

... "bite size"
news from
your
Region 10
Behavior
Specialist



Behavior Tip of the Month:

Use a low voice tone when trying to get the attention of children. The lower you speak the more emphasis there is in your voice.

In every exciting issue:

- Ask The Behavior Specialist
- Behavior Tip of the Month
- Calming Choice Card
- Social/Emotional Book Nook



Child Care
Resource Center

Child Care Resource Center
(Formerly Work Family Resource Center)
Lead Agency for Region 10
"Enriching Child Care, Engaging Families,
Enhancing Communities"
<http://www.workfamilyresource.org/>

OH, Behave!

Special Q&A Issue

Volume 11, Issue 4

Last day of
Spring 2018

Question: I am the lead teacher of a class of three-year-old children. I have difficulty during our morning circle time keeping the children interested in our regular activities. They won't sit still and they just want to hit one another and argue over where to sit. Can you offer any advice?

Answer: This is a problem I see often. Here are some things to consider which will prevent problems during circle time:

- Examine how long your circle time lasts. Is it age-appropriate? Does it last longer than the attention span of a three-year-old? While every child is different, a typical attention span for a three-year-old is approximately 9 to 12 minutes max. That doesn't seem like a long time to adults, but it is lengthy for a young child. Keep in mind you could always offer two short circle times each day and/or split a large group into a smaller one. Small groups are always more manageable.
- Plan for circle time away from toy shelves to eliminate as many distractions as possible.
- Help guide children as to where they should sit, plus give them

enough space between one another to prevent problems such as hitting. Use a carpet square, laminated picture, or even a small hula-hoop to designate each child's seat during group time and help teach personal space. This will help each child know what spot is their own and where they are expected to sit.

- Keep in mind that young children are naturally wigglers and squirmers. Circle time doesn't have to consist of just sitting activities. Singing, movement or active group games are also appropriate and will help children focus and pay attention.
- Make sure your planned circle time activities match the highest interests of the children in your class. This will ensure you capture their attention best!

Question: In our class of four and five-year-old children, we have a few that melt down when they don't get their way. We follow all the suggestions we have heard such as helping children learn to appropriately express their feelings and emotions in acceptable ways; learn how to control their anger and reduce their frus-

tration; and, help them problem-solve. However, as we try to calm them down when they are in the midst of a tantrum, each child seems to only get more upset. What are we doing wrong?

Answer: The strategies you are teaching the children are perfect. But, it could be the timing that is the problem. The time to teach these skills is not when a child is in the midst of a temper tantrum. These skills need to be taught and discussed when a child is not in a state of rage. When a child is melting down from being angry, they are not able to process helpful instruction. Their brain will not receive it at that time and, depending on the individual child, they may not even remember what you said. These skills are best taught at times when children are not engaging in a tantrum. Once a child is calm, help him learn ways to deal with the problem that made him so upset.

Question: I heard somewhere about a technique to help calm an upset child through hugging, but I can't remember exactly how it works. Can you help?

Answer: Absolutely! The trick to this working is to offer a hug to a child and once embracing, you exhale deeply triggering the child to do the same.

Ask The Behavior Specialist!



Question: I am the lead teacher of a very active group of four-year-old children. I have been using the Calming Choices cards from each newsletter in the safe place corner of the classroom. The children have enjoyed using them. I was wondering what else I could provide for the children in that area. We have Tucker Turtle, soft pillows, beanbag chair, and the solution kit from CSEFEL. What else do you suggest?

Answer: Wonderful question! You are certainly off to a grand start with the resources you have made available in that area. There's a wide array of other items you may want to add to your safe place corner. Here are some suggestions:

- Teddy bears to hug or tell their problems to.
- Puppets that will allow children to act out their feelings.
- Bubbles for reducing stress.
- Soft balls to squeeze.
- Social and emotional books which address anger, frustration, sadness, etc. [CSEFEL](#) has a comprehensive book list.
- Pictures of children portraying various emotions.
- Tactile items such as sand, clay, playdough, silly putty, pipe cleaners, etc.

- Earphones with soothing, relaxing music.
- Sensory bottles
- Blank paper with crayons, colored pencils, washable markers.
- Photo albums with pictures of family, friends, or generic pictures of pleasant things such as rainbows, puppies, teddy bears, etc.
- Pinwheels are excellent to help children learn to breathe in and out.
- Bubble wrap
- Kaleidoscope
- Eye mask or noise cancelling earphones.
- Box of tissues to collect tears
- "I Spy" jars or pictures
- Unbreakable mirror to make expressive faces
- Personal journals with blank pages (one for each child to use if and when desired)

The secret to success with this area is being sure each child knows and understands how to properly use each item available in the safe place.

Fun easy-to-make tip: Pool noodles that can be found at Dollar Tree make great squeezable fidgets. Simply cut in smaller portions to create a ton of calming squeezies.

In each issue you will find a new card to help you build your very own "Calming Choices" Card Set for your classroom.

When I am upset, I can... TALK TO A FRIEND



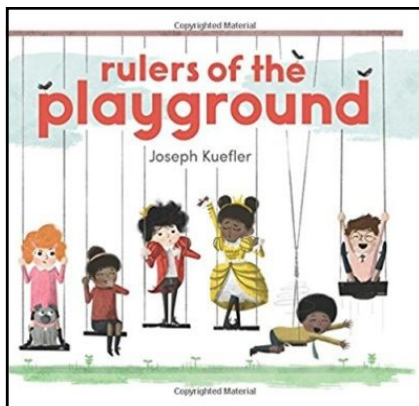
For durability and repetitive use, print on cardstock paper and laminate.

Thinking of children as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment.

Thinking of children as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them think through their distress.

Tip: Clear Christmas lights help create a cozy, soothing feel to a calm/safe place!

Social/Emotional Book Nook



In this book by Joseph Kuefler, sharing, kindness, and friendship are explored as children interact on the playground. Though this book is 48 pages, the illustrations are so beautifully done it captures the eyes and minds of readers and sweeps them into the story quickly and easily. Perfect for children four to eight years of age. Adults and children will find laughter and comfort in this book.

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our monthly column?

Feel free to fax your question to 704-636-9021.

You can remain anonymous if you prefer, but please put your question to the attention of "Ask The Behavior Specialist".



Questions or Comments?



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