

## Challenging Behavior

Pyramid Resources for Infant-Toddler Social-Emotional Development  
University of Kansas

Adapted from:  
The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning  
Vanderbilt University

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## Learner Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Define challenging behavior
- Consider reasons for challenging behavior
- Collect data on behaviors
- Support children with prevention and replacement



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## Training Agenda

- **Setting the Stage**
- **Understanding Infant and Toddler Challenging Behavior**
- **Gathering information on Challenging Behavior**
- **Responding to Challenging Behavior**
- **Wrap Up & Reflection**

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## Our Learning Environment

**What makes a positive learning experience and environment for you?**

**What can the trainer do to facilitate a safe learning environment?**

**What are some agreements we can make together?**

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## Possible Shared Agreements

**Confidentiality**  
**Take Care of Yourself and Others**  
**Demonstrate Respect for all**  
**Right to Pass**  
**Right to Take Risks**  
**Assume Positive Intent**  
**Recognize We Are All Learning**

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## Challenging Behavior

What is Challenging Behavior for Infants and Toddlers?

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## Overview of the Pyramid Model



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## CSEFEL Definition of Social/Emotional Development

The developing capacity of the child from birth through five...


- To form close and secure relationships;
- To experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways;
- To explore the environment and learn;

all in the context of family, community, and culture.

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## Developmentally Appropriate Behaviors Can be Challenging

Pre-Mobile Infants	Mobile Infants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crying to communicate</li> <li>• Cluster feedings or increase in need to eat</li> <li>• Fussiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking toys from others</li> <li>• Mouthing toys</li> <li>• Climbing on others</li> <li>• Knocking things down</li> <li>• Stranger anxiety</li> <li>• Biting</li> <li>• Crying/fussiness</li> </ul>



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## Developmentally Appropriate Behaviors can be Challenging

Toddlers	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saying “No”</li> <li>• Getting into everything</li> <li>• High levels of activity; rarely sit still</li> <li>• Insisting on doing things independently</li> <li>• Whining or crying</li> <li>• Claiming “Mine!” when an item is not theirs</li> </ul>

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## Challenging Behavior and Equity

- **High rates of suspension and expulsion with disparity based on race, gender, and disability status**
- **Young boys of color have highest rates of expulsion and suspensions**
- **Young children with disabilities are twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension**

**\*\*Later school success depends on learned emotional and behavioral skills before entering kindergarten.**


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## What is Implicit Bias?


**Implicit Bias is...**


Attitudes, Stereotypes, & Beliefs that can affect how we treat others.


Implicit bias is not intentional, but it can still impact how we judge others based on factors, such as:

  
Race

  
Ability

  
Gender

  
Culture

  
Language

In early childhood settings, implicit biases can affect how providers perceive and respond to children, which can lead to unfair differences in the use of exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension and expulsion.

Go to our Guide to learn about recommended policies and strategies for promoting all children's success and preventing suspensions and expulsions in early childhood settings! [preventexpulsion.org](http://preventexpulsion.org)

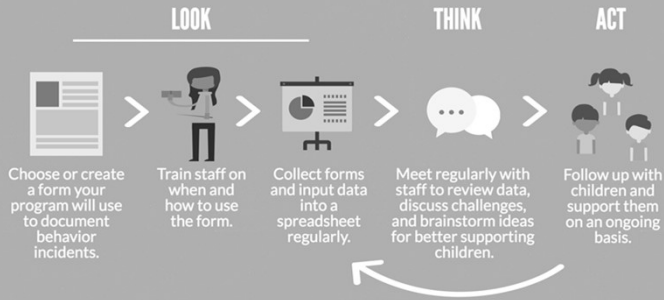
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PK.M12  
 K.M14  
 CC.14  
 CC.14  
 FSA.24

How Can We Identify and Address Implicit Bias?

## Using Data to Promote Fairness, Equity & Continuous Improvement



Go to our Guide to learn about recommended policies and strategies for promoting all children's success and preventing suspensions and expulsions in early childhood settings!  
[preventexpulsion.org](http://preventexpulsion.org)

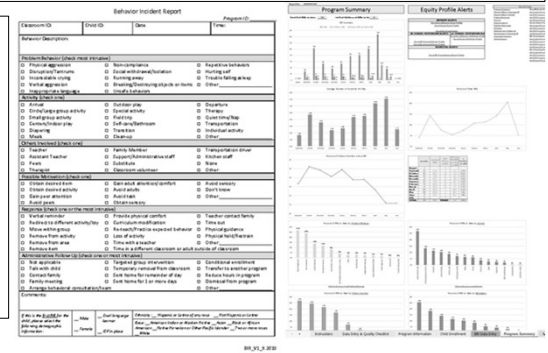
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## Behavior Incident Report

Collects and analyzes data on behavior incidents in early childhood settings

Alerts about potential equity issues by calculating disproportionality related to race, ethnicity, IEP status, gender, dual language



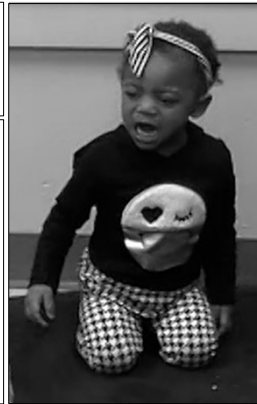
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## Emotions & Behaviors of Young Children

**Intensity**

**Frequency**

**Duration**



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## Continuum of Emotional Expression

**Internalizing  
 Withdrawing**

**Externalizing  
 Acting Outward**

Two different and extreme forms of emotional expression

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## Externalizing Behaviors: Acting Outward

### Inconsolable

Frequent or intense tantrums

Pushing

Hitting

Biting

Persistent refusal to allow activities

Harm to self or others

Throwing objects

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## Internalizing Behaviors: Withdrawing

### Pulling away

Rarely cooing, babbling, or talking

Looking sad

No caregiver preference

Little eye contact

Limited initiation of interactions

Being overly compliant or avoidant

Loss of or reduction in communication skills

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Internalizing/  
Externalizing  
Behavior



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## Handout 3 Identifying Behaviors

**Discuss which behaviors are acting outward and which are withdrawing, and record in the corresponding column.**

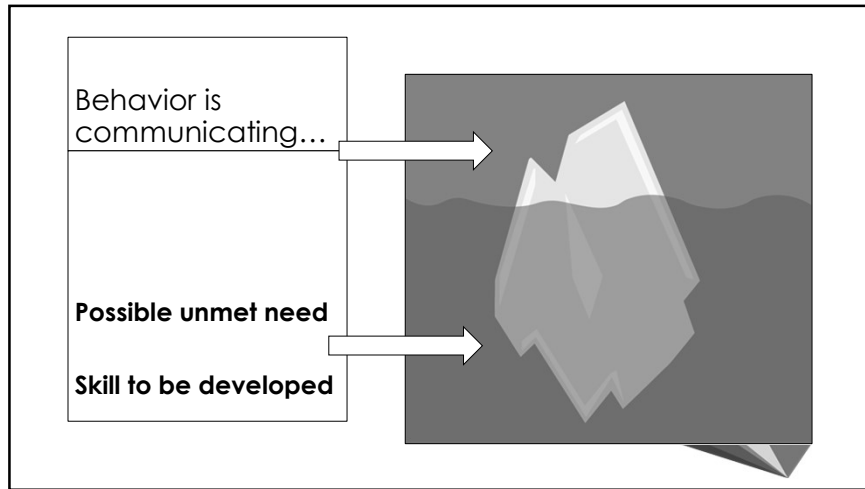
**Discuss what might be going on with the child and record in the right-hand column.**

### Activity – Identifying Behaviors

Directions: In the corresponding box, describe the withdrawing OR acting outward behavior. Then, write what might be going on for the child.

Difficulty experiencing emotions	Acting Outward Behaviors	Withdrawing Behaviors	What might be going on for this baby?
<p>Mom has left six-month-old baby Jenna in care for the first time. She has been in her current classroom for about a month. Jenna seems quiet and stays into space sucking her fingers. She does not seem especially interested in anything and will not make eye contact with her new caregivers.</p>			
Difficulty forming close and secure relationships	Acting Outward Behaviors	Withdrawing Behaviors	What might be going on for this baby?
<p>Nine-month-old, Alyah came to childcare six months ago. When her preferred caregiver puts her down, she throws her body back on the mat where she was placed. When other caregivers attempt to pick her up and soothe her, she arches her back and screams.</p>			

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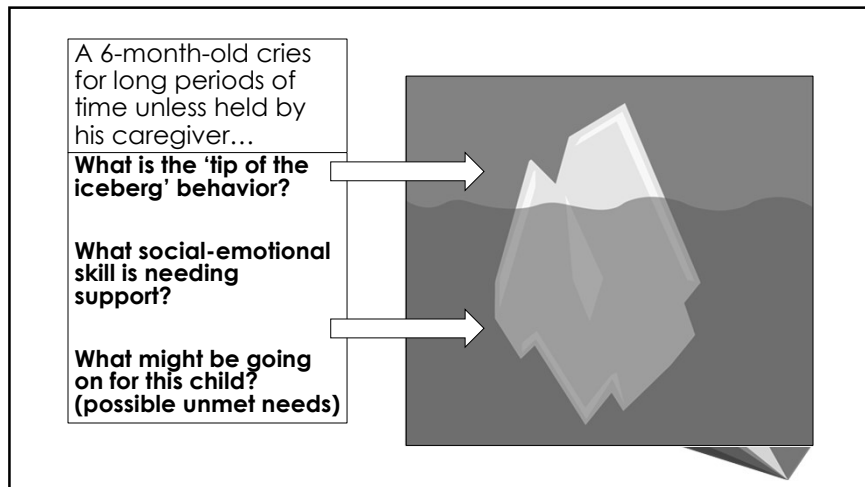
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### Reasons for Challenging Behavior

- Lack of skill in communicating & interacting with others
- Surges in developmental growth
- Medical/health reasons
- Social emotional environment
- Physical state: colic, hunger, overstimulated
- Differences between care program & home
- A combination of more than one above

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TA3  
FSA2



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### Handout 4

What is the "tip of the iceberg" or behavior of concern?

What under-developed social emotional skills may be underlying this behavior?

What else might be under the surface?

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## Purpose of Toddler Behaviors

### Escape

- Sitting alone when others are gathering for activities such as circle time or book time
- Running away when asked to walk inside after outdoor play
- Tantrums upon arrival at the center

### Gain Access

- Taking toys from others and watching for teacher response
- Taking food from others' plates
- Prolonged crying when desired teacher leaves the room

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## Purpose of Infant Behaviors

### Escape

- Turning head and refusing bottle/food
- Stiffening body or pushing away from caregiver
- Turning head to avoid eye contact
- Crying when peers are near or room is overstimulating

### Gain Access

- Kicking and fussing when put down
- Screaming when pacifier falls from mouth
- Crying when hungry

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## Gathering Information for Challenging Behaviors



### What data do we need?

- What behavior is happening?
- When is it happening?
- Why is it happening?
- How can we keep it from happening or change what happens?

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## Data Collection: Keep it Simple

Information gathered should help you figure out:

- **WHY** this challenging behavior is happening
- **WHEN** the behavior is happening
- **HOW** do we want to change it with prevention and replacement skills

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# ABC Data chart

**Antecedent: What is happening BEFORE the behavior occurs**

**Behavior: What behavior is taking place**

**Consequence: What happens right after the behavior**

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# ABC Chart

ABC Chart  
Data collection for challenging behaviors

DATE	Antecedent (what happened before)	Behavior (the challenging behavior)	Consequence (what was the result)

Handout (#.#) ABC chart  
TPTOS Item(s): RDC, CBE

For more information:  
prism.uedu | for ctatlas/resource



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# ABC Chart

ABC Chart  
Data collection for challenging behaviors

DATE	Antecedent (what happened before)	Behavior (the challenging behavior)	Consequence (what was the result)
	Tried to join peer with toy/take toy	Pulled toy and tried to bite peer	Peer left, child got toy

Handout (#.#) ABC chart  
TPTOS Item(s): RDC, CBE

For more information:  
prism.uedu | for ctatlas/resource



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# High Quality Universal Practices

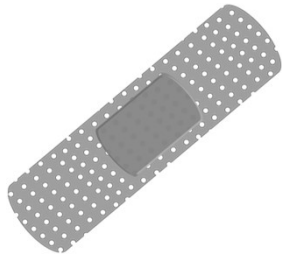
Engagement	Expectations	Responding
<b>Supporting engagement</b> <b>Redirection</b> <b>Positive attention</b> <b>Choices</b>	<b>Developmentally appropriate</b> <b>Individualized</b> <b>Communicated positively</b>	<b>Remain calm and supportive</b> <b>Label and teach about emotions</b> <b>Redirect</b> <b>Problem-solve</b>

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## Responding to Challenging Behavior

### Reactive



### Proactive



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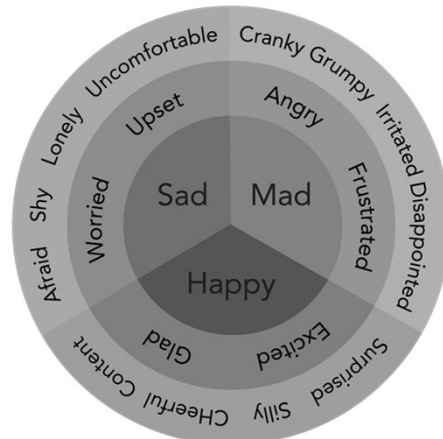
## New Way – Be Proactive

- Consider why this is happening
- Identify and examine biases
- Collect information on the behavior
- Consider ways to prevent behavior
- Focus on teaching new skills
- Replace the behavior
- Increase competence
- Long-term interventions



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## Feelings & Needs



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## Proactive Response to Challenging Behavior

Response makes behavior ineffective



Attention & encouragement for appropriate behavior exceeds attention/feedback for challenging behavior



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**Prevention is Powerful**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps children participate successfully</li> <li>• Can be strategies you're already using</li> <li>• Fits naturally</li> <li>• Stops challenging behavior from working</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prevention might be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adjust the environment</li> <li>• expand on what already works</li> <li>• avoid or adjust triggers</li> <li>• redirect</li> </ul>
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**Table Talk: Prevention**

**At your table, discuss a successful prevention strategy you have used for an individual child**

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**Teaching Replacement Skills**

**Alternative to challenging behavior**

**Efficient and effective**

**Consider child's existing skills**

**Consistent encouragement for appropriate behavior**

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**Replacement Skills for Toddler Behaviors**


<p><b>Escape Replacement Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request help</li> <li>• Participate in routine</li> <li>• Say or sign "No" or "All done"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gain Access Replacement Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in routine</li> <li>• Request help</li> <li>• Request attention</li> <li>• Ask for a hug</li> <li>• Ask for a turn</li> <li>• Ask for item</li> </ul>
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SUPPORTING CHILDREN  
WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS


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**AN INTRODUCTION**




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## Reflection




- **What questions do you have about challenging behavior and ways to address it?**
- **What insights do you have about your own practices?**
- **What insights do you have about the children and/or their families?**
- **What strategies did you see or hear that might be useful in your role and work?**
- **What would you like to learn more about?**



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## Next Steps


- **Identify and observe challenging behavior**
- **Collect data on behavior**
- **Create a plan to prevent or replace the behavior**
- **Include support staff and family in your plan**



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## Major Messages to Take Home

- **All children exhibit some level of challenging behavior, but it is the frequency, intensity, and duration that determine the need for extra support.**
- **In helping children curb challenging behaviors it is important to look at the possible reasons for the behavior and to look for ways to prevent and replace these behaviors.**



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# Challenging Behavior Agenda

## Part 1

- » Setting the Stage
- » What is Challenging Behavior?
- » Identifying Challenging Behavior

## Break

## Part 2

- » Using Data-Based Decision Making
- » Responding to Challenging Behavior
- » Wrap-up & Reflection

Other Information





## Activity – Identifying Behaviors

Directions: In the corresponding box, describe the withdrawing OR acting outward behavior. Then, write what might be going on for the child.

<p><b>Difficulty experiencing emotions</b></p> <p>Mom has left six-month-old baby Jenna in care for the first time. She has been in her current classroom for about a month. Jenna seems quiet and stares into space sucking her fingers. She does not seem especially interested in anything and will not make eye contact with her new caregivers.</p>	<p><b>Acting Outward Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>Withdrawing Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>What might be going on for this baby?</b></p>
<p><b>Difficulty forming close and secure relationships</b></p> <p>Nine-month-old, Aliyah came to childcare six months ago. When her preferred caregiver puts her down, she throws her body back on the mat where she was placed. When other caregivers attempt to pick her up and soothe her, she arches her back and screams.</p>	<p><b>Acting Outward Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>Withdrawing Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>What might be going on for this baby?</b></p>

<p><b>Difficulty experiencing emotion</b></p> <p>Twenty-two-month-old Jasmine sees her teacher set up the water table, her favorite activity. She runs to the table and bangs on it, then runs to her friend and bangs on him, leaving him screaming. Then she runs to the play area and throws a chair to the floor. She does this gleefully.</p>	<p><b>Acting Outward Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>Withdrawing Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>What might be going on for this child?</b></p>
<p><b>Difficulty regulating emotion</b></p> <p>Eighteen-month-old David has gone from being the oldest in a calm, quiet room of babies to being the youngest in a room full of rambunctious toddlers. He is quiet and withdrawn and likes to spend time under a table in the corner. If someone comes near him he pulls back and looks away. The other children ignore him so he is not forming friendships.</p>	<p><b>Acting Outward Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>Withdrawing Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>What might be going on for this child?</b></p>





## Activity – Iceberg

Directions: Take notes while watching video, then answer questions with your group

**What is the “tip of the iceberg” or behavior of concern?**

**What under-developed social emotional skills may be underlying this behavior?**

**What else might be under the surface?**





# ABC Chart

Data collection for challenging behaviors

DATE	Antecedent (what happened before)	Behavior (the challenging behavior)	Consequence (what was the result)





# Training Feedback Form

Directions: Please take a moment to provide feedback on the training you received. When the survey is complete, leave it with your trainer.

**Training Location:**

**Training Date:**    /    /

**My Program or Center:**

**Position (Circle one):**

Administrator

Education Coordinator

Disability Coordinator

Mental Health Consultant

Teacher

Teacher Assistant

Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

Put an "X" in the box that best describes your opinion as a result of attending this training:	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
My understanding of what can be considered challenging behavior in infants and toddlers has increased.					
My knowledge about ways to gather information about challenging behavior in order to respond appropriately has increased.					
I have a better understanding of the importance of replacing and preventing challenging behavior as a means to improve social emotional skills in young children.					
During the training, I thought of ways to incorporate what I was hearing into my daily classroom activities.					
My trainer was knowledgeable about the Pyramid Model.					
My trainer was able to present the material in an					
My trainer was responsive to participants' questions and needs.					

**Please respond to the following questions regarding this training:**

The best features of this training were...

My suggestions for improvement are...

Other comments and reactions I wish to offer (please use the back of the form for extra space):

