

... "bite size"
news from
your HSB
Regional
Behavior
Specialists



Volume 16 Issue 1

July 2022

OH, Behave!

Teacher Tone and Classroom Climate



Tip of the Month:

Keep your voice polite and pleasant, even when addressing negative behavior. If you feel angry, give yourself time before speaking with a student to let yourself calm down.

Connect with us!

Check out [Tucker's NC Nest](#) on Pinterest!

Follow OhBehaveTips on [twitter!](#)

Join our new online community by clicking [here!](#) By joining Social-Emotional Connections, you will have the opportunity to network, post questions, and share resources with other early childhood professionals in NC!

Open our latest public resource, a growing library shelf of virtual binders that include archived issues of the HSB newsletter, *Oh Behave!*, a collection of Disaster Response Resources, and a binder of scripted stories for classroom use! Click [here.](#)

One subtle, yet important detail in our day-to-day interactions with children is tone of voice. How we say it is just as important as what we say. Our tone of voice is a key part of the positive, supportive classroom climate that children need to thrive. Many factors contribute to how we communicate including physical and cultural elements. Some teachers have soft, delicate voices while others have a more rough, brassy voice by nature. Some teachers have a booming, high pitch voice that may be perceived as exciting to some children and alarming to others. Additionally, our intended message can quickly become skewed when our facial expressions and body language don't match. Most of our communication is non-verbal so children hear your posture, your body language and the tone of your message loud and clear.

Understanding the difference between an assertive voice and an aggressive one is not always easy to do. An assertive voice is clear and direct without compromising respect. A teacher's assertive tone is firm and communicates a clear directive to children. An aggressive voice is harsh and insulting, and often perceived as hostile and threatening. To help teachers differentiate between the two, they might ask themselves: What overall tone or emotion was attached to my statement or request?

Our ultimate goal is self-regulation; we want children

to learn strategies to effectively manage their own feelings and emotions. When we respond in an aggressive tone, we are using fear to manipulate children's behavior instead of intrinsic motivation, which directly influences the pro-social emotional regulation that we want all children to develop.

Some teachers defend their use of those more threatening and aggressive tones by saying they only use them when they've made repeated requests and children still do not respond. Teachers can use quiet corrections like proximity control, eye contact and touch as alternatives. Moving closer to children, making and maintaining eye contact and physically touching children are subtle, less distracting ways that we can use to correct misbehavior or get children's attention quickly and minimize potential power struggles. In this way, we're not scaring children into changing their behavior, but supporting them as they change their behavior on their own.

Teachers might also find themselves yelling to talk over a noisy classroom or when they need to get the entire classroom's attention at once. A good preventative technique is to have a go-to attention getter that you have already taught the children and use regularly. Some popular ones are If You Can Hear Me Clap, Hocus Pocus Everybody Focus, To Infinity and Beyond, etc. These are great ways to regain children's attention. When children hear these, they know that there is an important message to follow.

Self-reflection is an important part of changing our practices. As we reflect on our own tone of voice, we might ask ourselves:

- What did I want to communicate?
Using inflection and variations in pitch are tools teachers can use to assertively make requests and give directives to children.
- What feelings were driving or influencing my tone?
Children can hear emotions in our voice. When you communicate from a place of frustration, it wears you and the children out emotionally. The children may only hear the overwhelming emotion in your voice and miss the intended message.
- How did others perceive my tone?
We want to maintain a positive and trusting emotional climate in our classroom.
- Instead of raising my voice, what other strategies could I have used to communicate assertively?
Respond to the smoke, do not wait for the flame. Remind children consistently of expected behaviors, move about the classroom often and coach children along.

Another idea is to recruit a colleague to help by asking them to use the penny transfer technique for each time they perceived your tone as aggressive or by asking them to record your interactions throughout the day to review later.

Ask The Behavior Specialist!

Question: Hello. I'm having a hard time on how to talk with a parent when I have concerns about their child. When I talked with the parent, they say the child is just having typical tantrums and the doctors say they will grow out of it. I would like to get the child evaluated. What do I do?

Answer: As teachers, we are with children most of the day so we can observe behaviors that may not come up at home. Though you may have concerns and feel like the child should be evaluated, the parent is the one who will have to agree to get it done. My suggestion is to start by documenting your concerns regarding the behavior. Be sure to also describe what you are doing to help the child. I would let the parent know some of the strategies you are trying at school so the parent can try them at home. The biggest thing is to get the support of the parent. It's all about fostering teamwork. Hopefully after a few months of consistent communication, the parent may see some of the things you have concerns with and be open for another conversation about further evaluation.

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...

KICK A BALL OUTSIDE



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



Social Emotional Teaching Strategies Technical Assistance (SETS TA)

Are you interested in learning how to prevent challenging behaviors in your classroom through intentional teaching practices designed to embed social emotional development in young children? It is free! To learn more and enroll, contact your local regional NC Healthy Social Behavior Specialist! Hurry as spaces are limited!

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

Feel free to email it to AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com.

We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!

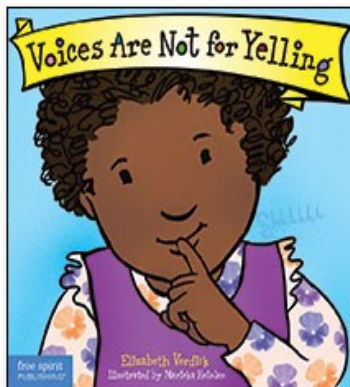


Do you know whispering can be a helpful part of behavior management?

When addressing a behavior issue in your classroom, keep your voice polite and pleasant. In fact, maintain your voice tone at a whisper. Children will need to quiet down in order to hear what you are saying.

Additionally, whispering a corrective reminder prevents a child from being embarrassed and ashamed in front of other children. By using whispering as part of your behavior management system, you show respect and dignity to the child while maintaining a nurturing, responsive relationship.

Social/Emotional Book Nook



Author Elizabeth Verdick is best known for her award winning Best Behavior Series books for toddlers. Made for durability, the books in this series help little ones understand why tails are not for pulling, teeth are not for biting, hands are not for hitting, etc. This particular book focuses on using an indoor voice "so people hear the words and not the yelling". The book also conveys the message of how to calm down and ask for help so they can get what they need. These books are very popular with young children largely because of the bright colors and attractive illustrations!

How To Reach Us!
336-245-4900

Renaee Lingafelt-Beeker
RBeeker@childcareresourcecenter.org
Ext. 1010

Cherie A. White
CWhite@childcareresourcecenter.org
Ext. 1017

