**(“Nap-time” Webinar #3)**

**Rising to the Challenge of Challenging Behaviors: Tools You Can Use in the Preschool Classroom**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E\_U6JiMoN0**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E_U6JiMoN0)

Teachers can create an ideal learning environment by guiding children's behavior in positive ways. Effective guidance keeps children safe, prevents behavior problems, helps children self-regulate, and builds a solid foundation for children's positive interactions with others. This webinar explores active listening, classroom rules, reflective statements, and other strategies teachers can use as they respond to common challenging behaviors in the preschool classroom.

**Instructions:**

1. “Click” on the link for the webinar entitled, “Rising to the Challenge of Challenging Behaviors: Tools You Can Use in the Preschool Classroom.”
2. Complete the Assignment.
3. Mail or email your assignment and the Registration Form to:

Child Connect for Family Success

861 E. Sibley

Howell, MI 48843

Attn: Jo Ann Cook

[cook.jo7@gmail.com](mailto:cook.jo7@gmail.com)

After your assignment is reviewed, you will receive a Completion Certificate for two (2) hours of professional development.

**Webinar:**

**Rising to the Challenge of Challenging Behaviors: Tools You Can Use in the Preschool Classroom**

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**Two Hour Training Registration Form**

**Name (First) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Middle Init.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Last) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Type of Provider (Check one): Family Group Center Relative/Day Care Aide Other**

**Worksite Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Upon successful completion, you will earn 2 hrs. of training. (Training is tax deductible as a business expense.)**

**Assignment**

**The following strategies are from the webinar for you to refer to when facing the challenging behaviors of young children in your care and completing this assignment.**

1. **Active Listening and Reflection** helps you get to know children while, at the same time, letting them know that you care about them. The **steps of active listening** are:

* Notice when children are experiencing strong emotions
* Move close to the child and move your body to his or her level
* Make eye contact and offer a gentle touch, as appropriate
* Repeat back what you hear the child telling you trough words or action
* Name and explain children’s feelings

1. **Classroom rules** should be simple, yet reflect your needs. Limit the rules to 3 or 4 and post these in the meeting area where they can be reviewed often.

* Be kind
* Be safe
* Take care of the things in the classroom

Teachers will pair the rules with children’s behaviors. For example, when a child is standing on a chair, say, “I’m worried you are standing on the chair, you could get hurt. Our classroom rule is, “Be safe.”

**Responding to Challenging Behaviors -** Stay calm and use the following proactive strategies:

1. **Reflective statements** – demonstrate to children that you are paying attention
   * Encourage positive behaviors
   * Begin with, “I see … (describe what you see or hear)
     + Ex: “I see that you are putting the blocks away on the shelf.”
2. **“I” Statements** – explain what is happening, your feelings, and the reason for your feelings

* Teach children that their actions affect others
* Support empathy
* Help children learn names for their emotions
  + Ex: “I feel worried when you stand on the top of the chair, you might get hurt.”
  + Ex: “I feel worried when the water is on the floor; use this towel to clean it up.”

1. **“When-Then” Statements** – explain the sequence of behaviors, providing clear, step-by-step directions.

* “**When** you wash your hands, **then** you can help me make bread.”
* “**When** everyone is quiet, **then** I can read the story.”

1. **Modeling specific language**. Rather than saying “use your words,” when a problem arises, teachers model the particular language that is needed.

* Children learn how to handle conflicts verbally when you teach specific language.
  + Ex: “Caleb, try saying, “I want a truck, too, please.” “Now, Caleb, you try it.”
* Coach children, “I see that you are reaching for the cup and stomping your feet, how could you ask for help to reach it?” (Notice a reflective statement was paired with the specific language, making it more effective).

1. **Offer specific choices** – supports independence and the ability to make choices.

* Gives children control over what is happening
* Works best when you provide two (2) acceptable choices.

1. **Redirection** – provides a child with an acceptable alternative to unacceptable behavior.

* “I see that you are practicing your throwing skills. It is not safe to throw stones. Here are some balls you can throw instead”

1. **Changing the Environment**

* Move a child to a new location
* Add or remove materials
* Change the daily schedule.

1. **Showing while telling** – talk with children about what they should do, using gestures and other visual cues.

* Focus on the positive – the “do”
* Demonstrate the behavior you expect
  + “Look at Derek’s face, his face tells you that he does not like it when you poke him.”

Consistency is key, so children know what to expect and when to expect it.

1. **Help Children Regain Control** – intervene to stop dangerous behavior.

* Establish a positive relationship with the child
* Obtain more information by observing
* Stay calm and respond constructively
* Remind yourself that your response is teaching children how to treat others
* Everything you, the teacher does and says, teaches something.
* Express your feelings appropriately.

**Common Challenging Behaviors**

**Testing limits** – children discover how much “power” they have

* Acknowledge child’s feelings and wishes – be an active listener
* State the limit clearly in simple terms
* Say what behavior is acceptable
* Offer a final choice
  + - * Ex: “If you continue on to climb on the table, you will have to go to an area without tables.”

**Physical aggression** - must be stopped immediately

* Position yourself at child’s level
* Use the word, **“Stop”,** “When you hit Alex, he hurts! Get the ice pack to put on Alex’s arm.”
* Attend to the victim – hold the child to help them feel comforted and safe
* Discuss alternative ways to express feelings and remind the child of the classroom rules

**Biting** – requires an immediate response

* + - Think of a way to redirect the child’s attention positively – giving them something they can bite on
    - Observe the child and try to discover what causes them to reach the frustration level of biting
    - If a child bites often, talk with the family members to develop a plan to stop the behavior

**Temper tantrums** - often occur when children have strong feelings that cannot be expressed with words

* + - Act quickly to protect the child, other people and things
    - Hold the child firmly to help them calm down
    - When the child relaxes, talk about what the child can do differently in the future
    - Reflect their behavior
      * “I could tell that you were really mad. Your arms were crossed in front of your body and your face was scrunched up tight. Your whole body was telling me you were angry. You really wanted to play with the truck. Next time, try telling Juan, “Let me play with the truck when you are finished.”
    - Children who are tired or frustrated are more likely to have tantrums
    - Observe children to know when and why a child is about to lose control
    - Direct the child to a soothing activity (e.g. water table, sand table) when you see them approaching a high level of frustration.

**Bullying** – is a way some children exert control over others. Often the biggest bullies are the most fearful children. Their behavior has to be stopped and redirected. The longer children are allowed to bully others, the harder it is to change the behavior. When you see a bullying situation:

* + - Be ready to step in
    - Help children verbalize their thoughts and feelings so they can learn to use language to regulate their behavior independently. Bullies often pick on certain children, they know which children will not stand up for themselves – so bullies disrupt their play, grab their toys, and frighten them. Children, who are victimized time after time as targets of aggression, often suffer from low self-esteem. They learn to be helpless and depend on adults to help them. The vicious cycle is hard to break. You can stop the bullying and teach victims to be assertive when an incident occurs; or at a more neutral time, such as a group meeting. For example, you might read a story about teasing and how children practice ways to respond. Use the strategy of supporting children to speak up when someone does something mean to them: “Stop pushing!” or “I’m still playing with it,” or “Stop calling me that name.” Some children might need coaching on using a powerful, assertive tone of voice.

**Determining the Causes of Challenging Behavior**

* Challenging behaviors are often a cry for help.
* Children whose behaviors are unacceptable may not know how to express their feelings in constructive ways.
* You will want to focus your attention on what the children need, rather than what they are doing. Try to imagine what the child might say if she could.
  + **“I don’t feel well.”** Health problems such as illness, allergies, lack of sleep, poor nutrition or hunger can be causes of children’s challenging behavior. If you suspect a physical problem, talk with the child’s family and consider having the child evaluated by a health care professional.
  + **A child might be thinking, “I don’t know what I’m supposed to do!”** The teacher says, “Clean up!” or “Get ready!” or “Use that brush properly!” When a child does not comply, the teacher may assume that the child is resisting on purpose; however, many young children do not understand what the teachers want them to do. Big words such as “properly,” have no meaning for the child and he is not likely to ask what that means. The “show and tell” strategy works well here. Children often need the teacher to show them what to do and how to do it. For example, how to hold the brush so the paint does not drip from the page onto hands and clothing.
  + **A child might be thinking, “I’m bored.”** Even in the most interesting and varied environments, some children are bored because they don’t find new ways to use the materials and engage with the other children. Make an extra effort and consider their unique interests and characteristics when planning new activities and selecting materials and encouraging involvement.
  + **A child might be feeling that they want more control**. Some children have very few opportunities to make decisions or exercise control over their lives. When children are given choices such as which materials to use or with whom to play and alternative ways to express strong feelings, they feel more powerful and begin to develop self-regulation. Try using the choices strategy and offering two acceptable choices or having children making a choice play.
  + **A child might simply be scared**. Often children who are aggressive toward others and challenge adults are fearful. To overcome fear, the children try to be “powerful.” To help them, try to find out what their fears are and what I causing them. Being an active listener can help you find the root of children’s fears. Make a plan that will address their fears and reassure the children that they are safe.

When you are dealing with challenging behaviors of any kind, remember that **reasons underlie all behavior**. Children whose behaviors challenge us may not feel safe or connected to others. They may lack the foundation of trust necessary to experiment with constructive activities. They need adults who care about them, form positive relationships with them and build their trust. They need opportunities to express their fears and anxieties appropriately through creative art, dramatic play, story-telling and talking with caring adults. They need you to remain calm and helpful. Only then, will children be ready to learn.

**Answer the following questions:**

1. What is positive guidance?
2. Using the instructions given in the webinar and referring to the strategies above, write three (3) “I Statements” in the space below:

a. ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­

b.

c.

3. Using the instructions given in the webinar and referring to the strategies above, write three (3) “When-Then” statements in the space below:

a.

b.

c.

4. Using the instructions given in the webinar and referring to the strategies above, write three (3) reflective statements:

a.

b.

c.

5. What are the classroom rules in your early childhood program? Did you create the rules in collaboration with the children, or on your own?

6. What challenging behaviors do you face most often in your program?

7. Which of the strategies described in the webinar do you think you could use most effectively to deal with the behaviors you named in (6) above?

8. What do you think could be the causes of the challenging behaviors you described above?

9. Why is it important to give **specific** instructions to young children in your care?

10. What is the **most important** information you learned from this webinar?

11. What strategies are you most likely to use in your early childhood program when you face challenging behaviors?