Tip Sheet

Challenging Behaviors (Families)

- We define a challenging behavior as "Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in social interaction." (Powell,Fixsen,& Dunlap 2003)

- Addressing and reshaping challenging behaviors as early as possible is important for the day to day quality of life for your loved one, as well as your family. Challenging behaviors can accumulate and limit the child's and his family's access to many important things in life.

- Considering why a person might behave in a certain way is the first important step toward understanding and learning how to help

- A behavior occurs because it serves a function and/or produces a desired outcome, regardless of whether it's positive or negative. Our children do *it because it works*.

- For Preschoolers challenging behaviors might look like: pinching, spitting, throwing objects, hoarding, grabbing, ignoring, withdrawing or a tantrum

- How *we* respond can have a significant effect on what happens next. To change the behavior we need to *change how we react and reinforce it*.

- When thinking about your child with challenging behaviors, it is also important to consider their positive features and strengths. We need to focus our attention and reward the things they are doing well, in place of correcting the inappropriate behavior.

- As parents we can help our children to cope and better manage their behavior by providing age appropriate support, teaching proper ways to communicate needs and redirecting behaviors

- Some Key Concepts for managing challenging behaviors:
- Stay calm & be aware of emotions (flat affect/ negative behaviors – animated for positive)
- Give clear and positive directions
- Be consistent
- Set creative boundaries
- Incorporate tangibles (timers, tokens, reward charts ,visual choice boards and schedules)
- Replace words with actions
- Create a reward system
- Make small *consistent* changes to build upon
- Celebrate the successes one at a time, whenever and wherever they come

Websites:

challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/documents/pyramidmodelfactsheet.pdf

Zerotothree.org. Autismspeaks.org

Tip Sheet

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Autism (ASD) is a complex biological disorder that generally lasts throughout a person's life. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states 1:59 births will develop Autism in U.S.

- It is called a developmental disability because it starts before age three, in the developmental period. ASD might also be referred to as Asperger Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder

- Autism effects a person's communication, socialization and sensory system. It causes delays or problems in the way in which a person develops or grows

- Some common characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder are:
    - Delayed speech or language skills and or difficulty expressing wants/needs
    - Lack of reciprocal eye contact or smile, does not respond to their name
    - Prefers to play alone or unsure how to play with toys
    - Often hyperactive ,uncooperative or oppositional
    - Displays repetitive words or actions

- The term spectrum is used because:
    - It exists on a continuum from mild to moderate to severe
    - It often co-exists with other disorders
    - It presents differently in different individuals

- No one knows the exact cause of ASD, there are only theories: genetic, neurological, infectious, metabolic, immunological, vaccine injury and environmental

- Websites:

    autism-society.org   autismspeaks.org   autismbeacon.com   fsuautism.com

    autismnavigator.com   autism.com.   www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/autism/apqi.htm

Tip Sheet

Challenging Behaviors (Professionals)

- Challenging Behavior is defined as "Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in social interactions" (Powell, Fixsen, & Dunlap 2003)

- To us it might look like screaming, hitting, pushing, pinching, biting, throwing grabbing etc. The reason they behave this way is BECAUSE IT WORKS!

- Challenging behavior in the preschool years needs to be addressed because it constitutes one of the strongest predictors of later more serious problem behaviors

- The best way to address challenging behaviors is to take steps to make sure that they don't occur. In order to change the students behavior we must first change our behavior.

- Several strategies to help prevent challenging behaviors in the classroom include:
    - Arranging of the classroom environment
    - Scheduling
    - Implementing rules, rituals and routines (Alter & Conroy 2015)

- Creating a well-designed classroom that is engaging and developmentally appropriate and implementing schedules, rules, rituals, and routines can help create a positive classroom communicating to children how to act appropriately

- When children understand what is expected and are provided the opportunity and support to engage in appropriate behaviors, they are more likely to choose this behavior, reducing the likelihood of using challenging behaviors (Alter & Conroy 2015)

- Setting an explicit goal as simple as spending a few minutes at the end of each day thinking about what worked well, what didn't, and how to improve the classroom can have a significant impact on a teacher's practice and on children's classroom experience

- Websites:
    - https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/guidance-and-challenging-behaviors
    - https://www.preschool-plan-it.com/challenging-preschool-behavior.html
    - https://www.wested.org/rd_alert_online/helping-early-childhood-educators-deal-with-challenging- behavior
    - https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2016/09/preschool-behavior-management.html

Tip Sheet

Measuring What Matters
Observation & Data Collection in the Classroom

- Collecting data and measuring student behavior is an important aspect of effective teaching in early childhood education (Lewis 2005)

- Early childhood education programs face increasing pressures to collect data, about both teachers and children, and to use those data to make decisions (Yazejian & Bryant, 2013)

- Observation and Data Collection are used:
    - To identify student's current levels of performance
    - To evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction
    - To shape and guide instruction
    - To monitor and communicate student's progress toward general objectives
    - To monitor progress toward (IFSP) or (IEP) goals and objectives
    - To meet local, state and federal requirements

- Children should be observed in multiple situations and by more than one person (Browne,K. & Gordon,A. 2009)

- "Different individuals frequently perceive the same situation differently, their observations reflecting their developmental level, cultural background, previous experiences and understanding and personal biases." (Boehm,A. & Weinberg, R. 1997)

- Three most used forms of observation used by teachers are:

    - Narratives (running record) the most common form of observation
    - Checklists are easier to record but less detailed than the narrative
    - Behavior Sampling condenses narrative into small segments that focus on time or events (Boehm & Weinberg 1997)

- Interpretation is what puts the observation into perspective making sense of what has been recorded

- Interpretation helps a teacher decide if they need to observe further to see the cause of a behavior or if they need to make environmental or curricular changes for the child
  (Browne,K. & Gordon,A. 2009)

- What does this information teach us about the child?

Strengths to build upon -- Weaknesses that might challenge them

- Websites:
    http://nstacommunities.org/blog/2011/01/12/data-collection-in-early-childhood/

    http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/fm/early-childhood-assessment/

    https://www.g-w.com/pdf/sampchap/9781590708132_ch03.pdf

Tip Sheet

Getting Ready For Kindergarten

- Starting Kindergarten is exciting, however it is normal for children and parents to feel anxious.

- Kindergarten marks an important stage in your child's life, each stage builds upon another. If your child is receiving Special Education Services it is important that you discuss and coordinate your efforts with your child's teacher and therapists.

- General Kindergarten Readiness
  - Understands cause and effect
  - Able to separate from parents for short periods of time
  - Shows understanding of general times of the day
  - Speaks understandably (short sentences of 5-6 words)
  - Able to recognize authority figures
  - Sorts similar objects by color, size and shape
  - Counts to 10
  - Identify some alphabet letters, some common sight words, rhyming words

- Self-Help Readiness
  - Hand Washing Routines   Toileting
  - Dressing and Undressing   Eating (opening containers, feeding themselves)

- Fine Motor Readiness
  - Cutting with scissors   Scooping and pouring
  - Using Writing Tools (crayon, pencil)   Manipulating Play-doh, sand, paints
  - Drawing simple shapes (circle, triangle, square)

- Gross Motor Readiness
  - Running   Balance   Climbing
  - Hopping   Marching   Throwing, rolling, catching a ball

- Social-Emotional Readiness
  - Responsibility for ones belongings   Show awareness/empathy
  - Respect for self and others   for feelings of others
  - Cooperation

- Websites

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/preschool/learnoutcomes.htm
http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/nyslsprek.p
Readingrockets.org   Familyeducation.com

Tip Sheet

Literacy in the Early Years (Professionals)

- Language is the foundation of reading and writing

- One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in an increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing (NAEYC 1998)

- Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write

- We use the term "emergent literacy" to characterize these early activities as part of a continuum of reading development, rather than as preparation for it (Ramsberg D., 1998)

- Effective early literacy instruction provides preschool children with developmentally appropriate settings, materials, experiences, and social support (Roskos K.,Christie J. & Richgels D., 2003)

- Essential early literacy teaching strategies will include: rich teacher talk storybook reading, phonological awareness activities, alphabet activities, support for emergent reading & writing, integrated content focused activities

- The amount of opportunities children have to practice has a direct link to their success and being ready for reading

- Examine your classroom (outside too) and see how many ways you can incorporate literacy throughout your program

- Literacy takes on an added importance when it is incorporated throughout the child's day and environment and not just "done" at circle time

- Websites:

  getreadytoread.org.   raisingreaders.org.
  bankstreet.edu/literacy-guide   colorincolorado.org.

Tip Sheet

Sensory Support

- There are 7 sensory systems that our bodies need to function, attend, organize, and synthesize information:
    1. Tactile - sense of touch
    2. Visual - sense of sight
    3. Olfactory - sense of smell
    4. Auditory - sense of hearing
    5. Gustatory - sense of taste
    6. Proprioceptive - sense of balance/body awareness
    7. Vestibular - sense of movement /spatial awareness

- Sensory processing refers to taking in information through the senses

- Sensory Processing Disorder exists when the brain has trouble organizing information from the senses

- Sensory issues are usually defined as either:
    - hypersensitivity (over-responsiveness to sensory stimuli)
    - hyposensitivity (under-responsiveness to sensory stimuli)

- A child's ability to use this information and to respond appropriately to the environment – including sounds, lights, textures, motion and gravity – is known as sensory integration

- Dimensions of Sensory Processing Disorder -Low Registration, Sensory Sensitive, Sensation Seeking, Sensation Avoiding

- Sensory integration issues can be helped by improving self-regulation

- Seasonal sensory challenges in summer might include:
    - The feel and/ or smell of sunscreen, bug repellent, sand, swimsuits, being barefoot, room temperature too hot or too cold

- Seasonal sensory challenges in winter might include:
    - the feel of heavy coats, boots, gloves or mittens, itchy dry skin, chapped lips, runny nose, icy surfaces, room temperature too hot or too cold

- Sensory play is an important part of early childhood development. Children learn best when they can touch, see, smell taste, hear and manipulate the materials in their world.

- Websites:
    - childdevelopment.com.au/resources/child-development-charts/sensory-processing-developmental-charts
    - https://www.understood.org/en/about/search-results?q=sensory
    - https://www.spdstar.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/DYKM%20general.pdf

Tip Sheet

The Social Emotional Child

- Children's social-emotional development influences all other areas of development: cognitive, motor, and language development

- Heathy social-emotional development includes the ability to:
    - Form and sustain positive relationships
    - Experience, manage, and express emotions
    - Explore and engage with the environment

- Parents and families play an enormous role in shaping a child's social and emotional development. Early relationships with parents lay the foundation on which social competency and peer relationships are built.

- Caregivers and teachers, who spend consistent time with the child, also play a significant role in promoting social and emotional development

- Emotionally healthy children engage in positive play behaviors, develop mutual friendships, and are more likely to find acceptance from their peers

- Through their play, they learn how to work in teams and cooperate with others

- Their behavior and interactions influence the way in which teachers perceive them and the way they are treated by their peers

- As early as preschool, the relationships children develop with one another can have a lasting impact on academic achievement, because they can contribute to more positive feelings about school and eagerness to engage in classroom activities

- Conversely, early rejection by peers has been associated with persistent academic and social difficulties in elementary school

- Websites:
  Abilitypath.org. - Ounceofprevention.org. - Challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu

Tip Sheet

Toilet Training

- Parents need to find the balance between readiness and determining when you need to start the process of potty training itself

- Typically children can be toilet trained by 2-3 years of age, however it might take longer if there are special needs. If your child is receiving Preschool Special Education Services it is important that you discuss and coordinate your efforts with your child's teacher and therapists

- We must consider the child's developmental age instead of their chronological age

- A child must show some signs that they are ready to learn:
  - Are they motivated to ditch the diapers?
  - Are they aware of the difference between being wet and dry?
  - Can they sense the need to urinate or have a bowel movement?
  - Do they have the ability to communicate their needs?
  - Can they remain dry for at least two hours?
  - Are they able to help undress and dress?
  - Can they sit without support?
  - Are they able to follow verbal directions? (flush, wash hands, etc.)

- Some factors that may make toilet training more difficult are:
  - Sensory issues -sensitivity to smells, lack of sensation, reduced sensory integration
  - Behavioral issues – difficulty with transitions, changes in routines
  - Cognitive issues – understanding the sequence of events, and target vocabulary

- Know when to call it quits. If your child resists using the potty or isn't understanding the process within a few weeks---take a break and try again in a few months. Chances are they aren't ready.

Tip Sheet

Value of Visuals

- Visual strategies are things we see that enhance communication

- The primary focus of visuals is to SUPPORT understanding

- They can provide information in a form we understand more easily than auditory information alone

- Many students with behavior and communication challenges understand what they SEE better than what they HEAR

- We ALL depend on visual aides in our daily lives such as:
  - Photos
  - GPS
  - Logos
  - Schedules
  - Calendars – Day Planners
  - To Do Lists

- Visual aides can be incorporated into our classrooms, homes and lives to benefit us all

- We want to teach children to identify the visuals that already exist in our environment as well as create specific visuals to meet specific challenges

- Visuals provide structure and make our environment more predictable and understandable

- Some common visual aides are:
  - Schedules
  - Timers
  - Task Organizers
  - Choice Boards
  - Written Rules (with pictures)
  - Transition Aid (prepares for a change)
  - Behavior Aid (prepares to anticipate what is expected of them, what options they have)

- Websites:
  Usevisualstrategies.com.   Sdparent.org.   Catapultlearning.com

Toilet Training Resources

General Resources :

- 6 Readiness Indicators for Toilet Training Young Children with Special Needs by Rybak, P., (www.friendshipcircle.org 2013)

- Toilet Training Children with Special Needs, (Healthychildren.org 2003)

- Potty Training: How To Get the Job Done,(Mayo Clinic 2014)

- Toilet Training a Child with Special Needs (Keeler C. 2011)

- The Unlikely Tool by Roush L., (TheMighty.com 2015)

Books For Parents:

- Parents' Book of Toilet Teaching by Joanna Cole
- Toilet Learning: The Picture Book Technique for Children and Parents by Alison Mack
- Toilet Training in Less than a Day by Nathan Azrin and Richard Foxx
- Vicki Lansky's Practical Parenting: Toilet Training by Vicki Lansky

Books for Kids 1-3:

- Going to the Potty by Fred Rogers
- I Want my Potty by Tony Ross
- Koko Bears' New Potty by Vicki Lansky
- My Potty Chair by Ruth Young
- Once Upon a Potty by Alona Frankel
- Today I Took My Diapers Off by Martha and Hap Palmer
- Everyone Poops by Taro Gomi

Videos for Kids 1-3:

- Once Upon a Potty for Her/Him
- It's Potty Time (Duke Family Series)

Videos For Parents on Facebook:

- Autism Potty Training-How to Potty Train with Discreet Trial Training
- The Autism Site – Potty Training Made Easy for a Child with Autism