

Information about the Backpack Connection Series from TACSEI

The Backpack Connection Series was created by the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children to provide a way for teachers and parents and caregivers to work together to help young children develop social-emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home. This series was developed in collaboration with Pyramid Plus: The Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion and Bal Swan Children's Center in Broomfield, Colorado.

To access the entire list of Backpack Connection Series handouts, refer to the website listed in the [Apply section of Lesson 4 in the Training & Curriculum Specialist Positive Guidance course](#).

Here is an annotated list of selected handouts from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations site. Handout summaries are copyright TACSEI and are provided here for your reference. Reproductions of their handouts are encouraged.

Addressing Behavior

Teachable Moments: How to Help Your Child Avoid Meltdowns

There are countless teachable moments daily when skills can be taught and emotions discussed, such as during play time, in the car, at bath time or while reading together. As a parent, you can reduce challenging behaviors such as hitting, biting, pushing and whining when you 1) concentrate on calming your child during a challenging behavior incident and 2) wait until an appropriate teachable moment to actually teach your child.

How to Help Your Child Stop Hitting and Pushing

Like many parents and caregivers, you may have found yourself in a situation where, despite your best efforts, your child continues to hit and push you or other children. To begin to address this behavior, it is important to understand that your child has his own opinions and probably wants to do more things for himself, yet he may not have the language skills or impulse control to make those things happen. This experience can be frustrating for him and his first reaction might be to hit or push. Young children often express difficult emotions such as frustration, anger or embarrassment by acting out physically. Many children do not know a different way to handle difficult emotions.

How to Understand the Meaning of Your Child's Challenging Behavior

As a parent or caregiver, you may see your child behave in a way that doesn't make sense and ask yourself, "Why does she keep doing that?" It can be very frustrating, especially when it seems like it should be easy for your child to figure out on her own a more appropriate way to

behave. In moments like this, it is important to remember that children continue to use a behavior because it works! Your child's behavior is a powerful communication tool that she uses to tell you what she needs or wants. Sometimes, when a child does not know the appropriate way (such as words, sign language or pointing to pictures) to express her needs or wants she may use challenging behavior (such as hitting, screaming or spitting) to communicate. Challenging behavior gives children the ability to send a message in a fast and powerful way. Children will use challenging behavior to communicate until they learn new, more appropriate ways to express their wants and needs. To change the behavior, it is important for you to first discover what is causing the behavior. If you know why your child is choosing a behavior, you can then teach her to communicate her wants and needs in a new way that everyone feels good about.

How to Give Clear Directions

"Why do I have to repeat myself time and again?" "Why won't she listen to me?" Listening and following directions are important skills young children must learn. There are many reasons why children do not follow directions.

How to Use Social Stories to Teach Your Child New Skills and Expectations

Children love to listen to stories. Not only are stories used to entertain children, they can also be used as tools to teach new skills and expectations. Many parents read books to teach their children the

alphabet or numbers, but stories can also be used to: teach social skills, such as how to take turns; teach clear behavior expectations for a time of day (e.g., quiet time) or event (e.g., road trip); reinforce routines, such as getting ready for bed; prepare for new experiences, such as the first day of school; and address a challenging behavior, such as hitting.

How to Help Your Child Stop Whining

There are few behaviors that are more frustrating to parents than whining. Yet for children, whining can be a quick and easy way to get a parent's full attention. Children whine when they feel overwhelmed by an emotion or desire and do not have the vocabulary to express their feelings. They also might whine when they do not have the skills to complete a task or because they feel tired, hungry, powerless, or lonely. Simply put, children whine to ask for help. You can help your child figure out WHY he is whining and help him to find a better way to communicate.

How to Help Your Child Stop Biting

It is very common for a child to bite others at some point during their early years. When children do not have the skills or vocabulary to express their feelings, they might engage in a behavior, such as biting, as a way to let you know how they feel.

Routines and Schedules

How to Plan Activities to Reduce Challenging Behavior

Unfortunately, there is no “Guidebook for Parents” that tells you exactly how to raise children who behave perfectly at all times. Each child and family is unique, which means that there is no one solution or strategy that is going to work for everyone, every time. However, while it isn’t magic, simple planning ahead can work wonders to help improve your child’s behavior. You can plan activities to teach your child important skills such as sharing, taking turns or handling disappointment. You can also plan ahead to prepare your child for new events in her life such as changes in her schedule, a road trip, a new baby or a visit from grandparents.

How to Help Your Child Have a Successful Morning

Do you struggle with stressful mornings when you want to lay your head down and cry before 8:00 a.m.? Do you often leave the house in an angry, frantic rush? Mornings can be a particularly challenging time for parents. Getting your entire family up and out the door is no easy task! It is important to understand that your morning routine serves as the foundation for your family’s entire day. You can create a morning routine that not only helps your day to begin more smoothly, but also teaches your child important skills that he needs to become more independent and confident. A morning routine can also reduce challenging behavior such as crying, whining and tantrums.

How to Use Visual Schedules to Help Your Child Understand Expectations

Often, children do not respond to adult requests because they don’t actually understand what is expected of them. When a child doesn’t understand what he is supposed to do and an adult expects to see action, the result is often challenging behavior such as tantrums, crying or aggressive behavior. A child is more likely to be successful when he is told specifically what he should do rather than what he should not do. A visual (photographs, pictures, charts, etc.) can help to communicate expectations to young children and avoid challenging behavior. Visual schedules (activity steps through pictures) can be used at home to teach routines such as getting ready for school. These types of schedules teach children what is expected of them and reminds them what they should be doing.

Visit the [website](#) located in this lesson’s Apply Activity for more handouts.