



# Preschool Child Find Chat

Understanding and Improving Your Preschool Child's Behavior

11/14/2023

# What is Preschool Child Find?

## Who are we?



Preschool Child Find Office

407 E Market Street

Leesburg, VA 20176

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Email: [preschoolchildfind@lcps.org](mailto:preschoolchildfind@lcps.org)

Webpage:

<https://www.lcps.org/PreschoolChildFindCenter>

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Identification Services Supervisor

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# What is behavior?

- Observable actions
- Functional to meet a goal or need
- Form of Communication
- Developmental skill that can be taught (the child may not know what is appropriate)
- Learned**: it has been effective (in meeting the child's need)or reinforced



# Factors that influence behavior...

Medical

Sensory  
differences

Physical

Developmental Stage

Family culture

Individual differences and temperament



# All children demonstrate negative behaviors sometimes.



Negative behaviors become more problematic as they occur more often and are more intense.



# Typical behavior concerns in preschoolers:

- Frustration
- Physical expressions of anger
  - Yelling, screaming, tantrums, holding breath, biting, throwing
- Crying at separation
- Saying “no”
- Not sharing - “mine”



**What does  
this  
behavior  
do for the  
child?**



**What  
does the  
child get  
in return  
for this  
behavior?**



# Typical functions of behavior for preschoolers

Attention

Learned helplessness

Escape/avoidance

Power/control

Revenge





# What is the function of this child's behavior?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0T2R8pTpcoo>



# The ABC's of Behavior

**Antecedent > Behavior > Consequence**



**Antecedent (what happens before):** Child wants candy and is told no.

**Behavior:** Child starts screaming and throws a tantrum.

**Consequence (what happens after):** After a few minutes, parent gives the child the candy.



**Behavior:** Child throws a toy or pushes another child.

**Antecedent:** Teacher was paying attention to another child.

**Consequence:**

- Teacher talks to the child that's upset
- Child gets sent to the director's office
- Removed from play completely



What do  
you do?

What can  
you do?

What will  
you do?



***Prevent the behavior by  
changing what happens before.***



***Decrease the  
behavior by  
changing what  
happens as a  
consequence.***

# Strategies for prevention

- Create family/class rules and clear expectations
- Change how you give instructions
- Give choices
- Change the environment
- Prepare your child for transitions or changes in routines
- TEACH coping strategies
- Pay attention to what you want



# Create family/class rules

- Be responsible (help clean up messes/toys)
- Be respectful (use manners, share, be kind to others)
- Be safe (hold hands on walks, stay on the sidewalk, climb down carefully from playground ladder)
- Be honest (tell me what really happened)

**Parent/Caregiver needs to follow the rules as well!**



# Set clear expectations

- **Use “I need” language**
  - I need quiet in the car, so I can think about driving.
- **Add descriptions of things they CAN DO**
  - You may quietly look at books in the car.
- **Let them know the consequences ahead of time**
  - If you are loud, I will stop driving until you are quiet.
  - FOLLOW THROUGH! Implement the consequence if needed.





# Change how you give instructions

- Use short, single step directions
- No trigger words (e.g. no, don't, stop)
- State in positive terms or what you want your child to do and not what you want your child to stop doing
- Tell, don't ask
- Build direction into routine (after lunch we're going to..)
- Use first/then (first we pick up, then we can have snack)
- Use choices
- Give extra prompts or cues
- Make following the instructions sound fun



# Provide choices

## The Magic Wand



- WIN-WIN solution
- Offer limited choices that YOU can provide  
“It’s time to go inside/take a bath....Would you like  
to walk by yourself or would you like to be  
carried?”

# Change the environment

- Create a routine (Mealtimes, Bedtimes)
- Organize or structure the situation (new or change)
- Keep items kids can't have out of reach
- Provide appropriate toys, rotate toys
- Provide a variety of play locations and types of play
- Build in structured games
- Offer motor breaks
- Meet sensory needs



# Prepare for Transitions

- Warnings
- Reminders
- Picture schedule of day



- Visual Clock (hourglass or egg timer)  
*Takes ownership off of parents! The timer says...*

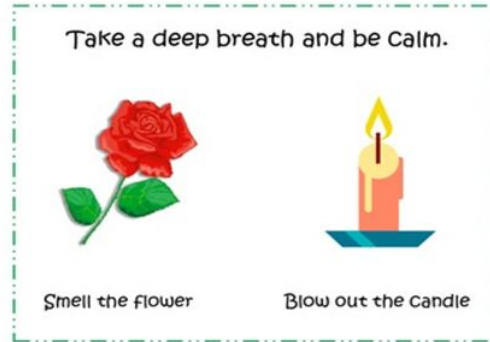


# TEACH Coping Strategies

- Identifying feelings (emotion faces)
- Identifying level of escalation



- Deep breathing



- Sensory items



# Pay attention to what you want

**Catch your child being good.** Talk about the positive behaviors you want to see. Point them out frequently and consistently.

***For every response to a negative behavior, provide 4 responses to positive behaviors*** - Praise works better than error correction

Praise and reward the behaviors when you see them. **Use specific, consistent and frequent praise.**

Use verbal or non-verbal (high-five, hug, smile) praise

**Praise the behavior and not the child.**



# Use behavior specific praise

## *Identify and define both your child and the behavior*

Praise the completion of a task - "You put all the toys away, thank you!"

Praise your child when they show a talent - "You built a great tower with your blocks."

Praise positive character traits/following family rules - "That was responsible/respectful/safe when you ...", "That was helpful/kind/considerate when you ..."

Praise for resisting negative behavior positively - "I like the way you walked with me on the sidewalk."



Even with the best laid plans,  
inappropriate behaviors  
can still occur.





What do  
you do?

What can  
you do?

What will  
you do?



***Prevent the behavior by  
changing what happens before.***



***Decrease the  
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# Responses to Behaviors/Consequences

- **Stay calm – be in control of your own emotions**
- Ignore the behavior (if not causing harm)
- Managing Tantrums
- Logical and Natural Consequences
- Take a break/Time Out
- Reward the positive – using behavior specific praise
- Consider reward/behavior chart
- Give rewards/privileges

Response must be consistent with...the **function** of the behavior.



# Ignore Behaviors



- **Works best when the function is attention**
- Inform your child that you will wait until they are finished - **Do not give any attention for misbehavior** (no looking or talking at/about the behavior)
- Do not use for aggressive or dangerous behaviors (causing harm to self/others or damage of property)
- Combine with rewards for positive behavior - **Ignore the negative behavior and reward any desired behavior**



# Managing Tantrums

It is ok for your child to be angry.

- Allow the tantrum behaviors to play out on their own, as long as your child is safe.
- It is important for children to learn how to express anger appropriately. **TEACH** them strategies.
- Reasoning with a child *during* a tantrum DOES NOT WORK.
- If possible, distract or interrupt and redirect.



# Logical and Natural Consequences

**Logical consequence:** something created by the parent, related to the behavior

- Toy taken away for the day if it isn't played with appropriately

**Natural Consequence:** something that happens on its own

- Toy breaks when child throws it.



# Take a Break / Time Out

## Don't use if the child's goal is avoidance

- The number of minutes is determined by the age
- Time-out should be in a consistent area
- Do not interact with the child during the time out
- If child leaves time-out, gently/quietly lead them back
- A child should be welcomed back after the time out: always talk about what to do different next time at a level the child can understand – end on a positive note



# Reward Positive Behaviors

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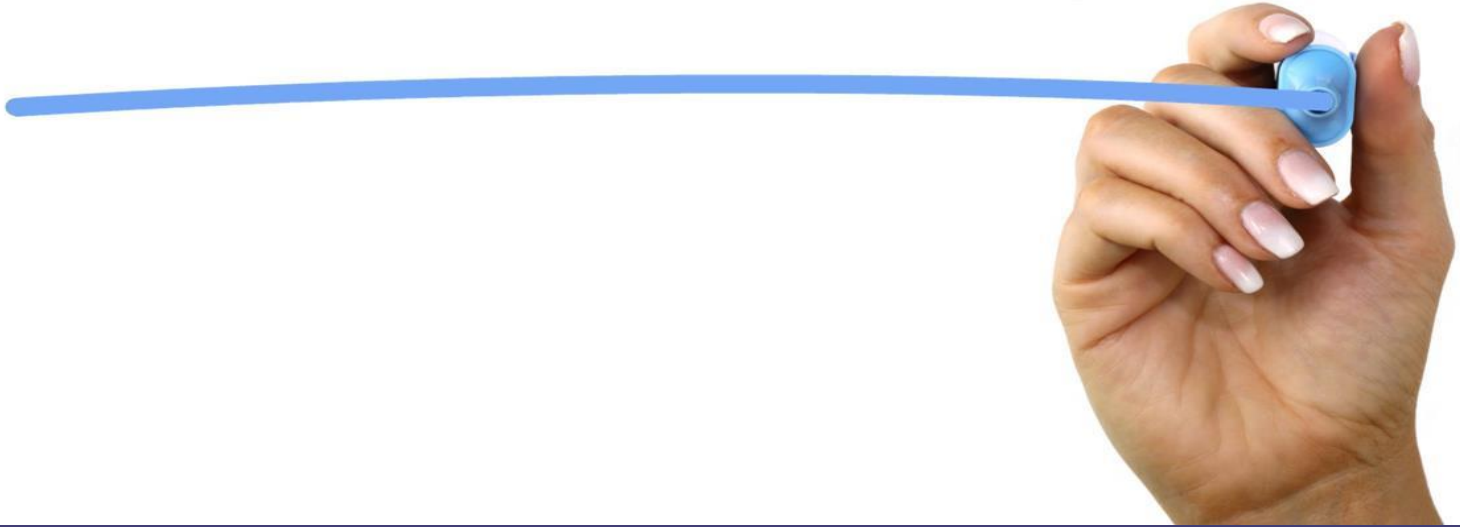
# “Reward” Ideas...

- Going to the park
- Playing with a special toy
- Getting a piggyback ride
- Having a bubble bath
- Watch a special movie
- Making a special treat
- Having a picnic
- Taking a walk with parent(s)
- Going out for a special treat
- Going on a special errand with parent(s)
- Helping choose an activity
- Helping parent(s) with grown-up task
- Riding a bike with parent(s)
- Playing a game with parent(s)





# QUESTIONS



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# Upcoming Preschool Child Find Chats:

February 6, 2024 - Raising Young Communicators

April 16, 2024 - Screen Sense for Young Children

Historic Douglass High School  
407 E Market Street, Leesburg

