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

OH, Behave!

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Tip of the Month:

Educators play a crucial role in teaching families the importance of children's social and emotional development. The Backpack Connection Series can be sent home when new skills are introduced in the classroom to keep families informed and provide ideas of ways to practice using the skills at home.

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.

How To Have a Successful Parent-Teacher Conference

From time to time teachers are asked to hold conferences or individual meetings with families or caregivers. This is something that can be very stressful for teachers. Many teachers do not have a lot of experience meeting with parents and it can be intimidating if the child has challenging behaviors. Thankfully, there are ideas and strategies that teachers can use to make this process go a little easier. As with many things in early childhood education *relationships* provide the foundation for successful conferences. When a child enters your classroom this is the time we start to build a relationship with the child and the family. You can begin by introducing yourself and asking the family questions about their child. You can give them this document to complete that will provide child specific information that can help you get to know the child. This also lets the family know that you are interested in their child. Greet the child and caregiver when a child is dropped off and picked up, this helps build connection. Ask parents about the best way for you to communicate with them, some will prefer email, text, notes or sometimes an app or software that the center uses for communication. Send updates about positive progress that their child is making. If a child is struggling with challenging behaviors, observe and document these behaviors and discuss next steps with your director. It may be necessary to meet with the family to ask questions and discuss possible solutions. Challenging behaviors can be taxing but all behaviors are a form of communication and we can work together with families to try to find solutions. When you meet with parents it is helpful to begin by telling them about some of their child's strengths before introducing their challenges. Ask parents if they see similar behaviors at home to the ones you are seeing at school. Perhaps explain that the expectations at school are different than those at home and that some children have trouble adjusting to those expectations. Tell the parents that you would like to work with them to help their child get the support they need to be successful at school. Some parents may be defensive at first and may not be very helpful or pleasant. Try not to take it personally. These are young children and for many parents this is the first time they have had discussions about challenging behaviors. This is why forming good relationships from the beginning can be really helpful. Tell parents the strategies you plan to implement to help with challenging behaviors in the classroom and ask them to help in this process by keeping lines of communication open and having frequent contact. Let parents know about the positive progress their child is making and do not give them daily lists of their child's infractions. Try to focus on the child's growth and improvements. If you are working to implement social emotional strategies and seeing little progress or you feel that parents would benefit from concrete information, there are two kinds of early childhood social emotional assessments that can be administered. The first is the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). This assessment is completed by both teachers and parents and helps to determine the level of resiliency a child possesses. The other is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for Social Emotional Health (ASQ-SE). This measures social emotional development in young children and can help determine the areas where children might need more support. When speaking with parents and families we need to try to remember that they are often concerned about their children and are unsure what to do to help if their children are exhibiting challenging behaviors. We need to do our best to help parents consider us as partners in their child's life. Focusing on positive relationships will go a long way towards strengthening communication and trust with families.



Ask The Behavior Specialist!



Question: *During my midyear conference one of my mom's asked me why her son comes home and has a tantrum. It was a hard conversation. What should I have said to her?*

Answer: During difficult conversations, gaining a deeper understanding of where parents are coming from is essential. Read below for some helpful tips:

- Start the conversation by asking open ended questions such as ,"What do you notice immediately before your son has his tantrum?" or "What concerns you most about this behavior?"
- Practice active listening and demonstrate empathy for what the parents are experiencing. Body language is one of the best ways to show you are paying attention, so be sure to sit beside them and face them and make frequent eye contact.
- It is also helpful to use the words "we" instead of "you" or "I" as much as you can. Although this may seem like a small gesture, it is an effective way to remind parents that you're on the same team and want what's best for their child.
- Advise parents to have a consistent routine when their child comes home to help them feel safe. One idea to help a child transition from school to home is to read their favorite book or share a snack together. Taking a few minutes to connect with your child will help them feel supported.
- Offer two choices so your child feels like they are in control of their situation. This will help prevent power struggles.
- Talk to them about emotions when they are calm and help them to problem-solve ideas for what they could do differently when they are angry, frustrated, scared or tired.
- Remind parents that they may need to step away to calm themselves before they can calm their child.
- Below are two resources to share with parents that may help them be successful in getting their child to calm down.

https://challengingbehavior.org/document/things-that-will-help-me-stay-calm-infants-image/

https://challengingbehavior.org/document/help-us-stay-calm-strategies-that-help-you-and-your-child-during-challenging-behavior-pdf/

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!



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…

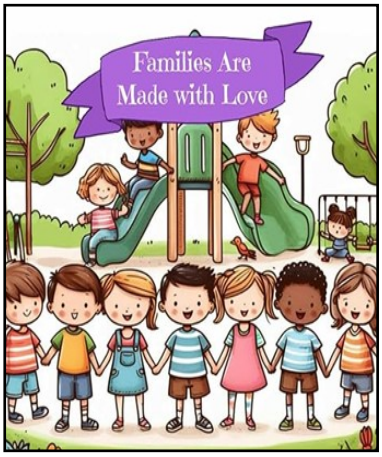
STRETCH MY BODY



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

Strong, positive relationships between families and educators support holistic learning at school, home and in the community.

Social/Emotional Book Nook



For ages 3-10,

In a world bursting with colors, love paints the most vibrant picture of all! *Families Are Made with Love* celebrates the kaleidoscope of families that fill our lives, proving that love comes in all shapes, sizes, and stories. Join two-mom dance parties, cheer with booming laughter in Dad-built Lego castles, and snuggle by the fire with wisdom spun by grandparents' twinkling eyes. From single-parent superhero adventures to sibling constellations woven with traditions from afar, this delightful book embraces every family's unique melody. Acceptance blooms brightest under love's warm sun, reminding us that understanding weaves a tapestry of strength, and love's magic binds us closer than any difference.

For more information about the Healthy Social Behaviors Project, contact your regional Behavior Specialist or:

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