CSEFEL Module Three
Infant Toddler
Individualized Intervention with Infants and Toddlers: Determining the Meaning of Behavior and Developing Appropriate Responses

Activity: Find Someone Who...
• Has the same first or last initial as you
• Discuss in pairs or small groups...
  – Previous experiences participating in training sessions related to challenging behavior
  – How many years of experience in the early childhood field you have

Learner Objectives
Participants will be able to:
• Define and identify the characteristics of challenging behavior for infants and toddlers
• Describe behaviors exhibited by infants and toddlers and the relationship between behavior and forms of communication

Learner Objectives
Participants will be able to:
• Identify ways to partner with families in understanding and addressing concerns about infant and toddler behavior
• Describe and use a process for developing and implementing a support plan to respond to challenging behavior

Agenda
• Setting the Stage
• What is Challenging Behavior?
• A Relationship Based Approach to Challenging Behavior
• Developing an Individual Support Plan
• Wrap-up, Reflection and Action Planning

Our Learning Environment
• What can the trainer do to facilitate a safe learning environment?
• How can other training participants help make the training environment conducive to your learning?
• What are some agreements we can make?
**Possible Shared Agreements**

- Confidentiality
- Take Care of Yourself and Others
- Demonstrate Respect
- Right to Pass and Take Risks
- Assume Positive Intent
- Recognize We Are All Learning

**The Words We Will Use**

- Terminology
  - Teaching and Supporting
  - Caregiving
  - Young Children, Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers
  - Caregivers
  - Families
  - Others?

**The Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children**

**Social Emotional Wellness**

The ability to:

- Experience, regulate and express emotions
- Form close and secure interpersonal relationships
- Explore and learn from the environment

**What Is Challenging Behavior?**

*What we are referring to when we say “challenging behavior”:*

- Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults
- Behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures

**CSEFEL Definition of Challenging Behavior**

*What we are referring to when we say “challenging behavior”:*

- Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults
- Behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures
Reasons for Challenging Behavior

- Developmental surge
- Medical reasons
- Biological differences
- Social emotional environment
- Discontinuity between care program and home
- Lack of skill in communicating and interacting with others
- A combination of more than one above

Activity: Considering Circumstances

Use Handout 3.4 to reflect on the circumstances of the child and family.

A Relationship Based Approach to Challenging Behavior

Examining Behaviors

Behavior Is a Form of Communication

- What the infant or toddler is experiencing
- What it is like to be in that child’s body
- What it is like to be in that child’s world

Expression of Emotion

- Intensity
- Frequency
- Duration
A 6 month-old cries for long periods of time unless held by his caregiver...

1. What is the ‘tip of the iceberg’ behavior?
2. What social-emotional skill is needing support?
3. What might be going on for this child? (possible unmet needs)

Video 3.1 – What is the Biting Trying to Tell Us?

Continuum of Emotional Expression
Social Withdrawing..........................Acting Out

Two different and extreme forms of emotional expression

Acting-Out Behaviors
- Fussing
- Inconsolable crying
- Frequent or intense tantrums
- Pushing
- Hitting
- Biting
- Frequent throwing of things or knocking things down or destroying property
- Persistent refusal to allow or participate in activities
- Harm to self or others

Social Withdrawing Behaviors
- Pulling away while being held
- Rarely cooing
- Rarely babbling or talking
- Looking sad
- Not showing preference for caregiver
- Not making eye contact
- Whining
- Being overly compliant or avoidant with the caregiver
- Diminished efforts to use communications skills that have previously been used

Where Do The Sticky Notes Go?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acting-Out Behaviors</th>
<th>Social Withdrawing Behaviors</th>
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Activity: Acting Out and Withdrawing Behaviors - Handout 3.5

Use Handout 3.5 to:

- Describe “acting out” and “withdrawing” behaviors for an age group
- Consider: What is intense, frequent, enduring?

A Relationship Based Approach to Challenging Behavior

Responding to Infant and Toddler Distress

Caregivers and Families Focusing on the Child

- Makes us more likely to be able to respond with empathy to a young child’s needs
- Helps us be more intentional about problem solving
- Will assist us in restoring the child’s sense of well being
- Will enable the child to spend his emotional energy on development
- Will help us keep our own emotions in check

Responding to Distress

- Acknowledge distress
- Offer comfort
- Be attuned (in sync) to child’s individual needs
- Help the baby/toddler achieve the understood intention
- Be developmentally appropriate

Video 3.2

What Is My Perspective?
Partner Activity, Handout 3.7

1. I am Michael. What is my perspective? I felt... (write down as many “I” statements as possible)
2. I am the child playing with Michael. What is my perspective? I felt...
3. I am the caregiver. What is my perspective? I felt...
A Relationship Based Approach to Challenging Behavior

Meaning of the Behavior

Hypotheses

- What happened that caused the child to react with challenging behavior?
- What was the child experiencing or feeling?
- What has caused the shift in the child’s pattern of behavior?
  - What happened before the behavior?
  - With whom did the behavior occur?
  - Where did the behavior occur?

Our Approach

- Reflective, rather than reactive
- Focus is on assisting child in getting needs met rather than eliminating the challenging behavior
- Goal is to help the child with developmental appropriate self-regulation so that developmental momentum is not slowed down or disrupted

Understanding Behavior is the Key

- Watching children – careful observation
- Behavior is a form of communication - children tell us their needs and wants
- Focus on the child. Ask “What is the child trying to tell me?” and “I wonder…”
- Create a best guess (hypothesis) and choose supportive ways to respond

Video 3.3 Katie and Muk

Activity: Small Group Discussion

- What information did you gather?
- What are the tip of the iceberg behaviors you see from Katie?
- What might Katie be trying to tell us? I wonder...
Questions to Ask About the Meaning of the Behavior

- What is the child experiencing?
- What is the child’s perspective on the situation?
- What strengths can be observed in the child’s development or behavior patterns.
- What, when, where, how and with whom is the undesirable behavior occurring?

Questions to Ask About the Meaning of the Behavior (cont’d)

- What is the child communicating that he wants or needs?
- What effect does the child’s behavior have on others?
- What do others do or stop doing in response to the child’s behavior?
- What is the meaning of the child’s behavior?
- What do I want the child to do?

Video 3.4 Muk video

Video 3.5

Parent Interview Questions

- What is your infant’s or toddler’s challenging behavior like for you?
- What have you done in response to his behavior?
- How do you feel when he acts this way?
- When and where does the infant or toddler behave in this way and what has typically happened before or after?
- Is this behavior new or has the infant or toddler been acting this way for some time?

Parent Interview Questions (cont’d)

- Does the child act this way with others (e.g. father, grandmother or others) and what does that person say about the behavior?
- How do you think the infant or toddler feels when he is engaging in this behavior? Why do you think he feels that way?
- Do you have any ideas about why the infant or toddler is acting this way?
Module 3

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- Do you have any ideas about why the infant or toddler is acting this way?
Potential Team Members
- Parents/Family Members
- Teacher(s), Home Visitors
- Assisting Teacher/Paraprofessional
- Therapists
- Administrative Staff
- Mental Health Consultant
- Others

What Goes Into a Support Plan?
- Hypothesis
- Prevention strategies
- Action plan for changes
- Responses to behaviors
- Timeframe and method for evaluating changes in the challenging behavior

Case Study Instructions
- Read child descriptions
- Discuss the descriptions with the group
- Use the Infant-Toddler Behavior Review to organize the information from the child descriptions and the observations
- Develop the hypothesis and consider possibilities for intervention
- Develop an Action Plan and Support Plan

Wrap-up, Reflection and Action Planning

Reflection
- What questions do you have about the material we discussed?
- What additional strengths are you able to recognize in your work and practices? In the children you care for? Families you help support?
- What strategies did you see or hear that might be useful in your role and work?
Activity: Planning for Change

- Use the handout to develop an action plan for yourself
- List three things you will do as you consider ways to create supportive plans for individual children

Major Messages to Take Home

- It is important to understand that behavioral problems in infants and toddlers are very often the child’s way of communicating emotional distress.
- A collaborative, reflective process leading to an understanding of the meaning of the individual infant’s or toddler’s challenging behavior followed by a plan of action is an effective intervention.
- A partnership with parents or other primary caregivers is an essential element of any effective intervention for infants or toddlers.