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## Working with Families to Support Children's Behavior

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### INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the webinar *Early Childhood Suspensions: The Impact on Families* from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

### Goals

- ◆ Plan for connecting with families to better understand their perspectives and experiences.
- ◆ Learn how to reframe your thinking around children's behavior and your communication with families.

### Activity

- ◆ Watch the webinar.
- ◆ Use the reflection questions to guide your work with families to support children's behavior.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support children's positive behaviors.

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**Reach out to parents, check yourself, do whatever is necessary so that no child walks away from your classroom thinking they're bad, feeling they're bad, feeling like they're dispensable and they don't matter.**

**Rosemarie Allen**

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ For younger children, behavior is often a means to communicate a need. Think back to a behavior a child showed that you found to be challenging.
  - What could the child have been trying to communicate at the time?
  - Our understanding of a child’s behavior is tied to our background and experiences.
    - How might a family with different life experiences perceive that behavior?
    - How does considering the family’s perceptions help you reconsider or reflect on your own expectations?
  - In the future, how will you connect with families to get to know and understand them to best support their child’s behavior in the classroom? Write down some questions you could ask families about their experiences with challenging behaviors.

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- ◆ In the webinar, Rosemarie Allen compares how families and teachers can have different perspectives of behaviors and situations between home and school. Read each statement or scenario. These represent some common remarks teachers and staff may say. Try reframing it by taking the perspective of the family member or the child. Share your ideas with a colleague or coach.
  - This child in my class is always climbing up on the furniture and jumping down. Nothing I say or do makes them stop.
  - I have called this mom at all different times of the day. I get voicemail or the call hangs up. She is not willing to work with me to help her child.
  - I talk to dad often at pick-up about his child’s yelling and not sharing. It still happens every day. I must send them out of class so that the other children can get work done.
  - I have encouraged and modeled using the plastic fork and spoon at every meal. This child just refuses and always makes a mess eating with their hands.

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- ◆ Consider the following scenario: you plan an engaging and thoughtful lesson for the children in your class. As you start explaining the activity, your cell phone rings—it’s your child’s school. There has been a behavior incident, and you need to come to the school immediately.
  - What is your initial reaction to this situation? How would you feel about leaving behind the lesson you worked so hard on? How would your supervisor react to your need to leave?
  - Imagine the incidents and calls from the school become more frequent. How would your feelings and reactions change with each phone call? Would your supervisor’s reaction change over time?
- ◆ In the webinar, one of the speakers shares an experience of a Latinx mother in her son’s classroom. She was thought to be “uninvolved” because she didn’t come to her son’s classroom when called.
  - Consider your experience in the scenario you went through above. How does it help you understand another family’s similar experience?
  - How can it help you understand the Latinx mother from the webinar? How can you reframe the parent not being involved?
  - How can you make sure families feel supported in similar situations in the future?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about working with families to support children's behavior:

- ◆ **Source:** Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center
- ◆ **Tip Sheet:** Understanding and Managing Children's Behaviors: Individual Support Plans (ISP)
- ◆ **Link:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/understanding-managing-childrens-behaviors-individual-support-plans-isp>
- ◆ **Description:** This tip sheet is a resource for teachers and families developing a behavioral support plan. When a child does not qualify for special education services, working together using these ISP guidelines will allow teachers and families to better support children's behavior.

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- ◆ **Source:** National Association for the Education of Young Children
  - ◆ **Article:** Culturally Responsive Strategies to Support Young Children with Challenging Behavior
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2016/culturally-responsive-strategies>
  - ◆ **Description:** This article reviews five core culturally responsive strategies. Teachers can practice these strategies when working with families to support children's behavior.

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- ◆ **Source:** Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (courtesy of the National Association for the Education of Young Children)
  - ◆ **Article:** Dual Language Learners with Challenging Behaviors
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/dual-language-learners-challenging-behaviors>
  - ◆ **Description:** This article shares scenarios and strategies for working with dual language learners with challenging behaviors. Teachers can work with families to learn about language differences at home and school and their impact on behavior.

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- ◆ **Source:** Virtual Lab School
  - ◆ **Online Lesson:** Working with Families of Children with Special Needs
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/family-engagement/lesson-4>
  - ◆ **Description:** This lesson offers ways to engage with families of children with disabilities in their classroom. Use these resources to guide your work with families to support their children's behavior.

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- ◆ **Source:** National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations
  - ◆ **Tip Sheets:** Children: Stress and Challenging Behavior (see green drop-down section)
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Emergency/>
  - ◆ **Description:** These colorful tip sheets identify ways to help children manage challenging behaviors. Share them with families as part of supporting children's positive behavior at school and home. They are available in English and Spanish.