



# Working with Challenging Behaviors Part 1 Diminishing the Fuel that is Igniting the Fires

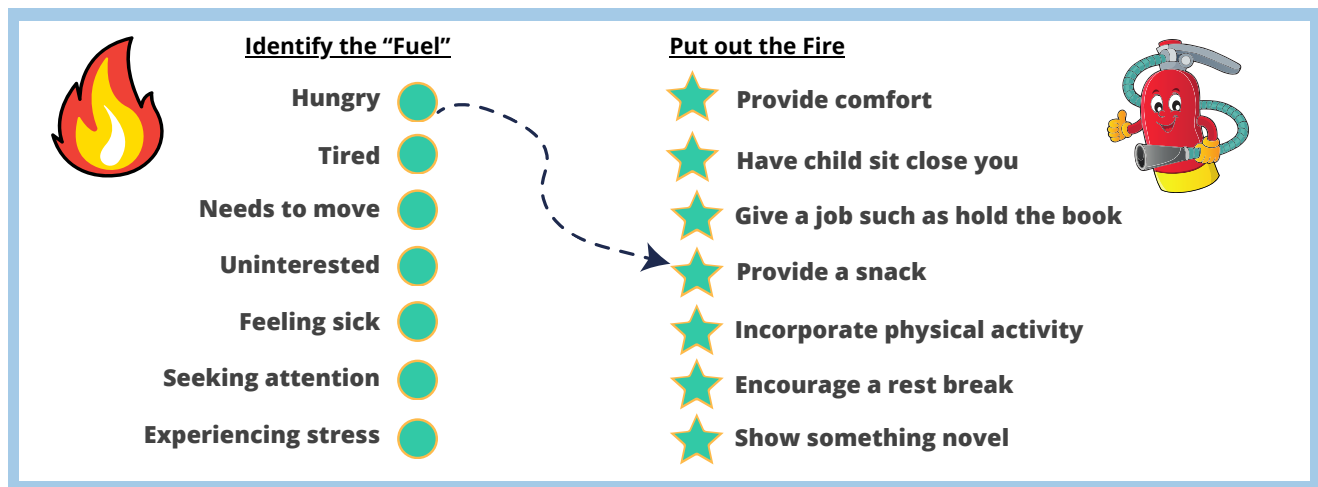
## Course Objectives:

- Identify what is behind specific negative behaviors you experience in your early childhood environment
- Label techniques to prevent challenges from occurring

*"Remember, everyone in your classroom has a story that leads to misbehavior or defiance. Nine times out of 10, the story behind the behavior won't make you angry. It will break your heart." ~ Annette Breaux ~*

## # 1 Way to work with challenging behaviors? \*Prevent the challenge from occurring!

- ✓ Be an early childhood scientist and observe, what did you try? What was the result?
- ✓ Observe if you are getting the results you intend. If not, adjust.
- ✓ Figure out and address the "Why" behind the behavior



**Medical Issues:** Check intensity, duration, frequency of issue

- ✓ **Seek help when challenges persist**  
\*Well child" checks \*Nutritionist visit \*School District (Early Childhood Screening)

**Lack of Sleep** Estimated 43% of children experience some type of sleep difficulty (86% of children with developmental delays)

- ✓ **Monitor cues**
- ✓ **Help child "notch down" to resting** \*No media, physical activity, trips out, rushing right before
- ✓ **Set up the environment**  
\*Dim lights \*Play quiet music \*Reduce activity \*Comfortable temperature \*Quiet activities

**Temperament:** One piece of the puzzle – Simply the way the child is wired to respond to the world.  
**Do you have a child who:**

- \*Won't join in right away? \*Is sensitive to temperature, clothing, sound, light?
- \*Is very active and has trouble sitting still? \*Feels emotions very strongly and loudly?
- \*Has a serious mood? \*Is very persistent even in the face of a challenge? \*Is easily distracted?

- ✓ **Individualize care, adjusting your expectations and helping the child succeed in your environment**



# Challenging Behaviors Part 1: Diminishing the Fuel that is Igniting the Fires



## Typical Development

- Developmentally-appropriate behavior can lead to specific power struggles
- Consider the type of behavior or issue and the age/stage of the child
- Difficulty can begin when children enter a new developmental stage or slip back due to stress
- Learning about normal development can help you have realistic expectations of children and avoid challenges
- According to Erik Erikson's theory on development, this age group is focusing on building initiative" (3-5 years) or "industry" (5-8 years). So, they have a strong desire to take initiative and control of their environment and, by 6, start to derive pleasure from learning and achieving things. If they do not get a chance to do this, they may feel guilt or feel inferior to others.



- May experience intense embarrassment and fear
- Have a strong need to control their pace, environment, and world
- Learning what they can control and what others control
- Remember the past and are starting to anticipate the future
- Have increased imagination and "magical thinking"
- Start to understand adults do not know everything
- Experience a strong need to be "right"
- Fluctuate between feeling powerful one moment to insecure the next
- Driven to learn and search for answers
- Strong drive to be first and win
- Think in "concrete" terms

## Age-Appropriate Behavior



- May avoid doing something that may result in an undesired outcome
- Dawdles (especially when rushed)
- Prone to argue
- May resist a routine or your plan
- Sneak things or "tells stories"
- Challenge rules and expectations
- Boss others around and try to control play
- Ask endless questions such as "What?" and "Why?"
- May resist change and insist things remain the same
- May be boastful



What could you do to prevent these age-appropriate challenges from occurring?



Avoid unnecessary restriction



Make it fun!



Utilize the child's skills

**"It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings."  
— Ann Landers**



# Challenging Behaviors Part 1: Diminishing the Fuel that is Igniting the Fires



## Stress



- Could do, now cannot; would do, now won't
- Stress may be subtle or apparent
- Stress impacts our brain and functioning



**Consider what is been happening with family or in child's world**



## Trauma



- There are many "Adverse Childhood Experiences" that impact behavior
- Contemporary trauma research demonstrates that all types of trauma can undermine children's abilities to learn, create healthy attachments, form supportive relationships, and follow classroom expectations (NCTSN 2008).
- Roughly 26 percent of children in the United States witness or experience a trauma before the age of 4 (Briggs-Gowan et al. 2010).



**Avoid "unevenness of emotional tone"**



**Give limited choices**



**Provide dependable routines**

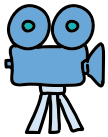
- Set a pattern to the day
- Include something the child wants and needs
- Make it visual



**Give the child a "yellow light" by "prepping" the child for what is coming next**



- Use verbal cues
- Use visual cues
  - Timer
  - Blink lights
  - Ring bell
  - Pictures
  - Visual Schedules



**Video Analysis: Which techniques does the adult use to prevent challenging behaviors?**



**Your main takeaway: Label a technique you can use to prevent challenges from occurring in your setting**



# Working with Challenging Behaviors WORKSHEET



## 1) Choose one challenge to focus on today.

Consider and document when it occurs, how often, and other details that help you gain insight into the issue.

2) Why might the child be doing this behavior?

3) How can you prevent this challenging behavior from occurring?

4) What can you do when the challenging behavior occurs?

5) What new skills could you teach?



# Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

## Working with Challenging Behaviors



### Teach Skills

- \*How to calm
- \*How to express strong feelings
- \*How to take a break when needed
- \*How to refuse or say "no"
- \*How to wait
- \*How to ask for help

### When behavior continues, use effective discipline techniques

- \*Provide a verbal prompt
- \*Broken record technique
  - \*Offer assistance
  - \*Present a choice
- \*Find the "Yes" within the "No"
- \*Ignore small misbehavior
  - \*Provide a countdown
  - \*Offer "Time in"
- \*Prompt to take "Time off"
- \*Provide a logical consequence

### Foster Social-Emotional Skills

- \*Build emotional literacy skills
- \*Identify and label emotions
- \*Model social language
- \*Problem-solve with child
- \*Teach perspective taking
- \*Promote, model, and practice friendship skills like sharing, helping, taking turns, apologizing, empathy

### Provide a Highly Supportive Environment that Prevents Challenges

- \*Empathize with child's feelings
- \*Stay calm
- \*Be consistent and clear with rules
- \*Teach child the rules
- \*Tell child what you want them to do
- \*Reinforce when child does something you want them to do
- \*Modify the environment to provide a good fit
- \*Plan ahead so you don't have to rush child
- \*Prepare for transitions with verbal alert or timer
- \*Sing songs to indicate what will happen next
- \*Provide a regular routine
- \*Make sure child gets enough down time, activity and sleep each day
- \*Provide two reasonable choices
- \*Make sure your expectations match what the child is capable of
- \*Give clear and simple directions with only one step at a time
- \*Use "first-then" and "when-then" statements

### Strengthen your Relationship with your Child

- \*Give child positive attention
- \*Give encouragement
- \*Have special one-on-one play time
- \*Get down at child's level
- \*Listen to child's stories
- \*Be silly together
- \*Provide hugs and pats on the back
- \*Invite child to help you with a chore
- \*Tell child what you like about them
- \*Ask for the child's opinion and insight

