

# **Transforming the Challenging Child**

## **The Nurtured Heart Approach**

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April 29, 2009

# Background

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- Traditional approaches to parenting can backfire with challenging children
- Intense children are seeking emotional energy from adults
  - Put energy towards reinforcing positive, rather than negative, behaviors
- When emotional energy is given in response to a behavior, it acts as a reward and reinforces the behavior

# Review of Workshop

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- Strategies
  - Solutions
    - Creating Successes
    - Heartfelt Appreciation

# Review of Workshop, cont.

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- Implementing the New Way
  - Rules
    - Choose a spot
    - Taking a break
      - Rehearse
    - Traps to avoid
  - Avoid triggering opposition
  - Support individualization
  - Stay in the present moment

# Connection to Child Abuse Prevention

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- Parents have control over their child's behavior
  - Undesirable behaviors can be minimized
  - Mutual responsibility
    - Decrease in child blaming

# Who is this effective with?

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- Can be utilized with any age
- Is particularly useful for children with “challenging” behaviors but is effective for any child
- Focus on young children because...
  - At higher risk of abuse

# Application to Young Children

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- Tantrums in public
  - Be attentive to whether child is tired
    - If so, don't go out.
    - If you're already out, go home
  - Rehearse the desired behavior in advance
  - Give heartfelt appreciation for good behavior
  - Listen intently to the child's verbalized desires
    - Avoid saying "no"
    - Acknowledge and affirm their desire

# Application to Young Children

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## ■ Time-In

- Create rules with child's input
- Start the rule with "no"
- Use positive reinforcement when rules are not broken
- Can save feedback for later

# Application to Young Children

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- Other Hints
  - Get there first
  - Reward behavior with “grown-up” tasks
  - Use time-outs as a consequence

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