

# early report



## Preventing and Treating Challenging Behavior in Young Children

Imagine you are a parent of a four-year-old son who has been repeatedly suspended and even expelled from various child care programs. You are tired of receiving multiple phone calls from the preschool, hearing that the teachers have nowhere to turn for help, and trying to find yet another preschool program for your son. This scenario is not unusual. According to Linda Nelson, Program Supervisor for the Osseo Early Childhood Special Education Program, "The number of young children under the age of five with a history of being expelled from multiple child care programs due to challenging behaviors is a growing concern in rural Minnesota." In order to address this critical concern, over the past eight years personnel with the Minnesota Behavior Project directed by Education Psychology professor Mary McEvoy and Communications Disorders professor Joe Reichle, have trained over 25 early education teams in eight states to prevent situations like the one described above.

The goal of the project, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and Minnesota's Department of Children, Families, and Learning is to assist schools in developing trans-disciplinary teams that provide technical assistance to early educators and families in addressing challenging behavior of young children. These teams then serve as local experts in the prevention and treatment of challenging behavior.

The project is important for two reasons. First, early childhood educators report that an increasing number of preschoolers are engaging in challenging behaviors in their homes, regular and special education classrooms, Head Start programs, child care centers, and other community-based programs (Buscemi, Bennett, Thomas, & Deluca, 1995). Furthermore, early educators report repertoires of challenging behavior as one of the greatest stumbling blocks in providing inclusive educational services to preschoolers (Reichle, Davis, Freeman, & Horner,

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The Anoka-Hennepin Early Childhood Special Education Behavior Assistance Team was developed as the model for this project in 1992. Current team members pictured from left to right: Dianne Breffle, Janet Carlson, Deb Louwagie, Lea Yager, Linda Cashman, Mary M. Lundleen, Lee Rutherford, and Rebecca Shonka.

1999). This is a concern in rural as well as urban areas. In fact, a legal advocate located in northeast Minnesota reported that an average of 90% of her caseload reflects challenging behavior (Linda Bonney, personal communication, Legal Advocate for Northeast Minnesota, Grand Rapids, Minnesota, 11/28/00).

The second reason that this project is important is the comprehensive nature of the training. Typically, inservice training involves consultation and one-day workshops. That training model does not usually include ongoing feedback and follow-up to address unique intervention implementation issues and does not result in a significant impact on teaching practices.

Because of the problems associated with one-shot inservice training, the Minnesota Behavior Project involves a variety of inservice activities including a one-day awareness-level workshop, a 20-hour course offered in local school districts and agencies for credit, and on-site longitudinal technical assistance. As a result of this intensive training and

support, local teams are competent in preventing and treating challenging behavior and thus are able to provide ongoing technical assistance and expertise to early educators and families in dealing with challenging behavior.

## Key Components of the Project

The key components of the project involve the content of the training as well as who participates in the training. The most recent research regarding interventions for young children with challenging behavior suggests that interventions should be based on functional behavioral assessments and that interventions should be proactive and comprehensive (DEC concept paper, 1999; Horner & Carr, 1997; Neilsen, Olive, Donovan, & McEvoy, 1998). Therefore, the project focuses on these two main areas of training, given both their research support and policy implications. Furthermore, a hallmark of early childhood special education is its multidisciplinary

approach. Therefore, the technical assistance teams consist of professionals in a variety of disciplines. A brief description of each key component follows —

- **Functional behavioral assessment.**

An underlying assumption of functional behavioral assessment is that problem behavior occurs for a reason and serves a specific purpose or function for the child. Most challenging behaviors exist because they have been effective for the child. For example, a child's aggressive behavior towards a peer may result in immediate teacher attention. In this case, although the behavior is not appropriate or safe, it is effective in obtaining adult attention. The child may have learned that aggression is the most efficient and effective way to get his or her needs met. Although the behaviors may be considered "challenging" by others, from the child's perspective they may be reasonable and effective responses to events that have occurred in his or her environment. A functional behavioral assessment helps interventionists determine why the child engages in challenging behavior as well as the events that consistently predict challenging behavior (Horner & Carr, 1997). As a result of functional behavioral assessment, educators obtain information on (1) what the challenging behavior looks like, (2) where and when it occurs, (3) what triggers or occasions the behavior (the antecedent), and (4) what social and nonsocial responses or consequences maintain or reinforce the behavior (Strain, McConnell, Carta, Fowler, Neisworth, & Wolery, 1992; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, & Hagan, 1998).

- **Proactive and comprehensive interventions.**

Proactive interventions focus on helping children change undesirable patterns of behavior and expand on their growing repertoire of skills (Dunlap & Fox, 1996). This is accomplished by organizing settings to decrease the likelihood of challenging behavior and encourage children to use new socially appropriate skills (Horner & Carr, 1997). By thinking about how the environment might influence the occurrence of challenging behavior, adults can prevent the behavior. By learning new skills, children can have more successful interactions with peers and adults (Dunlap & Fox, 1996). For example, take the child described above who engaged in challenging behavior to obtain teacher attention. One possible intervention would be to teach him a more socially appropriate way to request attention (e.g., saying, "Play, please"). Another possible intervention might be to provide attention more frequently. For instance, if he was previously getting teacher attention on average once every 10 minutes as a result of problem behavior, the interventionist would instead provide attention on average every 8 minutes. (Please see "But What Can I Do?: Supporting Paraprofessionals" on page 9 for more examples.)

- **Transdisciplinary training.**

This project incorporates a transdisciplinary approach by encouraging educators from different disciplines to work together closely. This approach takes advantage of the expertise of each individual team member. Without this shared expertise, the team would miss out on the specificity, resources, and wisdom accumulated through those represented disciplines (McWilliam,

2000). For example, a technical assistance team may be made up of any combination of the following: an early educator, a speech and language therapist, a school psychologist, a social worker, a nurse, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a paraprofessional, or family members. While the teams are comprehensive, each team may have a slightly different focus. For example, one team might focus on providing technical assistance to families. Other teams may have more of a classroom focus.

## Technical Assistance Process

The final outcome of the technical assistance process is providing technical assistance to educators and families who are struggling with a child's challenging behavior. However, the technical assistance process begins much earlier with a three- to six-hour inservice for technical assistance teams focused on identifying the causes of challenging behavior and designing proactive interventions. Since 1992, over 400 professionals and paraprofessionals have participated in the one-day workshops. Following the initial inservice training, professionals and paraprofessionals are invited to enroll in a graduate-level course that meets for 20 contact hours to expand information presented in the initial workshop. To date, 182 professionals have participated in this course. Following the course, team members from a variety of disciplines are selected. Once the technical assistance team is developed, members receive training in team-building skills as well as extensive field experiences focusing on the following "best practices" —

- Actively include families in the design of comprehensive intervention strate-

gies that cross home, school, and community environments.

- Design environments that address the needs of young children with challenging behaviors.
- Facilitate the social integration of children with challenging behaviors.
- Conduct functional behavioral assessments and utilize proactive strategies to diminish or prevent behavior problems.
- Establish functional communication skills as an alternative to socially motivated challenging behaviors.

To date, 16 technical assistance teams located in six states have been developed.

After team members demonstrate their competency in the "best practices," they are ready to accept referrals from the center or agency. It is helpful if each school district generates guidelines for how referrals are made to the team. Generally, referrals are made at two levels. First, teachers and families may request general technical assistance in organizing the environment or general information about ways to design proactive interventions to address the specific function of a behavior. The second type of referral is child-specific and generally comes via a request from the child's teacher or parent to the technical assistance team. Once this type of referral is made, a member of the technical assistance team is designated as the case manager and begins collecting assessment information. This might include information about the organization of the environment and individual functional behavioral assessment data. Once the necessary assessment information is obtained, the case manager presents the information to the entire technical assistance team at a regular weekly meeting. The team reviews the informa-

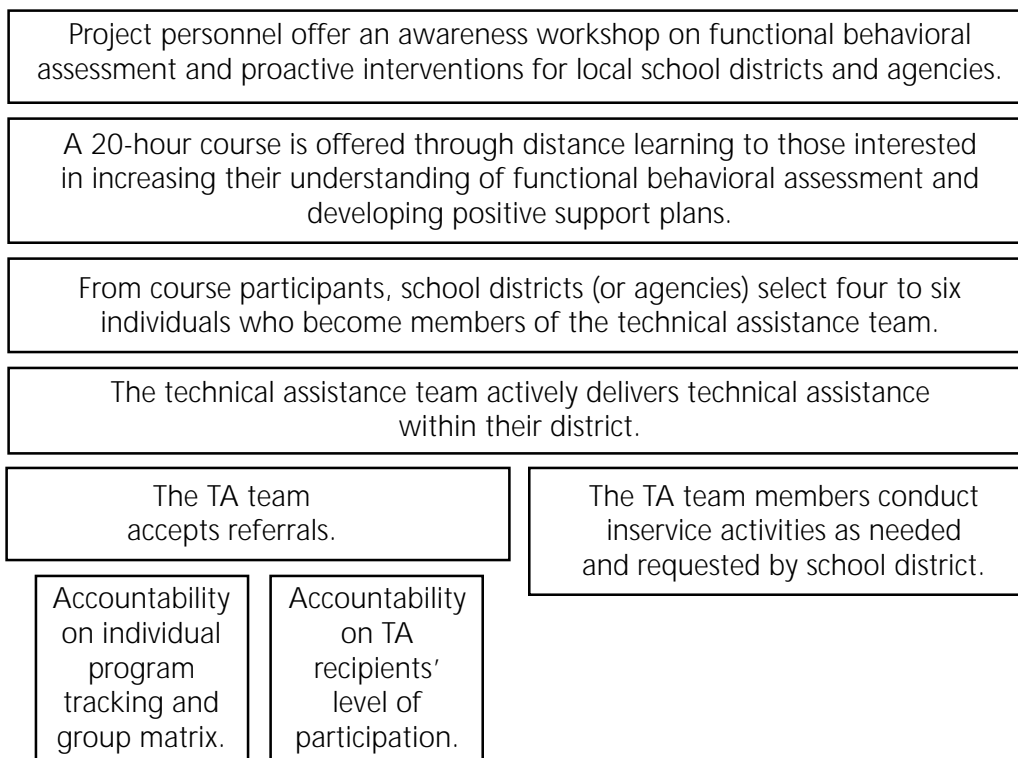
tion and develops a proactive intervention strategy. The case manager provides the necessary training to the teaching team and helps to develop appropriate data collection procedures. Finally, the case manager, the child’s teacher(s), and family decide on the level of ongoing technical assistance. (Please see “Jamie’s Story: Technical Assistance in Action” on page 7.)

In addition to receiving referrals, the teams often present workshops on topics including classroom organization, optimal staffing patterns, and adapting activities and curriculum to meet the needs of children with challenging behavior. As the team demonstrates success (typically after one year of assistance), project personnel systematically fade technical assistance (see Table 1).

## Next Steps

While this project has been successful, it has not reached out to individuals living in rural areas. Fortunately, one promising avenue to provide assistance to families and educators in rural areas is through the use of technology, including distance learning, videoconferencing, interactive television (ITV), and an online course Web site. Therefore, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning has funded a one-year project, the Greater Minnesota Behavior Project, to develop technical assistance teams in rural Minnesota. Through distance learning and information technologies and limited face-to-face contact, the project will provide this educational access to the state’s rural early childhood service providers and

**Table 1: Technical Assistance Process**



families. Drs. Mary McEvoy and Joe Reichle are in the process of developing a class via a course Web site. In the meantime, the course will be delivered via interactive television. In addition, other up-to-date distance learning technologies, such as on-line Web support and videoconferencing, will be used. Along with monthly face-to-face contact, we are convinced that this blending of technology and technical assistance will allow us to work effectively with families and educators in rural areas to meet their unique needs.

For further information on the Greater Minnesota Behavior Project, contact Judy K. Swanson, Project Coordinator, at (612) 626-9528 or visit the Web site at <http://ici2.umn.edu/multistate>.

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A student works on communication skills with speech clinician, Janeen Ringuette.

# Jamie's Story: Technical Assistance in Action

The Early Childhood Coordinator referred four-year-old Jamie to the Positive Behavioral Support Team. Jamie's Early Childhood teacher had expressed considerable frustration with his challenging behaviors.

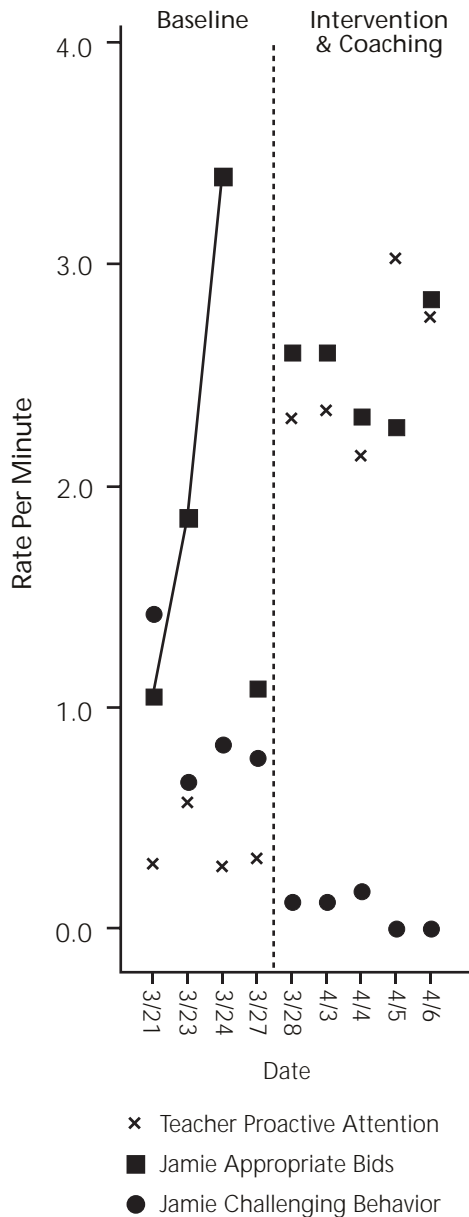
Following the referral, a member of the district's Positive Behavioral Support Team volunteered to case manage Jamie's referral. First, she conducted a functional behavioral assessment, which consisted of an interview with Jamie's teacher and the collection of data from direct observations. In the interview, Jamie's teacher expressed concern about Jamie's challenging behaviors during opening circle time. During this activity, he cried, yelled, left his seat, dropped to the floor, hit, kicked, and spat. Jamie's teacher reported that the classroom staff ignored his behaviors whenever possible. She also indicated that when Jamie's behaviors escalated and became excessively disruptive, the classroom aide would remove him from the activity, taking him either to a brief time-out or to an alternative activity. The direct observation revealed environmental events that occurred immediately before and after each occurrence of Jamie's challenging behavior. From these data, it was hypothesized that Jamie engaged in challenging behavior to obtain teacher attention. Additionally, the data suggested that when the teacher diverted her attention to materials or peers, Jamie's challenging behavior was more likely to occur. Three additional observations were important influences in linking assessment to intervention: (a)

Jamie received large amounts of one-to-one attention during time-out, (b) Jamie used both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors to obtain attention, and (c) staff rarely interacted with Jamie when he was behaving appropriately.

Second, in consultation with the classroom teacher, the technical assistance team developed an intervention plan to systemize time-out (i.e., time-out from the maintaining reinforcer) and to include two proactive intervention strategies: (a) providing attention each time Jamie appropriately requested attention and (b) providing Jamie with attention frequently (i.e., once every 30 seconds). Data were collected for how often Jamie engaged in challenging behavior, how often he appropriately requested attention, and how often teacher/staff provided attention.

To ensure that the intervention was implemented correctly, coaching was provided to the teaching team. Coaching consisted of reviewing the intervention with the teaching team prior to the activity and providing prompts to the teachers if they failed to implement the intervention at the specified time. The results of the intervention show rapid change in both child and teacher behaviors (see Figure 1, p. 8). Additionally, proactive attention exceeded target levels. Furthermore, following the summer break, technical assistance team members reported continued low rates of problem behavior and that his new teachers were providing high rates of teacher attention when Jamie was behaving appropriately.

Figure 1: Data Summary: Circle Time



## What is the Quality of Child Care in Minnesota? Are We Measuring Up?

Four Child Care Resource and Referral programs in Minnesota and faculty from the University of Minnesota recently asked themselves this question. They decided to take a close look at child care in four representative counties to learn more. *Measuring Up* is their report.

The research project pointed toward actions that could have a significant impact on quality of care, including —

- Resisting attempts to lower educational requirements for staff.
- Supporting T.E.A.C.H., a program currently under consideration for funding by the Minnesota Legislature that would provide tuition scholarships for early childhood professionals.
- Providing accreditation scholarships for centers and family child care providers
- Exploring additional ways to increase child care wages.
- Expanding the resource and referral system to reach more parents and to include additional information about centers and providers.

Commissioned by Resources for Child Caring and funded by the McKnight and Otto Bremmer Foundations, *Measuring Up* is an assessment of the quality of child care in Clay, Hennepin, Lyon, and Ramsey counties. The report is available at <http://education.umn.edu/ceed>.

# But What Can I Do?: Supporting Paraprofessionals

*Sites selected to participate in the Minnesota Early Childhood Special Education Program are encouraged to include all staff members, including paraprofessionals, in project workshops, coursework, and the transdisciplinary technical assistance team. Teachers go to workshops and receive a lot of information about where to get training and yet the paraprofessionals are often the ones who are asked to address the needs of children engaging in challenging behavior and implement behavior support plans. Paraprofessionals frequently are called upon to implement strategies without necessarily understanding what they are doing or why. What follows is a reprint of an article written by Judy K. Swanson, Project Coordinator, for ParaLink (Fall 2000), a newsletter for paraprofessionals working in education in Minnesota (reprinted with permission). While this article provides tips and strategies for paraprofessionals addressing the needs of children engaging in challenging behavior, it is only the beginning. It is our hope that paraprofessionals will receive additional training to work with teachers in implementing these important strategies.*

Frequently, it is the paraprofessional who is asked to manage the needs of the child engaging in challenging behavior. This can often lead to the frustrated response, "But what can I do? This child is totally out of control and I'm not the teacher." Although the teacher is the person responsible for the development of a behavior support plan, paraprofessionals in the classroom can have a significant influence on the instruction and education of students.

## What is Challenging Behavior?

A variety of behaviors can be the cause of concern, but a child's behavior is considered challenging if it results in self-injury or injury to others or damages the physical environment. Behavior is also considered challenging if it interferes with learning new skills or socially isolates the student (Doss & Reichle, 1991). Most children engage in unruly behavior at one time or another, but when the behavior is more frequent, has greater intensity, or lasts for longer periods of time, it is considered a challenging behavior.

## Understand the Child

Why do children engage in challenging behavior? Research has shown that behavior serves a function or purpose for a child, is predicted by the events that take place before the behavior occurs, and is maintained by events that take place after the behavior occurs (Neilson et al., 1998). Children can be motivated by the desire to obtain or avoid attention, to avoid a task or activity, or to gain an object or opportunity for action. There are also behaviors that occur for nonsocial reasons, such as pulling on an ear to get rid of the pain from an infection or rocking to self-calm.

When we focus on the needs of the child engaging in challenging behavior, the goal becomes prevention and the focus of intervention planning shifts from what we might do to change the *child* to what we might change about *our own* practices (Strain & Hemmeter, 1997).

## Consult the Behavior Support Plan

When there is a behavior support plan written for a student, the paraprofessional should be a willing participant in its implementation, including the taking of accurate data. It may be difficult to find the time, but data will reveal the effectiveness of the intervention being implemented. When the frequency or intensity of challenging behavior decreases or desired participation increases, you will know the intervention is effective for the student. If there is no change or challenging behavior is increasing, it will guide instructors to understand what changes are needed in the student's plan. Behavior support plans may include a communication replacement or other interventions designed to teach the child rather than react to the behavior. If you have questions about implementing the plan or taking data, seek clarification from the teacher (see questionnaire, "What Should You Ask The Teacher?", on page 13). The plan will be more effective if all instructors are implementing it consistently.

## Be Proactive: *Prevent Rather Than Respond*

If you know a particular activity or event frequently results in potentially challenging behavior, you can preplan activities that will eliminate the behavior before it occurs.

Example: John typically likes to chat with his friends and gets angry when asked to go to his desk for the next subject. Asking John to pass out the next subject's worksheets while others take their seats can provide a distraction, allow him to finalize conversations, and lessen his need for an outburst.

When a behavior is reinforced, it is likely to be repeated. Look at challenging behavior that persists over time to see if it is being unintentionally reinforced.

Example: Bill is working on his art project at the table with his classmate, Carol. He will usually work independently for about three minutes before asking Joan, the paraprofessional, to look at his work. Joan is working with another student when he says, "Joan, Joan, look at my painting." He repeats his request four times, each time a little louder and more insistently. Finally, Bill throws a marker across the table at Carol, and Joan immediately responds by going to him and saying, "Stop that! You know you're not supposed to throw markers. Tell Carol you're sorry." Joan then stays in close proximity to be certain Bill stays on task. His subsequent requests for her to look at his project receive immediate attention.

The event before the behavior was an ignored request for attention. After the behavior, Bill received immediate and continued attention for his behavior even though it was not pleasant. Understanding the motivation of the behavior can help you to be prepared before the behavior happens again and may prevent it from happening in the future.

When a child's behavior is motivated by a desire for attention, intermittent positive attention (periodic eye contact and a simple "thumbs up," wink, smile, or pat on the back) during appropriate behavior may lessen the child's need to obtain your attention with a challenging behavior.

When a challenging behavior consistently results in the premature ending of a task, the child may be using the behavior to avoid the activity. Releasing the

child before the behavior occurs allows you to be the one to determine the timing of the task's completion. In the future, when the child can see that they will be released, there can be a gradual increase in participation expectations.

One way to build the student's tolerance for a delay in the reinforcement is to give a delay cue just before releasing the student. As mentioned above, Bill's critical time was three minutes. A delay cue would be given prior to the three minutes and the first request for attention: "Bill, I'll be right over to see your art work," followed by immediate attention: "Bill, you're really doing a nice job on your art project today."

The time between the delay cue and the release or attention is then gradually increased. Do not try to stretch the time too quickly or you will increase the potential for the challenging behavior to reoccur.

Collaboration is another good strategy for the child who wants your attention or is trying to avoid a task. When you know a student frequently refuses to participate in a task or activity, offering to collaborate when introducing the activity or task may prevent a challenging behavior. Sharing the task and offering praise for participation is an opportunity to teach positive interactive skills. It will also allow you to control a planned, gradual increase in the child's participation.

There are two critical keys to success with these strategies —

1. Respond to the child and implement strategies BEFORE the behavior occurs.
2. Increase expectations gradually.

## Offer Choices

Control is a topic that often surfaces when there is a discussion about behavior. The student who tells you "no," no matter what you're asking of him or her, presents a significant challenge. In some cases, the student is simply trying to obtain control over the situation or environment. Too often our focus is on controlling or managing a child rather than teaching the child problem-solving skills.

Offering choices is a strategy that allows the child to have some control. It's a win-win strategy. Choices can be offered as options in time, activities, or sequence of events. Choosing between two positive choices is a positive way to introduce choice making. For younger children, you can ask: "Do you want to play with the trucks or the puzzles?" For all ages, a choice between two negatives might be reflected in a choice of timing: "Do you want to do your math assignment now or after lunch?"

Another way to be proactive is to set children up for success through the arrangement of the environment. Some environments can provide triggers for challenging behavior. Whenever possible, provide an environment where a child can be successful by anticipating situations that might cause problems. For example —



A choice of toys is offered by Shawn Collins, paraprofessional.

- Seat the student who is easily distracted away from the doorway or pencil sharpener.
- When it is time to get ready for the bus, rather than releasing the whole class to get ready in a small locker area, release small groups, providing an alternative activity for those waiting.

## Use Distractors and Reinforcers

Most restaurants have distractors available for young children and everyone dining in the restaurant appreciates them. In the school setting, a younger child waiting for a late bus could be given a koosh ball to hold or a book to read. During difficult transitions, carrying objects, (i.e., a ball to gym class) can provide an effective distraction.

Distractors need to involve an item or activity that is enjoyed by the child (i.e., being line leader, running an errand, erasing the board, or enjoying time in an activity with a peer).

These same items and activities can also be used as reinforcers. As discussed above, reinforcement that follows a challenging behavior maintains that behavior. In the same way, using reinforcers following appropriate behaviors can cause them to increase. In addition to items and activities, interactive rewards, such as getting more of your time and attention through a special activity, can be a very effective reinforcer.

It is critical to note that in order to be effective, items or activities used as distractors or reinforcers need to be valued and preferred by the student and saved exclusively for those purposes.

Prompts can also encourage appropriate behavior and distract attention from

or stop an inappropriate behavior before it becomes challenging. Prompts can be given verbally or as gestures. Offering praise for appropriate behavior, giving instruction, putting a finger to your lips for silence, touching the chair where you want the student to sit, or pointing to a schedule are some examples.

Some children are visual learners, watching for cues from peers before taking action. For this child, offering visual cues can clarify instructions. Effective cueing needs to be clearly understood by the student and done as a natural part of the routine and should not be used in frustration or anger.

Some children can view behavioral goals as insurmountable. Reinforcing any progress toward the goal is a natural way of cueing and encouraging the student to increase appropriate behavior. For example, “Walk quietly in the hallway” may be a difficult rule for some children. Rather than waiting until the end of a walk down a long hallway to reinforce appropriate behavior, frequently give a smile, nod, or “thumbs up” along the way to provide reinforcement and prompt continued success. This step-by-step shaping approach recognizes progress, offers encouragement, and provides an opportunity for a positive interaction.

## Listen to Your Language

Your communication techniques can reduce challenging behavior as well. Some strategies for preventing and reducing challenging behavior through language include —

- Be generous with encouraging words: “It looks like you worked very hard on that paper” and “I like the way you handled that situation.”
- Avoid nagging warnings: “I know the assignment was difficult for you yes-

# What Should You Ask the Teacher?

## *Questions to Ask the Teacher When You Have Been Asked to Work With a Student With Challenging Behaviors*

### **About the Student**

- Is there a behavior support plan for this student? If yes, ask for a copy.
- What goals should I focus on with this student?
- What are the behaviors of concern?
- What past strategies have been successful or unsuccessful?
- What activities are difficult for him/her? What does he/she like/dislike? When does he/she feel successful?
- Are there medical factors that may be influencing the child's behavior, i.e., vision, hearing, medication side effects?

### **About Your Role/ Responsibilities. . .**

#### **With the Student**

- What are my specific responsibilities? (i.e., am I responsible for taking data? If so, please explain how and when I am to take it.)
- What do I have permission to do? (i.e., if swinging calms the student, do I have permission to go to the swing or do I check with you first?)

- If needed, should I use physical guidance? What guidelines should I follow?
- What should my proximity be to the student? Do I work with other students or only this student?

#### **With the Teacher**

- What kind of cues can we use to communicate between us? (i.e., to let you know I need support, to let you know I need clarification, for you to let me know you have observed a need for change.)
- How frequently can we connect on how things are going? In what ways should I provide you with updates?

#### **With Others**

- What is my role with the parent?
- Am I on the IEP? May I attend the IEP conference?
- Are there times when other staff will be working with this child? If yes, how do I communicate with them?

*Contributed by collaborating professionals in the Early Childhood Special Education program from Anoka-Hennepin District #11 and the University of Minnesota: Jan Carlson and Shawn Collins, ECSE Paraprofessionals; Judy Klein-Pells, Cheryl Rademacher, and Janine Westlund, ECSE Teachers; Lee Rutherford, ECSE Psychologist; Judy K. Swanson, University of Minnesota Project Coordinator.*



Teacher Karen Noreen shares the song "The Five Little Monkeys" with her class.

terday. If you need help just raise your hand and I'll come to help" versus "Get busy and get that assignment done or you'll be in trouble again today."

- If you like a behavior, pay attention to it: "I liked the way you did that" and "Thanks, that really helped."
- Offer reasonable choices to the child when choices are available, but don't word your directions as a choice when none is available: "It's time to get ready for Phy Ed." or "We're going to Phy Ed now" versus "Do you want to go to Phy Ed?" or "It's time to go to Phy Ed, okay?"
- Use the child's name in positive conversation. Frequently a child's name is used only in addressing challenging behavior.
- Give reasonable explanations for requests and directions: "You need to get ready now so we have enough time to play on the playground."
- Signal or cue the student that an activity is about to end. This allows you to prepare the student for the end of an activity, and can also give information to prepare for the next activity:

"Your art project is really looking great! We'll be going to the library in five minutes. I hope they have the next book in that series you're reading. Finish what you are doing so we will all be ready to go." Or, "It really looks nice outside. We'll be going out for recess as soon as everyone is done with their assignment."

- Address the behavior and teach the child. How we view the child is all-important. When talking with a child about their behavior, talk about what they should be doing: "Johnny, you need to be working at your desk during this assignment", versus, "Johnny, you aren't in your desk. You know you're not supposed to be out of your desk!"
- When you know a particular task or activity is a difficult one and often results in challenging behavior, offer a collaboration or choice in your wording of the initial request. Again, avoid nagging.
- Set a good example. Model the behaviors you want to see in the children. Children will often imitate the language, tone and actions of adults, whether or not it is your intent.

## Set a Positive Tone

You can have a significant influence on student behavior from the moment you walk into the room. To encourage student participation and self-esteem, relax, make frequent eye contact, smile, ask questions, and use positive language. By focusing on the child and interacting in a meaningful way, you will have a powerful influence!

## References

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## Courses Related to Challenging Behavior at the U of M

EPSY 5616	Applied Behavior Analysis and Classroom Management
EPSY 5681	Teaching Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers with Disabilities: Methods and Materials
ESPY 5300	Addressing Challenging Behavior in Young Children

## 2001 Harris Visiting Scholar Program

The Irving B. Harris Training Center for Infant and Toddler Development at the University of Minnesota is pleased to announce that Dr. Joy Osofsky, Professor in the Departments of Public Health, Psychiatry, and Pediatrics at Louisiana State University, will be the Harris Visiting Scholar this spring. Dr. Osofsky, an expert on the effects of violence on very young children, will be the keynote speaker at the Harris Forum on May 31, 2001 from 12:30–3:00 p.m. The Harris Forum will be held at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. There is no charge for this event.

To register or for more information, call the Harris Center at 612-624-4510 or go to [www.harristrainingcenter.org](http://www.harristrainingcenter.org).

# CEED-Affiliated Projects

## **Positive Approaches to Problem Behavior for Young Children with Disabilities: Multi-State Outreach Project**

Contact: Judy Swanson, (612) 626-9528, [swans114@umn.edu](mailto:swans114@umn.edu)  
<http://ici2.umn.edu/multistate>

## **Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development**

Contact: Jeff Priest, (612) 624-8020, [pries005@umn.edu](mailto:pries005@umn.edu)  
<http://ici2.umn.edu/ecri/>

## **Minnesota Infant Mental Health Project**

Contact: Christopher Watson, (612) 625-2898, [watso012@tc.umn.edu](mailto:watso012@tc.umn.edu)  
<http://ici2.umn.edu/ceed/projects/>

## **Head Start Project**

Contact: Deborah Ceglowski, (612) 624-2034,  
[deborah.a.ceglowski-1@tc.umn.edu](mailto:deborah.a.ceglowski-1@tc.umn.edu)

## **Training Leadership Personnel Specializing in Augmentative/Alternative Communication and Proactive Strategies to Address Challenging Behavior Among Preschoolers and Youth with Severe Disabilities**

Contact: Joe Reichle, (612) 625-6542, [reich001@umn.edu](mailto:reich001@umn.edu)

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CEED provides information regarding young children (birth to age eight), including children with special needs, in the areas of education, child care, child development, and family education. CEED activities include research, training, and publications geared toward improving professional practices, supporting parents, and informing policy development.

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# CEED

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