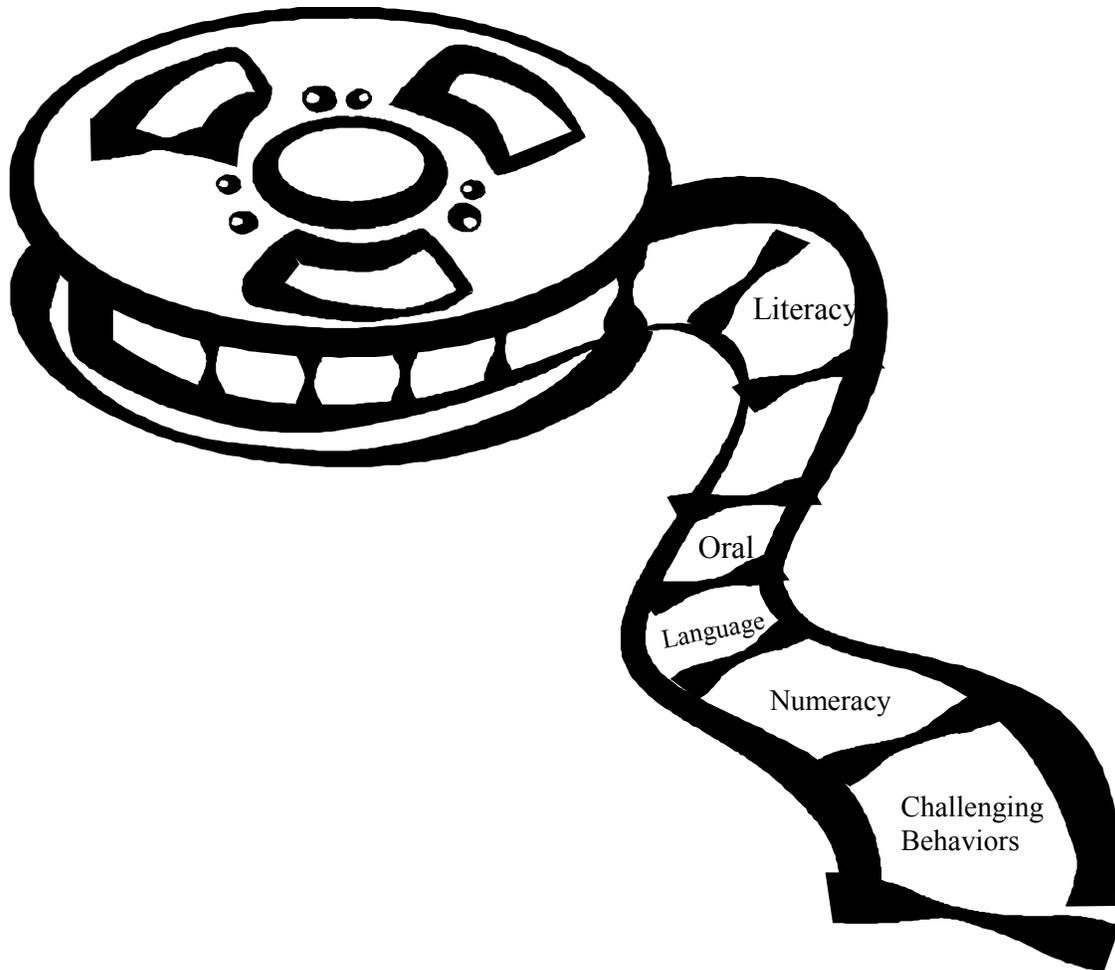# Project REEL

Literacy

Oral

Language

Numeracy

Challenging
Behaviors

# Resources for Early Educator Learning

# BIG, FAT IDEAS

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.
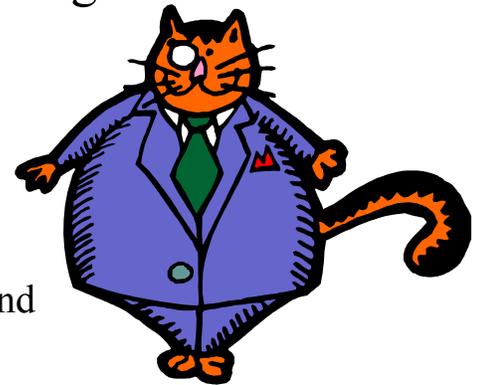
**Project REEL:  Workshop 1**

**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)

| **Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (Birth to Age Three)** |
|---|
| **SECTION 6:  SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT** <br> **Component: Self-Concept** <br> **Component: Self-Control** <br> **Component: Cooperation** |

| **LEARNING EXPECTATIONS:** |
|---|
| *0-4 Months:* |
| Expresses comfort and discomfort (0-4 mos.) |
| Expresses enjoyment and unhappiness (0-4 mos.) |
| Regulation (0-4 mos.) |
| *5-8 Months:* |
| Expresses feelings (5-8 mos.) |
| Expresses preferences and interests (5-8 mos.) |
| Regulation (5-8 mos.) |
| *9-12 Months:* |
| 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.) |
| *13-18 Months:* |
| 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.) |
| *19-24 Months:* |
| 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.) |
| *2-2 ½ Years:* |
| 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.) |
| *2 ½ - 3 Years:* |
| 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.) |

**Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (ages 3-5)**
**Aligned with The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5**

| Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (ages 3-5)<br><br>SECTION 6: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT<br>Component: Self-Concept<br>Component: Self-Control<br>Component: Cooperation<br>Component: Management of Self Within the Learning Environment | The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5 |
|---|---|
| **LEARNING EXPECTATIONS:** | |
| *3 – 4 Years:* | |
| 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 |
| *4 – 5 Years:* | |
| 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.*

*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)*

# 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)**

The adult in a setting must respond to the challenging behaviors, BUT *the way we respond to these behaviors is critical to changing the behaviors:*

⊙  It is difficult to be effective with children when we are upset.

⊙  It takes thought and practice to change upsetting thoughts to calming ones.

⊙  The adult reaction can *escalate* the behavior or *de-escalate* the behavior.

⊙  Reframing thoughts and behavior can help us to interact more positively with the child and build the necessary positive relationship.

⊙  Planning ahead can help us to prepare for the times when we know challenging behaviors may occur.  (Example:  "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." )

⊙  A number of things affect our attitudes about challenging behavior:

   ⊙  Individual beliefs - past experiences with children, training experiences, and level of support for dealing with challenging behaviors.

   ⊙  Culturally based beliefs (e.g., what skills we expect children to engage in independently at certain ages, how we expect children to interact with adults, etc.).



***A team approach may be needed – use all of the resources available to you.***

## II.    The Relationship between Social-Emotional Development and Challenging Behaviors.

> "I can tell the kids who have had some type of preschool experience before they come to my classroom. They are the ones who know how to play with toys, join a group of children who are playing, listen to a short story, and talk about how they are feeling."    --Veteran Kindergarten Teacher (19 years experience)

**Key Social Emotional Skills Children Need as They Enter School:**

✓  Confidence

✓  Capacity to develop good relationships with peers

✓  Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks

✓  Ability to effectively communicate emotions

✓  Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive

When children don't have these skills, they often exhibit challenging behaviors

*We must focus on teaching the skills!!*

**Some Basic Assumptions**

- Challenging behavior is most often related to some skill deficit (e.g., language, social)

- Behavior that persists over time is working for the child

- When we have positive relationships with children, supportive classroom environments, and focus on teaching social and communication skills, we reduce the likelihood of challenging behavior

## The Teaching Pyramid



*Promoting Social Emotional Competence*

- Individualized Intensive Interventions
- Social Emotional Teaching Strategies
- Creating Supportive Environments
- Building Positive Relationships

**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 an 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

> **"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).*

**One of the most important things early childhood educators can do is to provide 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:

**AFFIRMATIONS**



**PROHIBITIONS**
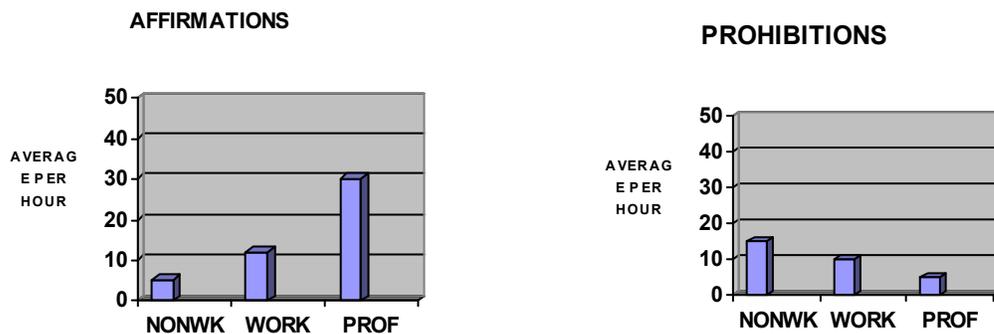
# Practical Strategies for Building Relationships

> ***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' 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 expectation for behavior.

❖ Must be rich in opportunities for exploration and discovery.

❖ Influences the way children (and adults) behave.

(Sandefur w/ Gamble, Warren & Hofer, 2003)
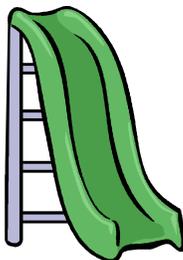
Some environmental design issues that will help teach children behavioral expectations include (1) **the physical design of the environment**, (2) **schedules**, (3) **routines,** (4) **rules**, and (5) **how activities are planned and structured**.

## The Physical Design of the Environment - Developing Interest Areas/ Learning Centers (Sandefur w/ Gamble, Warren & Hofer, 2003)

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 (Sandefur w/ Gamble, Warren & Hofer, 2003)

**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 I 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** (Sandefur w/ Gamble, Warren & Hofer, 2003)

**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.**

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**Rules and Limits – Stating Expectations for Desired Behavior** (Sandefur w/ Gamble, Warren & Hofer, 2003)

**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** (Sandefur w/ Gamble, Warren & Hofer, 2003)

**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.



**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 <u>to do,</u> not what <u>not to do</u>; 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.

(Marion, 2003)
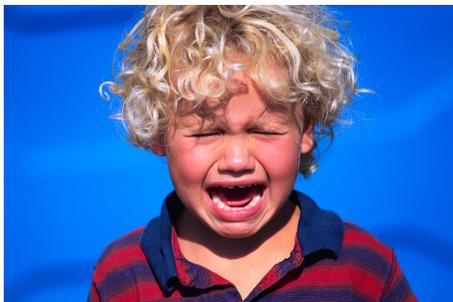
# III. Strategies for Promoting Social-Emotional Development.

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.

**Children who are at-risk for failure due to a lack of appropriate social-emotional skills MUST be explicitly taught these skills. For those children this section can be used to identify ways to teach:**

- ❖ **friendship skills**
- ❖ **following rules and directions**
- ❖ **increasing emotional vocabulary**
- ❖ **ideas for controlling anger and impulse**
- ❖ **problem-solving skills**
- ❖ **ideas for dealing with common peer problems**

FIRST: Identify the "Teachable Moments" – before conflict occurs – and use those times to teach appropriate social-emotional skills.

## 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.)

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Note:  Children under three are typically not developmentally capable of waiting for their turn.  However, we can still look for opportunities to use language that helps them develop this concept.  (Example: Infant teacher is changing a diaper as another child begins to fuss.  She says, "Sylvia, I hear you fussing and I'll get you just as soon as I finish with Cole.")  ***Wait time for infants and toddlers must be minimized as much as possible.***

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- ❥ **Giving Compliments.** Although these behaviors do not often occur among preschoolers, they tend to have a powerful effect on the formation of friendships. Adults can model giving compliments on a child's successes, buildings, and efforts at a new task.  They can point these out and encourage children to compliment each other.  One way to practice this is playing a "Say Something Nice about Someone Game" with a small group of children.

- ❥ **Knowing When and How to Give Apologies.** Learning when and how to give apologies, just like learning how to give compliments, can have a positive effect on the formation of friendships. As adults make apologies, children begin to learn how to pay attention and be more responsive to their friends' feelings. (Example:  "I'm sorry that…" and  "I didn't mean to…")  Caution – Sometimes a child learns that a quick "Sorry" is a way to divert the adult's attention from her misbehavior and move on to a new activity.  This has little meaning and does not allow for the child to focus on the specific action for which she is apologizing – and the child is more likely to repeat the inappropriate behavior.

*Caution – Sometimes a child learns that a quick "Sorry" is a way to divert the adult's attention from her misbehavior and move on to a new activity.  This has little meaning and does not allow for the child to focus on the specific action for which she is apologizing – and the child is more likely to repeat the inappropriate behavior.*

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***Teach Friendship Skills***

**Systematic teaching of skills** must be done for those children who need more assistance in developing these behaviors.  Teaching can be done through:

- ❖ Modeling – using adult demonstration, video, puppets.
- ❖ Role-play and rehearsal – adult modeling peer rejection, providing feedback, and then providing a behavioral alternative that they reinforce.
- ❖ Priming – asking children who they are going to play with, what materials they are going to share, and providing practice.
- ❖ Direct Modeling – modeling by the adult as a play partner.
- ❖ Reinforcement – reinforce children's behaviors by commenting shortly after the play (sometimes the adult attention can have the effect of terminating the play) and by describing what was observed ("You are taking turns and saying nice things to each other" rather than "You're playing so nicely together.")

---

***Teach Following Rules and Directions***
◆ Use simple wording
◆ Tell children what ***to do*** NOT what ***Not to do***
◆ Demonstrate – show and tell children what you want them to do
◆ Give children opportunities to practice under adult supervision
◆ Praise effort!

***Teach feelings vocabulary***
Teach different feeling words and definitions:
◆ Directly
◆ Incidentally in the context of conversation and play
◆ Through special activities
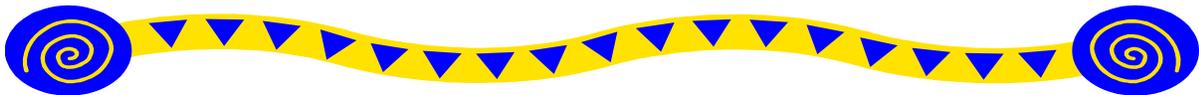
## *Suggestions for Teaching Feelings Words:*

**Use children's books** – Many children's books can be used to discuss feelings 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 Ant*s, 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

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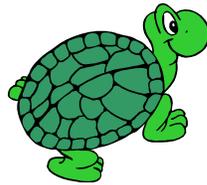
Practice this with children – provide examples of situations where they might become "turtles" and let them follow the steps.  Let children know that the teacher will help them by giving the prompt "turtle" when this technique is needed.

## *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 got 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 experience)

You have built positive relationships, created a supportive environment, and explicitly taught social-emotional skills, but you still have one child whose behavior is challenging.  For that child, the following are appropriate:

***Review the Definition of Challenging Behavior***

**Challenging Behavior is any behavior that:**
o    **Interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play**
o    **Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults**
o    **Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure**
o    **(Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003, p. 9)**
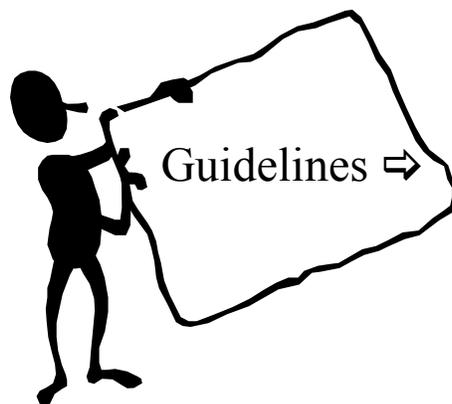
Guidelines ⇨

## *Some General Guidelines for Using These Additional Strategies:*

❖ *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.

### 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

### 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 the 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).

- 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.

# The Project REEL Specialist and Behavioral Consultant will work with individual participants and programs when a Positive Behavior Support Plan is needed.

# Remember, the more effective you are at:

❖ *Building Positive Relationships*
❖ *Creating a Positive Environment*
❖ *Teaching Social-Emotional Skills*

## the less challenging behavior you will see and you may not need this step!

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

## 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.