



Center for Early Education and Development

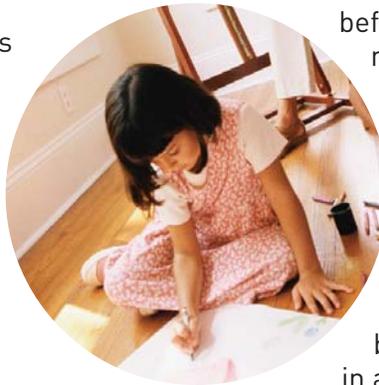
# Tip Sheets

## Addressing the Needs of Young Children who Engage in Challenging Behaviors

### Behavior Analysis

#### What is Behavior Analysis?

- Behavior analysis focuses only on observable, describable, and measurable behaviors. Behavior analysis based on behavioral principles operates on the following tenets.
- Behavior is controlled by **antecedents**, events which occur before a behavior is observed and by **consequences** which are events that occur after a behavior is exhibited.
- These **antecedents** and **consequences** can be manipulated in order to modify the target behavior.
- Thus, behavior analysis addresses learned behavior.



#### What is Proactive Behavioral Support?

- Proactive behavioral support involves teaching new and more appropriate skills as alternatives to the challenging behavior. It also involves modifying the environment, daily schedules, and the interactional patterns of others in the child's environment. Finally, it may involve working with children to enhance their self-regulatory skills.
- Input from the child's primary care providers including parents, child care workers, and early childhood teachers, is important in establishing the nature and intensity of the challenging behavior. Factors such as medical condition, language difficulties, or cultural differences must be taken into consideration. When a challenging behavior is confirmed, then a Functional Behavior Assessment must be completed to objectively describe the target behavior, determine its function, and its antecedents and consequences.



#### Are there other considerations when implementing a behavioral support plan?

- Choose the least intrusive and least restrictive intervention first and determine its effectiveness before implementing more intrusive and restrictive intervention strategies. For example, if a child stays in their spot during story time with verbal reminders, it would be inappropriate to develop a sticker chart for that child that rewarded their seated behavior if verbal reminders were effective.
- For many students, challenging behavior may be the only behavior in a student's repertoire that has been effective in meeting his/her needs. Proactive approaches to challenging behavior increase the communicative options in a student's repertoire and provide more choices for the student to communicate his/her needs.
- Analyzing the child's behavior will help prevent and dissipate negative feelings that you may have developed in response to a challenging behavior. Reacting objectively to the child's behavior can help make you and your intervention more effective.

#### What are some examples of Positive Behavioral Support Strategies in Early Childhood?

See other tip sheets for a detailed description of each strategy.

- » Communicative Replacement
- » Environmental Arrangement
- » Tolerance for Delay of Reinforcement
- » Providing Opportunities for Choice
- » Using a Preferred Item or Event as a Distractor
- » Scheduling
- » Requesting a Break

**For additional information on this topic, please visit  
CEED's web site at <http://cehd.umn.edu/ceed>.**

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