Section 2
Understanding Children's Needs

Head Start has a long and rich history of supporting the healthy development of young children. While we know that the development of children is individual, experts seem to agree that there are some key needs that must be met for children to develop in optimal ways. This session is designed to help professionals explore the seven needs outlined by early childhood experts, Brazelton and Greenspan and discuss strategies for meeting these needs in families, communities and classrooms. The session will cover the following areas of need:

- The Need for Ongoing Nurturing Relationships;
- The Need for Physical Protection, Safety, and Regulation;
- The Need for Experiences Tailored to Individual Differences;
- The Need for Developmentally Appropriate Experiences;
- The Need for Limit Setting, Structure, and Expectations;
- The Need for Stable, Supportive Communities and Cultural Continuity; and
- The Need to Protect the Future

Audience
This 3-hour session is designed for professionals who work with young children and families. It is particularly suited for Head Start staff, including both those who work inside and those who work outside the classroom. Each session will accommodate between 30 and 40 people. While this session can be effectively facilitated with large audiences, a group of approximately 30 professionals is ideal.

Room Set Up
The room should be arranged to accommodate a presenter/facilitator at the front of the room. Participant seating should consist of round tables that will accommodate approximately 6 people.

Facilitators/Presenters
The Understanding Children's Needs training session can be successfully managed by one session facilitator. It is recommended that Head Start agencies select a facilitator with background in child development and with experience facilitating small and large group discussions.

Supplies/Materials
Name Tags

Markers

LCD Projector and Screen

Pens and Pencils

Flip Chart

Computer,

Paper for Participants

Copies of Handouts for All Participants

Understanding Children's Needs

Facilitator's Guide
Resources
Master Handouts

**Head Start Innovation and Improvement Grant
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Understanding Children's Needs
Facilitation Outline

Introductions

(10 min.)   **Ask participants to say their name, their agency, their role in the agency and tell the group one of the best things an adult ever did for them as a child.** *(Facilitator: Chart the answers on flip chart for use later in the session.)*

(10 min.)   **Overview of the Head Start Innovation Grant**
(Optional)   **Expectations for Participation in the Project Evaluation and Tracking**
(State Office Staff)

(20 min.)   **Basic Needs of Children**

INTRO here….

(Slide)   Two early childhood experts, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and Dr. Stanley Greenspan have created a model that divides the needs of every child into seven distinct categories. They feel that every child, in order to grow and develop to their fullest potential have the following seven needs:

- The Need for Ongoing Nurturing Relationships
- The Need for Physical Protection, Safety, and Regulation
- The Need for Experiences Tailored to Individual Differences
- The Need for Developmentally Appropriate Experiences
- The Need for Limit Setting, Structure, and Expectations
- The Need for Stable, Supportive Communities and Cultural Continuity
- The Need to Protect the Future

These early childhood experts feel these seven items are the basic or *irreducible* needs of all children.

In this training module, we will explore these seven areas and come up with strategies on how we can foster these in our Head Start classrooms.

(Activity)	Let's look back at our list we created during the introductions. Does each of the answers fit into one of these categories? *(Facilitator: Go down the list and see if/how each of the answers fit. The purpose is to show that these things were not only things that we, as children, felt important, but also are things that supported our growth and development.)*

The 7 Irreducible Needs of Children
Let's take each of these needs and explore them individually.

(20 min.)	**The Need for Ongoing Nurturing Relationships** Every child needs a warm, intimate relationship with a primary caregiver over a period of time. We hope that children have this relationship with their parents. We also hope that children have these types of relationships with their child care providers and early childhood teachers. Because many children are in child care arrangements from birth, they have other adults in their lives than just their parents or close family members. In some of these arrangements, they are with the care providers for only a short period of time, sometimes only a few months, before they are "moved up" to another classroom or switched to a different care setting all together. When this happens to children, no matter the age, they are not able to form ongoing relationships with the adults in these settings. When ongoing nurturing relationships are absent or interrupted, children can develop disorders of reasoning, motivation and attachment. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers need these nurturing interactions most of their waking hours.
(Activity)	For a moment, think of the characteristics that are present in a healthy relationship you have (or had) in your life. On a piece of paper, reflect and write down what these characteristics are. *(Facilitator: Allow about 3 minutes for this part of the activity.)* Now, turn to the person sitting next to you and share your lists with each other. *(Facilitator: Ask participants to compare lists. Allow about 2 minutes for this part of the activity.)* Did you have any of the same characteristics on both of your lists? Can someone please share one or two of your characteristics? *(Facilitator: Chart answers. Answers will most likely include the following: respectful, loving, enduring, long lasting, unconditional, accepting, supportive, etc.)*

Can these characteristics be ones present in our relationships with children? Sure they can.

(Handout 1) On Handout 1, you'll see several characteristics listed. I'd like for you to, with a partner, think of strategies that can help you foster these characteristics in your relationships with the children in your classrooms. Think of specific things you do in your classrooms. You will have 10 minutes to come up with these strategies. *(Facilitator: Allow 10 minutes for this activity. Ask for each pair to give one strategy in one of the characteristic areas. Possible strategies for each characteristic include:*

Respectful –

Loving-

Enduring-

Long lasting-

Unconditional-

Accepting-

Supportive-

(Handout 2) Additional information and strategies can be found on Handout 2. There is a wealth of resources on the website found at the bottom of Handout 2. Some of these are materials that you may want to share with co-workers or parents. They are available to educators at no charge. Be sure and check this website out.

(35 min.) **The Need for Physical Protection, Safety and Regulation**

Let's move to the next basic need of children. The need for physical protection, safety, and regulation.

Both in the womb and throughout childhood, children need an environment that provides protection from physical and psychological harm, chemical toxins and exposure to violence.

"Virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning early in the prenatal period and

extending throughout the early childhood years." (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000)

Children need to feel and be safe in every environment they spend time in. This includes their homes, their child care settings, their Head Start classrooms, and their communities.

Before birth, children must be protected from exposure to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and environmental pollutants.

All children need to know that they are protected by the adults in their lives. Some children, however, need to be protected *from* some of the adults in their lives. In the 40 years since child neglect and abuse became a recognized problem in America, there has been no sustained success in reducing the incidence of child maltreatment.

In the latest statistics from the federal government, it is reported that during the fiscal year of 2005 there were 3.3 million child maltreatment referrals allegedly involving 6 million children. Nearly 900,000 of these children were determined to be victims of child maltreatment. Child abuse and neglect can happen in any family. Many children are living in chaotic and dangerous communities and homes. Parents who are experiencing stress, isolation, addiction, or lack basic parenting skills can be at a higher risk for abusing or neglecting their children.

(Slide)
(Handout 3)
Early childhood programs that work with families should consider incorporating the *Strengthening Families* approach. This approach looks at building resiliency in families by incorporating Protective Factors into all the program does.

An early scan of existing research about conditions that produce a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect revealed several "protective factors" or attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk for abuse and neglect to find resources, supports or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress. When these factors are present, child maltreatment appears to be less likely to occur. Handout 3 describes this approach and shows how specific program strategies can build protective factors.

(Activity)
I'd like for you to look at the strategies listed on the left hand side of the Handout 3. Think about *specific activities* your program does in each of these areas. If you can't think of any, circle that strategy and come up with a way to implement that strategy. *(Facilitator:*

Allow 15 minutes for this part of the activity. Ask participants to give specific ways their program meets these strategies. (Allow 5 - 10 minutes for this part of the activity.) Answers can include:

***Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support** – comfortable space available for families to meet informally; provides opportunities for families to socialize and foster a sense of community (celebrations, field trips, events celebrating cultural customs, affordable family activities, etc.))*

***Strengthen Parenting –** information on parenting is available through a variety of means and in the language spoken by the family; teachers share parenting tips and discuss parenting issues with parents during drop off and pick up times, when parents are frustrated, etc.; parents are invited to visit the classroom; connect parents to resources and supports that may help to address the parenting issues, ect.*

***Respond to Family Crises-** staff develop personal relationships with families by taking time to get to know them individually; message that parents can turn to staff in the event of a crisis is conveyed; maintains resource and referral links to crisis services; staff proactively respond to signs of parent or family distress, etc.*

***Link Families to Services and Opportunities-** program develops family plans with parents; staff and parents have access to up-to-date information about services that are available in the community, etc.*

***Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development-** program uses a social and emotional development curricula for children that is culturally sensitive to the families it serves, encourages children to express their feelings, etc.; teaches parents about children's social and emotional development in parenting classes and informal discussion with parents; parents have opportunities to observe their children interacting with other children and teachers, etc.*

***Observe and Respond to Early Warning Signs of Child Abuse or Neglect-** staff are trained to recognize early signs of child abuse and neglet; staff monitor signs that a family may be under stress (physical signs, acting out, unusual parental behavior at pick-up/drop-off times, repeated unexplained absences, missed payments, divorce, job loss, etc.); staff are trained to follow protocols for reporting child abuse and neglect; parents are*

informed about the program's protocols for reporting child abuse and neglect, etc.

Value and Support Parents- *parents are active in making decisions about their children's education;staff get to know all family members by name; program offers specific activities for fathers, mothers, and other family members; etc.*

All of the above information is found on the CSSP website at http://www.cssp.org/doris_duke/index.html*)*

As you probably found, your Head Start programs are doing many of these strategies which build the protective factors. That's great! What many programs are not doing is being *explicit* about naming them as such.   The Strengthening Families Initiative hopes to change that through its implementation in early childhood settings. Take this information back to your classrooms and know that when you do these strategies, you are indeed strengthening the families you work with.

(15 minutes) **BREAK**

(25 minutes) **The Need for Experiences Tailored to Individual Differences**

(Slide)   Another need all children have is the need for experiences that are tailored to their individual differences.

Every child has a unique temperament. Tailoring early experiences to nurture a child's individual nature prevents learning and behavioral problems and enables a child to develop his or her full potential.

In the book, *The Irreducible Needs of Children,* author Greenspan and Brazelton explain it this way, " We have traditionally expected children to fit the expectations of parents and society at large. To some degree, this is absolutely correct. The expectations we have for children to become socialized, for example, to learn to curb their aggression, and to be empathetic and kind to others are very important. On the other hand, in the last 50 years we have learned that expecting children to live up to our expectations is a two-way street. The degree to which we can tailor experiences to each child's unique qualities increases the likelihood of that child's gowing up physically, intellectually, and emotionally healthy and thus able to meet the expectations of family and society."

(Activity)   Think of the children you work with. Specifically, think of two

(Handout 4) different children. On Handout 4, describe the characteristics of these two children. Answer the questions as they relate to each child. You will have 10 minutes for the first part of this activity.

By taking the time to think about each of these individual children, were you able to see their differences? Have you considered planning activities based on the individual characteristics of the child? For example, if a child has a pretty rigid temperament and does not transition from activity to activity well, do you adjust for this and give him plenty of warning before an activity is to end? Or do you expect him to move to the next activity as smoothly as a child who has a more adaptable temperament?

Think about how "fixed" your schedules are? Do they allow for individual differences? Does your routine fit the children who have flexible coping abilities? Is your classroom so unstructured that the children who need structure struggle?

See each child as the individual that he/she is and celebrate the characteristics that make them that way. When you begin to recognize each child as an individual, you can't help but begin to plan experiences for them individually.

Turn to a person sitting next to you and share one way you do, or might start, individualizing for this child. Take 10 more minutes. Be sure you each get to talk about one child.

(15 minutes) **The Need for Developmentally Appropriate Experiences**

Children of different ages need care tailored to their stage of development. Unrealistic expectations can hinder a child's development. This need ties in with the need for individualized experiences.

(Slide) Developmentally appropriate experiences for children are simply experiences that are geared for their level of development. In order to provide these types of experiences, care providers, teachers, and parents must have a basis in knowing how children grow and develop. They must also know basic milestones in development.

(Handout 5) The National Association for the Education of Young Children
(Activity) (NAEYC) has published a position paper on developmentally appropriate practice that lists 12 principles that inform developmentally appropriate practice. These can be found on Handout 5. Take a moment to read and reflect on these principles. *(Facilitator: Allow 3-5 minutes for participants to*

read Handout 5. Then, ask them to turn to a person sitting next them. Each person in the pair is to pick a different principle and think of an instance where the principle was "lived out" in their Head Start classroom. Allow 10 minutes for this activity.)

(15 minutes) **The Need for Limit Setting, Structure and Expectations**

(Slide)
(Handout 6)
Children need structure and discipline. They need discipline which leads to internal limit-setting, channeling of aggression and peaceful problem-solving. To reach this goal, they need adults who empathize as well as set limits. They need expectations rather than labels, and adults who believe in their potential but understand their weaknesses. They need incentive systems, not failure models.

Greenspan and Brazelton, *The Irreducible Needs of Children,* have some recommendations for limit setting for families. These are basics that classrooms can easily adopt as well. These are found on Handout 6.

- Give more and expect more – Couple limits and expectations with nurturing care. "When we expect without giving and give without expecting, children become either angry and resistant or spoiled and passive." (Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000).
- Consider discipline as teaching – Discipline includes setting limits, problem solving, learning to anticipate difficult situations, and learning to deal with disappointment and feelings of loss and humiliation.
- Corporal punishment is a no-no – This is no longer acceptable in a world of violence.
- Never humiliate – Humiliation breeds resentment, anger, and rebelliousness.
- Embed expectations in relationships – Children need to *be a part* of supportive adult-child interactions, not just observe them. When children experience adults doing for them what will eventually be expected of them, true teaching occurs.
- Make expectations appropriate to a child's age – This recommendation ties into having a solid understanding of child development. A 12 month old should not be expected to be toilet trained, it's not developmentally appropriate. Likewise, a four year old should not be biting other children. That is more developmentally appropriate for a 18 month old, not a 4 year old.

(Handout 7) Please take 10 minutes to discuss the challenges and successes of using these recommendations in your classroom with the person sitting next to you. *(Facilitator: Allow 10 minutes for this discussion.)*

An additional resource on this topic can be found on Handout 7. This information is provided from the Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior.

(5 minutes) **The Need for Stable, Supportive Communities and Cultural Continuity and the Need to Protect the Future**

To feel whole and integrated, children need to grow up in a stable community. This means a continuity of values in family, peer groups, religion and culture, as well as an exposure to diversity.

Meeting all these needs should be our highest priority. If we fail, we will jeopardize our children's future.

(15 minutes) **Review of the 7 Irreducible Needs of Children**

(Handout 8) Let's now take the remaining time and review the 7 irreducible or basic needs of children. All of these needs are listed on Handout 8. As you recall our previous discussions on each of these needs, I'd like you to write down at least one strategy you will now use in your Head Start Classroom to meet the particular need. There are many ways to do this exercise. You could think about one particular child for each need and write down something you will do for that child. You could also think about the children in general that you work with. The point is to commit to changing *or continuing* a practice that helps the children you work with grow, learn, and flourish.

Please take 15 minutes. When you are finished, I'd like you to get into groups of 4 -5 and share your responses.

(5 Min) Wrap Up

Strategies to Foster Ongoing Nurturing Relationships

The Need for Ongoing Nurturing Relationships

Every child needs a warm, intimate relationship with a primary caregiver over a period of years. We hope that children have this relationship with their parents. We also hope that children have these types of relationships with their child care providers and early childhood teachers.

When ongoing nurturing relationships are absent or interrupted, children can develop disorders of reasoning, motivation and attachment. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers need these nurturing interactions most of their waking hours.

Respectful

Unconditional

Loving

Supportive

Expressing Warmth and Affection to Children

HANDOUT 20

Expressing warmth and affection to children is important for a number of reasons:

✓ It shows children that teachers and other caregivers like them, enjoy being with them, are having fun with them, and are pleased with their efforts and accomplishments.

✓ It reassures and comforts children and contributes to secure relationships between children and adults.

✓ It provides models of positive, gentle behavior and is linked with children's ability to interact with peers.

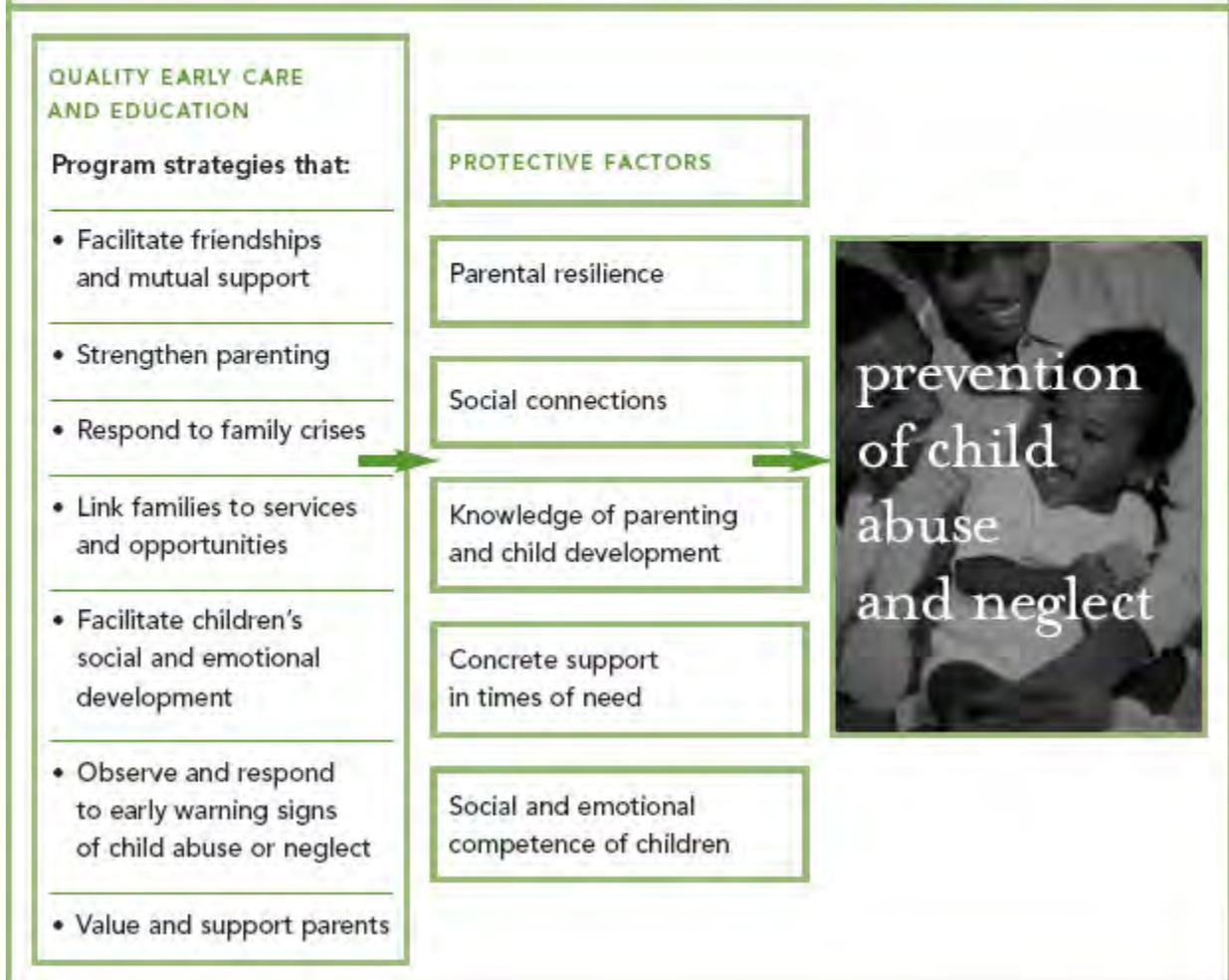✓ It leads to teachers' enjoyment of the warmth and affection of children.

Remember:

✓ Expressions of warmth and affection are most effective in the context of an ongoing positive relationship between a child and caregiver.

✓ Warmth and affection can be expressed in so many different ways including smiles, laughter, voice tone, words of endearment ("I missed you", "little one"), encouragement, and many types of physical contact (a quick pat on the head, a special handshake, gentle stroking, hugging).

✓ It is critical to express warmth and affection to children in ways that are sensitive to their individual preferences, family and cultural background, temperament, disabilities, and possible history of abuse. Some children may prefer very brief rather than lengthy touch, for example.

✓ Classrooms that are well organized and predictable set the stage for individualized, warm interactions with children.

✓ Children who are the most challenging are often those who need warmth and affection the most.

Strengthening Families Approach

how early childhood programs help prevent child abuse and neglect

Excellent early care and education programs use common program strategies to build the protective factors known to reduce child abuse and neglect.

QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Program strategies that:

- Facilitate friendships and mutual support

- Strengthen parenting

- Respond to family crises

- Link families to services and opportunities

- Facilitate children's social and emotional development

- Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect

- Value and support parents

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Parental resilience

Social connections

Knowledge of parenting and child development

Concrete support in times of need

Social and emotional competence of children

prevention of child abuse and neglect

Individual Differences

Child One	**Child Two**
Family Background -	Family Background -
General Temperament-	General Temperament-
Interests-	Interests -
Dislikes-	Dislikes-
One special attribute -	One special attribute-

Principles that Inform and Guide
Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Domains of children's development – physical, social, emotional, and cognitive- are closely related. Development in one domain influences development in other domains.

Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.

Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning.

Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual children's development; optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.

Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization.

Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.

Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.

Development and learning result from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds that children live in.

Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development.

Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery.

Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know.

Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure.

NAEYC. (1997). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through 8; A Position Statement. Washington, DC.*

Recommendations for Limit Setting

Give more and expect more – Couple limits and expectations with nurturing care. "When we expect without giving and give without expecting, children become either angry and resistant or spoiled and passive." (Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000).

Consider discipline as teaching – Discipline includes setting limits, problem solving, learning to anticipate difficult situations, and learning to deal with disappointment and feelings of loss and humiliation.

Corporal punishment is a no-no – This is no longer acceptable in a world of violence.

Never humiliate – Humiliation breeds resentment, anger, and rebelliousness.

Embed expectations in relationships – Children need to *be a part* of supportive adult-child interactions, not just observe them. When children experience adults doing for them what will eventually be expected of them, true teaching occurs.

Make expectations appropriate to a child's age – This recommendation ties into having a solid understanding of child development. A 12 month old should not be expected to be toilet trained, it's not developmentally appropriate. Likewise, a four year old should not be biting other children. That is more developmentally appropriate for a 18 month old, not a 4 year old.

Brazelton. T.B. & Greenspan, S. I. (2000). *The Irreducible Needs of Children.* **Perseus Publishing: New York, NY.**
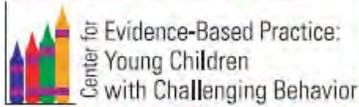
Recommended Practices

Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Effective Practices

Peter J. Alter & Maureen A. Conroy

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Benjamin Franklin

The single best way to address challenging behaviors in young children today is to take steps to make sure that they never occur. While there is no universal panacea for preventing challenging behaviors, there are several broad-based early intervention strategies that researchers suggest to prevent challenging behaviors. These strategies include: (a) arranging of the classroom environment, (b) scheduling, and (c) implementing rules, rituals, and routines. In the following section, a brief overview of each of these prevention strategies is provided.

Effective Classroom Environments

Effective classroom environments begin with a well-organized and engaging classroom that includes developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), activities, and materials. For instance, if the children in a classroom are engaged with interesting activities and materials that are appropriate for their developmental levels, they will be less likely to engage in challenging behaviors. On the other hand, if the activities and materials are too difficult or too easy, challenging behavior is more likely to occur. Consider the following points when designing a well-organized and effective classroom environment.

- Designing effective classroom environments includes structuring the physical arrangement of the classroom to increase appropriate behaviors, such as engagement, and decrease the probability of challenging behaviors. Several strategies for structuring the physical classroom include: arranging the classroom to ensure visual monitoring of children, arranging activity centers to support children's appropriate behaviors (e.g., limiting the number of children in a center) and facilitating smooth transitions among activities (e.g., organizing the location of materials on shelves), and arranging materials in the classroom to promote engagement, mastery, and independence. Increasing the accessibility, appropriateness, and availability of toys and materials can facilitate children's independence, thus, decreasing the likelihood of challenging behaviors. In addition, attending to details, such as the lighting, temperature, and noise levels, can reduce the probability of children who engage in problem behaviors due to sensitivity to these environmental factors (e.g., children with autism).

IDEAs that Work

References

Bovey, T. & Strain, P. (2003). Using environmental strategies to promote social interactions. Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. Retrieved September 6, 2005, from www.csefel.uiuc. edu/what works.html.

Brown, W.H., Odom, S.L., & Conroy, M.A. (2001). An intervention hierarchy for promoting preschool children's peer interactions in natural environments. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21, 90 – 134.

Center for Evidence-Based Practice website at http://www.challengingbehavior.org

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning website at

http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu

Del'Homme, M., Kasari, C., Forness, S. R., & Bagley, R. (1996). Prereferral intervention and students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders. Education and Treatment of Children, 19, 221-232.

Gable, R. A. (2004). School-wide positive discipline. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Education.

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Kauffman, J. M. (1999), How we prevent prevention of emotional and behavioral disorders. Exceptional Children, 65, 448-468.

Lawry, J., Danko, C., & Strain, P. (1999). Examining the role of the classroom environment in the prevention of problem behaviors. In S. Sandall & M. Ostrosky, (Eds.), Young exceptional children: Practical ideas for addressing challenging behaviors (pp. 49-62). Longmont, CO: Sopris West and Denver, CO: DEC.

Massey, G.N. & Wheeler, J. J. (2000). Acquisition and generalization of activity schedules and their effects on task engagement in a young child with autism in an inclusive pre-school classroom. Education & Training in Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities, 35, 326-335.

Designing effective classroom environments also includes structuring the interpersonal climate of the classroom. When teachers attend to children's appropriate behaviors and provide assistance as they need help, children are less likely to engage in challenging behaviors. Developing a positive interpersonal climate begins with implementing engaging activities that are developmentally and individually appropriate for all children. In addition, the use of positive attention and positive feedback with children who are engaging appropriately in activities and playing with their peers will increase appropriate behaviors. Remember, "catch them being good" and acknowledge them for it!

Scheduling

Children like predictability! Creating and teaching the daily schedule helps communicate to the children the organization of daily activities and events. Providing a predictable daily schedule helps prevent the occurrence of challenging behavior. Therefore, designing effective classroom environments involves implementing consistent daily schedules. When implementing a daily schedule, consider the following points.

Young children in particular may benefit from the use of photographic or picture schedules that provide concrete, visual cues of the scheduled activities and routines. In fact, children who are just beginning to learn language may actually need to have real objects included in their schedules.

When organizing a daily schedule, teachers may want to consider rotating large and small group activities, varying active and quiet activities, structuring a transition time in the activity, and placing the most difficult activity at a time when the children are most alert and attentive. It can also help to include a schedule within activities as well as across activities. For instance, if the activity has several components, the teacher may want to communicate to the children what will come first, next, and so forth by showing the child a sequence of visual cues (e.g., photographs, line drawings) that represent the different components of the activity. Again, this will communicate to the child what to expect.

Embedding choices within the schedule, in which children have an opportunity to decide between one activity and another (e.g., blocks center or dress up center) also will increase the rate of child engagement and decrease the likelihood of challenging behaviors.

Rules, Rituals, and Routines

A critical component of the environment that decreases the likelihood of challenging behaviors is providing rules, rituals, and routines. Rules are most appropriate for preschool age children; whereas, rituals and routines are more applicable to younger children. Providing rules, rituals, and routines helps provide structure for everyone in the classroom, including the adults. A ritual may be a song, a rhyme, a game, kinesthetic movement or any other activity that is used in a predictable and repeated pattern over time to communicate values, foster community, or remind children

of behavioral expectations. When implementing rules, rituals, and routines, consider the following points.

- Rules provide preschoolers with the structure to teach them which behaviors are appropriate and which behaviors are not appropriate in the classroom setting.

- For younger children especially, rituals and routines provide verbal and non-verbal cues and prompts that help them learn appropriate behaviors. For example, a bell that signals the end of play time provides children with a cue about a schedule change and allows them to initiate the change without verbal prompting from the teacher.

- Rituals and routines may include songs, rhymes, games, and kinesthetic movement that can be used to foster community and serve as rule reminders. These activities taught over time and embedded as part of a daily schedule serve as reminders to children about appropriate behaviors in different classroom contexts.

- Rituals and routines provide stability and consistency and can communicate values such as friendship, caring, or responsibility. For instance, the teacher may teach a set of songs about these values that children sing at the end of circle time, or the class may always review the expectations when walking in a line to go from place to place.

- In addition, rituals can be an effective way to ease transitions, reducing the occurrence of challenging behavior that often happens when children transition from one activity to another. An example of a ritual that may help ease transitions and serve as a rule reminder when children are going to a place where they need to be quiet, such as the library, or when they are starting a quiet activity, such as naptime, is for the teacher to say to the class "Zip it, lock it, and put it in your pocket. " The actions that accompany this request is for the children to zip an imaginary zipper over their lips (zip it); act as though they are turning a key at the end of the zipper (lock it), and put the imaginary key in their pocket (put it in your pocket).

- When implementing rules, rituals, and routines, teachers will typically need to teach them to the children in their class using small steps, paired with positive, specific feedback and repeated over time until all the children understand and are able to engage in the appropriate behaviors.

In summary, preventing challenging behaviors before they occur is part of an effective early childhood classroom. Creating a well-designed classroom that is engaging and developmentally appropriate and implementing schedules, rules, rituals, and routines can help create a positive classroom communicating to children how to act appropriately. When children understand what is expected and are provided the opportunity and support to engage in appropriate behaviors, they are more likely to choose this behavior, reducing the likelihood of using challenging behaviors. Remember, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

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The Irreducible Needs of Children

The Need for Ongoing Nurturing Relationships

The Need for Physical Protection, Safety, and Regulation

The Need for Experiences Tailored to Individual Differences

The Need for Developmentally Appropriate Experiences

The Need for Limit Setting, Structure, and Expectations

The Need for Stable, Supportive Communities and Cultural Continuity

The Need to Protect the Future

Understanding Children's Needs PowerPoint Presentation

Slide 1

Understanding Children's Needs

Head Start Innovation and Improvement Grant
Funded by
The Office of Head Start
Administration for Children Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Slide 2

Introductions

Please say your name, your agency, and your role in the agency.

Then, tell the group one of the best things an adult ever did for you as a child.

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Slide 3

The Basic or "Irreducible" Needs of Children

- The Need for Ongoing Nurturing Relationships
- The Need for Physical Protection, Safety, and Regulation
- The Need for Experiences Tailored to Individual Differences
- The Need for Developmentally Appropriate Experiences
- The Need for Limit Setting, Structure and Expectations
- The need for Stable, Supportive Communities and Cultural Continuity
- The Need to Protect the Future

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Understanding Children's Needs PowerPoint Presentation

Slide 4

Strengthening Families

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Slide 5

Activity

- Look at the strategies.
- Think of specific activities your program does in each of these areas.
- If you can't come up with any, circle that strategy.
- Think of a possible way to implement all circled strategies.

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Slide 6

Strengthening Families: Strategies

- Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support
- Strengthen Parenting
- Respond to Family Crises
- Link Families to Services and Opportunities
- Facilitate Chidlren's Social and Emotional Development
- Observe and Respond to Early Warning Signs of Child Abuse or Neglect
- Value and Support Parents

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Understanding Children's Needs PowerPoint Presentation

Slide 7

> ### The Need for Experiences Tailored to Individual Differences
>
> Every child has a unique temperament. Tailoring early experiences to nurture a child's individual nature prevents learning and behavioral problems and enables a child to develop his or her full potential.

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Slide 8

> ### Activity
>
> • Think of two children you work with.
>
> • On Handout 4, describe the characteristics of these two children. Answer the questions as they relate to each child.
>
> • Turn to the person sitting next to you and share with them one way you do, or might start, individualizing for this child.

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Slide 9

> ### Developmentally Appropriate Experiences
>
> Developmentally appropriate experiences for children are simply experiences that are geared for their level of development.
>
> In order to provide these types of experiences, care providers, teachers, and parents must have a basis in knowing how children grow and develop.

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Understanding Children's Needs PowerPoint Presentation

Slide 10

Activity

- Take a moment to read and reflect on the principles on Handout 5.
- Turn to someone sitting next to you to form a pair.
- Each of you are to pick a different principle and think of an instance when the principle was "lived out" in your Head Start classroom.

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Slide 11

The Need for Limit Setting, Structure and Expectations

Children need structure and discipline. They need discipline that leads to internal limit-setting, channeling of aggression and peaceful problem-solving.

To reach this goal, they need adults who empathize as well as set limits. They need expectations rather than labels and adults who believe in their potential but understand their weaknesses.

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OPEN	HAPPY	ALIVE	GOOD
understanding	great	playful	calm
confident	gay	courageous	peaceful
reliable	joyous	energetic	at ease
easy	lucky	liberated	comfortable
amazed	fortunate	optimistic	pleased
free	delighted	provocative	encouraged
sympathetic	overjoyed	impulsive	clever
interested	gleeful	free	surprised
satisfied	thankful	frisky	content
receptive	important	animated	quiet
accepting	festive	spirited	certain
kind	ecstatic	thrilled	relaxed
	satisfied	wonderful	serene
	glad		free and easy
	cheerful		bright
	sunny		blessed
	merry		reassured
	elated		
	jubilant		

LOVE	INTERESTED	POSITIVE	STRONG
loving	concerned	eager	impulsive
considerate	affected	keen	free
affectionate	fascinated	earnest	sure
sensitive	intrigued	intent	certain
tender	absorbed	anxious	rebellious
devoted	inquisitive	inspired	unique
attracted	nosy	determined	dynamic

passionate	snoopy	excited	tenacious
admiration	engrossed	enthusiastic	hardy
warm	curious	bold	secure
touched		brave	
sympathy		daring	
close		challenged	
loved		optimistic	
comforted		re-enforced	
drawn toward		confident	
		hopeful	

Difficult/Unpleasant Feelings

ANGRY	DEPRESSED	CONFUSED	HELPLESS
irritated	lousy	upset	incapable
enraged	disappointed	doubtful	alone
hostile	discouraged	uncertain	paralyzed
insulting	ashamed	indecisive	fatigued
sore	powerless	perplexed	useless
annoyed	diminished	embarrassed	inferior
upset	guilty	hesitant	vulnerable
hateful	dissatisfied	shy	empty
unpleasant	miserable	stupefied	forced
offensive	detestable	disillusioned	hesitant
bitter	repugnant	unbelieving	despair
aggressive	despicable	skeptical	frustrated
resentful	disgusting	distrustful	distressed
inflamed	abominable	misgiving	woeful
provoked	terrible	lost	pathetic
incensed	in despair	unsure	tragic

infuriated	sulky	uneasy	in a stew
cross	bad	pessimistic	dominated
worked up	a sense of loss	tense	
boiling			
fuming			
indignant			

INDIFFERENT	AFRAID	HURT	SAD
insensitive	fearful	crushed	tearful
dull	terrified	tormented	sorrowful
nonchalant	suspicious	deprived	pained
neutral	anxious	pained	grief
reserved	alarmed	tortured	anguish
weary	panic	dejected	desolate
bored	nervous	rejected	desperate
preoccupied	scared	injured	pessimistic
cold	worried	offended	unhappy
disinterested	frightened	afflicted	lonely
lifeless	timid	aching	grieved
	shaky	victimized	mournful
	restless	heartbroken	dismayed
	doubtful	agonized	
	threatened	appalled	
	cowardly	humiliated	
	quaking	wronged	
	menaced	alienated	
	wary		