

Dealing with Challenging Behavior

Increasing emotional regulation through positive behavior supports

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What comes to mind when you think of your child's challenging behavior?

hit



tantrum

scream

throw

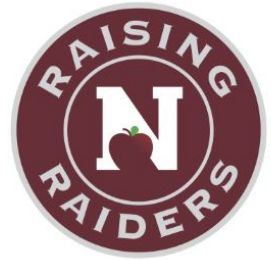
yell

refuse

run



Where do these behaviors come from?



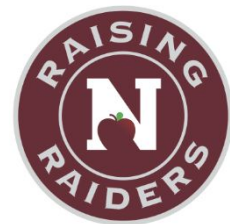
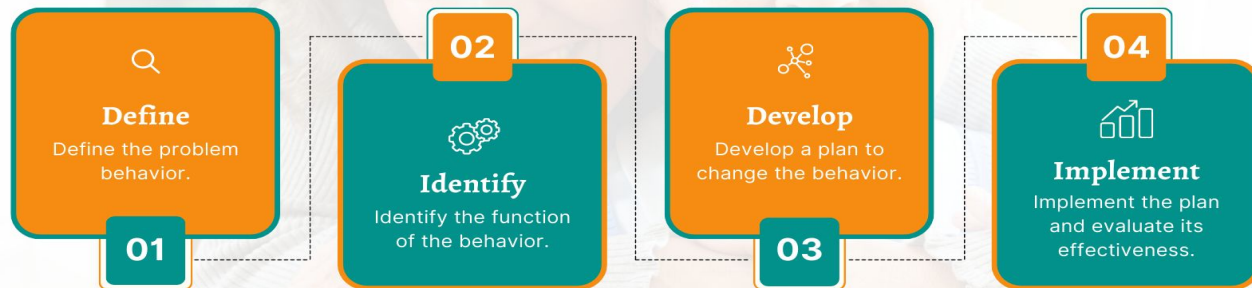
AGENDA

1. What is positive behavior supports?
2. Discuss your expectations for behavior and how you communicate that to your child
 - a. Share developmental guide on behaviors for ages 3-5
3. What are some functions of behaviors? Why are kids acting this way?
4. Identify the challenging behaviors we experience with our children
 - a. Explore ways we can respond to that behavior
 - i. i.e. labeling emotions, validating, setting limits, if- then or first-next, modeling or stating exactly what you want them to do

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) describes a process for addressing children's challenging behavior that is based on an understanding of the purpose of the behavior and a focus on teaching new skills to replace challenging behavior.

Behavior expectations– what are yours and how do you communicate that to your children?

Basics of Positive Behavior Support



1. **Helpful to have routines at home- preschoolers need routines but actually helpful for all children (and adults!)**
2. **Choose Expectations: What you want to see. (really want to narrow down what you are working on)**
3. **Teach, remind, reward, and respond to encourage positive behavior**



What behaviors are most important to you?

- Sharing
- Helping others
- Using toys gently
- Looking at the adult when spoken to
- Greeting others
- Staying near you when out in the community
- Following adult directions
- Using manners
- Asking for what you want
- Cleaning up after themselves
- Trying before asking for help
- Waiting your turn

Use positive words to tell the child what to do instead of what not to do. Clearly and simply state what you expect the child to do. Have age appropriate expectations. Use age appropriate language.



“If a child doesn’t know how to read, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to swim, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to drive, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to behave,

we..... teach? punish?

Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2)

Your child:

is more independent and can do many things for herself. Your child will tell you, "I can do it myself!"

is still learning to follow simple rules, although he sometimes needs gentle reminders.

now plays briefly with other children. She is still learning about sharing and taking turns.

likely has a special friend that he prefers playing with. Boys may prefer playing with boys, and girls with girls.

is becoming more independent. When you go on outings, she will not always hold your hand or stay by your side.

has emotions that may shift suddenly, from happy to sad or from mad to silly. He's learning how to handle his emotions.

can sometimes use words to express her feelings.

is beginning to think about other people's feelings and learning to identify their feelings, too.

uses imagination to create stories through pretend play with dolls, toy telephones, and action figures.

sometimes boss people around and makes demands. This shows that he is independent and values himself. He might do something that he is asked to do, but he is more willing if he thinks it is his idea.

may be fearful and sometimes has nightmares. Scary images and sounds, even cartoons, can give her nightmares.

has an increasing attention span. She often stays with an activity for at least 5 minutes.



Social-Emotional Development Guide

Learn what types of behaviors to expect from your growing child.

Age 3



Your child:

likes to play with other children and has favorite games and playmates.

is beginning to share. He takes turns but is possessive of favorite toys.

expresses extreme emotions at times—happiness, sadness, anger, silliness. She may be able to label her own feelings.

often uses real-life situations when he plays, such as going to the store, school, and gas station.

may have imaginary friends when playing games, sleeping at night, and going to preschool.

now understands short and simple rules at home.

is starting to understand danger. She knows when to stay away from dangerous things.

loves silly jokes and has a sense of humor.

is beginning to control his feelings of frustration.

may use her imagination a lot, and she can be very creative.

is becoming more independent and adventurous. He may like to try new things.

can be boastful and bossy at times with her new independence.

shows concern and sympathy for younger siblings and playmates when they are hurt or upset. His ability to empathize—to put himself in someone else's shoes—is increasing.

has an increasing attention span. She often stays with an activity for at least 10 minutes.



Social-Emotional Development Guide

Learn what types of behaviors to expect from your growing child.

Age 4



Your child:

likes to play best with one or two other children at a time.

likes to choose his own friends and may have a best friend.

now plays simple games such as Candy Land and Go Fish.

may play with small groups of children at the park or at school.

understands and can follow simple rules at home and at school.

is now very independent and likes to make his own choices about clothes to wear, foods to eat, and activities in which to be involved.

is sensitive to other children's feelings. She can identify other people's feelings: "She's sad"

likes to talk with familiar adults and children.

understands how to take turns and share at home and at school, but he may not want to all of the time.

shows a variety of emotions. She may be jealous of other children at times, especially of a younger brother or sister who is getting attention.

feels adult approval is very important. Your child looks to adults for attention and praise.

is showing some self-control in group situations and can wait for his turn or stand in a line.

is usually able to respond to requests such as "Use your quiet voice" or "Inside is for walking."

is beginning to understand the meaning of right and wrong. She does not always do what is right, though.

has an increasing attention span. She is able to focus her attention for a necessary length of time, such as listening to directions or a story.



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Age 5



What Stress Looks Like In Kids



Fight

Anger, Irritability

Unwilling to compromise/
Wanting control

Hitting, kicking,
biting, pushing

Throwing things/
become destructive

Yelling, screaming,
name calling

Blaming, deflecting
responsibility

Flight



Fidgeting,
Restlessness

Running away or trying
to run away

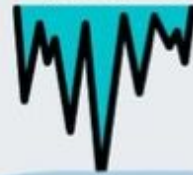
Hard time paying
attention

Ignoring or avoiding
situation/procrastination

Hyperactive/unable
to focus

Anxious, worried,
scared, panicked

Freeze



Self-isolation

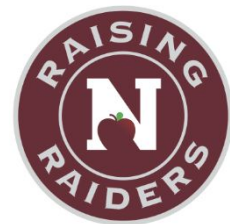
Shutting down, verbally
unresponsive

Zoned Out,
daydreaming

Difficulty performing/
completing tasks

Depressed, numb,
unable to move

Appears indifferent
or helpless



How to help your child recognize frustration

- Notice and label when you, your child or others are frustrated.
- Validate their frustration and explain that everyone get frustrated.
- You might say:
 - **Model:** “I am frustrated. I have tried three times to fix the vacuum and it is just not working! I am going to take a break. I will come back and try when I am feeling calmer.”
 - **Label:** “You are so frustrated! I see that you have been trying to build that tower and it keeps falling down! Let’s have a snack and then try again together.”
 - **Teach:** “That little boy looks frustrated. He can’t climb up the ladder on his own. I wonder if he needs some help?”
- **BREAKS:** Knowing when to take a break is a skill that can be taught to your child.
 - “I see you are frustrated. Let’s take a break. First, let’s do five jumping jacks and get some water. Then we can come back and try again! ☐
- **TOYS:** Are great tools for role playing situations that your child may be struggling with, such as trying to accomplish a task.
 - “Wow, this train can’t get up the hill. He has tried four times and keeps rolling back d looks like he wants to cry. I wonder what he can do?”
- Teach your child appropriate ways to respond to frustration.
 - You can ask for help by saying help please! ☐



What to Teach Children About Feelings

Specific word(s) for emotions

Feelings change

You can have more than one feeling about something

You can feel differently than someone else about the same thing

All feelings are valid—it is what you do with them that counts

Teach Children More than Happy, Sad, or Mad!



Affectionate
Cariñoso(a)



Bored
Aburrido(a)



Brave
Valiente



Calm
Calmado(a)



Cheerful
Alegre



Comfortable
CÓmodo(a)



Creative
Creativo(a)



Curious
Curioso(a)



Disappointed
Decepcionado(a)



Disgusted
Asqueado(a)



Excited
Emocionado(a)

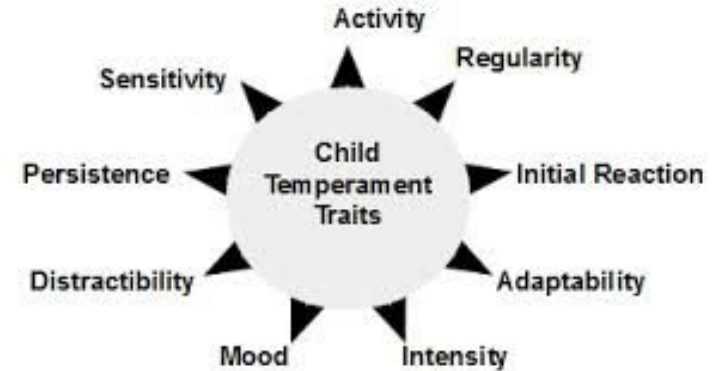


Embarrassed
Avergonzado(a)



Temperament is a child's unique way of experiencing and reacting to their environment. Understanding your child's emotional patterns can help you better understand why they act the way they do.

- Easy or flexible children tend to be happy, regular in sleeping and eating habits, adaptable, calm, and not easily upset.
- Active or feisty children may be fussy, irregular in feeding and sleeping habits, fearful of new people and situations, easily upset by noise and stimulation, and intense in their reactions.
- Slow to warm or cautious children may be less active or tend to be fussy, and may withdraw or react negatively to new situations; but over time they may become more positive with repeated exposure to a new person, object, or situation.



Set yourself up for success...



Knowing your child's triggers and challenges can be used as an advantage.

If you can catch it before it happens, there is an opportunity for preparation and setting the expectation. Also an opportunity to practice what expectation you've been working on. Remember to be clear and consistent in telling your child what to do.



On the same hand, knowing your own triggers and limits is equally important. Recognizing your own tolerance and emotional response is just as important. Take a moment to think about how you respond to your child's behaviors.



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Where do these behaviors come from?



Ways caregivers can respond...

1. **Be clear with the limits.** → Specific rules and expectations should be presented in a way that children can understand and explain them in their own words.

- a. For example, “eat all of the food on your plate” is a clear expectation, but “eat your food” may be too broad.

2. **Be consistent.** → When you provide limits, they should be held firm to. When limits are adjusted over time, children can learn to then find a way around them.

Routines help establish expectations. Limits mean love and routines help children to understand what is expected and what should be followed.

3. **Provide an alternative behavior.**

A simple statement of “I know you did ‘x’ but next time I need you to do ‘y’” is always a good way to go. By providing an alternative behavior we are teaching children how to better handle situations.



4. Pair limits with a reasonable consequence.

If/ Then or When/ Then: “When you clean up your blocks then we can go outside.”

EX: If a child doesn't put his or her toys away, then a logical consequence is that the child loses the opportunity to play with them for some period of time. If a child doesn't turn the television down after he or she has been asked, then the TV is turned off. Logical consequences make sense to children and teach lessons about how the world generally works.

5. **Lead with a positive statement.** Tell your child what you want them to do, not what you don't want.

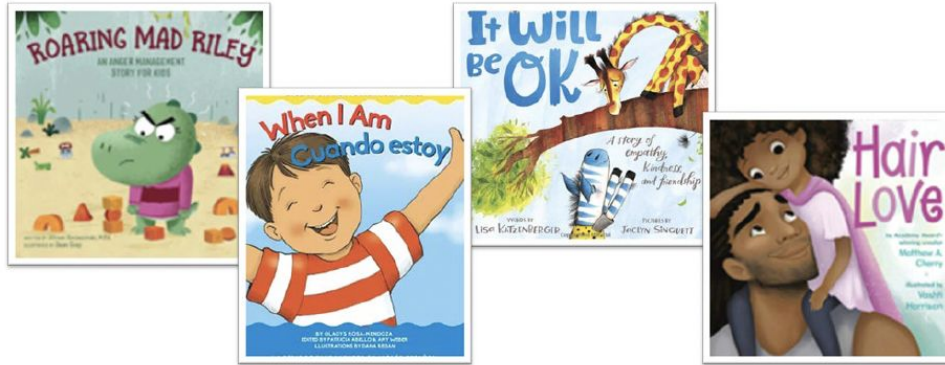
6. **Don't argue.** Providing children with the chance to understand why the rule is there is fine, but you want to prevent getting into a power struggle. Give the expectation, provide the reason and then be done.

Silence can be a powerful tool.

7. **Offer choices when you're able.**



Children's Literature



<https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/program-wide/practical-strategies/>



Play Games



Scenarios

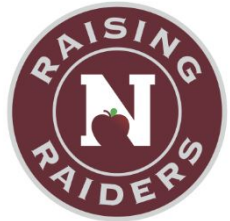
- Discuss typical situations that happen when children are together: “How would you feel if this happened to you?”

What does it look like?

- Make a _____ face.
- How does your face look when you feel _____?
- What makes you feel _____?

Resources

1. National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations
ChallengingBehavior.org
2. HealthyChildren.org
3. health.usnews.com/wellness/for-parents/articles
4. Pathways Psychology
<https://pathways-psychology.com/>
5. HappyParentingandFamilies.com/





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