

Trigger	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence

C. Tim

Trigger	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence

D. Madison

Trigger	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence

- Other factors, not necessarily in the environment, may also influence behavior. Setting events are events that occur at another time that increase the likelihood that the child will demonstrate a challenging behavior. Setting events serve to “set the child up” to have the challenging behavior as shown in the following example:

Setting Event	Trigger	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence
Quan was up late last night due to an asthma attack. He arrives at school looking sleepy and with dark circles under his eyes.	Quan approaches the computer and sees a child working on a program.	Quan hits the child and pushes the child out of the chair onto the floor.	Child leaves the computer area and Quan sits down to begin working.



### Steps for Implementing a Positive Behavior Support Plan

The Positive Behavior Support framework offers a way of “thinking through” challenging behaviors. One of the critical first steps of the process is to translate a behavior into a message that the child is communicating. The need to refocus on the *function* of the behavior rather than the *form* is the foundation of this approach.

Several steps underlie the PBS framework, all of which focus on various aspects related to determination of a behaviors function. The steps of the PBS framework are as follows:

1. Establish a team to help identify goals for intervention.
2. Gather information through completion of a functional assessment.
3. Develop hypotheses or ideas about the function of a behavior(s).
4. Design the behavior support plan for intervention.
5. Implement, monitor, and evaluate the outcome of the intervention.

A detailed description of each of the above steps follows.

## 1. *Establishing a team*

When a child demonstrates a behavior considered “challenging”, it is important to start the process of individual strategy development through identifying a team of adults who can be helpful to the process. Potential team members in addition to the early childhood educator include:

- ❖ The child’s parent or primary caregiver(s)
- ❖ Assisting early childhood educators in the learning setting
- ❖ Administrative Staff/Directors
- ❖ Specialists
- ❖ Others from the community who may be involved with the child and family

The purpose of the team is to work together to develop the most effective plan possible. Each team member can play an important role. For example, inclusion of the parent/family is considered of critical importance in that they may provide valuable information regarding setting events (i.e., past events) that may be contributing to the behavior. Establishing a team is also considered an important first step in that several people working together—as opposed to the early childhood educator working alone—are *most effective* in problem-solving and in providing support to the child and the learning environment. The purpose of the team *is not* to criticize individual team members and their perceived contributions to the challenging behavior.

Particular care should be taken when talking to family members about a child’s challenging behavior as well as including them in team meetings. Several important aspects of including family member’s are as follows:

- ❖ Maintain communication with caregivers *from the beginning*. Care should be given to establish positive relationships with family members *before* challenging behaviors are demonstrated. Regular communication about the child’s behaviors—both positive behaviors and challenging behaviors—should occur.

- ❖ When positive relationships have been formed, it is easier for everyone involved to talk about challenging behaviors.



## 2. Complete a functional assessment

The process for developing an understanding of a child’s challenging behavior is known as the functional assessment. Through gathering information, this assessment attempts to pinpoint the possible function(s) of a challenging behavior. The functional assessment is guided by information from *observations* and from *answering questions* that help to dig deeper into the meaning of a child’s behavior.

*Guidelines for observations:*

- Observe the child in settings where challenging behaviors may occur.
- Also observe in settings where the challenging behaviors do **not** occur.
- During observations, look for characteristics of the situation that may contribute to the behavior. For example, if a challenging behavior only occurs in situations where other children are present, this may be an important clue for figuring out the function of a behavior.
- Important characteristics to note during observations include:
  - ✓ Who else is present
  - ✓ What time of day
  - ✓ How long the behavior lasts
  - ✓ What happened right before the behavior occurred
  - ✓ What happened right after the behavior occurred
- A variety of observation formats can be used; the most important idea to remember when thinking about a format for observing is to keep it simple. An example of a simple observation format is:

Name: Activity:	Observer:	Date: Time:
Activity:  Behavior Problem:  Social Reaction:  Possible Function:		

Additional observation formats that might be helpful can be found on the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning website ([www.csefel.uiuc.edu](http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu)).



### 3. Develop a hypothesis, or best guess, about the function of the behavior.

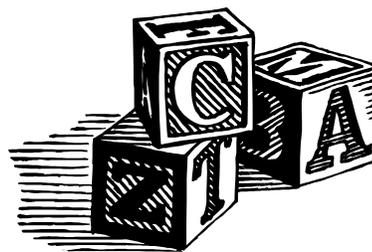
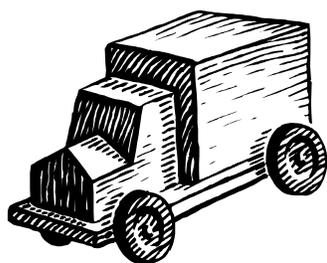
The function of a behavior refers to the underlying message that the challenging behavior communicates. When the function of the challenging behavior can be hypothesized, the intervention plan can include an alternative way for this function to be addressed. For example, Jordan cries for an extended time when transitioning from independent play to a group activity. If the function of Jordan's crying is to attempt to escape this transition, the intervention plan can focus on teaching Jordan a different way of communicating this need. Also, hypothesizing escape as the possible function of Jordan's crying leads us to carefully consider the characteristics of the group activity that may be difficult for Jordan and that she desires to escape.

Hypothesis statements include:

- ❖ Triggers of the challenging behavior.
- ❖ Description of the challenging behavior.
- ❖ Responses that maintain the challenging behavior.
- ❖ The best guess as to the function of the behavior.

Example: Brianna has been acting out during play. The following hypothesis statement might be developed based on observation and answers to interview questions:

In group play situations (triggers), Brianna uses threats, hitting, pushing, and kicking (description of the challenging behavior) to get desired toys or as a way to join in play with other children. When this happens, the other child gives up the toy and leaves the play area. At other times, the adult intervenes and provides Brianna with excessive attention through talking with her about her behavior and scolding her for these repeated episodes (responses that maintain the behavior). The possible functions of Brianna's behaviors might include obtaining desired objects/activities and obtaining adult attention.



**Activity**

Using the scenarios that follow, complete the following hypothesis statement worksheet:

Triggers	
Behavioral Description	
Responses that maintain behavior	
Function	

**Scenario 1**  
 Jackson says “no” or runs to another area of the room when asked to participate in structured language-based activities and activities that require sharing. When the adult firmly directs Jackson to participate in these activities, Jackson throws objects, screams, and/or says “shut up!” When these behaviors occur, adults frequently walk away or allow Jackson to leave the activity.

**Scenario 2**  
 Brooke tantrums when the early childhood educator is paying attention to other children in the room. She initiates a chase game by going over to the adult and pulling the adult’s hand or hitting the adult and running away. If the adult does not follow Brooke, she cries loudly, screams, and covers her face. Often, the adult picks Brooke up and softly talks to her when these behaviors occur.

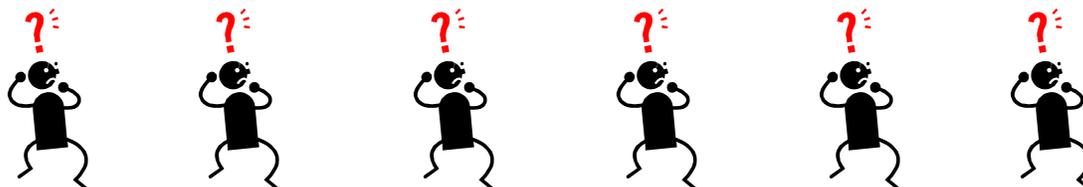
**Scenario 3**  
 Katie begins whining, crying, pretends to vomit, screams, and slaps at the adult when asked to leave one activity to move to another. When Katie does this, the adult says, “you’re not going to act like that here, little girl!” while Katie continues to stay in the desired activity. The adult then walks away.

*What do you do when you're not sure about the function of the behavior?*

Occasionally, observations and questions do not lead to an obvious function. In this circumstance, one question to assist in thinking about a possible function is to ask: what would make the challenging behavior stop? Is it something that could be provided to the child? Or, is it something that could be removed from the child?

Collecting additional information may also be necessary to identify the function. Collecting this information in the same setting is important.

It is also important to know that the same behavior may have more than one function. For example, hitting may be used to escape in one situation and serve to initiate an interaction with a peer in another situation. In such instances, both functions must be addressed in the development of an intervention plan.



#### ***4. Developing the behavior support plan (bsp) for individual intervention.***

If a child doesn't know how to read, we *teach*.  
If a child doesn't know how to swim, we *teach*.  
If a child doesn't know how to put on shoes, we *teach*.  
If a child doesn't know how to behave, we???"

Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"

Tom Hemer, (NASDE President), *Counterpoint*.

Development of the behavior support plan is a component of PBS that occurs *after* identification of team members, completing a functional assessment, and developing a hypothesized function of a challenging behavior. The PBS approach to behavior support plan development requires that we think about intervention in a different way that what traditionally occurs. Rather than focusing exclusively on punishment for a challenging behavior, the PBS framework includes an emphasis on teaching appropriate behaviors.

Thinking about challenging behaviors in a different way involves considering the following questions:

- What might prevent the situation from occurring?
- What skills does the child not have that makes the situation difficult?
- What might be another way for the child to get his or her needs met without using challenging behaviors?
- Is the adult behaving in a way that possibly keeps the behavior occurring?

Using the following example, consider answers to the questions listed above:

Madison is in housekeeping putting on high heels and a hat. Emily moves into the area and selects a purse from the dress-ups. Madison shouts “no” and bites Emily. A child care provider and tells Madison to go to the thinking chair and then takes Emily to the bathroom to look at the bite. After 4 minutes, Madison leaves the thinking chair and returns to housekeeping. She grabs the purse Emily had selected and continues to play. Emily leaves the bathroom with the child care provider and then begins an art activity where the teacher is present.

Steps for behavior support plan development:

1. Behavior Hypothesis – Purpose of behavior, best guess about why the behavior occurs (discussed in the previous section).

Consider all of the following in the behavior support plan, depending on information from the functional assessment:



2. Prevention Strategies

One strategy for dealing with challenging behaviors is to consider factors that may prevent the situation from occurring. In other words, how might the environment be changed to reduce the likelihood that challenging behavior will occur? For example, if a child has difficulty transitioning quickly from one activity to a new activity, a prevention strategy might involve giving the child “warnings” about the upcoming transition such as saying, “In five minutes, you’ll be leaving the computer area to go to the art table.”

Other example prevention strategies follow:

- ❖ Provide the child with a choice between two activities. Choice can be offered using photographs, visual cues, or objects. Choices must be offered explicitly and personally to the child. Choices should represent options of desirable activities or materials. In addition, it is sometimes helpful to offer a choice of a desirable activity and an undesirable activity. For example, for a child who does not remain in a large group activity, an adult might say to the child prior to the activity, “Ethan, you can choose to stay with us during circle time or you can choose to sit at the table by yourself.”
- ❖ Reduce distractions or competing events or materials that might contribute to the desire to escape.
- ❖ Provide a visual schedule that shows the steps of completing a task, particularly in a situation where a child may wish to escape due to perceived task difficulty.
- ❖ Provide visual guidance that highlights boundaries. For example, use feet for line-up (each child stands on a set of footprints), carpet squares for circle time, mats for block structures.
- ❖ Provide advance directions/steps of an upcoming activity. For example, first we’re going to \_\_\_\_\_, then you’ll \_\_\_\_\_, when you finish that, you’ll \_\_\_\_\_. It is important to repeat these steps during the activity to provide reminders.
- ❖ Arrange activities carefully. Have all materials accessible to minimize wait time. Demonstrate an activity before asking the children to begin. Also allow for partial participation for a child who has difficulty with all steps of a task.
- ❖ Provide enough materials for the number of children in an activity.

### 3. Replacement Skills

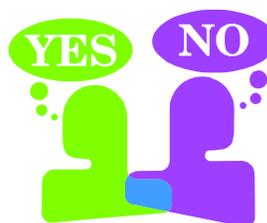
When a child demonstrates challenging behaviors, it is important to ask, “does this child have the skills necessary to complete the required task?” If a child cannot use a challenging behavior to express his/her needs, how **can** they express their needs in ways that are appropriate? For example, if a child screams to make requests for a desired activity, what can we teach the child to use instead? **Punishing a child for an inappropriate behavior that results from a lack of skill will never result in behavioral improvement.** In fact, punishment may result in failure of the child to demonstrate skills that he/she actually does have.

In order to teach replacement skills, the following guidelines are offered:

- ✓ Teach an alternative behavior to the challenging behavior. The new skill must replace the challenging behavior.
- ✓ The new skill must “work” for the child, i.e., it must serve the same function as the challenging behavior. For example, for the child who screams to get what she desires, replacing this behavior with use of a communication card must result in her getting the desired object.
- ✓ It is imperative that the child receive praise and positive feedback when demonstrating the alternative behavior.
- ✓ It is also imperative that the replacement skill be taught throughout the day when the child is **not** demonstrating the challenging behavior.

Possible Replacement Skills when the Function of a Behavior is to Escape:

- Request a break from an activity
- Request help during an activity
- Follow a schedule for completing a task
- Say, “No” rather than throwing objects or hitting a peer
- Say, “All done”
- Identify and express feelings



Possible Replacement Skills when the Function of a Behavior is to Obtain:



- Follow an If/Then schedule
- Request help in obtaining the desired object
- Teach the concept of “wait” as appropriate to the child’s age and level
- Request attention
- Provide choices
- Ask for a hug
- Ask for a turn

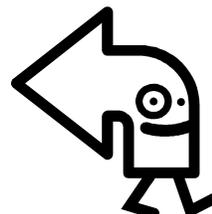
#### 4. Responses of the Adult

The final component to consider for the behavior support plan is to identify what adults will do when the challenging behavior occurs to ensure that the challenging behavior is not maintained and the new skill is learned. A general guideline is to redirect the child to use an alternative behavior or skill. **For children who demonstrate challenging behaviors, it is crucial to provide praise/reinforcement for appropriate behaviors! Rewards for appropriate behavior must equal or exceed attention provided for challenging behaviors.**

Possible adult responses to challenging behavior:

- ✓ Redirect/cue to use appropriate “new replacement skill” and then allow escape
- ✓ Cue with appropriate prevention strategy
- ✓ State “exactly” what is expected
- ✓ Offer choices/alternatives
- ✓ Praise/reinforce when replacement skill is performed
- ✓ Respond in a way that does not maintain a challenging behavior

**FOR POTENTIALLY HARMFUL BEHAVIORS, THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE PROVIDED FOR RESPONDING TO A CRISIS SITUATION:**



When a child demonstrates behaviors that are potentially a danger to self or others, **immediate safety** issues are of utmost importance. It may be necessary to include “safety-net” procedures in the behavior support plans for some children. Such procedures are not intervention procedures but are, instead, measures taken to keep the child and others safe.

- If a child is in danger of harming himself or others, you must first be concerned with safety.
- It may be necessary to remove a child from a particular situation to keep him/her safe.
- If it appears that “holding” a child may be necessary, it is important that the team members be aware of and agree to this procedure. **All early childhood educators have the responsibility for being knowledgeable of any limits or prohibited restraint procedures as identified by their particular settings.**
- Safety-net procedures are only appropriate when there is also a full behavior support plan or intention of developing a plan.



When documenting outcomes it is necessary to:

- Use objective assessment methods (for example, keep up with the frequency of a challenging behavior.
- Do NOT rely on a subjective report of progress. It is not acceptable to rely on one's memory of the past week for determining whether or not an intervention is effective.
- Be sure to implement an intervention for a long enough period of time prior to deciding that an alternative plan may be necessary. While there is not a "rule" for length of implementation of intervention, in general, an intervention must be implemented in a consistent way for several days while keeping objective data prior to deciding that the intervention may not be effective.
- Behavioral change occurs in a process. Therefore, it is necessary to count slow change as progress rather than expect a challenging behavior to disappear soon after an intervention is implemented.

### **Integrating all components of the behavior support plan.**

Behavior support plans are more effective when they are written and all team members receive copies of the plan. Developing a written plan for intervention and documentation of progress facilitates accountability and consistency. In addition to forms available online at [www.csefel.uiuc.edu](http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu), the following format and example may be helpful for the development of a behavior support plan:



Child Name: Caleb  
 Date Intervention will Begin:  
 Date Intervention Outcome will be Evaluated:

<p><u>Trigger</u></p> <p>Group play; centers and outside play with peers</p>	<p><u>Behavior</u></p> <p>Verbal aggression (threats), hits, pushes, kicks</p> <p><u>Function:</u></p> <p>Obtain toy/play</p>	<p><u>Maintaining Consequence</u></p> <p>Peers give up toys/items</p> <p>Peers leave area</p> <p>Adults intervene by providing negative attention</p>
<p><u>Preventions</u></p> <p>Pre-teach skills via social story</p> <p>Use visual prompts for demonstration of appropriate behaviors</p>	<p><u>New Skills</u></p> <p>Asking to play</p> <p>Asking for teacher's help</p>	<p><u>New Adult Responses</u></p> <p><u>To Challenging Behavior:</u></p> <p>Anticipate &amp; cue asking to play/help</p> <p>Intervene to prevent harm by providing attention/support to child who is attacked</p> <p><u>To Use of New Skill:</u></p> <p>When asks, respond</p> <p>Provide praise for appropriate behavior</p>

## **VII. Identify Resources for Supporting Social-Emotional Development and Dealing with Challenging Behaviors**

For some children all of the strategies outlined here will not be enough. Parents, teachers, and program directors will need additional assistance beyond what Project REEL can provide. It will be important for Specialists to include in the participants' manual some resources within their region that would be available.

For this section each of the Specialists will need to research what is available. Some suggested resources may be:

- CCR&R: What support is available within your own CCR&R to assist participants? What are the resources that the Coordinator and other Specialists know about that can be included.
- TEIS (Tennessee's Early Intervention System) is a resource for families with children under three years of age. Where is the TEIS office for your region? Include address, phone number, and contact person(s).
- The local school system is a resource for families with children three and older. Include the school system's special education office number and contact (person to whom a family with a child over three would be referred).
- Note: you may include other agencies in the community (the more resources for families, the better. However, it is TEIS and the local school system that have legal responsibility in Tennessee under federal special education laws, so be sure that participants know to contact them.

### **VIII. Behavior within a Developmental Context Using the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards and the *Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum***

All behaviors, including those considered challenging, ***MUST*** be considered within a developmental context. The age of the child is a crucial factor in understanding how the child behaves. Social-Emotional expectations for a child from twelve to sixteen months are very different from those for a child 24 to 30 months.

The TN ELDS and the *Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum* provide a framework for understanding expectations at various ages. These should be regularly referenced to guide everyday learning activities.