

... "bite size" news from your HSB Regional Healthy Social Behaviors Coaches



OH, Behave!

Volume 17
Issue 12

June/July 2024



Tip of the Month:

Always separate the behavior from the child. Is the child defiant or is the child exhibiting defiant behavior?

Connect with us!

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

Follow OhBehaveTips on [X \(formerly, Twitter!\)](#)

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](#).

Understanding Defiant Behavior

Occasional defiance is a normal and healthy part of a child's development. Children often use defiant behaviors to assert themselves, test limits and when they are trying to become more independent. As children grow older and become less dependent on their teachers and caregivers, they start to develop a more secure sense of their own identity. With that comes learning to communicate what they need and feel and then learning to manage those feelings appropriately. As children learn who they are and how they fit in the environments around them, they are bound to display defiant behaviors at one time or another. Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) differs in that it involves a pattern of defiance and hostility toward others resulting in a strained relationship with family, teachers and peers. The severity and longevity of uncooperative, hostile and resistant behavior is a key marker for more severe defiance in children.

Exposure to trauma and inconsistent caregiving can contribute to children's use of defiant behaviors. Another important factor

is children's individual temperament or their "personal style." A child's temperament is what makes them unique and is mostly made up of innate qualities that they are born with but early experiences and interactions can help to shape a child's temperament, too. Generally, children's temperament can be described as either flexible, feisty or fearful and play a huge role in understanding how a child interacts with others, approaches new situations and expresses emotion. Considering a child's temperament helps teachers to understand children's individual differences and better teach children to express their preferences, desires and feelings appropriately. This is especially true for a child with a feisty temperament as they tend to be strong-willed and determined. Awareness of a feisty temperament can help a teacher plan for and consider a child's adaptability to a new activity or routine prior to implementing it, curbing their reliance on defiant behavior to adapt to change, understand directives and express their needs. How teachers respond to children's use of defiant

behaviors can either reinforce it or weaken it. When teachers anticipate the kinds of situations that lead to defiance, they can help children problem solve and cope in advance. When responding to defiant behavior, the most important thing a teacher can do is remain calm. Keeping a close check on his or her own feelings and responding with empathy is a great way to model the same behavior you want the children to have. Teachers should speak calmly and use clear, concise language to validate children's feelings, reinforce limits and remind children of the consequences. This is important for avoiding power struggles and helping children learn to self-regulate. When teachers understand that defiant behavior is often the by-product of an important period of development for children, they are more inclined to approach it with understanding and help to shape new behavior.

The [Backpack Connection Series](#) provides a way for teachers and parents/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.





Ask The Healthy Social Behaviors Coach!

Question: In my class of three year olds, we have a recurring problem. I guess it keeps happening because we haven't found a good solution to handling the issue. Each time the children line up to go outside, at least two start fighting or pushing because of the waiting. What can we do next time?

Answer: Thank you for your question! One of the very first things to do is to identify what is causing the problem. You did that! You said it yourself—the waiting is the reason the children are pushing and fighting. Children are naturally wigglers and squirmers. Waiting is hard for some adults as well. Look at your schedule and see if you can eliminate unnecessary waiting times. Children are going to find ways to entertain themselves whenever there is a lack of activity and it will often be with behaviors we don't find appropriate. Without keeping their minds and hands busy, they will begin to think about the last time they were line leader, etc. Since self-regulation is a skill three year olds are still learning, they act on their impulses. So, once we remove all the unnecessary waiting periods, we realize there will be times that children will undoubtedly have to wait. So, we have to be prepared for that as much as we possibly can.

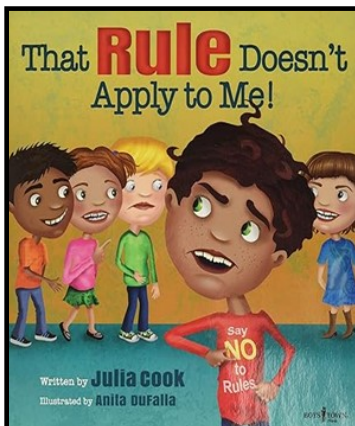
For your specific situation with lining up, try giving the first few children that line up something to carry outside such as tissue box, first aid kit, etc. The children that line up first are going to have the longest time to wait in line. Keeping their hands occupied will keep them from reaching out to hurt others. Also, consider having a child to be line leader, another child to be in the middle of the line, and then another at the end of the line to help everyone “stay on track” (The HSB team has an entire training called, “Staying on Track”. [Contact](#) your local Healthy Social Behaviors Coach for more information!)

Keep in mind if you have young preschool-age children you will need to teach them the expectations for lining up. To help with this, consider using a visual to illustrate how children should line-up and where their feet and hands should be when they are in-line. Use footsteps, arrows, or shapes to remind children of how to be present in line.

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to AskTheBehaviorCoach@gmail.com. We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!



Social/Emotional Book Nook



Ideal for children ages 3 to 7!

Noodle is having a rough couple of days. The rules keep getting in the way of his fun! Rules for this and rules for that. There are so many rules - too many rules! Rules stink! Noodle has no use for obeying rules at home, or school. He argues about the rules and doesn't think any of them actually apply to HIM! Can't he just have a rule-free day? With help from mom, Noodle learns to visualize the consequences of no rules at all and begins to understand that rules help create a safe environment for everyone. Enjoy this book being read aloud [here](#).

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...

PLAY IN THE SAND AND WATER TABLE



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

challenging behaviors helpline

Do you have children who bite? Do children struggle to focus during circle time? Do challenging behaviors cause difficult transitions? Do you spend all day managing behavior? Are you at your wits' end?

Help is available for these and other behavior challenges!



Speak to a Behavior Support Advisor for advice and resources specific to the challenging behaviors in your classroom. 1-888-600-1685 Option 1



Submit your questions to a Behavior Support Advisor online and receive a call or email in response.



Post your questions in the 'Talk to the Expert' Group on our online network, Social Emotional Connections, for early childhood educators. There will also be opportunities to join free webinars on challenging topics or classroom activities.

For more information, scan the QR code or go to childcareresourcecenter.org/challenging-behaviors-helpline



child care resources

CCR&R Council



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Rena Lingafelt-Beeker

RBeeker@childcareresourcecenter.org

245-4900, ext. 1010

Cherie A. White

CWhite@childcareresourcecenter.org

245-4900, ext. 1017

