

Behavior Tips for the Preschool Years

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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

The Particular Challenge of Behavior in Preschool

For non-verbal preschoolers,
behavior **IS** their language

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

- Look at Each Task and Make the Necessary 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

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

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 if behavior continues
- Short, specific consequence with focus on desired activity/reward
- 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 in Each Setting
- Share Strategies