

Working with Challenging Behaviors: Disruptive Circle Time



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

It tends to happen more during transitions, later in the day, or if they are bored. They talk out of turn, get up and play and are unable to remain focused. It causes disruption and can lead to touching or throwing things at other children.

Why do you think they are doing this behavior?

- They are bored or uninterested
- Want to do something else
- It has been too long to sit without movement
- Tired
- Hungry
- Don't feel good
- Excited to say answer
- Wants to be first
- Doesn't understand the idea of taking turns
- Too overstimulated
- Stressed
- Did not have a smooth transition into circle time
- Lacks ability to wait
- Feel overwhelmed
- Distracted
- Want Attention
- Above/below understanding
- Impulsiveness
- Lack skills

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Talk calmly and remind them the rules of circle
- Draw attention to and celebrate the positive behaviors happening, praising those who are sitting nicely
- Help them get wiggles out before circle time starts ex. play a game (freeze game)
- "Space check" Have them put their arms out forward and then out to the side to see if they are touching a friend. If they can touch a friend they need to move a little and try the space check again.
- Do a one-minute meditation to help find calm center.
- Give jobs, inviting them to be a helper
- Use "Feeling cards" before circle time starts
- Go through the routine/rules of circle time in a fun way
- Incorporate music and dancing into circle time
- Sing a song to gain attention: "Eyes are watching, ears are listening" then say "It's teachers turn to talk. Raise your hand if you have something to say"
- Tell them what TO DO with their wiggles such as using sit spots & fidgets
- Be consistent and clear
- Empathize with how it feels to sit and listen
- Use visual timers, visual cues, and other visual supports
- Provide a brain break, when needed
- Use puppets and other novel and interesting engagement tools
- Provide individual materials/tools to use during whole group
- Match expectations to ability level of children
- Use simple "First, then" and "When, then"
- Provide alternative sitting (token chairs, bumpy chair, squishy blanket, pillows)
- Incorporate movement activities
- Offer a break
- Change out which adult is leading it to give variety
- Pre teach and foreshadow (prompting what comes next)

What can you do if the behavior still occurs?

- Give them a choice of whether they participate in circle or read a book in the quiet area nearby
- Ask them if they need some time in the calm down area
- Help them communicate how they are feeling
- Offer assistance
- Focus on the children that are engaged
- Remind them of what is coming next, "First we will finish this book, then have snack!"
- Give jobs, having the child be a helper (Hold the book, choose which song to sing, etc.)
- Have them go to the "wiggle" area
- Offer a choice, "Would you like to sit three more minutes or four?"
- Allow them to sit at a table and play with a fidget
- Shorten circle time
- Placement at circle
- Full class engagement responses
- Turn and talk
- Switcheroos
- Let them know they can all talk for a count of 5 then be quiet
- 2nd teacher comes to aid and model appropriate behavior
- Quick "body check"
 - Stop to breath, reassess kids bodies to help self regulation
- Manage our expectations
- Give choices on how to manage individual behaviors
 - Fidgets



Compiled from insight from live webinar participants during Preventing Challenging Behaviors by Raelene Ostberg, M.Ed. - Director, Thriving Together LLC

✉ raeleneostberg@gmail.com

☎ 507.581.9346

🌐 Thriving-Together.com

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Working with Challenging Behaviors: Refusing to Complete Academic Task



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

The refusal to complete academic task seems to happen daily when the task is perceived as too difficult and transitioning from preferred to nonpreferred task

Why do you think they are doing this behavior?

- Low self-esteem/too hard
- Stamina /self-control fatigue
- Lack of control
- Non preferred tasks
- Disengaged
- Don't like the teacher, lack of connection
- Hungry
- Tired
- Low predictability
- Unprepared for class
- Sensory need - overstimulation

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Co-participation
- Providing a choice
- Location, demonstration of learning
- Errorless teaching
- Limit setting
- If then
- When then
- Fail safe chore
- Make learning engaging

What can you do if the behavior still occurs?



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Working with Challenging Behaviors: Lacks Attention



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

Not sitting at circle, ignoring, wandering, during bathroom breaks, distractions.

Why do you think they are doing this behavior?

- In a large group
- Bored
- Hungry
- Lack of capability
- Lack of concern for expectations
- Rough morning
- Unstable at home
- Need to move more
- Out of routine
- Lack of choice
- Lack of stamina
- Unregulated

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Choices
- Fun
- Make things exciting
- Understand them
- Temperament
- Plan ahead
- Timers
- First, then
- Connections
- Validate feelings
- Give down time
- Realistic expectations
- Stay calm
- Keep self regulated
- Fewer rules
- Pick your battles

What can you do if the behavior still occurs?



Working with Challenging Behaviors: Clean Up



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

The refusal to clean up seems to happen most often during transitions when do not want to stop what they are doing. It also happens when they are having fun or are very focused, moving from a preferred activity to one they don't want to do.

Why might they be refusing to clean up?

- Not ready to go inside yet
- They didn't make the mess
- They are hungry
- They are crabby, tired, or overwhelmed
- Want to keep playing or are still working on something so they are not ready to move to the next activity yet
- They created something cool and do not want to take it apart
- They are busy having fun!
- Cleaning is not fun
- Unclear expectations around clean up or the daily schedule
- Not sure how to clean up or have not learned why it is important
- Want your attention
- Want to be with their friend
- They have no clean up at home
- May feel overwhelming
- No prior warning was given
- Difficult to transition from one thing to the other
- Persistent temperament so it is difficult to stop without completing the current task
- They don't want to
- Want to be on control
- Afraid of missing out
- They don't want to stop playing
- Development
- Stress
- Temperament
- Off Schedule
- Frustrated

How can you prevent it from occurring?

- Give a warning
 - 10 minute warning, then 5 minute warning, then flick the lights and turn on music and *then* pick up toys
 - Set a timer / Visual timers / Visual Schedules
 - Do a positive countdown to cleanup time
- Make cleaning up fun
 - Sing a cleanup song
 - "oh my goodness - look at this mess"
 - Make into a game or competition
 - Act like superheroes
 - Use magic powers
 - "Let's see if you can pick up all the blue socks before I pick up the red ones!"
- Assure of when play can continue at a later time
- Talk about the next fun activity, like a mystery bag
- Make the expectation more clear such as providing visuals on the baskets to help show where each toy goes.
- Join them in cleaning up and do it together
- Provide encouragement and descriptive praise, "WOW! We are cleaning up together. What a team we all are! Now, we will get more time outside!"
- Offer choices
 - Want to clean up the "trucks" or the "Balls"?
 - Want to clean up the "Red" toys or "Green" toys?
 - Which area they clean that day and then switch the next day?
 - Would you like to clean up for 3 minutes or 4?
- Model and demonstrate what you want the child to do next
- Give clear direction, "Put the play-doh in the bin please."
- Be consistent and maintain a clean up routine
- Empathize with them and label their feelings
- Engage in communication
- Figure out their stressors/ triggers
- First - Then: "5 minutes to play, then clean up"

What can you do if the behavior still occurs?

- Offer to work together - "It looks like you are having a tough time cleaning up. Let's do it together and see how fast we can get it done!"
- Problem-solve together - Ask them how they think we should take care of the mess.
- Communicate with the child, letting them share their feelings and help them and provide feedback.
- Simplify directions
- Continue to praise and focus on those who are cleaning up
- Have them help a friend - I have already started using the term "Super Friend". Now everyone wants to be a "Super Friend"!
- Use clear communication to prompt the child
- "First clean up - Then snack!"
- "Train set goes away now. Snack time!"
- Include play
- Check in with co workers for advice on how they would handle it
- Logical consequences: Less outside time or playtime
- Make a connection to their favorite thing
- Get more adult support
- Use puppets
- Let them calm down in quiet safe place
- Take breaths
- "Choose - Choose" Method
- Take a picture and send to mom and dad on SeeSaw
- Designate spot for something they want to finish later
- "I like the way that..."
- Everyone picks up 3 things
- Limit amount of toys out



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Working with Challenging Behaviors: Hitting



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

It seems to happen most often when another child is taking a toy from them, or transitioning. It can happen when they are tired and unsure how to communicate how they are feeling.

Why is the child Hitting?

- Hitting out of frustration or anger
- No control over the situation the precedes the hitting.
- No impulse control
- Tired or hungry
- Friend not doing what they want
- Unsure how to use their words
- Feel rushed, feel helpless - lack of control
- Needs not being met
- Another child took their toy, they don't want to share
- Needs physical contact
- Aggression due to home/life changes
- Transitions
- Not feeling well
- Lack of appropriate language/communication skills
- Temperament
- Trauma
- Stress
- Feel they are not being understood or listened to
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Wanting to connect
- Lack social-emotional skills

What can you do to prevent it?

- Read books about - hand are not for hitting
- Teach problem solving with stories
- Notice tension rising and give verbal reminders
- Teaching them how to, encouraging with being positive, giving choices
- Provide a calm/ quiet space
- Try to make sure to meet necessary needs of the child
- Doing a physical group activity first to expend the excess energy, set up different play areas to help keep the kiddos away from each other
- What can they do?
 - Wall push
 - Downdog
- Give warnings before transitions
- Positive reinforcement when they are being kind
- Set timers for toys, ask if they need a break, nap, snack or cuddle. Let them take a break from each other by different play stations
- Get down at their level
- Be clear about what the rules are and how we are going to participate when introducing a new activity
- Be empathetic
- If they are tired make sure they know they can stop to rest at that time
- Print out a chart with pictures to let them point and tell you how they are feeling (if they can describe with words)
- Give them prompts on what words they can use to express their feelings
- Change up the routine

What can you do if behavior still occurs?

- Coach regarding positive choices for releasing stress and anger, offering a verbal prompt to teach what to do instead
 - Give time and place to calm down
 - Give them a pillow to hit instead
 - Get a clown punching bag
 - Pound the play-doh
 - Rainbow breathing
- If they are tired - let them take a break
- Stay calm, stop and coach
- Help child calm down
- Talk to them quietly
- Teach empathy - explain that it hurts other when they hit
- Use visual charts to show that hands are not for hitting. You can do this, or that etc. but not hit. Use it as a teachable moment.
- Give a logical consequence that has been established ahead of time. Then follow through. For example, "If you hit, you cannot stand by your friend in line."
- Offer a choice
- Ask what happened. Have children talk about it. I ask the child who got hit- Did you like it when Johnny hit you? And have him tell Johnny "I didn't like it when you hit." Then I ask the other child why they hit- what didn't they like that made them feel like hitting.
- Ask to bring bubbles down

