



Using the Pyramid Model to Respond to Challenging Behavior

Native American Child and Family Conference (SW)

Date:

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Presenters:

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National Center on

Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety



Meditation





Today's Presenters



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Rock, Paper, Scissors SUPERSTAR

Let's get up, get to know each other, and PLAY!





In this session we will:

- See who's in the room
- Explore that behavior has meaning
- Learn the ABCs of behavior
- Understand how to respond to challenging behavior





Who's in the room?

Pair and Share

- What role do you have in your program?
 - Answer the question as a group at your table.





Raise your hand if you've heard of the Pyramid Model.

The Pyramid model gives us a different way to view challenging behavior.



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Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children





Ready for Every Child

When we adhere to these values, it means we are ready for each and every child including:

- Children who have experienced trauma
- Children with disabilities
- Children who are dual language learners
- Children with persistent challenging behavior





Our “Must Haves”



Prevention
Focus



Trauma-Informed



A Caring
Community



Anti-Biased
Practice



Commitment to
Equity, Inclusion,
and Belonging



Data-Informed



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Pyramid Model Tiers

- Focus on prevention and promotion practices.
- Use evidence-based strategies intended to reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviors.
- Ensure all 4 tiers are in place.





Prevention and Promotion

Focus on prevention of challenging behaviors and promotion of social skills





Young Children Will Experience Challenging Behaviors



- It begins early!
 - NCPMI shares that between 10-30% of preschool children are not behaviorally and emotionally ready to succeed in school.
- Early problem behavior is predictive of future challenges.
- What does Office of Civil Rights (OCR) data show us and what can we do about it?



What the Data Tells Us

FOCUS ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE | PART 2 OF 5

AUGUST 2022

Suspensions and Expulsions in Public Schools



U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights

2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

The Civil Rights Data Collection gathers and publishes key information about student access to educational opportunities and school climate from public schools (pre-K through 12th grade) in all 50 states, D.C., and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

2017-18 OVERVIEW OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE K-GRADE 12

50,922,024

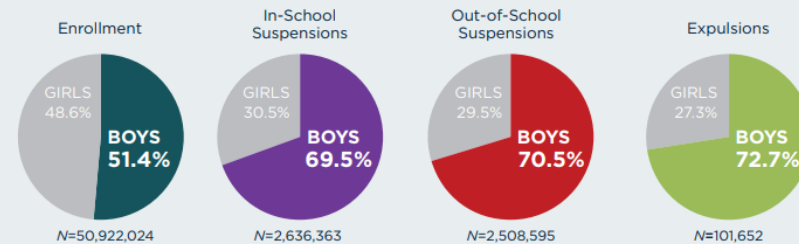
STUDENTS ATTENDED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

11,205,797

SCHOOL DAYS MISSED DUE TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

101,652

STUDENTS EXPELLED FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



STUDENT DISCIPLINE BY RACE/ETHNICITY & SEX



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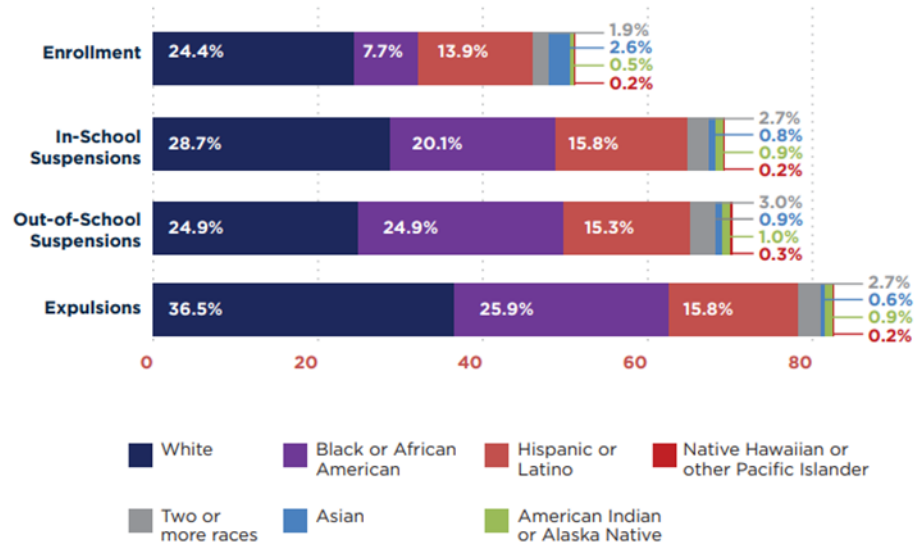
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So what, now what?

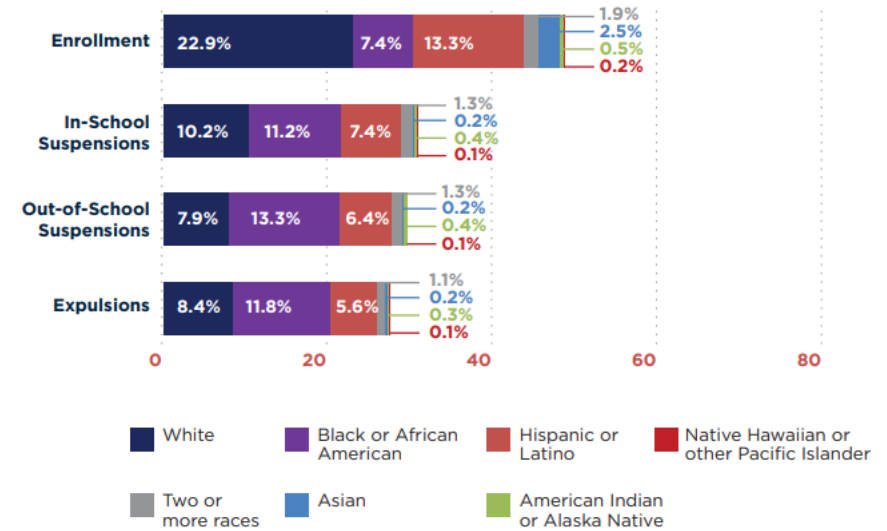
BOYS

Boys of nearly all races were disproportionately disciplined, but Black boys were suspended and expelled at proportions that were 3 times their enrollment.



GIRLS

Overall, girls received fewer suspensions and expulsions in comparison to boys. Among girls, Black girls were the only group across all races/ethnicities who disproportionately received suspensions and expulsions.





Challenging Behavior vs Behaviors That Challenge Us

Challenging Behavior Defined

- Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in prosocial interactions with peers and adults.
- Behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures.
- Examples include prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive vocal and motor behavior (e.g., screaming, stereotypy), property destruction, self-injury, noncompliance, and withdrawal.



Making the Connection Between the Pyramid Model and Trauma-Informed Care

Pyramid Model


- Promotes social and emotional development and school readiness of young children
- Effectively addresses challenging behavior through intentionally teaching social and emotional skills
- Leadership team guides the implementation process and develops the support and infrastructure needed to ensure that adoption of the Pyramid Model can occur within the classrooms and services provided to children and their families.

Trauma-Informed


- Addresses the consequences of trauma in the individual and facilitates healing
- A trauma-informed organization is an organization or system that ...
 - Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and potential paths for healing
 - Recognizes the signs/symptoms of trauma
 - Fully integrates knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings



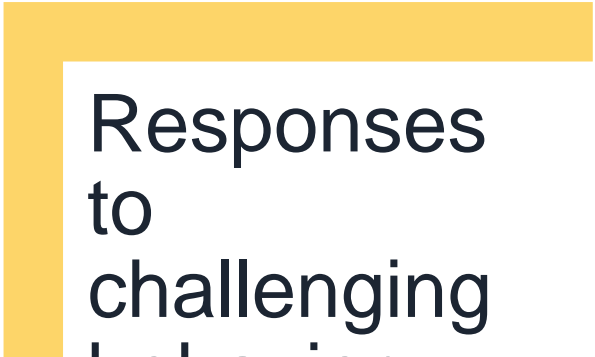
What can we do?



Prevention of
challenging
behavior



Promotion of
social and
emotional
skill
development



Responses
to
challenging
behavior



Effective Workforce, Culture, and Behavior

- All staff have an identity, values, and beliefs they bring to their work.
- Staff values and beliefs may be different than those of the families they serve.
- Staff may perceive or understand behavior differently based on their own values and beliefs.

Differences in values and beliefs can lead to differences in how behavior is viewed and addressed.



Consider the Foundations



- How strong is the foundation of the Pyramid in my **program**?
- Have I tried to look for any behavior patterns **program wide**?
- Have I shared or re-shared the needed skills to all children? To some children? To the individual child?



Video

Hot Buttons



NCPMI Hot Buttons



Write three behaviors that "push your buttons."

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

Write the emotion word that describes the way each of these behaviors makes you feel.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

What is the impact of your feelings? How do you respond to each of these behaviors?
Write down how you act/react towards a child when he or she displays each behavior.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

How do these behaviors and your response impact the relationship you have with the child?

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

How do the child's behaviors and your response impact the relationship you have with the family?

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----



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ChallengingBehavior.org

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Pub: 06/18/19



Identify When and How You Respond

- Become aware of when and how you respond to challenging behavior.
- Pause to reflect on your response
 - *Do I respond the same way with each and every child?*
 - *Did I expect the child to be challenging?*
 - *When is my response different?*
 - *How am I feeling?*
- Identify what the behavior is really trying to communicate, and if needed, develop a plan to address your response.



Self-Care for Staff



Self-Care for Teachers

Regulating your responses when children's behaviors push your buttons



When children engage in behavior that pushes your buttons, it is important to be intentional in how you respond. Making a plan will help you remain calm when you respond. By being calm, you will be able to objectively observe the child's behavior and think about what the behavior is communicating. This will help you respond in a way that is supportive of the child.

Below are strategies that you might use when a child's behavior pushes your buttons:

Before Your Buttons Are Pushed

Think, Think, Think about your PLAN!

- ▶ How can I respond when the child starts pushing my buttons?
- ▶ How can I take care of myself and still support the child?
- ▶ Can I make changes in the environment to support the child and decrease the challenging behavior?
 - Have I taught rules to the child in my classroom? Have I provided individual supports for the child?
 - What activities does the child particularly enjoy?
 - What helps the child calm down?
 - What helps the child feel safe and secure?
 - Have I taught strategies to help the child calm down?

Hot Button Activity

Check out the Hot Button Activity to reflect on behaviors that push your buttons and how your responses affect children and families.

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Hof-Buttons.pdf>



ReFRAME your thinking about the child's behavior that pushes your buttons.

"Jalen is tired and needs a break."

"Susan is frustrated because she doesn't want to wear a mask."

"Marco doesn't understand the new routine and needs some help."

"John doesn't feel safe."

While Your Buttons are Being Pushed



Try one or more of these:

- ▶ Pause and take a deep breathe
- ▶ Breathe slowly and deeply
- ▶ Focus on breathing. Notice your breath, try counting when you inhale and counting when you exhale
- ▶ Step back (not away)
- ▶ Count to 10
- ▶ Use positive self-talk: "I've got this!"
- ▶ Hold and squish a stress ball
- ▶ Help the child use their preferred way to calm down
- ▶ Tag in a colleague to help support the child if you need a break



ReFRAME the child's behavior. What might they be trying to tell me?

"I don't know what to do."

"I miss home."

"I don't have words to tell you how I feel."

"I am frustrated and this is hard."

"Can you help me?"

After the Button-Pushing Behavior has Ended



- ▶ Take time to breathe!
- ▶ Reflect
 - Identify your emotions.
 - What was the child trying to tell you?
 - Is there another strategy that might have worked better?



- ▶ Journal about the experience.
- ▶ Collaborate and connect. Find a colleague to check in with and reflect.
- ▶ Find positive ways to re-connect with the child to strengthen your relationship.



ReFRAME! Challenging behavior is a signal that the child may need support and instruction in social-emotional skills. What skills might I teach them?

Teach the child...

- ▶ ways to calm down and regulate their emotions.
- ▶ how to express emotions.
- ▶ how to communicate needs.

Behavior Has Meaning





Children Communicate in Many Ways

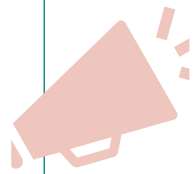
Forms of communication

- Words
- Sentences
- Point to a picture
- Eye gaze
- Pulling adult
- Crying
- Biting
- Tantrums
- Others?

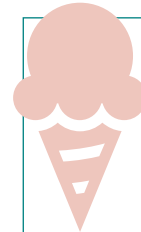




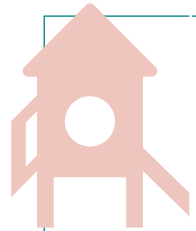
Behavior Can Mean Many Things



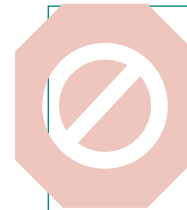
“I want you to pay attention to me.”



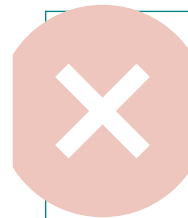
“I want that (toy, food, paint, etc.).”



“I want to play with you.”



“I don't want to stop what I am doing.”



“I don't want to clean up!”



Behavior Has Meaning

All behavior has a function.

Function is what a child is trying to communicate.

- Obtain desired item
- Obtain desired activity
- Gain peer attention
- Gain adult attention/comfort
- Obtain sensory
- Avoid peers
- Avoid adults
- Avoid task
- Avoid sensory



Determining Meaning = Determining Function



There is process for determining function.



It might seem complicated, but we can do it!



A

Antecedent

What happens BEFORE the behavior

B

Behavior

The behavior (clearly defined)

C

Consequence

What happens AFTER the behavior.



Antecedents

What happens
BEFORE the
behavior occurs?

Possible Antecedents:

- The child is asked to do something.
- Someone took away an object.
- The child is having difficulty with a task.
- The child wants an object that is not available.
- The child is asked to stop a preferred activity.



Behavior

Operationally Defined Behavior

Review your definition for the following:

- Observable
 - Can be seen or heard

- Measurable
 - Can be timed or counted

- Repeatable



Consequence

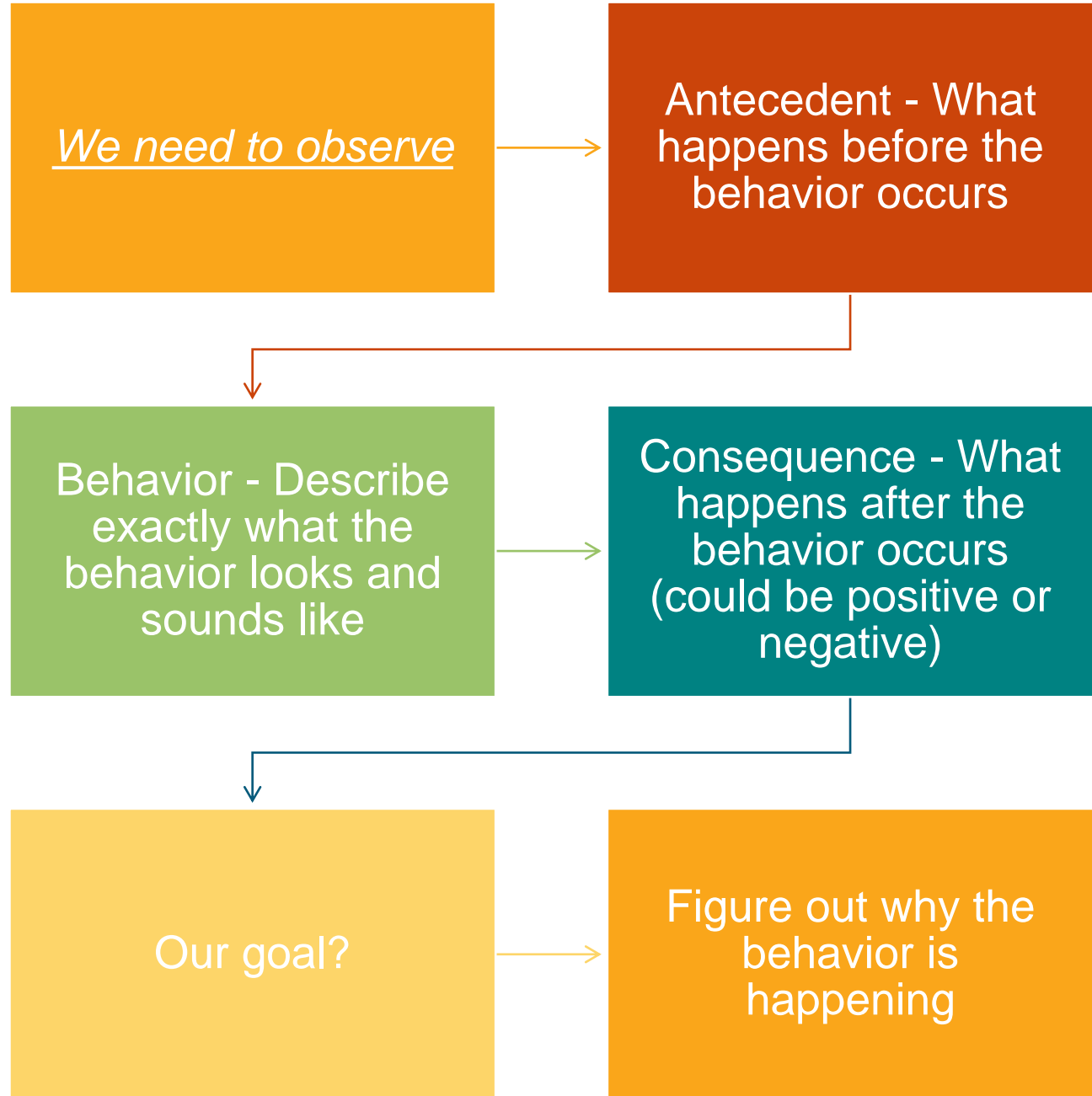
What happens
AFTER the
behavior occurs?

Possible Consequences:

- The child gets attention.
- The child gets something.
- The child gets help.
- The child gets to continue to play through cleanup because the teacher ignores them.
- The child avoids circle which is a non-preferred activity.



ABCs of Behavior





And Now It's Time to Play... *Name That Function!*

- What happens before the behavior?
- What is the challenging behavior?
- What happens after the behavior?

In the scenario:

- What does the child GET or AVOID by engaging in the behavior?



Video

Practice #1



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIEeakeXvMM>



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Behavior Equation

Function: Obtain Desired Activity

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Mom stops reading the book. Book closes.	Crying	Mom reads the book again.



Observation Vignette #1 ABCs





Behavior Equation

Antecedent (What happens before)	Behavior	Consequence (What happens after)



Observation Vignette #2 ABCs





Behavior Equation

Antecedent (What happens before)	Behavior	Consequence (What happens after)



Video

Vignette #3 ABCs





Behavior Equation

Function: Obtain Desired Toy

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Peer takes toy	Physical aggression (pushes, hits, kicks, etc.)	Adult intervenes; provides negative attention; peer relinquishes toy



Activity: Responding to Challenging Behaviors



- Read through the strategies.
- Star strategies that are new, you like, or want to use.
- Be prepared to share your ideas!



Tips for Responding to Challenging Behavior in Young Children

January, 2017

Phil Strain
Jaclyn Joseph
Mary Louise Hieronimus
Erin Barton
& Lise Fox

The most effective strategies for addressing challenging behavior are primarily focused on prevention of challenging behavior and promotion of appropriate social behaviors. These strategies include environmental manipulations, providing positive attention and feedback to children, and teaching social skills and emotional competencies. Even when these practices are in place, some young children will engage in challenging behavior. There are several strategies you can use when responding to challenging behavior but these should always be combined with more intentional promotion and prevention practices. The use of these response strategies is intended to reduce the likelihood of challenging behavior, but will not be effective without careful and intentional attention to teaching social skills and emotional competencies.

1. When children are engaging in challenging behavior, keep interactions with them to a minimum during these episodes. You should ensure the child's safety while providing minimal attention to the challenging behavior. This recommendation is based upon the fact that the two most likely reasons for challenging behavior are: (1) attempts to get attention or (2) attempts to avoid or escape a non-preferred activity. Sometimes if we attend to children during this time, we are reinforcing their inappropriate behavior.
2. When children are engaging in challenging behavior, interrupt, and redirect the child to the appropriate alternative behavior using minimal attention, discussion, and emotion. Your redirect should focus on stating what the child should or might do. For example, if the child has taken another's toy, prompt a more appropriate social skill (e.g., "You can trade with Eric"). For example, throwing blocks might be redirected to: "Let's build, you put one here!" Notice that this recommendation involves minimal interaction and usually just one prompt.
3. Reinforce the nearest child who is engaging in the appropriate, alternative behavior (e.g., "I see Manuel using walking feet" or "LaShawn you are sharing the blocks so nicely with your friends!"). Then, when the child with challenging behavior engages in the desired behavior, immediately use descriptive feedback to acknowledge his/her use of the desired behavior.
4. When the incident of challenging behavior ends and the child engages in appropriate behavior, provide positive attention to the child. This might include joining in the child's play, having a conversation with the child about the child's interests or activity, providing the child with a response opportunity, or providing the child with physical affection. It is important for the child to be able to rejoin the classroom community and to experience positive attention from the adult in the classroom when behaving appropriately.



Remember

“The use of these response strategies is intended to reduce the likelihood of challenging behavior but will not be effective without **careful and intentional attention to teaching social skills and emotional competencies.**”

Strain, Joseph, Hemmeler, Barton & Fox (2017)



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Preventing and Responding to Challenging Behaviors





What can you do?

- Implement Pyramid Model practices
 - Responsive relationships
 - Supportive environment
 - Teach social skills and emotional competencies
- Offer support to family
 - Listen to families
 - Recognize traumatic event
- Consider trauma when identifying strategies
 - Select strategies that help the child feel safe, comfortable, and supported.
 - Validate children's emotions and provide support for the expression of emotions.
 - Eliminate or modify actions that might trigger the behavior.



Major Messages

Behavior is
learned

Behavior has
meaning

Behavior is
communication

Consider the
context

Implement
Pyramid Model

Use
individualized
strategies

Consider family
values and
beliefs

Consider the
possible effect of
trauma on
behavior



Challenging Behavior Works

- Children often engage in challenging behavior when they don't have social or language skills to engage in more appropriate behavior.
- Children engage in challenging behavior because “it works” for them.
- Challenging behavior results in the child gaining access to something or someone (i.e., obtain/request) or avoiding something or someone (i.e., escape/protest).



Staff who are more confident in their ability to manage their area of responsibility, feel less overwhelmed by challenging behaviors when they arise. As such, they are less likely to perceive a behavior as “disruptive” compared to staff who feel less equipped to manage these behaviors...



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Questions?



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