



Presentation Summary for

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR: PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

JANUARY 16, 2015

Guest speaker Dr. Mary Louise Hemmeter joined us to discuss challenging behaviors for young children who also have disabilities.

One goal of the presentation was to make clear that children who exhibit challenging behaviors do not necessarily have disabilities. And, conversely, that not all children with disabilities have challenging behaviors.

Why do children engage in challenging behaviors? There's usually a message they are trying to communicate.

Challenging behavior can often be addressed through prevention strategies. For children with disabilities who have challenging behavior, the process is the same as for all children, but the strategies might differ depending on children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and their specific needs and strengths. The following strategies can be individualized as needed.

Classroom schedules and routines:

- Have consistent schedules and routines
- Make sure the content and length of activities are developmentally appropriate
- Be intentional about using visuals to teach routines
- Give consistent feedback
- Provide more individualized support for children with disabilities who have challenging behavior during routines. They may need an individualized visual schedule or a peer buddy, for example.

Transitions:

- Try to minimize the number of transitions
- Teach expectations
- Model or provide visual examples of appropriate things to do while waiting (counting, singing a group song, playing Simon Says)
- Allow children to transition at separate times or in smaller groups as needed

Large group activities:

- Consider the length of the activity (especially circle time). Is it age appropriate?
- For children who are working on expanding their attention, shorten wait times and allow breaks.
- Use visuals to make rules clear and to break tasks into smaller steps
- Provide ongoing feedback to expand children's understanding, participation, and learning

Types of support:

Visuals

- To help children communicate their needs
- To break down tasks
- To clarify expectations

Timer

- To provide a safety signal so children know when something is coming to an end

Adult support

- To facilitate large group and small group activities
- To model and provide examples, and help children who need more intensive support
- To provide choices

Peer support

- To model, think-pair-share, or be a buddy

Child preferences

- To increase children's motivation and engagement in tasks that can trigger challenging behavior

RESOURCES

- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning on ECLKC](#)
- [Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children's Social and Emotional Competence](#)
- [Classroom Visuals and Supports](#)
- [Facts about Young Children with Challenging Behaviors](#)
- [Tips and Ideas for Making Visuals to Support Young Children with Challenging Behavior](#)
- [Well Organized Classrooms: Behavior Guidance 15-minute In-service Suites](#)
- [Curriculum Modifications 15-minute In-service Suites](#)

For more information, contact us at: NCQTL@UW.EDU or **877-731-0764**

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