



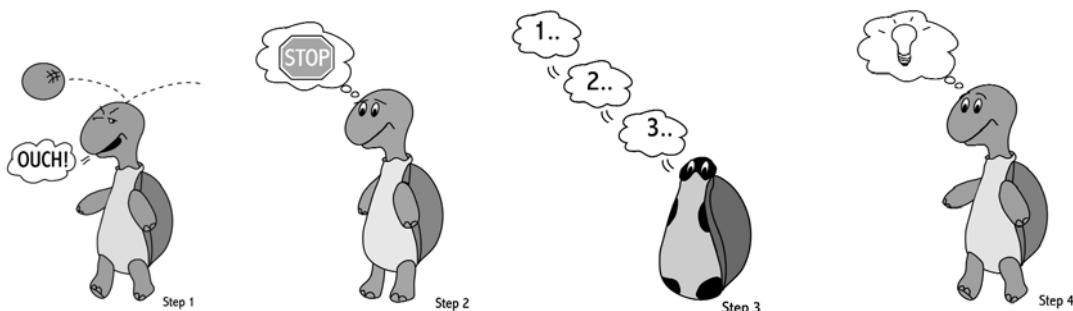
## What to do When...

### Managing a Child's Anger or Disappointment

("What to do When..." provides short term advice for teachers when they are confronted by common challenging situations. Refer to the Additional Resources to learn more about preventing and managing children's challenging behavior.)

When a three- to five- year-old child has lost control of his or her behavior and strikes out, disrupts, or tantrums in a way that might hurt him- or herself or others or cause damage to objects or property:

1. Gently but firmly guide the child of concern away from children nearby who might be hurt. Do not pull or push the child physically, or wrap the child in your arms.
2. Assure any injured children that they are safe. Tell them that you will protect them and that you understand their feelings.
3. Model remaining calm. Take deep breaths and position yourself face-to-face with the child who has expressed anger or disappointment, with the intention of having the child imitate your own calming behavior. Be aware that too much of your attention (for example, lecturing, scolding, giving lengthy instructions) may reinforce unwanted behavior. Use the "Turtle" technique to help remind the child to "Stop", "Count to three" and "Think of what to do". Help the child to gain control of him- or herself.



4. Look for signs of the child's calming and immediately acknowledge with positive praise, such as "You really stayed calm even though you felt mad (or your feelings got hurt)! I'm proud of you!" Once he or she is calm enough to hear you and to talk about the situation, talk about the possible solutions to what caused the anger or disappointment, and give appropriate choices that satisfy the child in a positive way.
5. Consider additional *Turtle Technique Reinforcing Activities* .

**"Super Turtle" Award:** A certificate is given out at the end of the day noting how a child controlled their anger and impulse.

**“Turtle Power” Necklace:** A plastic turtle on a string is awarded to a child who was able to remain calm in an upsetting situation.

**“Turtle Token Jar”:** The teacher has a collection of small plastic turtle counters (or green pom-poms). Every time the teacher catches a child remaining calm and handling disappointment – a turtle token is placed in a clear jar. When the jar is full the class gets to have a turtle celebration.

**“Turtle Stack”:** Teachers have a supply of construction paper, turtle cut-outs. Each time a child is caught remaining calm in an upsetting or disappointing situation, the teacher puts a paper turtle on the wall. This turtle can have the child’s name on it. The next turtle earned is stacked on top of the first, and so on until the criterion is reached. The class then gets to have a turtle party.

**“Turtle Tote”:** The teacher selects a child who has done a remarkable job of controlling anger and impulse and sends them home with a stuffed turtle puppet for the evening. The child can then re-tell how they used the turtle technique to their parents.

**Additional Resources available online at [www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel)**

**What Works Briefs:** Summaries of Effective Practices for Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Development and Preventing Challenging Behaviors. The Briefs describe practical strategies, provide references to more information about the practice, and include a one-page handout that highlights the major points of the Brief.

**Brief 11**

*Using Functional Communication Training to Replace Challenging Behavior* by G. Dunlap, M. Duda  
[HTML](#) | [PDF Handout: HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

**Brief 14**

*The Role of Time-Out in a Comprehensive Approach for Addressing Challenging Behaviors of Preschool Children* by G. Dunlap, L. Fox, M.L. Hemmeter, P. Strain  
[HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

**What Works Training Kits:** Based on the What Works Briefs topics, short training packages are available that include PowerPoint slides with accompanying note pages, activities, and handouts, which provide a trainer with the materials needed to conduct a short staff development program on a focused topic.

**Training Kit 11**

*Using Functional Communication Training to Replace Challenging Behavior* by G. Dunlap, M. Duda  
[PDF](#) | Handout: [PPT](#) | Presenter: [PPT](#)

**Local Resources to contact online:**

Region A Partnership for Children at [www.regionakids.org](http://www.regionakids.org), for a list of resources to promote social emotional competence and prevent challenging behavior in your county and in Region A.

