



## What to do When...

### Communicating with Parents

(“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 talking with families about problem behavior

#### Do

1. Begin the discussion by expressing concern about the child.
2. Let the parent know that your goal is to help the child.
3. Ask the parent if he or she has experienced similar situations and are concerned.
4. Tell the parent that you want to work with the family to help the child develop appropriate behavior and social skills.
5. Tell the parent about what is happening in the classroom but only after the parent understands that you are concerned about the child, not blaming the family.
6. Offer to work with the parent in the development of a behavior support plan that can be used at home and in the classroom.
7. Emphasize that your focus will be to help the child develop the skills needed to be successful in the classroom. The child needs instruction and support.
8. Stress that if you can work together, you are more likely to be successful in helping the child learn new skills.
9. Maximize the importance of helping the family understand and implement positive behavior support.



## **Don't**

1. Begin the discussion by indicating that the child's behavior is not tolerable.
2. Indicate that the child must be punished or "dealt with" by the parent.
3. Ask the parent if something has happened at home to cause the behavior.
4. Indicate that the parent should take action to resolve the problem at home.
5. Initiate the conversation by listing the child's challenging behavior. Discussions about challenging behavior should be framed as "the child is having a difficult time" rather than losing control.
6. Leave it up to the parent to manage problems at home; develop a plan without inviting family participation.
7. Let the parent believe that the child needs more discipline.
8. Minimize the importance of helping the family understand and implement positive behavior support.

(from Rev. 5/06 *The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign* )

### **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 2**

*Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior* by R. M. Santos, M. M. Ostrosky  
[HTML](#) | [PDF](#) Handout: [HTML](#) | [PDF](#) Additional Sources: [HTML](#)

#### **Brief 10**

*Positive Behavior Support: An Individualized Approach for Addressing Challenging Behavior* by L. Fox  
[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](#)

#### **Brief 16**

*Fathers and Father-Figures: Their Important Role in Children's Social and Emotional Development* by A. Quenberry, M.M. Ostrosky, R.M. Corso  
[HTML](#) | [PDF](#) Handout: [HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

## **Brief 22**

*Acknowledging Children's Positive Behaviors* by Timm, M and Doubet, S.

[HTML](#) | [PDF](#) Handout: [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 2**

*Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior* by R. M. Santos, M. M. Ostrosky

[PDF](#) | Handout: [PPT](#) | Presenter: [PPT](#)

## **Training Kit 10**

*Positive Behavior Support: An Individualized Approach for Addressing Challenging Behavior* by L. Fox

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## **Training Kit 16**

*Fathers and Father-Figures: Their Important Role in Children's Social and Emotional Development* by A. Quesenberry, M.M. Ostrosky, R.M. Corso

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## **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.

