Promoting Children's Success:
Building Relationships and Creating Supportive Environments

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Child Care Bureau

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Learner Objectives

- Participants will be able to describe the importance of building relationships with children, families, and colleagues.

- Participants will be able to describe the relationship between children's social emotional development and challenging behaviors.

- Participants will be able to describe how challenging behavior serves a function for children.

- Participants will be able to describe the relationship between environmental variables, children's challenging behaviors, and social emotional development.

- Participants will be able to identify strategies that can be used to (1) build positive relationships with children, families, and colleagues; (2) design environments, schedules, and routines; (3) structure transitions; (4) help children learn rules and routines; and (5) plan activities that promote engagement.

- Participants will be able to use descriptive acknowledgment and encouragement to support children's positive social behaviors.

- Participants will evaluate their work with children related to building relationships and the structure and design of their environment. They will generate strategies for addressing areas where they need to make changes or improvements.
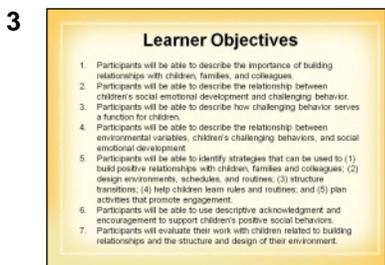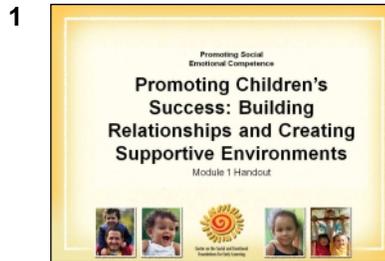
Suggested Agenda

I.	Introduction and Logistics	20 min.
II.	Examining Our Attitudes about Challenging Behaviors	20 min.
III.	Understanding the Relationship between Challenging Behavior and Social Emotional Development	10 min.
IV.	Creating Environments in which Children Can Be Successful: The Pyramid	5 min.
V.	Building Positive Relationships	40 min.
VI.	Designing the Physical Environment	30 min.
VII.	Schedules, Routines, and Transitions	50 min.
VIII.	Planning Activities that Promote Engagement; Large and Small Group Time	40 min.
IX.	Giving Directions	10 min.
X.	Teaching Children Classroom Rules	15 min.
XI.	Ongoing Monitoring and Positive Attention	15 min.
XII.	Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement	30 min.
XIII.	Pulling It All Together: Summary and Completion of Action Plan	45 min.

Materials Needed

- ☐ Agenda
- ☐ PowerPoint
- ☐ Facilitator's Guide
- ☐ Chart paper or White Board and Markers
- ☐ **Video Clips**
  - ☐ 1.1 Adult:Child Conversations
  - ☐ 1.2 Preparing for the Transition to Centers
  - ☐ 1.3 Providing Individualized Transition Cues to Gabby
  - ☐ 1.4 Circle Time
  - ☐ 1.5 Stop/Go Teaching Rules
  - ☐ 1.6 Children Demonstrating Classroom Rules
  - ☐ 1.7 Positive Attention during Large Group Activity
- ☐ **Handouts**
  - ☐ 1.1 Participants' PowerPoint Slides
  - ☐ 1.2 Hot Button Activity
  - ☐ 1.3 Reframing Activity
  - ☐ 1.4 Inventory of Practices
  - ☐ 1.5 Building Relationships with Young Children
  - ☐ 1.6 Positive Attention Data Collection Sheet
  - ☐ 1.7 List of Starters for Positive Feedback Comments
  - ☐ 1.8 Sample Certificate
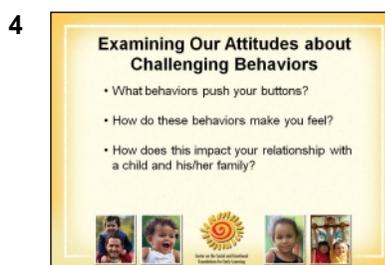- ☐ 1.SE Session Evaluation Form

I. Introduction and Logistics
(20 minutes)

1

Promoting Social
Emotional Competence

Promoting Children's Success: Building Relationships and Creating Supportive Environments

Module 1 Handout

2

Agenda

- Introduction
- Examining attitudes
- Relationship between challenging behavior and social emotional development
- Creating environments
- Building relationships
- Designing the physical environment
- Schedules, routines, & transitions
- Activities that promote engagement
- Giving directions
- Teaching classroom rules
- Ongoing monitoring and positive attention
- Using positive feedback & encouragement
- Pulling it all together

3

Learner Objectives

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6. Participants will be able to use descriptive acknowledgment and encouragement to support children's positive social behaviors.
7. Participants will evaluate their work with children related to building relationships and the structure and design of their environment.

II. Examining Our Attitudes about Challenging Behaviors
(20 minutes)

4

Examining Our Attitudes about Challenging Behaviors

- What behaviors push your buttons?
- How do these behaviors make you feel?
- How does this impact your relationship with a child and his/her family?

I. Introduction and Logistics (20 minutes)
During this time, you will want to accomplish the following things.

1. Begin with an introduction of all speakers, a brief overview of who you are, where you are from, and information about your background that is relevant to this training event. (Show **Slide 1.**)

2. Have the participants introduce themselves to each other and provide you with a brief overview of who they are. Have each table of participants introduce themselves to each other and then report back to the whole group what roles the participants at their table represent (e.g., teachers, assistants, therapists, administrators, family members, trainers) or another introductory strategy depending on the size of the group and the time available.

3. Review what you plan to accomplish for the day **(Slide 2),** and the learner objectives **(Slide 3).**

4. Distribute all handouts including PowerPoint slides, resources, and the Inventory of Practices.

5. Take care of logistical issues (e.g., breaks, bathrooms, lunch plans).

6. Encourage participants to ask questions throughout or to post them in a specially marked place.

II. Examining Our Attitudes about Challenging Behaviors (20 minutes)

A. Show **Slide 4.** The purpose of this discussion (Hot Button Activity described below) is to acknowledge how difficult it is to deal with children with challenging behavior. Explain how important it is for teachers and other caregivers to have support when they are working with children with challenging behavior. It is difficult to see beyond the challenging behavior, and it helps to have someone else who can brainstorm possible solutions.

B. Hot Button Activity

1. Have participants identify children's behaviors that "push their buttons."
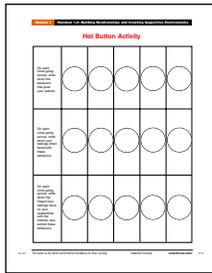
Handout 1.2

a. Distribute **Handout 1.2** (Paper with "hot buttons" on it) and have participants individually fill in the top row with their "hot button behaviors." Each participant can complete several circles.

b. Ask for volunteers to name some of the behaviors that push their buttons. Keep going until you have an extensive list on the **flip chart.** Make the point that what pushes one person's button might be very different from what pushes another individual's buttons. Past experiences with children, training experiences, and level of support for dealing with challenging behaviors are just some of those factors.

2. Ask participants to think of children who they have worked with who have these types of behaviors.

a. Have participants complete the second row of circles by listing feeling words (how they felt when they were working with that child or how they felt when people were sharing their list of behaviors that "pushed their buttons").

b. As group members share their ideas, write them on the **flip chart** paper or a blank overhead. They will most likely say things like: "It makes me frustrated." "I feel like I don't know what I am doing." "It makes me mad." "I feel like a failure." "It makes me want to get another job."

c. Ask participants to write responses to this third question on the third row of circles on their paper: How do these feelings affect your interactions with children when they engage in these behaviors? Participants might say they avoid children when they act like this or that adults interact in a not-so-pleasant way after children engage in these behaviors, etc. Make the point that it is difficult to be effective with children when you are feeling this way. It is important to plan a strategy for dealing with these situations.

d. Let's talk about how we can use this emotional signal or "feeling" as a positive thing—it tells you that you need to think of positive ways to deal with

(continued)

5

6

Handout 1.3

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the situation (e.g., focusing on the positive, asking for help, reframing).

e. Walk through **Slides 5 and 6** (Managing Personal Stress: Thought Control) reading over the upsetting thoughts and the calming thoughts. Talk about the fact that if we reframe our thoughts we can engage in more positive interactions with children and use these as opportunities for growth.

3. Have participants take each of their "hot buttons," re-read it, and consider how they can reframe the behavior to interact with the child to build a positive relationship with him or her. For example, one might consider: "If Delroy starts to whine when he can't get his shoes on or off, or his bookbag stored in his cubby, I will use these interactions as opportunities to teach him how to ask for assistance in a more appropriate way."

4. Use **Handout 1.3** (Reframing Activity)—**(Slide 7)** Review the four examples listed then have individuals list two to three of their own and restate the problems to make them more manageable. Do not generate solutions at this time.

5. Make the point that there are individual and culturally based beliefs that affect our attitudes about challenging behavior. Most children don't come to school knowing what teachers expect them to do. This could be due to the child's lack of experience in group care settings or to differences in families' and teachers' expectations of children's behavior. Studies show that parents and teachers sometimes have differences in their expectations about children's behavior, which may influence children's understanding about expectations in the classroom.

Culturally based beliefs affect our attitudes toward behavior (e.g., what skills we expect children to engage in independently at certain ages, how we expect children to interact with adults, etc.). Show **Slides 8 and 9** on developmental milestones that are the findings from research studies (cited on the slides).

6. Talk about how important it is to use a team approach when addressing social emotional competence and challenging behaviors. It is especially important in terms of providing support to the teachers and other adults who work with children with challenging behavior every day.

III. Understanding the Relationship between Challenging Behavior and Social Emotional Development (10 minutes)

A. Describe how several national reports (e.g., *Eager to Learn, Neurons to Neighborhoods, A Good Beginning,* the *Kaufmann Report on Social-Emotional Development*) have discussed the importance of social emotional development in children's readiness for and success in school. These publications have identified a number of social emotional skills that help children be successful as they transition into kindergarten, including the skills listed on **Slide 10.** Read through the list of skills:

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

1. Ask participants to explain how they know when a child doesn't have a specific skill (e.g., for example, "What do children do when they can't persist at a challenging task and they are faced with something that is hard for them?").

2. Make the point that children often use challenging behavior when they don't have more appropriate behaviors or skills to accomplish the same goal or to communicate the same message. This means that our focus has to be on "teaching children new skills" rather then "trying to get them to stop using challenging behaviors." We need to teach children what to do rather than what not to do **(Slides 11 & 12).**

III. Understanding the Relationship between Challenging Behavior and Social Emotional Development (10 minutes)

10

Key Social Emotional Skills Children Need as They Enter School

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

What do children do when they don't have each of these skills?

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- When children do not have these skills, they often exhibit challenging behaviors

- We must focus on TEACHING the skills!

12

"If a child doesn't know how to read, *we teach.*

If a child doesn't know how to swim, *we teach.*

If a child doesn't know how to multiply, *we teach.*

If a child doesn't know how to drive, *we teach.*

If a child doesn't know how to behave,

we.......... ....teach? ....punish?

Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2)

3. Make the point that this also applies to children who speak another language or whose home culture values different behaviors than the early childhood setting (e.g., home culture might value listening to adults during mealtime versus engaging in conversation while one eats). The goal is to facilitate children's learning of skills valued in the school/community in order to ensure success while at the same time honoring the values and beliefs of the home culture and language.

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> **Some Basic Assumptions**
> - Challenging behavior usually has a message- I am bored, I am sad, you hurt my feelings, I need some attention.
> - Children often use challenging behavior when they don't have the social or communication skills they need to engage in more appropriate interactions.
> - Behavior that persists over time is usually working for the child.
> - We need to focus on teaching children what to do in place of the challenging behavior.

B. Talk about some basic assumptions about challenging behavior **(Slide 13).**

1. Emphasize that challenging behavior often occurs when children don't have the appropriate language or social skills to achieve the same purpose. It is important to point out that children with challenging behavior most often do not have disabilities.

2. Talk about other variables that might contribute to children's challenging behavior such as lack of sleep, hunger, stress in the home, temperament, genetic factors, different contextual expectations (e.g., home versus early childhood center) and second language development. These should be considered when designing individualized plans for children.

3. Explain that when children use challenging behaviors over time, those behaviors are working for them. Use an example such as the child who grabs toys from another child rather than asking to play. If the child usually ends up with the toy after grabbing it, then he will continue to grab because grabbing is working for him.

4. Point out that there is a lot we can do to prevent challenging behavior, such as having a positive relationship with the child, having schedules and routines that support the child, having activities that are engaging, and teaching a child the skills he/she needs to be successful. These topics are what the rest of this day of training will focus on.

IV. Creating Environments in which Children Can Be Successful: The Pyramid
(5 minutes)

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Promote Children's Success

- Create an environment where EVERY child feels good about coming to school.
- Design an environment that promotes child engagement.
- Focus on teaching children what To Do!
  - Teach expectations and routines.
  - Teach skills that children can use in place of challenging behaviors.

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Individualized
Intensive
Interventions

Social Emotional
Teaching Strategies

Designing Supportive Environments

Building Positive Relationships

IV. Creating Environments in which Children Can Be Successful: The Pyramid (5 minutes)

A. Show **Slide 14.** As we just talked about, there are a variety of things we can do to prevent challenging behaviors and to teach children appropriate behaviors. As adults, we must first focus on prevention before we focus on changing children's inappropriate behaviors. We must focus on:

1. Ensuring that the classroom is a place children want to be

2. Designing environments that promote engagement

3. Teaching children the skills they need to be successful

B. One way we can look at this is through the following model **(Slide 15).** This pyramid addresses each of the components that we will be talking about in each of the training modules. Talk about how this model is consistent with developmentally appropriate practices in that it includes key practices for promoting social emotional development and only focuses on more intensive interventions for those children with the most persistent challenging behavior. The focus is on promotion and prevention (the bottom three levels of the pyramid) and moving to more intensive individualized interventions only when the bottom of the pyramid is in place and children continue to engage in challenging behavior.

1. Relationships form the foundation of the pyramid and are necessary for everything else we do.

2. Well-designed environments support children's appropriate behaviors and make it less likely that children will need to engage in challenging behavior. In addition, environments can be designed to teach children expectations and promote their engagement and interactions.

3. Talk about the importance of teaching children the skills that they need so they don't have to use challenging behavior.

4. When we do all of this, children are less likely to engage in challenging behavior. Thus, we are less likely to need to design intensive, individualized interventions. The success of individualized interventions depends on the extent to which the other levels of the pyramid have been addressed.

V. Building Positive Relationships (40 minutes)

A. Show **Slides 16 and 17.** The relationships we build with children, families, and colleagues are at the foundation of everything we do with children. We know about the importance of relationships in terms of children's development and success in school. It is important to build these relationships with all children as a context for supporting their social emotional development and preventing challenging behavior. It will be easier to address challenging behavior if we already have a relationship with the child.

1. Activity. Show **Video Clip 1.1**: Adult Child Conversations.

   Introduce the video as follows: This video shows one teacher engaged in conversation with a child as they play. To play video, double click on the photographs on the slide. To advance to the next slide, click the down arrow on your keypad.

   Note to Presenter: the videos in these modules are designed to provide examples that can be used to describe, reflect, and refine teachers' practices. They are not intended to be the best way, the only way, or the right way to do something.

   What things does the teacher do to build relationships with children? **(Slide 18)**

   • Participants might comment on how the teacher talked about things the little girl does at the after-school program and at home, participated in play as a partner, sat at the children's level, was a responsive listener, etc.

   • Read the Uri Bronfenbrenner quote **(Slide 19).**

   • Introduce the Connected/Disconnected Activity **(Slide 20).**

V. Building Positive Relationships
(40 minutes)

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Building Relationships

- Helps each child feel accepted in the group
- Assists children in learning to communicate and get along with others
- Encourages feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults
- Provides a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group

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Building Relationships with Children

Why is it important?

1. The relationships that we build with children, families, and colleagues are at the foundation of everything we do. It is important to build these relationships early on rather than waiting until there is a problem.
2. Children learn and develop in the context of relationships that are responsive, consistent, and nurturing.
3. Children with the most challenging behaviors especially need these relationships, and yet their behaviors often prevent them from benefiting from those relationships.
4. Adults' time and attention are very important to children, and we need to be sure that we are giving them that time and attention at times other than when they are engaging in challenging behavior.
5. Parents and other colleagues (such as mental health providers and therapists) are critical partners in building children's social emotional competence. We should all work together to ensure children's success and prevent challenging behavior.

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Video 1.1: Adult Child Conversations
What are some things that this teacher does to build positive relationships with children

clip 1.1

(video clip 1.1)

19

"Every child needs one person who is crazy about him."
Uri Bronfenbrenner

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Activity: Connections with Children
CONNECTED   DISCONNECTED

21

22

23

24

2. Use the graphic for connected/disconnected. Show the slide and write responses on **chart paper.** Ask the group to think about when teachers are disconnected from children...What would they see in the classroom? What would it look like? Write the ideas on chart paper. Focus on the graphic for connected... What does it look like when teachers have good connections with children? What do you see? What is happening? Write the ideas on chart paper. Make the point that this is what we are seeking to put in place to build relationships with children.

We should also examine the relationships between adults (including family members) on the team **(Slide 21).** What does it look like if adults are disconnected in a classroom or in a program? Write ideas on **chart paper.** What about when adults work together well and are really connected. How can you tell?
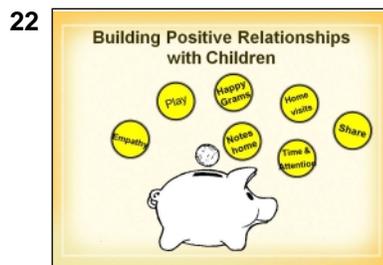
3. Then move into figuring out what we should do to build these relationships **(Slide 22).** How do we build relationships with children? Present the metaphor, adopted from the work of Carolyn Webster-Stratton, of a "piggy bank" to illustrate "making deposits into children's emotional banks" as a way of building positive relationships (Webster-Stratton, 1999).

- Instead of a piggy bank, other metaphors might be a garden (growing) or basket (filling). Ask participants to generate other possible metaphors. We make deposits when we do things to build relationships while we make withdrawals when we engage in behaviors that are detrimental to relationship building.

- Recap some of the strategies observed in the video, emphasizing the power of play in building positive relationships (e.g., talk about things children do at home or in other settings during play, actively engage in children's play, participate as a play partner, sit at children's level, joke and laugh with children, spend time with children doing what they love to do).
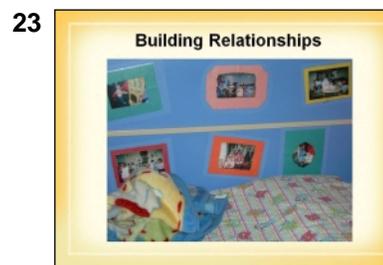
- Show **Slides 23 and 24** of how adults can create relationships with children by bridging home to school through the use of photos **(Slide 23)** and celebrating important events in children's lives **(Slide 24).**
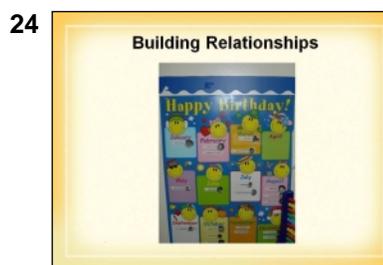
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Activity- Building Relationships

- How do you build positive relationships with:
  - Children?
  - Families?
  - Colleagues?
- Brainstorm a list of things you could do to build or strengthen relationships with children, families, or other colleagues
- Share with the large group
- Identify 2-3 things you are going to do to build stronger relationships with children, families, and colleagues. Note these on *The Inventory of Practices* (p. 16, Action Plan)

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Ideas for Making Deposits

- Greet every child at the door by name.
- Post children's work around the room.
- Have a "star" of the week who brings in special things from home and gets to share them during circle time.
- Call a child's parent in front of them to say what a great day she is having or send home positive notes.
- Call a child after a difficult day and say, "I'm sorry we had a tough day today. I know tomorrow is going to be better!"
- Give hugs, high fives and thumbs up accomplishing tasks.

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- When a child misses school tell him how much he was missed.
- Write on a t-shirt all the special things about a given child and let him/her wear it.
- Find time to read to individual children or a few children at a time.
- Acknowledge children's efforts.
- Find out what a child's favorite book is and read it to the whole class.
- Give compliments liberally.
- Play with children, follow their lead.
- Let children make "All About Me" books and share them at Circle Time.

B. Group Activity: Strategies for Building Relationships with Children, Families, and Colleagues **(Slide 25)**

1. Have participants work with people at their table or select a partner, depending on the size of the group. Give each group markers and **chart paper.**

2. Assign each group one of the following: (a) children, (b) families, or (c) colleagues.

3. The small groups should brainstorm a list of things they can do to build relationships with children, families, or other colleagues.

4. Give participants about 10 minutes to complete this task.

5. Teams should report back to the large group with examples. Other participants can be encouraged to add to the list.

6. After the groups have reported back, ask them to take 5 more minutes in their small group to answer the following question: "What specific strategies might you use to build a relationship with that one child, family, or colleague who is most challenging to you or who most pushes your buttons?"

7. Have teams report back.

8. Included below are some examples of the types of things that you might highlight or use to prompt participants to think more broadly about how to build relationships with children (**Slides 26 and 27** have some ideas for relationship building with children):

   • Pay attention to each individual child.

   • Joke and laugh with children.

   • Know what interests each child and talk to the child about that interest.

   • Respect each child's approach to situations and people.

   • Talk to the child seriously when the topic is serious or important to the child.

   • Ask children to tell you what makes them happy and sad, and respect their feelings.

   • Show children that you are happy they are there.

- Learn and remember personal information about children (e.g., best friend's name, pet's name, type of pets, sibling, activities they do outside of school), and use this information in your conversations with them.

- Give children genuine choices, and assist them in following through with their choices.

- Show respect for children's cultural, linguistic, and religious beliefs.

- Listen to children when they speak to you, and respond appropriately to their questions.

- Spend time with children doing what they love to do.

- Smile at children.

- Respond to children consistently.

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Building Relationships
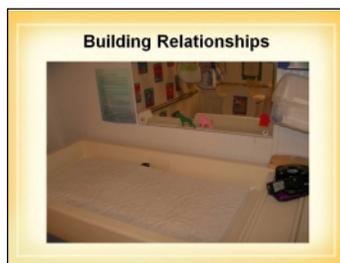
Slide 28 shows a mirror near the changing table—a way to build relationships with children during diaper changing.

Here are some ideas for building relationships with families:

- Keep lines of communication open between program and families (e.g., notes, orientation, or phone calls).

- Support and encourage parental involvement in activities.

- Learn from family members about their children, and home and family life.

- Share resources with parents about how to support the child's social emotional development.

- Share positive things the child did at the program (e.g., Happy grams).

- Conduct meetings with parents in an environment and time convenient for them.

- Assure parents about confidentiality and privacy rights.

- Implement activities that bring families together.

- Show respect to parents by acknowledging the good things that they are doing with their child.

- Ask parents to share their unique resources with your program (e.g., talents, access to other resources).

Here are some ideas for building relationships with colleagues:

- Encourage teamwork

- Provide support

- Build trust among colleagues

- Be honest and kind to one another

- Respect co-workers' talents and abilities

- Acknowledge accomplishments

- Understand and respect each other's backgrounds

- Develop a shared vision, goals, and mission

- Have a sense of humor

- Build cooperation

Refer participants to the Inventory of Practices (section on Developing Meaningful Relationships): **Handout 1.4**.

C. Action Planning. Give each team another 10 minutes to pick one or two things that they are going to do when they get back to their classroom to improve their relationships with all children or with a particular child, family, or colleague, or things that they will do to help others improve their relationships with the children, family, and colleagues.
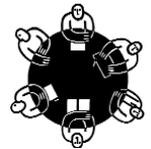
1. Participants can use the Inventory of Practices and Action Planning Form to make notes about changes they are going to make or facilitate in their job settings.

2. Encourage participants to consider resources or supports they might need to make these changes.

3. If time allows, have one or two people share with the group what changes they are going to make.

D. At this point, you should highlight the importance of play as a context for building relationships with children. Explain that play gives the adult an opportunity to follow the child's lead, comment on what the child is doing, and build positive interactions.

1. Talk about how easy it is to spend most of our time giving directions and correcting behavior, and point out that play provides a context for focusing on more positive behaviors and interactions and promoting children's social skills and emotional development.

Handout 1.4

Handout 1.5

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VI. Designing the Physical Environment (30 Minutes)

Refer participants to **Handout 1.5** (Building Positive Relationships with Young Children by Joseph & Strain).

E. Show **Slide 29.** Explain that the next things you will be talking about are related to creating supportive environments.

Although they may not be new concepts to people, explain that participants should be thinking about these issues in terms of how they relate to preventing challenging behavior and promoting social emotional development. Remember, you are looking at these through a different lens—the social emotional competence and challenging behavior lens.

TIP: For some groups, this material will be a review of information they already know. If you know your audience is highly skilled, consider presenting this in an alternative way. Rather than walking through each slide, do an activity in which you encourage participants to think about how each practice is related to promoting social behavior or preventing challenging behavior. Divide the participants into small groups (four-six people). Assign each group a set of practices (e.g., designing learning centers, schedules, and routines). Have them discuss how those practices support children's social emotional development and prevent challenging behavior. Have them identify practical examples of how they could implement these practices specifically to focus on social behavior (e.g., to prevent challenging behavior during transitions, use a buddy system where less-skilled peers are paired with highly skilled peers).

VI. Designing the Physical Environment (30 Minutes)

In this section, we cover many topics. While they are all important, you will need to determine how much time to spend on each topic based on the needs and skills of your audience.

A. When we consider the design of the physical environment, we are trying to do two things: promote engagement and prevent challenging behavior.

- We will talk about two sets of strategies related to the physical design of the environment: traffic patterns and designing learning centers.

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Classroom Arrangement and Design: Traffic Patterns

- Minimize large open spaces
- Minimize obstacles and other hazards
- Consider the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities

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Classroom Arrangement and Design: Learning Centers

Physical Design
- Clear boundaries
- Visibility
- Visual prompts when centers are not an option
- Adequate number of centers
- Size and location of centers
- Number of children in centers
- Organization of materials
- Preparation of centers

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Classroom Arrangement and Design: Learning Centers

Create meaningful and engaging learning centers
- Relevant to children's needs, interests, and lives
- Highly engaging and interesting
- Variety of materials in each center
- Changed and rotated on a regular basis

B. Show **Slides 30 and 31.** Review the following major issues about traffic patterns:

1. Minimize large open spaces in which children can run, etc.

2. Minimize obstacles.

3. Consider environmental arrangement as it applies to children with physical or sensory (e.g., blindness) disabilities.
   - Show photo slide of how footprints and "fence" help organize the physical environment.

C. Then talk about how a lot of strategies related to learning centers will increase the likelihood of children being engaged and decrease the likelihood of challenging behaviors occurring. Talk about two aspects of planning learning centers—the physical design and the actual content of the materials and activities that occur in each center.

D. Show **Slides 32 and 33.** Review the following major issues about the physical design of learning centers:

1. Have clear boundaries so that children know where the center begins/ends, and so that children are not crowded together.

2. Make sure that all children are visible to adults and that adults are visible to children.

3. When learning centers are closed for some reason, indicate that the centers are closed by using visual prompts such as sheets or blankets, circles with a slash through them, etc.

4. Have enough centers for the number of children in your care and enough materials within the centers so that children are engaged and not continually arguing over materials.

5. Consider the size of centers and the location of centers. For example, it is best to avoid having a center that is likely to have a high level of activity in it (e.g., block center, dramatic play) located close to a center where the teacher wants quieter activities (e.g., listening centers, computer, etc.) to occur.

6. Use developmentally appropriate and creative ways to limit the number of children in centers if this is necessary (e.g., laminated cards containing children's names that can be moved into pockets at the center as opposed to a sign saying "2 children only").

7. Organize materials and keep them in appropriate places, taking into consideration children's development of independence skills.

8. Have centers organized and ready to go when children arrive.

E. Show **Slide 34:** Creating Meaningful and Engaging Learning Areas. Learning centers need to be meaningful, engaging, and interesting to children.

34

Create Meaningful and Engaging Learning Areas
• Stand in center of the room
  – Is there a clear entry to each center?
  – Is each center inviting?
  – Are there enough materials (3 units of play per child allowed in center)?
  – Is there a system in place for entering and exiting centers?
  – Are centers and materials/shelves labeled?
  – Is there a rotation of materials?
  – Are materials highly engaging?
  – Are the activities relevant to children's needs, interests and lives?

1. Materials within centers need to be meaningful and relevant to children's needs, interests, and lives (e.g., within the dramatic play area, materials that are culturally appropriate should be available; the pictures on puzzles and in the classroom library should reflect the diversity within your community, etc.). There should be culturally meaningful activities and materials (e.g., within the typical water table, you can alternate materials that have a similar consistency such as beans, rice, pasta, and potatoes). Also, consider using labels in multiple languages around the classroom.

2. Centers need to be highly engaging and interesting to children. Build on children's interests by including materials and activities that children enjoy or express an interest in. If children all tend to stay in one or two centers, that would suggest that the other centers are not engaging or interesting to children.

3. Provide a variety of materials in each center. For example, related books can be put in every center (e.g., books on animals can be placed in the reading center; magazines can be placed in the dramatic play area that is designed as a veterinarian's office; a book about the post office can be placed in the writing center). Writing utensils and paper also can

be in a variety of centers (e.g., in the dramatic play area, the writing center, or near the computers). Be creative.

4. Change the materials or themes in centers on a regular basis. The post office set up in the dramatic play area might be interesting and engaging at the beginning of the year but will be old and uninteresting if it is still there in the spring. Listen to what children are talking about. Create centers that build on their interests. Rotate materials within a center so that the same materials are not out all year. Let children help you choose the materials.

- Show **Slide 35** of two writing centers.
- Discuss the strengths and concerns of each center arrangement. Do you imagine children selecting one center versus another—why?
- If you had a writing center in your classroom, how would you design it given what we have talked about so far?
- Show **Slide 36**—group discussion of how this circle area could be improved.
- Show **Slide 37**—group discussion of this circle time arrangement.

F. Show **Slide 38:** Classroom Arrangement and Design Activity
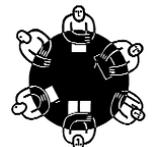
1. With a partner, sketch a classroom or other environment/setting.

2. Redraw the environment, and then share major changes with other participants at the table.

3. Ask the participants to think of one child who has significant challenging behavior. What might need to be done to the environment to support that child?

4. For additional ideas, refer participants to the Inventory of Practices.

VII. Schedules, Routines, and Transitions (50 minutes)

A. **Slide 39.** Talk about how schedules should be designed to promote child engagement. As we have talked about earlier, when children are engaged with a material, a peer, or an adult, they are less likely to be engaged in challenging behavior. Some of the things that will keep them engaged are:

35

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VII. Schedules, Routines, and Transitions
(50 minutes)

39

1. Balancing the activities so there is a mix of small group and large group activities and a mix of teacher-directed and child-directed activities.

2. Teaching children the routine: We can't expect children to follow the routine if we don't teach it to them. Schedules and routines provide some security and a sense of what comes next; children are able to anticipate what will happen, and thus feel more secure. This is especially important for children whose primary language differs from that spoken in the classroom.

B. Talk about different ways you can teach children to follow routines or schedules.

1. Teach it during circle using visual cues that all children understand.

2. Reinforce children as they go through the schedule of the day.

3. Provide individual instruction to children who need more assistance, and use individualized picture cues.

4. Be consistent with your schedule and routines. Children will be more likely to learn to follow a schedule if it is implemented consistently.

5. Post your schedule visually, and refer to it frequently throughout the day so children learn what will happen next.

6. When changes are necessary, prepare children for those changes. You can prepare children by making announcements at opening circle, using visual prompts on a posted schedule indicating a change (e.g., a stop sign on top of an activity that is not going to happen as planned), and reminding children about the changes as often as possible.

   • For some children with disabilities (e.g., autism), changes in the schedule or routine can be a trigger for challenging behaviors.

Show **Slides 40-48** of various types of schedules (e.g., object, photograph, individual, activity)
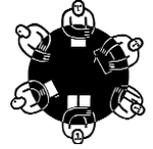
49

Activity
Using Visual Schedules
- You say it's time for circle. One little boy roams away from circle. When you try to guide him to circle, he drops to the ground and will not budge.
  - How can you use your visual schedule to teach?

50

Activity
Using Visual Schedules
- You announce that it's time for centers and a girl runs to go out the door yelling "No! Play out!"
  - How can you use your visual schedule to teach?
  - What else might you be able to use to teach?

51

Activity
Using Visual Schedules
- A child goes to play with her favorite train. When you go over to her and tell her it's time for snack she starts screaming and throwing train pieces.
  - How can you use your visual schedule to teach?
  - What else might you be able to do/use to teach?

52

Activity
Using Visual Schedules
- A new little boy arrives in your classroom and he is very scared. When Mommy says bye, he screams, cries, pulls on her leg, and tries to climb up Mommy's body.
  - How can you use your visual schedule to teach?

53

Activity
Using Visual Schedules
- Today you have scheduled water play outside. All of the children are excited and have been anticipating the outside fun all week. But we have been given a tornado warning and it's raining, so there will be no outside fun today.
  - How will you teach using your visual schedule to prevent challenging behavior?

54

Transitions
Plan for transitions.
- Minimize the number of transitions that children have during the day.
- Minimize the length of time children spend waiting with nothing to do.
- Prepare children for transitions by providing a warning.
- Structure the transitions so that children have something to do while they wait.
- Teach children the expectations related to transitions.
- Individualize supports and cues.

55

(video clip 1.2)

Video 1.2: Transitions to Centers

Group Activity: As a large group, read **Slides 49-53** and discuss solutions for each vignette.

C. Show **Slide 54.** Another issue that is closely related to schedules and routines is transition. Challenging behaviors often occur during transitions, especially when all children are expected to do the same thing at the same time and then end up waiting with nothing to do. We know from research that children often spend a significant proportion of their preschool day making transitions between activities. So, our goal should be to:

1. Minimize the number of transitions that children have during the day.

2. Plan transitions so that there is a minimal amount of time spent in transition and that children are highly engaged during the transition.

3. Give children a warning before a transition occurs.

4. Minimize those transitions during which every child has to do the same thing at the same time (Does every child have to go to the bathroom at the same time? Could snack be part of center time?). Structure the transition so that children have something to do while they are waiting (e.g., finger plays, songs, guessing games). Provide some children with chores, and give children helping roles during transitions (e.g., handing out the paper towels, holding the door, helping a friend).

5. Teach children about the expectations for transitions. This instruction can occur during a group time and should be reinforced throughout the day.

Show **Video Clip 1.2** of Transitions to Centers **(Slide 55)**. Discuss what was observed.

6. Individualize the instruction and cues provided to children. Some children will make the transition with a minimal amount of support, while others may need a picture schedule, verbal prompt, adult assistance, or some other type of cue.

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56 — Video 1.3: Providing Individualized Transition Cues to Gabby
(video clip 1.3) or

57 — Transition with Visual and Timer

58 — Transition with Visual

59 — Transition with Choice

60 — Transition with Visual Choice

61 — Transition with Center Necklaces

62 — Teaching Children Expectations

63 — Activity Analysis Using Clip Art
Washing Hands
1 Wet hands 2 Get soap 3 Wash hands 4 Dry hands 5 Throw away.

64 — Individual Schedule
First   Then
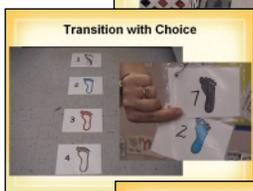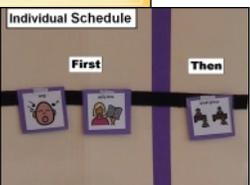
Show **Video Clip 1.3** of Providing Individualized Transition Cues to Gabby **(Slide 56)**. Discuss what was observed. What did the teacher do to assist Gabby in changing locations? What other strategies can you use to assist students like Gabby in changing locations?

D. It is important to provide visual cues and reminders for young children—especially young children with special needs and children for whom English is their second language. Visual cues and reminders are useful to help children learn the routines of the classroom, to help them learn the expectations or "classroom rules," to help children anticipate making transitions between activities, and to assist children in knowing what to do during these transitions.

E. As adults, we use visual cues constantly. For example, (1) we look at our watches or the clock to see when a boring meeting will end or when it is time for lunch; (2) when we go into a new building, we look at signs to find places we need to go such as the elevator, restroom, or location of a conference room; and (3) when we go to vote, we look at the visual directions provided to see how to use the voting machine (and we pray that it will work!).

F. Show **Slides 57-61.** Show multiple examples of visual reminders for transitions (e.g., preparing Brendan using a timer; transitions with visuals, choices, and necklaces).

- You can also bring examples of actual posters, signs, etc., that teachers use in their classrooms.

- Ask participants for suggestions of visual supports or reminders that they have used in their own setting.

Show **Slides 62-64;** highlighting how important it is to teach children the expectations for transitions.

VII. Planning Activities that Promote Engagement; Large and Small Group Time (40 minutes)

As we talked about above, one of the keys to preventing challenging behavior is to ensure that children are engaged with activities, peers, or adults. We have already talked about how to build relationships with children on an individual basis. Adults should also plan activities in ways that will promote engagement. There are two keys to this: (1) use both small and large group activities, and (2) ensure that activities are designed and adapted so that all children can participate in a meaningful way.

65

Large Group Activities
- Planning the activity
  - Consider the length
  - Be clear about the purpose and goals of the activities
  - Use circle time to teach new things
- Implementing the activity
  - Provide opportunities for all children to be actively involved
  - Assign jobs to children
  - Vary your speech and intonation patterns
  - Have children lead activities
  - Pay attention to children's behavior

A. Large Group Activities. One of the common problems that teachers have is challenging behavior during large group activities. It is difficult to keep all children interested throughout circle time. Give participants some suggestions about how they can increase the likelihood that all children will be engaged **(Slide 65).** This can be talked about in two parts.

1. Planning the activity

   a. Consider the length of time needed for circle time relative to the children's ages and abilities and to the types of activities that will occur during the large group time.

   b. Have a purpose and be clear about what it is you want children to learn during this time.

   c. Don't do exactly the same thing every day. For example, you can teach concepts during large group in a variety of ways (e.g., puppets, role play, stories, songs, visual aids, discussion). Vary these activities from day to day. You might also do repeated reading of the same story for several days but use puppets on the first day, a flannel board on the second day, and have children role play the story on the third day.

   d. Don't just do circle to do circle, but use it as a time to teach new concepts. This is an especially good time to teach social skills and to support children's emotional development. Explain that we will be talking about this point later.

2. Implementing the activity

   a. Make sure all children have opportunities to be involved (e.g., everyone holds a character from the story, children do things with partners).

   b. Assign jobs for children who have a particularly difficult time during circle (e.g., book holder, page turner).

   c. Vary the way you talk and the intonation of your voice.

   d. Have children help lead activities.

   e. Pay attention to children's appropriate behavior, as well as the function of their behavior; remember that if they are wiggling and wandering away, the activity is probably not interesting to them.

B. Show **Slide 66:** Activity. Show two video segments of Circle Time **(Video Clip 1.4)**.
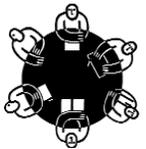
   1. Have participants discuss with other participants at their table the following questions after they watch the videotaped segments **(Slide 67)**. Are the children engaged? What tells you that they are or are not engaged? Describe what the teacher is doing currently and what she might do to support the children's engagement in the activity. What other strategies could the teacher do to keep the children even more engaged in either video clip?

   2. Point out things such as the teacher sitting in a chair "above" the children rather than on their level, no props (e.g., photos, manipulatives, etc.) are used that could help engage children, etc.

C. Show **Slide 68:** Small Group Activities. Discuss the importance of using small group activities both in terms of giving more individualized time to children and as an opportunity for skill building. Then talk about how to implement small group activities effectively.

   1. Talk about being clear about the purpose and outcomes of the activity. What is it you want children to learn, and are you structuring the activity so that it

66

(video clip 1.4)

or

67

68

meets the needs of all of the children involved? Although small group activities are often more teacher directed, they do not have to be didactic. They can involve games, stories, discussion, projects, etc.

2. Small groups also provide a great opportunity to use peers as models. One peer can model a skill or behavior you are trying to teach another child.

3. It is important to ensure that all children participate in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their goals and needs.

4. Provide descriptive feedback related to appropriate behavior to children throughout the activity.

D. Show **Slide 69:** Schedule/Routines/Transition Activity. If time allows, try to implement this activity as a way to reinforce the main concepts learned to this point.

69

Schedule/Routine/Transition Activity

- Divide into groups of people who currently work together.
- Write down a schedule from one of the participant's classrooms.
- Consider the things we have just talked about. What changes could you make in what you are currently doing that might increase engagement and prevent challenging behaviors?
- Share your major changes with others at your table and brainstorm possible solutions.

1. Have each table write on a piece of **chart paper** a schedule for a preschool classroom (a schedule from one of the participant's classrooms or program).

2. Then have all participants discuss what changes might need to be made in the schedule to either increase engagement or prevent challenging behaviors of all children. Have them also think about specific adaptations that might be needed for the children with the most challenging behavior.

3. Encourage them to consider the following questions: (1) Are there too many large group activities? (2) Is there a balance of large and small group activities? (3) Are there too many transitions? (4) Could some transitions be eliminated or the length decreased? (5) Could there be fewer whole group transitions? (6) Is the length of activities appropriate (neither too long nor too short)?

4. Brainstorm ideas for change. Encourage participants to complete the Action Plan (Inventory of Practices) related to strategies that they might focus on when they get back to their programs.

5. If time permits, have a few people share their ideas for change with the large group.

IX. Giving Directions (10 minutes)

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Research has shown that preschool children have high rates of not following teacher directions. While this might be because of the child's characteristics, it might also be because of the way teachers give directions. Directions that are stated negatively ("why haven't you put up the toys") or directions that are stated as questions ("can you help me put up the toys?") may confuse children or make them less likely to follow the direction. Here are some strategies that can be used to increase the likelihood that children will follow teacher directions **(Slide 70).**

70

Giving Directions

- Make sure you have the children's attention before you give the direction.
- Minimize the number of directions given to children.
- Individualize the way directions are given.
- Give clear directions.

1. **Make sure you have the child's attention before you give the direction.** Many times, the child may not even hear the direction or realize the direction is being given to him. The teacher can begin a direction to the whole class by saying, "I need everyone to listen" or the teacher can begin a direction to an individual child by tapping him on the shoulder or saying his name.

2. **Minimize the number of directions given to children.** Research shows that teachers give a very high number of directions to children, many of which teachers they do not follow through with. It is important to give only directions that you want the child to comply with, give directions in a positive way that tells the child specifically what to do, and give the child time to respond before giving another direction. Also, it is important to follow through if the child does not follow the direction.

3. **Individualize the way directions are given.** Some children may respond well to verbal direction, while others may need physical prompts or pictorial prompts to follow the direction.

4. **Give clear directions.** Tell the child exactly what you want her to do. Avoid directions that are vague such as "be careful" or "settle down." These directions could be substituted with "hold on to the railing" or "sit quietly."

71

Giving Directions

- Give directions that are positive.
- Give children the opportunity to respond to a direction.
- When appropriate, give the child choices and options for following directions.
- Follow through with positive acknowledgment of children's behavior.

5. Show **Slide 71.** **Give directions that are positive.** Maintain a positive tone when you give directions.

6. **Give children the opportunity to respond to a direction.** Avoid giving multiple directions at one time without giving the child a chance to respond and without acknowledging the child for responding.

7. **When appropriate, give the child choices and options for following directions.** Sometimes it is important that children follow a direction in a specific way; but other times, it is ok to give the child some options. For example, during a transition time, the teacher might say "you need to sit quietly, you can get either a book or you can draw a picture."

8. **Follow through with positive acknowledgment of children's behavior.** It is important that children understand when they are following directions.

X. Teaching Children Classroom Rules
(15 minutes)

X. Teaching Children Classroom Rules
(15 minutes)

A. Show **Slide 72.** Emphasize that preschool settings need to have a few simple rules.

72

General Guidelines About Rules

- Have a few simple classroom rules.
- Involve the children in developing the rules.
- Post the rules visually.
- Teach the rules systematically.
- Reinforce the rules at high rates initially and at lower rates throughout the year.

1. Ask participants why having rules is important.

2. Describe how there are general guidelines about rules, and ask participants to share what they think these guidelines are (e.g., stated positively, fewer than five, developmentally appropriate, posted visually, clear and concise).

3. Ask participants why it is a good idea to have children involved in developing rules (e.g., they will understand them better, provides ownership, builds a learning opportunity, etc.).

73

Involving Children in Developing the Rules

- Have children help generate the rules.
- Name the rule and have a child demonstrate the rule.
- Name the rule and have the children identify the visuals that might go on a poster.
- Have children help decorate a rules poster.

B. Show **Slide 73.** Present some ways to have children involved in developing the rules. For example,

1. Children can be involved in generating classroom rules (it will be important that teachers have had some time to reinforce at high rates those behaviors they would like to see so that children have an idea of what the classroom expectations are).

74

Circle Time Rules

75

Program-wide Rules

Together We Can

76

Classroom Rules

77

Rules

Should Address
- Noise level
- Movement inside
- Interactions with property
- Interactions with adults
- Interactions with peers

78

or

(video clip 1.5)

Video 1.5: Stop/Go Teaching Rules

clip 1.5

79

Rules Activity

- Develop a list of 3-5 rules you use or would use in a classroom.
- Discuss these rules with others at the table.
- Brainstorm fun and creative ways for teaching the rules.

2. Children can help decide what visuals to put on posters around the room to help remind themselves of classroom rules.

3. Children can decorate a rules poster.

4. Show **Slides 74-76** of rules.

C. Discuss what general behaviors or topics rules should address (e.g., noise level; movement; interactions with adults, children, and materials) **(Slide 77).**

1. Talk about how you can't expect children to follow the rules without teaching them.
2. Explain how rules can be taught during circle time and reinforced in ongoing contexts.
3. As you are teaching rules, you can connect them to children's ongoing behavior (e.g., "Who has been a super friend; tell me what you did?" "Yes, I saw Corinne sharing the glue with Ed at the art table").

Slide 78. Video Clip 1.5: Stop/Go Teaching Rules.

Introduce this segment by telling participants that the segment shows a group activity in which children were beginning to learn the classroom rules or expectations. After viewing the segment, ask participants if the rules were stated positively and are developmentally appropriate; (Did they meet the guidelines just discussed? What are the strengths of this group activity? How might you adapt an activity like this for your particular needs? How does this activity help children learn rules? What other materials can you use? How can you modify this activity to support students with disabilities? Second-language learners?)

D. Show **Slide 79:** Rules Activity.

1. Have small groups work to develop a list of three to five rules for their setting.

2. If they have rules already, have them list them and check them against the criteria.

3. Ask participants to brainstorm some fun ways they can remind and reinforce the rules in the setting. List these on flip **chart paper.**

80

Fun Ways to Reinforce the Rules

- Rules Bingo!
- Make a big book about school rules
- Homework– what are your rules at home?
- Play "rule charades"

4. Present additional ideas to reinforce classroom rules **(Slide 80).**

   a. **Rules Bingo:** Put symbols of rules on bingo cards and have children play bingo.

   b. **Big Book of School Rules:** Using large pieces of paper, children can help make pictures and pages about each rule, laminate the pages, and turn the pages into a big book.

   c. **Home Rules:** Children draw a picture of their home and take it home with them with some blank circles. Children and parents write their home rules on the circles, tape them to the picture of their home, and send it back to school.

   d. **Rules Charades:** Have a child model a rule, and have the other children guess what rule they are modeling.

81

Video 1.6: Children Demonstrating Classroom Rules

clip 1.6

or

(video clip 1.6)

Slide 81. Video Clip 1.6: Children Demonstrating Classroom Rules.

Introduce the video by telling participants that this segment shows a larger group activity in which children are demonstrating the classroom rules. As you watch it, consider: How did this teacher involve the children in learning the classroom rules? What are some strengths of this activity? Ideas for adapting it? How would you set up this activity in the classroom? How can you enhance this activity? What other materials can you use? How can you modify this activity to support students with disabilities? Second-language learners?

82

Playground Rules
- Look
- Wait Your Turn
- Nice Hands
- Listen
- Feet First
- Climb By Teacher

Show **Slide 82** of school-wide playground rules (posted on all playgrounds throughout this early childhood education program).

XI. Ongoing Monitoring and Positive Attention
(15 minutes)

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(15 minutes)

83

Ongoing Monitoring and Positive Attention

- Give children attention when they are engaging in appropriate behaviors.

- Monitor our behavior to ensure that we are spending more time using positive descriptive language and less time giving directions or correcting inappropriate behavior.

A. Show **Slide 83.** This slide presents the idea of "catching children being good." There are two important issues here.

   1. Give children attention (e.g., verbal, nonverbal) when they are engaging in appropriate behaviors. Too often, we leave children alone when they are playing

quietly or when things are going along smoothly in our early childhood settings.

Provide feedback for the effort, thinking, and problem solving (e.g., What a great idea! Brilliant thinking in figuring that out!) versus emphasizing quality of work (e.g., You did a dynamite job in coloring that entire picture!). Balance positive feedback and encouragement with engaging children in authentic conversations. You do not want to engage in a monologue of continual feedback.

2. Adults need to monitor their own behavior to make sure they are spending more time using positive, descriptive language and less time giving directions or correcting inappropriate behavior.

B. Show **Slide 84:** Activity.

1. Use the handout (**Positive Attention Handout 1.6**) for this activity. **Watch Video Clip 1.7 Slide 85.** (Positive Attention) of large group activity, and count the number of times the teacher says positive things or uses positive nonverbal behaviors such as high fives, pats on the back, and handshakes.

   a. Participants should be encouraged to jot down specific things that the teacher says or does (verbal and nonverbal).

   b. After watching the video, engage participants in a large group discussion regarding what behaviors they saw and heard the teacher use. Have participants discuss different ways they can provide positive attention.

   c. Occasionally participants will remark that they would not do this activity because they do not have snow in their geographic location. Prompt them to consider if they would not teach about farm animals in an urban school, about oceans in the Midwest, etc.

2. Continue the discussion by asking participants for suggestions on how to keep teachers focused on the positive throughout the day. Examples might include having visual cues posted in the room as reminders (e.g., smiley faces, key words that trigger you to remember to acknowledge positive behavior).

84

Positive Attention Activity

Handout 1.6

85

Video 1.7: Positive Attention

or

(video clip 1.7)

3. Have participants return to their Action Plan and note ways they are going to help remind themselves and other adults within their settings to provide attention to children when they are engaged in appropriate behavior. How can they "up the ratio of catching children being good?"

XII. Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement
(30 minutes)

86

Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement: 4 Principles

- Contingent on appropriate behavior
- Descriptive
- Conveyed with enthusiasm
- Contingent on effort

XII. Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement
(30 minutes)

A. Show **Slide 86. Describe the four major principles of using positive feedback and encouragement.** Positive feedback and encouragement should be:

1. **Contingent on appropriate behavior.** For example, when Cameron hangs his coat in his cubby, the teacher can acknowledge it by saying "Cameron thank you so much for hanging up your coat all by yourself." When you observe Patrick washing his hands before lunch, you can give him positive feedback with a thumbs up and verbally describing what he did.

2 **Descriptive.** Rather than just saying "good job" or "thanks," you provide a brief description of the behavior that you just observed. This feedback helps children know exactly what the behavior is that you would like to see repeated. For example, you might say, "Thanks for hanging up your coat all by yourself, Cameron. You sure are getting big." "Wow, Patrick. You just washed your hands all by yourself without Ms. Ellie or me even telling you to do it."

3. **Conveyed with enthusiasm.** Tone of voice, facial expressions, being down on a child's level, and the timeliness of when the positive feedback is delivered are all variables that affect the spirit in which positive feedback is accepted.

   a. Many children inherently like feedback from adults, and as we know, they will typically do many things to gain adults' attention (yes, the good and even the not-so-good behaviors!).

b. Our enthusiasm when we deliver feedback conveys to young children that we are paying attention to them, that their behavior matters to us, and that we celebrate their accomplishments.

c. Think of the number of times you have heard a young child say, "Teacher, I did it!!!" It makes us smile just remembering the enthusiasm of young children when they have mastered a new skill or tried something that they have never done before.

4. **Contingent on effort.** Children need to be encouraged for their efforts as well as their successes. For example, Maggie, a child with special needs in your classroom, who really struggles with self-help skills, would be encouraged to try and put her shoes on, even if it means just getting her toes inside the shoes.

B. Show **Slide 87.** Talk about how there are different ways to give encouragement and feedback beyond the simple "good job." Encourage participants to think about other ways to verbally give feedback and ways to give nonverbal feedback and encouragement.

87

Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement

- Remember to use nonverbal forms of positive feedback and encouragement.
- Individualize use of positive feedback and encouragement based on children's needs and preferences.
- Encourage other adults and peers to use positive feedback and encouragement.

Handout 1.7

1. Refer to **Handout 1.7** titled Some Starters for Giving Positive Feedback and Encouragement (e.g., "You are so good at..." etc.). As they read through the suggestions, participants should mark a few that they particularly like and plan on using when they return to their early childhood settings. They can also come up with other ideas.

2. Giving nonverbal feedback/acknowledgment or signs of appreciation is an important strategy that we often overlook. Providing children with "warm fuzzies" might include hugs, high fives, winks, and thumbs ups. Have participants think of nonverbal ways that they typically provide feedback to young children. Have the group generate a list of these nonverbal behaviors and compile them on **chart paper.**

C. We do need to remember that types of positive feedback and encouragement should be individualized for each child. For example, some children may not feel comfortable being encouraged in front of a group, while others may really like to be encouraged in front of a group of peers. We have to look at the individual preferences of children. There also may be cultural variations on what is typical and/or acceptable. Share an example (such as the following), noting the individual differences of children.

1. Relate the example of Kunal, a 4-year-old boy who struggled to be independent and was extremely persistent. After trying for many minutes to complete a task such as riding his bike up a slight incline and numerous slips backwards, he would get angry at his Mom and Dad if they acknowledged his efforts. He would even go so far as to say, "Don't say, 'You did it!'" or if they patted his back as he finally peddled away, he would cry out, "No, don't pat me." For Kunal, the challenge, and then ultimate success, although stressful and frustrating at times, was rewarding enough at that moment. His parents learned that, for him, bringing up these successes later (e.g., at bedtime when talking about the day, or hugging him and telling him how proud they were that he was learning to ride his bike so well) was a better strategy for providing positive feedback on Kunal's efforts.

D. Encourage other adults and peers to use positive feedback and encouragement. Point out to participants that this idea is a real key to increasing children's appropriate behaviors! The impact of positive feedback and encouragement can be increased by ensuring that children are encouraged from multiple sources (e.g., parents, other teachers, and peers). Encouragement from more than one person is more likely to have a positive impact on children's behavior. Consider the following examples of how the impact can be increased for individual children.

1. Kendall is acknowledged by his teacher at school and given a certificate about his good behavior that is attached to his coat. The bus driver acknowledges him as Kendall gets on the bus to head home, and then both of his parents acknowledge his appropriate behavior at home. By using this strategy of sending home a complimentary note, his teacher has helped Kendall receive three pieces of information about his behavior with one simple note (Mom, Dad, and the bus driver have all commented on his great sharing today).

2. Outside another Head Start classroom, Shannon (a child with Down syndrome) is complimented in front of her Mom when her Mom arrives to pick Shannon up at the end of the day. The teacher mentions that Shannon had such a great day because she "used her words to ask for more crackers and juice during snack" that day. Hearing this compliment, Mom is likely to mention it again to Shannon as they drive home, and she might even mention it to Grandma when they arrive at the grandparents' house for dinner that evening.

3. If children repeatedly hear you thank them when they have assisted in cleaning up a center, helped wipe off the snack table, or assisted in gathering all the backpacks, they are likely to give one another compliments when a peer helps them with a backpack or takes part in gathering toys together.

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Increasing Positive Behaviors:
Activity
• What are 3-5 behaviors you would like to see increase in your setting?
• Review item 8 on the *Inventory*.
• What changes might you make in your use of positive feedback and encouragement in order to increase the behaviors you just identified.
• Add this to your *Action Plan*.

E. Show **Slide 88.** With a partner, have participants list three to five behaviors that they would like to see more of in their classrooms (partners do not have to end up with the same list but rather through discussion develop their own lists of behaviors to target). Consider behaviors that are likely to take the place of challenging behaviors. This list becomes the behaviors participants should encourage at high rates when they return to their early childhood settings. Have participants refer to their Action Plan and add these behaviors that they hope to target.
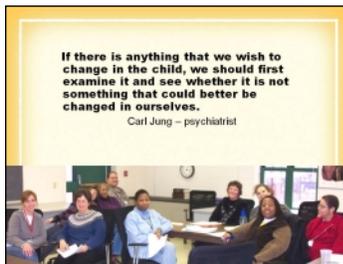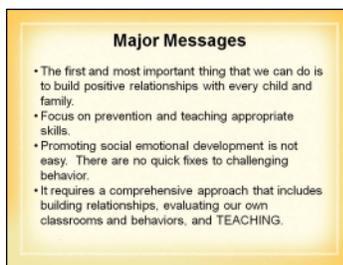
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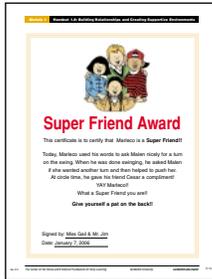
Handout 1.8

F. Show **Slide 89** and distribute **Handout 1.8 (Sample Certificate).** Show a sample of a certificate that teachers might use to send notes home about a child's appropriate behaviors.

XIII. Pulling It All Together: Summary and Completion of Action Plan
(45 minutes)

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91

XIII. Pulling It All Together: Summary and Completion of Action Plan (45 minutes)

A. Show **Slides 90 and 91. Read Jung quote and highlight the four major messages presented today.**

1. The first and most important thing that we can do is to build positive relationships with every child and family (as well as with the other professionals who work with the child and his/her family).

2. Focus on prevention and teaching appropriate skills (strategies we have discussed during this session such as looking closely at the physical environment, considering the schedules/routines/transitions/rules within your setting, and forms and frequency of positive feedback/encouragement used).

3. Promoting social emotional development is not easy. There are no quick fixes to challenging behavior.

4. Promoting children's social emotional development requires a comprehensive approach that includes building relationships, evaluating our own classrooms and behaviors, and TEACHING.

B. **Action Planning Activity.** Have participants complete their Action Plan Form, filling in the grid with ideas of changes they want to make in their early childhood settings as a result of today's session, as well as methods for evaluating their progress in making these changes. Ask if anyone is willing to share some ideas that they hope to implement "back home." Encourage a few participants to share ideas gleaned from today's session.
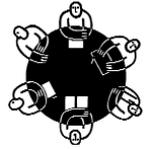
C. **Answer any final questions.**

1. Thank participants for their input and attention.
2. Have participants complete the evaluations.

Resources

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CSEFEL What Works Briefs available at:
http://vanderbilt.edu/csefel

/whatworks.html

Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships. What Works Brief #12 by M.M. Ostrosky and E.Y. Jung.

Helping Children Understand Routines and Classroom Schedules. What Works Brief #3 by M. M. Ostrosky, E. Y. Jung, M. L. Hemmeter and D. Thomas.

Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities. What Works Brief #4 by M. M. Ostrosky, E. Y. Jung and M. L. Hemmeter.

Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior. What Works Brief #2 by R. M. Santos & M. M. Ostrosky.

Using Environmental Strategies to Promote Positive Social Interactions. What Works Brief #6 by T. Bovey and P. Strain.