New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports
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**Challenging Behavior Definitions
for Program-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
in Early Childhood Education Programs**

1. **Physical Aggression** – forceful physical actions directed towards adults or peers that may result in physical contact and injury (e.g., hitting, kicking, spitting, pinching, and throwing objects).

2. **Self-injury** – physical actions directed towards oneself, which may result in visible injury (e.g., hitting, kicking, scratching, pinching oneself).

3. **Disruption/Tantrum** – an outburst or action that prevents learning or interferes with teaching and persists despite an adult's request to stop or attempt to provide support.

4. **Inappropriate Language** – the repeated use of words or phrases that are typically unexpected for the child's developmental age or level (e.g., swearing, profanity, sexually explicit) despite the request of an adult to stop.

5. **Verbal Aggression** – the use of threatening, offensive or intimidating words directed towards a peer or adult (e.g., screaming, name-calling, swearing, profanity, threats).

6. **Non-compliance** – refusal to follow a reasonable request, direction or the established routine, which persists after multiple requests and a reasonable amount of time.

7. **Social Withdrawal/Isolation** – non-participation in class activities or withdrawal from play or social interactions with peers or adults that interferes with the child's ability to learn and interact with others which is outside the typical range of temperament.

8. **Running Away** – the act of leaving a designated area of supervision/boundary of play without permission and without responding to the requests of an adult to return.

9. **Property Damage** – purposeful actions directed towards items or property that may have destructive results (e.g., ripping of books, knocking over shelves, throwing chairs).

10. **Unsafe Behaviors** – physical actions which may directly or indirectly result in physical injury to self or others that (a) persists despite an adult's request to stop and (b) are unexpected based on the developmental age and/or level of the child (e.g., climbing on furniture, running into people or things, inappropriate use of materials).
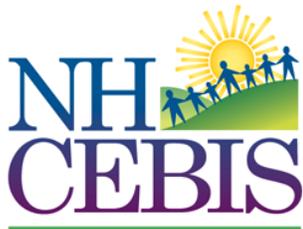
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Strategies for Responding to Challenging Behavior in
Program-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
For Early Childhood Education Programs

Teacher/Staff Responses

1. **Re-teach and Practice Expected Behavior –** a technique in which the teacher instructs the child on the expected behavior, models the expected behavior, has the child practice the expected behavior and then acknowledges the expected behavior (e.g., if a child is running in the classroom, the teacher could state, "Remember the rule is that we walk in the classroom. This is how I walk. Please go back and show me walking." After the child practices walking, the teacher can acknowledge the appropriate behavior by stating, "Yes! That's great walking!").

2. **Verbal Reminder** – a technique in which the teacher directly states the specific rule/expectation immediately after the child displays a challenging behavior (e.g., "It's time for quiet voices.") This is most effective when paired with eye contact.

3. **Remove from Area** – this strategy is used when a child displays continuous social difficulties playing/engaging in the classroom. The teacher may require that the child play in an alternate area. This strategy is most effective when paired with 'offering choices'. This intervention is designed in such a way that the child can continue working/playing in an alternate area of the classroom. This technique is intended to decrease the likelihood that the challenging behavior will reoccur.

4. **Physical Guidance** - a technique in which a teacher uses minimal physical touch to support/escort a student to another location, when the student is not actively resisting. (e.g., the teacher puts her arm on the child's shoulder and leads child to the clean-up area or holds hands with a child to slow down his/her pace).

5. **Curriculum Modification** - a strategy used when it is likely that the challenging behavior is the result of a task that is too difficult or un-preferred, in which the teacher decreases the amount of work expected and/or provides additional supports to enable the student to complete the work successfully (e.g., changes the format or presentation, provides pictorial directions, etc).

6. **Family Contact** - a technique in which the teacher calls a child's family to discuss an incident or behavior of concern. This technique is most effective when there is a positive relationship between the teacher and the parent/guardian and when the parent/guardian has been given positive feedback about the child in

advance of the contact for challenging behavior. This technique is intended to decrease the likelihood that the challenging behavior will reoccur.

7. **Loss of Item/Privilege** - a technique in which the teacher removes a child's access to a reinforcing object, activity or status for a specified period of time after a challenging behavior is exhibited. This is intended to decrease the likelihood that the challenging behavior will reoccur (e.g., if a child continually throws blocks, s/he is not allowed to use blocks for a developmentally appropriate amount of time; If a child continually uses scissors dangerously at the art table, s/he is then not allowed to participate in the art project).

8. **Move within Group** – a technique that is used to separate two or more peers that show an inability to engage in positive interactions with each other, or are doing so at an inappropriate time. The teacher may ask one child to move to a different seat/area while participating in the same activity/routine (e.g., a child is instructed to sit elsewhere during circle time).

9. **Time with Adult in Different Classroom/Support Staff –** a technique in which a child is integrated in another classroom's activities, or guided to another location with an alternate, supportive adult, for a specified period of time after a challenging behavior is exhibited. This technique is intended to decrease the likelihood that the challenging behavior will reoccur.

10. **Remove from Activity –** this strategy is used when a child displays continuous social difficulties participating in a particular classroom activity. The teacher may require that the child try a different activity. This strategy is most effective when paired with 'offering choices' (e.g., If a child has continuous difficulty coloring, the teacher may state, "I see you are having a hard time with coloring. I need you to do something else. Do you want to paint or glue a collage?"). This intervention is designed in such a way that the child can continue working/playing on an alternative activity. This technique is intended to decrease the likelihood that the challenging behavior will reoccur.

11. **Physical Hold/Restrain -** a technique in which a child is held in a manner which limits his/her bodily movements by a staff member who is appropriately trained in an approved, evidence-based program. This technique is only to be used when safety is an issue, when the child is a danger to him/herself or others and when all other less intrusive techniques have been exhausted. Best practice also suggests an approved policy for training, implementation procedures and oversight.

12. **Other –** this allows for the program to create another teacher-based intervention.

**Administrative Strategies for Responding to Challenging Behavior in
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For Early Childhood Education Programs**

1. **Non-Applicable -** no administrator response needed.

2. **Talk with Child** - a technique in which the program administrator engages in a discussion with a child about alternatives to his or her challenging behavior that results in a plan for performing the alternative, pro-social behavior in the future. This technique is not appropriate when the challenging behavior is likely to have been motivated by accessing adult attention.

3. **Telephone Contact with Parent/Family** - a technique in which a child's parent or guardian is called by the program administrator to discuss an incident and/or behavior of concern. This technique is most effective when there is a positive relationship between the administrator and the parent/guardian and when the parent has been given positive feedback about the child in advance of the contact for challenging behavior.

4. **Parent/Family Meeting -** a strategy used to promote parent partnership in addressing and responding to a child's repetitive behavioral challenges. The child's parent/guardian attends a meeting with the administrator to discuss the challenging behavior. This technique is most effective when there is a positive relationship with the parent and when the parent has been given positive feedback about the child in advance of the contact for challenging behavior.

5. **Reduce Hours in Program -** a technique in which the amount of time a child spends in the program is reduced for a limited amount of time.

6. **Arrange Behavioral Consultation/Team -** a technique in which an expert is called upon or the child is referred to a behavior support team in the program to help develop an appropriate response to the student's challenging behavior, with input from the program staff and family.

7. **Targeted Group Intervention –** a strategy in which the child is provided additional instruction in social emotional skills through a small group that is matched to their needs.

8. **Transfer to Another Program –** a strategy in which the administrator, with family agreement, arranges for the child to attend an alternate, more appropriate placement, or the child/family moves out-of-district and changes program/district.

9. **Dismissal –** a strategy in which the child is sent home early for the day. This technique is not appropriate when the challenging behavior is likely to have been escape-motivated.

10 .**Other -** this allows for the program to create another administrator-based intervention.