




Understanding Behavior

Pyramid Model Infant-Toddler Training Series

National Center for
Pyramid Model
INNOVATIONS
ChallengingBehavior.org

1



Learner Objectives

- Understand and describe that all young children's behavior is a way of communicating and has meaning
- Use a variety of strategies, including observation and self-reflection, to increase capacity to support social-emotional development of infants, toddlers, and their families

2

Agenda


- Setting the Stage: Behavior
- Observation
- Learning from Families
- Cues of Young Children
- Development & Challenges
- Examining Our Reactions
- Responding to Challenges
- Wrap-Up & Reflection



3

Our Learning Environment

- What can the trainer do to facilitate a safe learning environment?
- How can other training participants help make the training environment conducive to your learning?
- What are some agreements we can make?



4

Possible Shared Agreements



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

5

Topics We Will Discuss



6



Observation



Understanding Children's Development & Behavior

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7

Observation Tips

- Record what you see and hear
- Be objective—just the facts
- Use all of your senses (see, hear, touch, feel, smell)
- Note your own responses and how you are feeling
- Observe different days, different times of day, different places and activities



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8

Sample Observation

What do you see in this picture?




Shared by Kristin Tenney-Blackwell

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9

Time for Reflection




- What was my purpose for observing?
- Do I notice any similarities or patterns?
- What do these observations suggest?
- What else might be going on?
- Is there anything else I want to observe or find out?
- How does this observation fit with other things that I know about the child?
- Am I interpreting my observations and using practices in an unbiased and equitable way across all children?

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10

Temperament—A Continuum of Traits



Handouts 4 & 5

Think about where you feel each child falls on the continuum of traits, such as activity level, adaptability, persistence, or mood



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11

Learning from Families

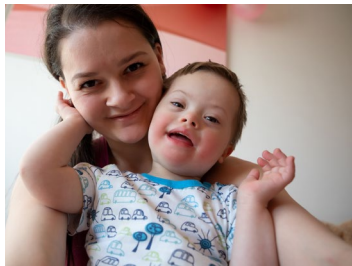


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12

Encourage Input & Sharing

- Encourage families to share their observations.
- Let families know their observations are important and valued.
- Place a basket at sign-in for families to drop off photos and notes to support careful observation.



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13

Cues of Young Children



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14

Engagement & Disengagement Cues



Engagement cues:
"I want more."



Disengagement cues:
"I need a break."

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15

Engagement and Disengagement Cues Examples

Engagement Cues

- Eyes widen
- Turn eyes, body, or head toward speaker
- Alert face
- Steady breathing
- Hand-to-mouth activity
- Hand clasped together
- Grasping finger or object
- Smooth movements

Disengagement Cues

- Crying or fussing
- Gagging, spitting
- Frowning
- Hiccupping, yawning, sneezing
- Jittery or jerky movements
- Falling asleep
- Back arching
- Turning away
- Stiff or limp posture

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16

Responding to Cues 1

- 1. Look:**
 - Is there a problem?
- 2. Think:**
 - Why is it happening?
 - What should be done?

How Would You Respond to These Young Children?



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17

Responding to Cues 2

- 1. Look:**
 - Is there a problem?
- 2. Think:**
 - Why is it happening?
 - What should be done?

How Would You Respond to These Young Children?



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18

Responding to Cues 3

1. **Look:**
 - Is there a problem?
2. **Think:**
 - Why is it happening?
 - What should be done?

How Would You Respond to These Young Children?



Development & Challenges



Development & Its Influences on Challenges & Behaviors

19

20

Development's Influence on Challenges

- New challenges may emerge with development
- Development creates the need for caregiving shifts and modifications
- Challenges may occur because development has not yet occurred



Challenging Scenarios

- A 3-month-old screams and cries for long periods of time because...
- A 17-month-old hits another child because ...
- A 2-year-old says "no" frequently because...



21

22

Challenging Situation with a 9-Month-Old

9 Months - May be clingy with familiar adults



Examining Our Reactions



Caregiver Values, Beliefs, & Assumptions

23

24

Emotional Reactions

Handout 7

- What behaviors push your buttons?
- How do these behaviors make you feel?
- How does this impact your relationship with a child and their family?

Handout 7: Examining Our Emotional Reactions to Behaviors. The worksheet includes sections for 'Hot Buttons' and 'Reframing Behavior'.

25

Examining Our Feelings

- Pay attention to your own behavior, thoughts, and feelings
- Use thoughts and feelings as a signal
- Consider what our facial expression, tone, and movements might convey to the child or family
- Take extra effort to remain calm or take a break
- Ask for help
- Take time for additional observations
- How do these feelings impact your relationship with the child? the family?

26

Noticing & Challenging Our Thoughts 1

Original Thoughts

- That child never stops crying.
- I can't handle it.
- I can't calm him. Nothing works.
- Maybe center care is not for him.

Reframed Thoughts

- This child is getting to know me and learning how to regulate. My job is to stay calm and help soothe him. As I stay calm and keep trying to find ways to comfort the child, we will develop a better relationship.
- I can handle this. I am in control. I am not alone in this. I can ask others for help and support. I can be a model for how to stay calm in a stressful situation.

27

Noticing & Challenging Our Thoughts 2

Original Thoughts

- Sarah is only trying to get to me and ruin my day.
- I don't know how to do this.
- This child's needs are beyond my training.

Reframed Thoughts

- Sarah is not developmentally capable of this. She may have learned that this is a good way to get her needs met. I can work harder to teach her better ways to get her needs met.
- I work as part of a team. We can work together to try to figure this out. This child and family need our help.

28

Activity: Reframing Behavior

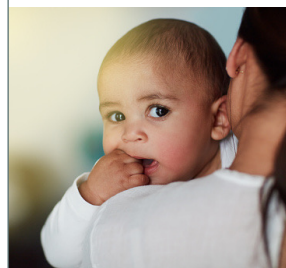
Handout 7: Examining Our Emotional Reactions to Behaviors. The worksheet includes sections for 'Hot Buttons' and 'Reframing Behavior'.

- Read the example listed
- Pick a "Hot Button" behavior from Handout 7 to record on Handout 8
- Write down thoughts you have about the behavior
- Challenge your thoughts in order to reframe and replace with a more objective thought

Handout 8: Reframing Behavior. The worksheet includes sections for 'Original' and 'Reframed' thoughts.

29


Strategies for Reframing



- Step back and notice your own feelings
- Observe the behavior
- Ask "I wonder" questions about the behavior
- Revisit developmental resources about child's age and stage of growth
- Think about how this might feel for parents and families

30

Responding to Challenges



Effective Strategies for Addressing Challenging Behaviors & Situations

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Responding to Classroom Challenges

- Respond immediately
- Remain calm and supportive
- Help children recognize their emotions



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Responding to Challenging Behaviors



- Provide positive attention to the child and acknowledge feelings
- Provide soothing support
- Use the opportunity to promote social-emotional development
- Redirect with choice

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Understanding Guides Our Response


- Child's developmental level
- Message of the behavior
 - What is the child seeking?
 - What is the child wanting to avoid?



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Strategies that Support Toddlers



- Objects or visuals
- Visual boundaries
- First-Then
- Choices
- Preferences
- Transition warnings and cues

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Scripted Stories

- For children interested in books
- Promotes engagement in the routine
- Simple language about what to do
- Use photographs of the child engaging in the routine



Oliver Takes a Nap



The lights are turned off.
The music is turned on.
My cot is ready.

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36

Wrap-Up & Reflection



37

Self-Reflection: Practice Implementation Checklist

- Communicating age-appropriate behavioral expectations
- Responding to distress & managing challenging behavior

38

Major Messages to Take Home

- Caregivers who reflect on their own well-being, skills, and perspectives will be better equipped to contribute to the positive social-emotional development of infants and toddlers, as well as support families rearing infants and toddlers.
- Caregivers who use a variety of strategies, including observation, will be better able to form close relationships with infants, toddlers, and their families.



39

Thank You

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40