

## Examining your attitude

- What behaviors push your buttons?
- How do these behaviors make you feel?
- Why is your attitude so important
- Everyone has different buttons
  - Past experiences with children
  - Training experiences
  - Level of support for dealing with challenging behaviors
  - Culturally based beliefs



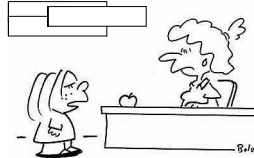
## Why should he stay?

- Moral obligation – can't give up on a child
- If you know what to do it's possible to make it work
- Tells the teachers that they are competent
- The other children are positive role models
- Makes you aware of all the flaws in your program
- Gives the child a bad message:
  - he's unteachable
  - you don't want him
- Where should he go?



## Inclusion

- Enables children with disabilities to become part of the fabric of society.
- Promotes appreciation and understanding of diversity among children without disabilities.



"How do you know I have a learning disability?  
— Maybe you have a teaching disability!"

## The inclusive classroom

- There are natural, fluid supports to enable all children to successfully participate.
- There is no stigma attached to difference.
- Students appreciate diversity and understand that they all differ in learning styles and abilities.
- Students help one another to learn and feel accountable for both themselves and others.
- Teachers use positive behavior support and emphasize children's strengths and progress.
- Teachers consider students' interests in their planning and give children the opportunity to make choices and direct their own learning.

## What do I mean by challenging behavior?

- Not a diagnostic term
  - There may be no diagnosis
  - Need to survive period before diagnosis
- Not a Label
  - How does labeling affect your attitude?
  - Have you ever been labeled?
  - How did the label affect your behavior

## CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR is challenging for:

- The child
  - prevents him from achieving important outcomes.
  - probably doesn't have much control over it.
  - wishes that he could change his behavior more than anyone.
- The other children
  - become frightened and confused
  - don't know how to respond or defend themselves
- Teachers/Family
  - don't know how to turn things around,
  - responses may even make things worse.

## Challenging Behavior

- 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

Timid and withdrawn behaviors also qualify as challenging

## Challenging Behavior

- Developmentally appropriate
- Common response to difficult life events:
  - parents separate or divorce,
  - new baby
  - parent loses a job or falls ill
  - family moves to a different city
- Children with **BORDERLINE** challenging behavior
  - 3 to 7 % of children **RELY** on challenging behavior as the best way to respond to almost any situation

## Children with borderline challenging behavior

- Retaliate
- Launch preemptive strikes
- Provoke another child
- Look for attention by behaving inappropriately

## Children who continue to use challenging behavior

- Develop a reputation
- Often become isolated and depressed
- Expect rejection
- Strike out preemptively
- Best defense is a strong offense



## Consequences

- Band together with their like-minded peers
- As adults the boys may become batterers
- The girls are at higher risk for early pregnancy and single parenthood



## What happens in School

- Teachers are more likely to punish children with challenging behavior
- Less likely to encourage them when they behave appropriately
- Teachers call on children with aggressive behavior less frequently
- Ask them fewer questions
- Provide them with less information

## Positive reinforcement

- With some children positive reinforcement seems to have the opposite effect of what you expect
- Tempting to conclude that positive reinforcement is the last thing they need.
  - Need more encouragement, not less.
    - Perhaps they can relate to more subtle forms of positive reinforcement, but the reinforcement needs to be there
      - wink or a smile..
- Their response indicates that they don't feel good about themselves

If a child's negative self-image is very strong, he will try to get others to treat him negatively -- because in his own eyes he couldn't possibly be worthy of positive attention.



## The teacher's role

Combating the child's negative view of himself takes commitment, patience, and perseverance

- Trust, respect, and care for the child
- Believe in the child's ability to succeed
- Find something that you like about the child

## So, Why Do They Misbehave?

**BECAUSE THE BEHAVIOR IS WORKING FOR THEM!**

1. To avoid/escape a situation or person(s)
2. To obtain an object or attention
3. To change level of stimulation

## Biological Risk Factors

- GENES
- TEMPERAMENT
- ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER (ADD)
- COMPLICATIONS OF PREGNANCY AND BIRTH
  - Stress
  - Pre-maturity
  - Substance abuse during pregnancy
  - Malnutrition
- DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS
  - Language delays
  - Sensory integration problems
  - Executive functions
- GENDER



## Temperament

- **Activity level:** active, restless
- **Perceptiveness or distractibility:** difficulty concentrating
- **Intensity:** loud whether happy or angry
- **Regularity:** unpredictable about sleeping, eating
- **Persistence:** committed to tasks; stubborn
- **Physical sensitivity:** responds to the slightest touch, smell, sound, sight, etc.
- **Adaptability:** uncomfortable with transitions and changes in routine
- **Approach/withdrawal:** withdraws from new situations, people, places, foods, etc.
- **Mood:** serious and analytical; seldom shows pleasure, cranky

## Attention Deficit Disorder

- ❖ Inattention – inability to control, direct or sustain attention consistently
- ❖ Impulsive/misread social cues
- ❖ Hyperactivity
- ❖ Disorganization
- ❖ Poor fine motor skills
- ❖ INCONSISTENT

## Language Disorders

There is a 50% overlap between language delays and behavior problems

The verbal deficits of antisocial children are pervasive:

- Understanding
- Categorizing, labeling, and storing emotions and previous experiences in language
- Thinking things through in language
- Expressing complicated feelings, thoughts, and ideas.

## SOCIAL-INFORMATION PROCESSING

The **CONTENT** of their thought

- hostile goals
- aggression is acceptable
- blame others when things go wrong
- enhances their reputation
- doesn't hurt the victim
- choose ineffective solutions

The **STYLE** of their thought

- respond impulsively
- don't look for new facts
- don't anticipate the consequences
- don't think of alternative solutions



## Sensory Processing Disorder

- Brain Disorder
- Misinterpret sensory information
  - Sound, touch, vision, taste, smell, movement
- Hyper-Responsive
  - Sensory defensive – fight, flight, fright -
  - Cannot inhibit non-essential sensory information
  - May be considered hyperactive, distractible, uninhibited
  - Unable to calm or console themselves
  - Difficulty developing regular sleep and eating patterns
- Hypo-Responsive
  - Under responsive
  - Do not protect themselves enough

## Environmental Risk Factors

- FAMILY FACTORS AND PARENTING STYLE
- POVERTY AND THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS SURROUNDING IT
- EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE
- VIOLENT MEDIA
- CULTURAL DISSONANCE
- SCHOOL



## Family factors and parenting style

Any life circumstance that hinders a parent's well-being can put children at risk, including:

- Insecure or disorganized attachment
- A mother who had her first child when she was very young
- Parents with little education
- A parent with mental illness, especially a mother who's depressed
- A parent who is abusing alcohol or drugs
- A parent with antisocial or criminal behavior
- A large number of children in the family

**Inappropriate parenting increases the risk of challenging behavior**

Anger and out of control responses model the use of aggression as a way to solve problems

**Children who are exposed to violence**

- Learning violence is an acceptable — and effective — way to resolve conflict and gain power
- Becoming more ready to accept aggressive behavior both in themselves and in others
- May suffer from post traumatic stress disorder
- Are at high risk for criminal behavior and aggressive behavior in their own dating and marital relationships



**Violent media**

THERE IS A DIRECT CAUSAL LINK BETWEEN VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION AND VIDEO GAMES AND AGGRESSIVE behavior

- Aggressor effect
- Victim effect
- Bystander effect
- Increased appetite effect

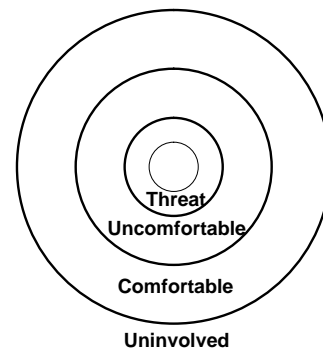


**Culture**

- ▶ Culture is a vital part of a person's self concept
- ▶ Everyone has the need and the right to be proud of their cultural heritage.
- ▶ Children begin to construct their identity from:
  - ▶ understanding their own culture
  - ▶ responding to how others see and relate to them.
- ▶ Not being recognized can actually
  - ▶ harm a person by putting his/her self-concept at risk
  - ▶ result in challenging behavior.

<p><b>LOW CONTEXT</b> Majority U.S., Canada, Europe <b>individual orientation</b></p>	<p><b>HIGH CONTEXT</b> 70% of the world <b>group orientation</b> African/Native Americans, Asian, Latino – Dominant world culture</p>
<p><u>Focus on individual development and functioning independently</u> Helping oneself  Talking about oneself – qualities and strengths  Using words to communicate  Standing out • Personal property</p>	<p><u>Focus on interdependence and the child as a member of a group</u> Helping others and being helped  Being modest about one's qualities and strengths  Using observation to learn  Fitting in • Shared property</p>

**Circles of Comfort**



### The culture of school

Expected school behavior may be quite alien to what's needed by some children at home and in the neighborhood where they live

- Values
- Rules and regulations
- Means of communication
- Evaluation
- Social structure

The culture of childcare/school	The Culture of the Children	
Teachers expect students to work independently and compete for rewards	Children help one another learn	Individual valued as a member of the group
Learn from books and other materials	Learn through experience	Learn by watching
When called on, students respond one at a time	Children may be reluctant to speak	No one needs permission to enter the conversation
To show they're paying attention, children sit still and maintain eye contact	Children are expected not to share their views but to watch and listen	Listeners join in and respond with gestures, movement, and words
When called on, students respond one at a time.	Children may be reluctant to speak	Children join in and add their opinions

### Cultural dissonance

- Feel incompetent
- Feel confused
- Don't understand the rules
- Do not feel accepted, respected, or valued

### The teacher's role

- Accept each child for who he/she is
- Understand his/her reality
- Challenge him/her
- Encourage each child to develop competency through special interests and activities
- Recognize each child's ability and provide opportunities for success.
- Model constructive thinking and the conviction that life can get better.
- A child's protective factors are at work when they are doing well

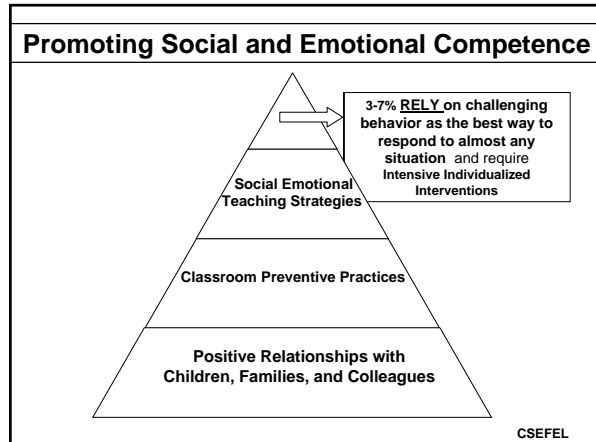
### Prevention is the best intervention

The goal of many of the strategies to follow is to build the resilience of a child who is at risk and create a safe and caring environment for ALL children



### Prevention and the brain

- The connections amongst the neurons and neural pathways are dependent upon use.
- Repeated use leads to strong connections. If connections are under-used the connections are lost.
- Experiences in early life:
  - activate gene expression
  - result in the formation of critical pathways and processes.
- Billions of neurons in the brain must be stimulated to form sensing pathways, which influence a person's learning and behavior, and biological processes which affect physical and mental health.



**The most powerful tool that you have is your relationship with the children.**

**Day-to-day, taken-for-granted social interactions lay the foundation for the child's development of sense of self, attitudes, values, and behavior patterns**



- Getting to know the family**
- **What can you do to get to know the family ?**
    - Greet them when they arrive in the morning.
    - Send out newsletters that let them know what you are doing.
    - Create a photo display of activities.
    - Develop an interactive journal
    - Let them know about their child's successes
    - Invite them to visit the classroom/fieldtrips

- Parent involvement varies**
- **Actively involved in every activity**
  - **It's your problem - see a clear separation between home and childcare**
  - **May not have the resources - time, energy, or money**
  - **Parents' own experience at school/childcare and their attitude toward authority**
  - **Have heard this so many times from people who really have not helped them in the past**
  - **Consider you the cause of their child's problems.**
  - **They feel incompetent, helpless and alienated**
  - **Not appropriate to discuss family dynamics or personal problems with a teacher**

- Talking about the problem**
- **Be factual and specific**
  - **Talk about what you have seen - not what you think**
  - **Ask open ended questions**
  - **Invite them to share with you what they have found works at home**
  - **Brainstorm as many ideas as possible**

### The teacher's role

It is the teacher's role to provide an environment that is conducive to learning.

Teachers can be part of the solution or part of the problem



### Prevention

Creating opportunities for ALL children to succeed.

- Changing the physical environment
- Changing the program
- Changing the social context
  - Changing your approach with the children
  - Utilizing preventative pro-social skills curricula



### Changing the physical environment

- How is your room set up?
- Is it cluttered?
- What is the message children get when they walk in?
- What's at eye level?
- What areas are problematic?
- Is the room friendly, personal?
- Are materials easily accessible?
- Are there clear paths from one area to the next?



### Changing the program/schedule

- Are the children actively engaged throughout the day?
- Is your program developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive?
- Does your program reflect the children's interests?
- Are your expectations realistic?
- How many choices do the children have?
- Does your program meet the needs of all the children?
- Are there opportunities for children with different learning styles?

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### Differentiated instruction and cooperative learning

- Enables students of all abilities to participate actively in learning without being isolated from the group
- Prevents challenging behavior because children who are fully engaged are less likely to need it.

## The main goals for Transitions

- Move children from one activity to another in a safe and organized manner
- Capture and hold the children's attention
- Maintain a secure and predictable routine
- Have fun!!



## The social context

The social context creates the overall tone of the group

- Develop a social spirit that reflects the needs, cultures and developmental level of the children
- Create a context that makes EVERY child feel good about coming to school
- Focus on teaching children what To Do!

## Be Positive!!!



- Give children attention when they are engaging in appropriate behaviors
- Use positive descriptive language
- Tell children what to do instead of what not to do



## Creating a positive social context

- Assign permanent compatible partners
- Assign seats at lunchtime and snack
- Divide the children into smaller groups
- Make expectations clear
  - limits
  - consequences
- Create rules and policies:
- Develop a behavior guidance policy
- Focus on teaching children what To Do!
- Teach social skills pro-actively.

## Create Rules and Policies

- Develop a list of three rules for your classroom

### 3 Basic Rules

Brainstorm ways you can promote and reinforce the rules



## Teach social skills

### KEY SKILLS

- Friendship skills
- Empathy
- Impulse control
- Problem solving skills
- Anger management



## How do children learn social skills?

- Children learn how to act pro-socially in much the same way that they learn how to act anti-socially.
- They learn through:
  - modeling
  - practice
  - reinforcement



## Friendship skills

- **Joining**
  - Stay close
  - Look for a natural break
  - Ask, “Can I play?”
- **Maintaining appropriate interaction**
  - How to give suggestions (play organizers)
  - Sharing toys and other materials
  - Turn taking (reciprocity)
  - Being helpful
  - Giving compliments
  - Understanding how and when to give an apology



## Empathy

The ability to:

- Determine the emotional state of another person
- Assume the perspective and role of another person
- Respond emotionally to another person



## Key concepts with feelings

- Feelings change !
- You can have more than one feeling about something.
- You can feel differently than someone else about the same thing.
- All feelings are valid – it is what you do with them that counts.



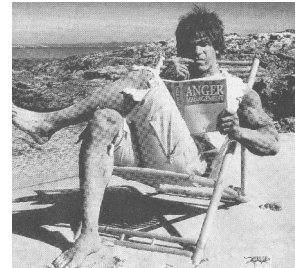
## Managing feelings

- Impulse control
  - Stopping and thinking through a problem rather than doing the first thing that comes to mind
- Recognizing that anger can interfere with problem solving
- Learning how to recognize anger in oneself and others
- Learning how to calm down
- Understanding appropriate ways to express anger



## Anger management

The ability to channel one's angry feelings into socially acceptable directions by breaking or reversing the cycle of anger escalation.



## Problem solving skills

- Children need to learn how to identify the problem
- Think of alternative solutions
- Decide what action they can take
- Understand what the consequences would be
- Figure out ways to implement their solution
- Learn how to evaluate its success
  - Is it safe? Is it Fair? Good Feelings?
  - What to do when a solution doesn't work?



## The teacher's role

- Anticipate problems
- Stay closely attuned
- Coach
  - Support
  - Encourage; and
  - Promote
- Prompt
- Reinforce

You're a role model, and concentrate on being your pro-social best

## Take home messages

- Self reflection is important when working with any child, but especially important when working with children with challenging behavior.
- It is important to know why children behave the way they do.
- There are many risk and protective factors that influence a child's behavior.
- It is important to build positive relationships with every child and family
- Focus on prevention and teaching appropriate skills.
- Elements related to prevention of challenging behaviors include the physical environment, daily program, activities, and social context; supportive interactions, family involvement, and cultural awareness.
- There are no quick fixes to challenging behavior.

You can make an enormous difference in children's lives!



committee for *children*

Educating the heart and mind

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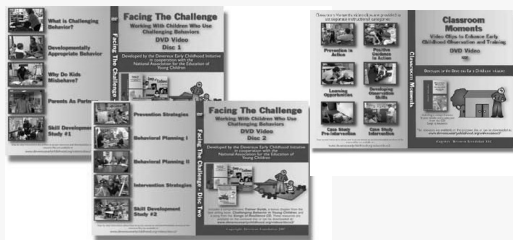
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**Challenging Behavior in Young Children:**  
**Understanding, Preventing, and Responding Effectively**

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