

# Behavior Tips for the Elementary Years and Beyond

Gretchen Carroll, M.A.  
Education Coordinator

Jane and Richard Thomas Center for Down Syndrome  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

# Approaching the “Hot Topic” of Behavior

- Why It Matters
- Understanding Problematic Behavior
- Preventing Problematic Behavior
- Replacing Problematic Behavior
- Responding to Problematic Behavior

# Why It Matters

- Behavior affects learning
- Behavior affects placement
- Behavior affects social relationships
- Behavior affects independence

# Understanding Problematic Behavior

- Every behavior is a form of communication
- What is the behavior saying?
  - ✓ I don't understand/This is hard for me
  - ✓ I want to do something else
  - ✓ I want you to pay attention to me
  - ✓ I am tired/physically uncomfortable
  - ✓ I have a sensory need I need to fill

# Potential Behavioral Challenges

- Difficulty with transitions
- Poor compliance
- “Stubbornness”
- Attention
- Physical behaviors
- Noises, inappropriate language
- Flight

# Preventing Problematic Behavior

- Environmental Factors
  - Visual input and cuing
  - Hands-on materials
  - Appropriate seating
- Consistent, Known Expectations
- Built-In Breaks

# Preventing Problematic Behavior

- Picture Schedules
- Positive, Visual Behavior Plans
  - Behavior charts based on portions of day
  - Behavior charts based on task completion
- Written Social Stories
- Video Social Stories
- Allow Student to Be the Helper

# Preventing Problematic Behavior

- Modifications and Accommodations
  - Change the delivery of the information
  - Change the output required by the learner
  - Change the pace of delivery
  - Change the amount of content
  - Change the content itself



# Replacing Problematic Behavior

- Providing objects for manipulation
- Providing a safe way to express anger/frustration
- Providing objects to occupy the mouth
- Providing timed opportunities in sensory setting

# Responding to Problematic Behavior

- Diversion and distraction
- Offer choice to return to appropriate behavior
- Immediate, calm response/consequence if behavior continues
- Short, specific consequence with focus on desired activity
- Encourage peers to share their feelings
- Ignore attention seeking behavior (when possible)
- Directly model and teach desired behaviors

# Responding to Problematic Behavior

- Incorporation of behavior goals into the IEP
- Request of a formal Functional Behavior Assessment
  - Antecedents/triggers
  - Behavior itself
  - Events following the behavior
  - Function
  - Formal behavior plan

# Home/School Connection

- Acknowledge Different Demands
- Recognize Importance of Expectations and Reactions
- Share Strategies