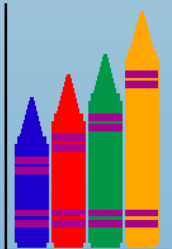










Seven Successful Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children

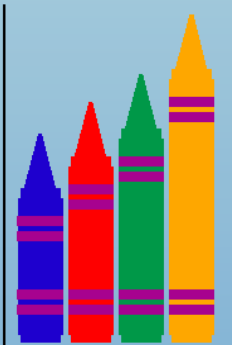
Judith Carta, Ph.D.
Hansen Early Childhood Lecture
October 13, 2004



**Center for Evidence-Based Practice:
Young Children
with Challenging Behavior**

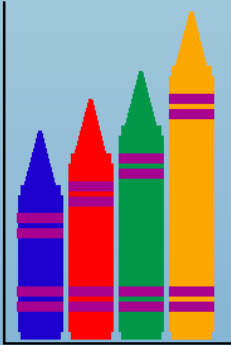
Key Social Emotional Skills Children Need as They Enter School

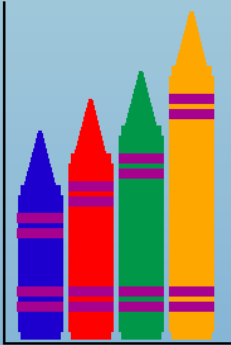
- 
-  Confidence
 -  Capacity to develop good relationships with peers
 -  Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
 -  Ability to effectively communicate emotions
 -  Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive





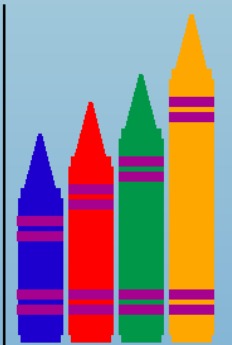






Many Young Children Exhibit Problems in Critical Social-Emotional Area

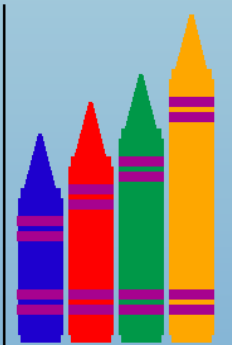
- Not uncommon to see 10 to 25% of children having problems in these areas.
- Not surprisingly, early educators often identify need for more training in dealing with behavior problems.

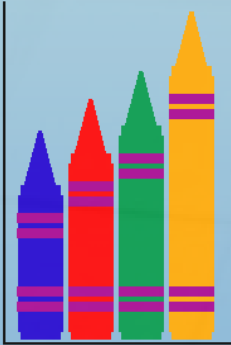




Why Do Challenging Behaviors Occur?

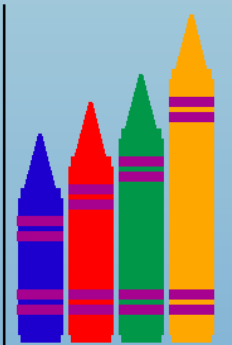
- Children lack the language or social skills to express themselves in appropriate ways.
- Pre-disposing situations (lack of sleep, hunger, stressful homes)
- Children have learned that challenging behaviors work for them





Challenging Behavior Communicates




- May be used instead of language by a child who has *limited* social skills or has learned that challenging behavior will result in meeting his or her needs

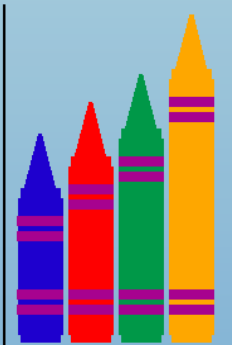




Challenging Behavior Vignettes

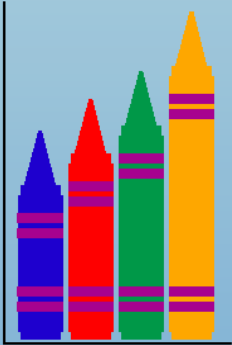


-  What are the challenging behavior?
-  What was the child communicating?
-  Could it have been prevented?



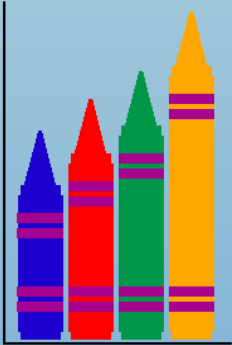
Madison

Madison is in housekeeping, putting on high heels and a hat. Emily moves into the area and selects a purse from the dress-ups. Madison shouts "no" and bites Emily. A teacher comes over, she asks Madison to go to the thinking chair and takes Emily to the bathroom to look at the bite. After 4 minutes, Madison leaves the thinking chair and returns to housekeeping. She grabs the purse Emily had selected and continues to play. Emily leaves the bathroom with the teacher and then begins an art activity where the teacher is present.



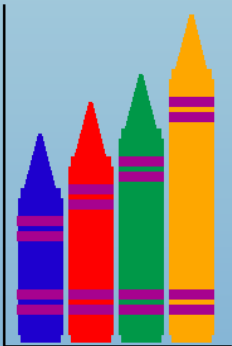
Shana

Shana is sitting in her high chair with nothing on the tray. Her mother is stirring her oatmeal. Shana begins crying and bangs her head on the back of the seat. Her mother says to her, "It's not cool enough, honey, just a minute." Shana stops crying when the oatmeal is placed on her tray



Examining Our Attitudes about Challenging Behavior

- What behaviors push your buttons?
- How do these behaviors make you feel?



Managing Personal Stress: *Thought Control*

Upsetting Thought

"I wonder if Wal-Mart is hiring?"

"He ruins everything! This is going to be the worst year of my career."

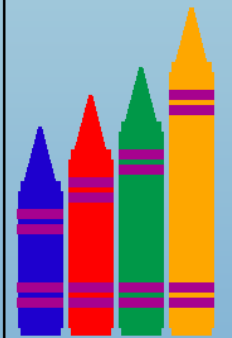
Calming Thoughts

"I really feel undervalued right now – I need to seek support from my peers and supervisor."

"This child is testing to see where the limits are. My job is to stay calm and help him learn better ways to behave."

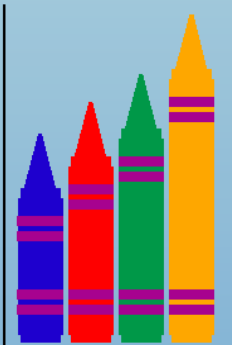
Prevention can work.

- There is much we can do to prevent challenging behavior.

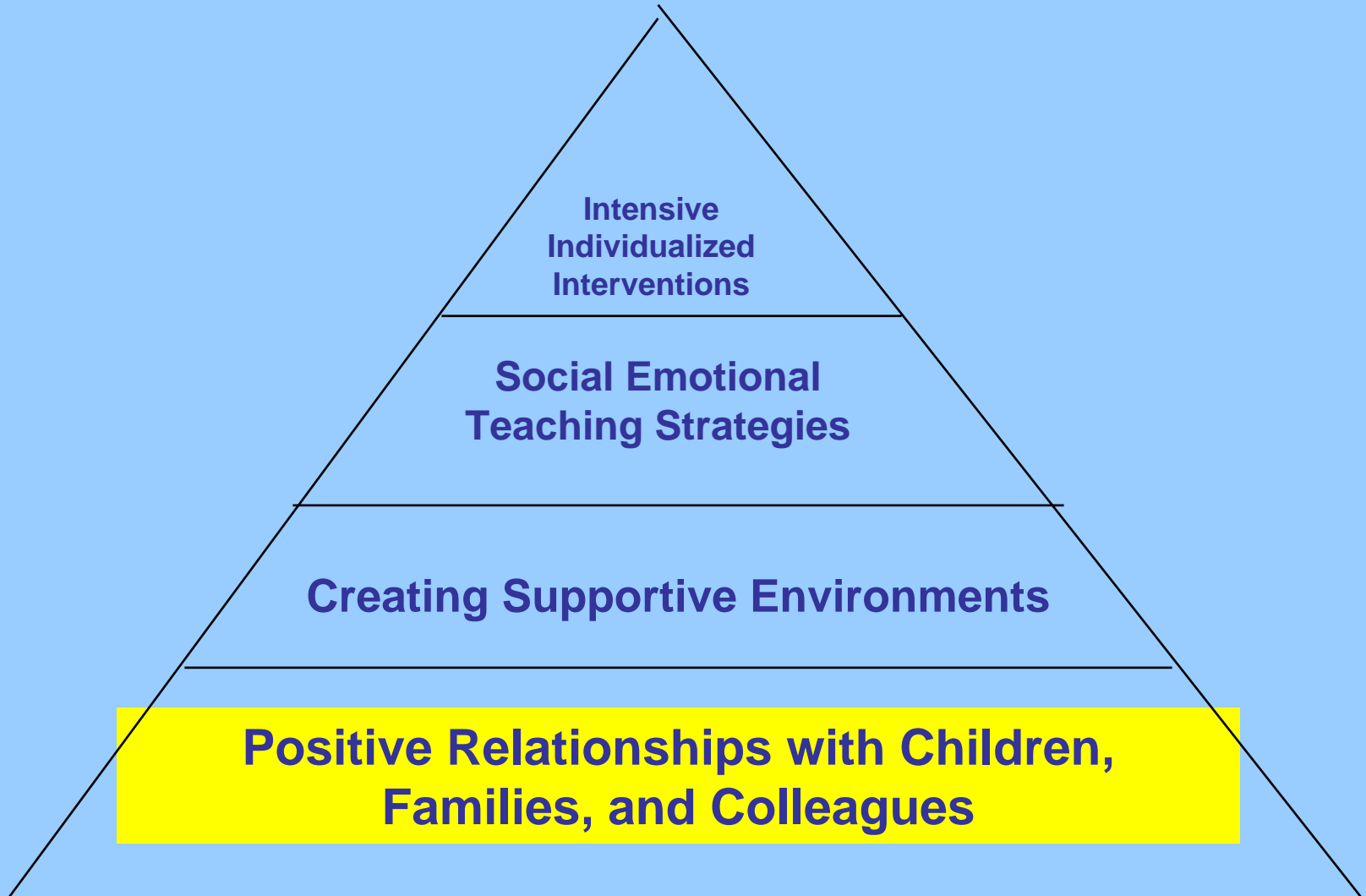


Key features about prevention

- Sound prevention strategies will eliminate 90% of challenging behaviors.
- Teachers can prevent challenging behaviors using good developmentally appropriate practices.

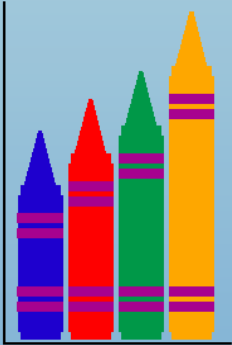


Teaching Pyramid



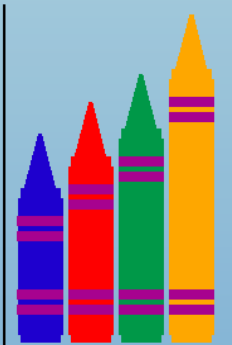
Classroom Preventative Practices- Promoting Children's Success

- Create a context that makes EVERY child feel 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.



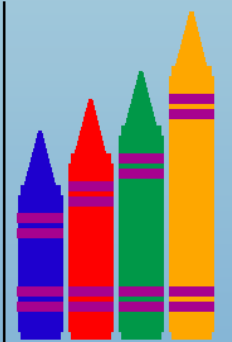
Why these practices are so critical for high-risk children?

- While these classroom features are important for supporting all young children, poor environments can act as triggers for challenging behaviors.
- Just like clean air supports health in everyone, poor air quality can trigger a breathing attack in an asthmatic.



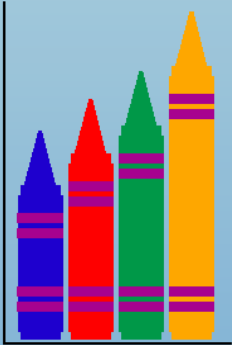
7 Successful Prevention Strategies

1. Lay the foundation with relationships.
2. Design the classroom space that supports engagement and minimizes disruption.
3. Make sure transitions are short and sweet.
4. Create centers and group times that maximize engagement.
5. Use choice and preference.
6. Develop and teach clear rules and consistent, explicit routines and teach them.
7. Teach children appropriate ways to communicate their feelings.

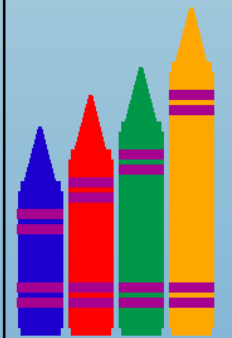


1. Relationships are the foundation

- Children learn and develop in the context of responsive, consistent and nurturing relationships.
- Children with the most challenging behaviors especially need these relationships yet their behaviors often prevent them from benefiting from those relationships.
- We need to be sure we are giving time and attention to children other than when they are engaging in challenging behaviors.

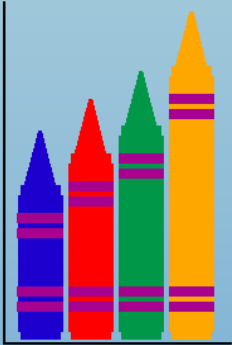


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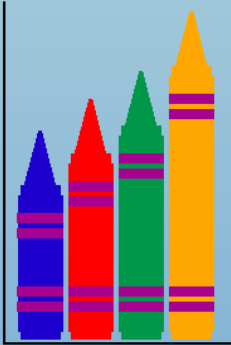
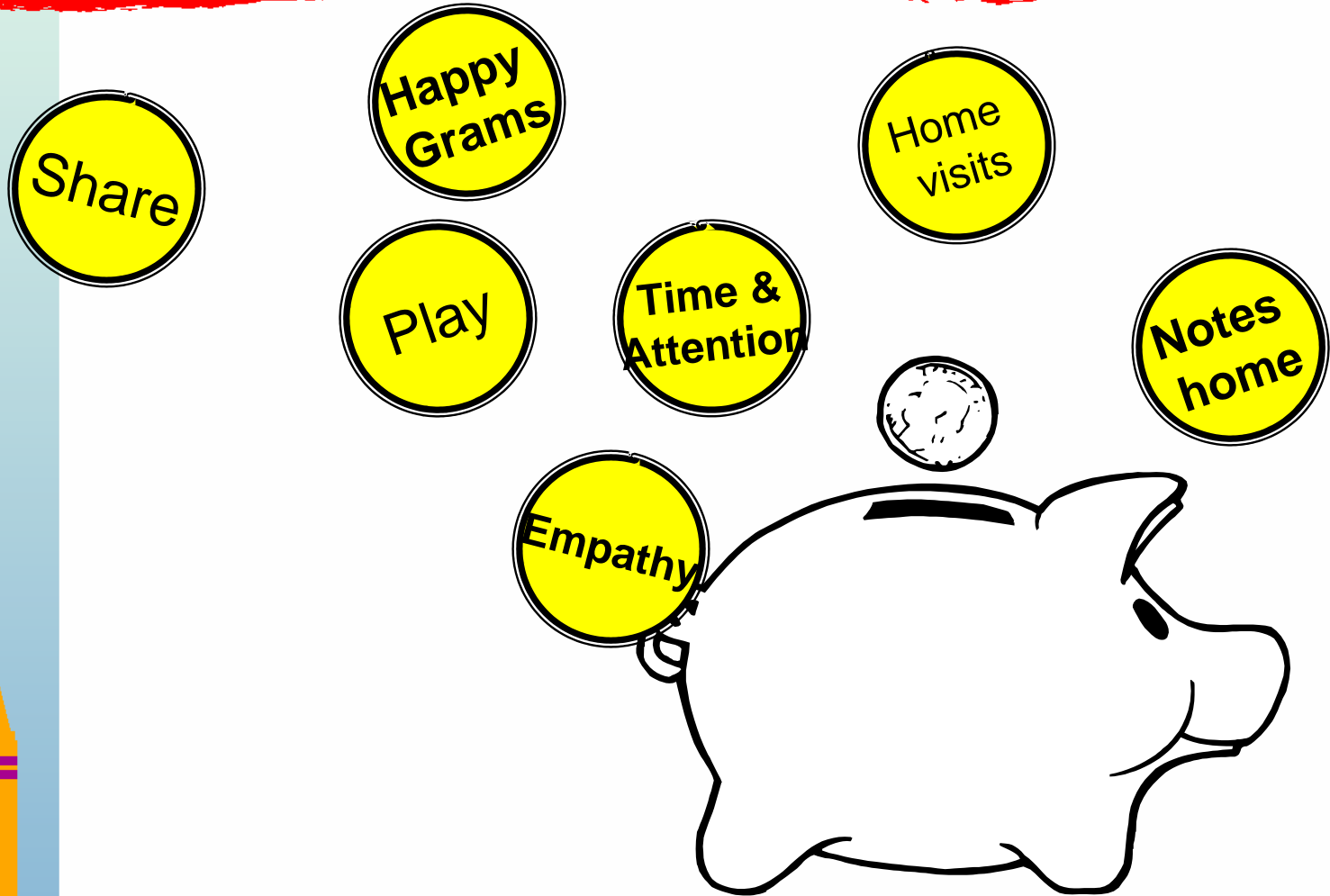


Relationship-building activities:

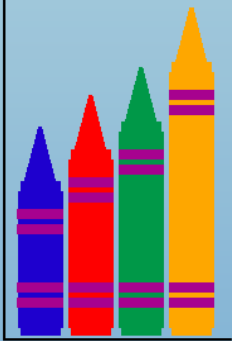
- Paying attention to each individual child.
- Knowing what interests each child.
- Don't be afraid to be wrong and to talk to children about it.
- Give hugs, pats, and handshakes.
- Speak respectfully about children's families.
- Play with children at their level.
- Spend time with children doing what they love to do.



Building Positive Relationships with Children



Play with children at their level



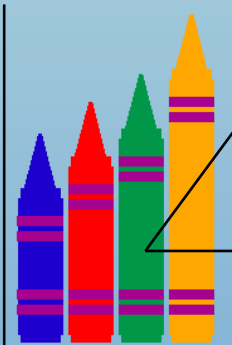
Teaching Pyramid

**Intensive
Individualized
Interventions**

**Social Emotional
Teaching Strategies**






Creating Supportive Environments

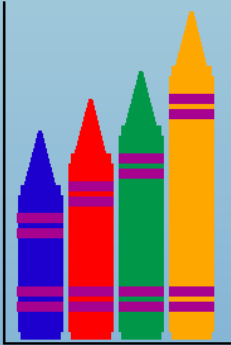
**Positive Relationships with Children,
Families, and Colleagues**



2. Space sets the stage

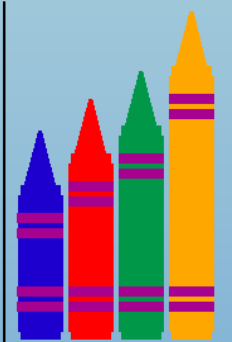


-  Have enough centers and enough materials within centers.
-  Have clear boundaries so children know where center begins/ends.
-  Consider the size and location of centers next to one another.
-  When centers are closed, indicate with a visual prompt (circles with slashes, covered with sheets etc.)
-  Minimize obstacles and large open spaces



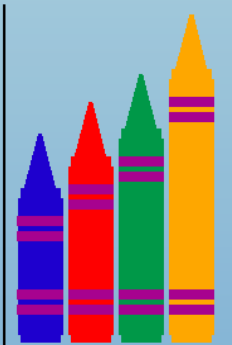
3. Transitions can make or break the day.

- Can take up to 25% of classroom day.
- Are “prime time” for challenging behavior.
- Children don’t know what they should be doing.
- Children don’t have anything to do.
- Children aren’t prepared for the transition.



Transition hints:

- Examine your schedule and minimize transitions.
- Eliminate times when children wait with nothing to do.
- Post your schedule visually and refer to it frequently throughout the day.
- Give children warnings before transition.





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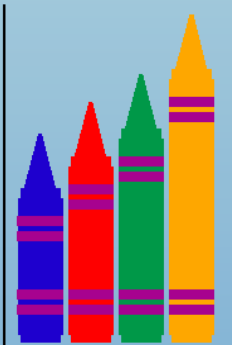
Brendan's
Turn

16:02

KOMPUTER INTEGRATION


Transition hints:

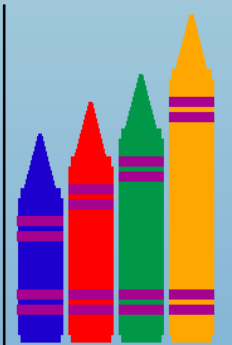
-  Have consistent schedule and transition routines.
-  Teach children the transition routine.
-  Use environmental prompts to guide transitions





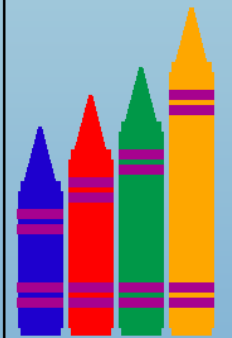
4. Get engaged.

- 
- Engagement is a critical indicator of a classroom:
 - Active engagement is a strong predictor of development and achievement
 - When children are actively engaged in appropriate behavior they are much less likely to be engaged in challenging behaviors.
 - Our job is to design environments to promote engagement.




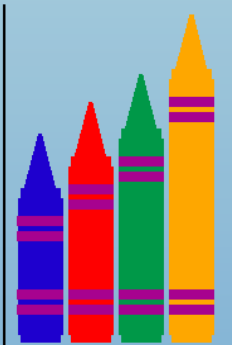
Designing engaging centers

- Build on children's interests. Listen to what children are talking about. Let children help you choose materials.
- Change materials or themes in centers often.
- Provide a variety of materials in each center.
- If children tend to stay in one or two centers, that means other centers are not interesting enough.



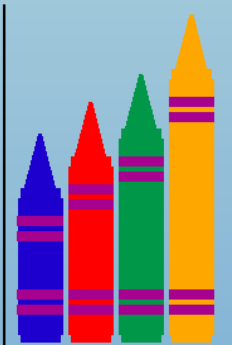
Promoting active engagement during group times.

- 
- Consider the length of time for group relative to children's ages and types of activities.
 - Don't do the same thing every day.
 - Make sure all children have opportunities to be involved.
 - Assign jobs for children who have a particularly difficult time during circle (e.g., book holder, page turner).
 - Have children help lead activities.
 - Pay attention to the cues children are giving you about their level of interest.



5. Be pro-choice in the classroom.

- Giving children choices of materials, activities that will come next, friend to sit with at lunch.
- Choice-making allows a child to feel that she has some control over the environment.
- Can be done verbally or with objects or pictures.
- Control motivates child to participate and remain engaged longer.



SNACK

Apple Sauce



Juice



Milk



SONGS

Where is
Thumbkin



Itsy Bitsy
Spider



Happy and You
Know It



Mr. Sun



Simon Says



5 Green
Speckled Frogs



CIRCLE

Story



Puppets



Books on tape



Flannel Board



Glove Play

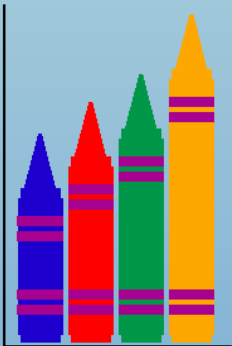


Instruments



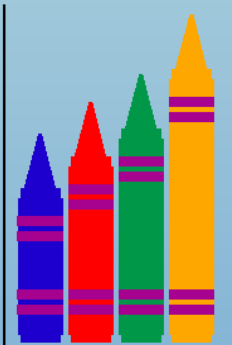
Who benefits most from choice-making?

Children who benefit most are those who display problem behavior to escape participation in activities.




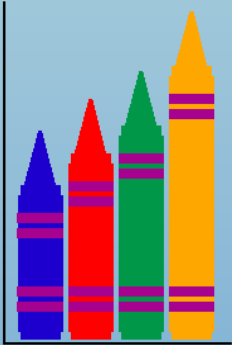
6. Get some R & R (routine & rules).

- Routines: event completed on a regular basis, frequently involving a series of responses (e.g. bedtime routine)
- Routines make settings predictable for children and adults.
- Predictable routines and rules help children understand the expectations of the environment and reduce the frequency of behavior problems.



Routines are important for a number of reasons:

- 
- They help children learn about sequence.
 - They begin to anticipate what's next.
 - They help children become more independent.
 - But routines need to be taught and practiced. (e.g., role play).
 - Number of steps should be limited.
 - Children may need picture prompts.



wash hands



dry hands

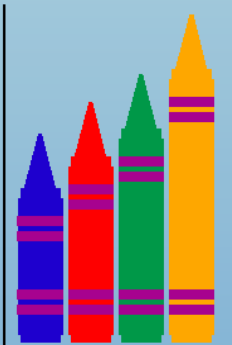


throw away



Example of transition routine

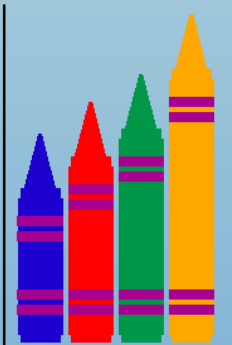
1. Throw away trash.
2. Put placemats in cubbies.
3. Push table under chair.
4. Wash hands.
5. Walk to book area for story time.



Rules also help define expectations

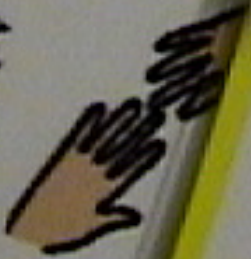


- Important features of rules:
 - They should be observable and concrete.
 - “Keep hands to yourself.”
 - Not: “Be a good citizen.”
 - They should be stated positively.
 - “Quiet talking during naptime.”
 - Not: “No loud talking during naptime.”



Use nice hands, words

Ask for help



Quiet voice

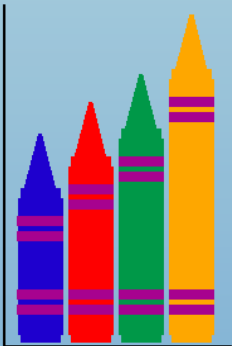


Feet on floor



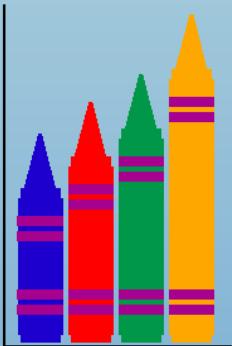
General Guidelines about Rules and Directions

- Have a few simple classroom rules.
- Involve the children in developing the rules.
- Teach the rules systematically.
- Post the rules visually.



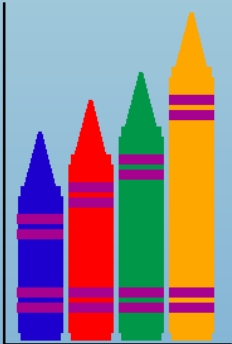
Involve Children in Developing the Rules

- 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



Fun Ways to Reinforce Rules

- Rules Bingo!
- Make a big book about classroom rules.
- Homework – what are your rules at home?
- Play “rule charades”



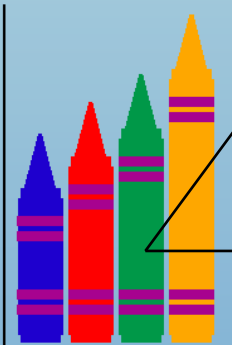
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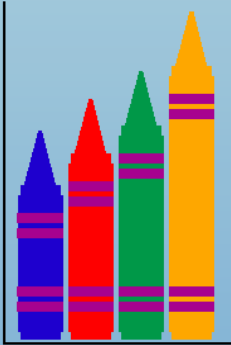
**Positive Relationships with Children,
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7. Enhancing Emotional Literacy

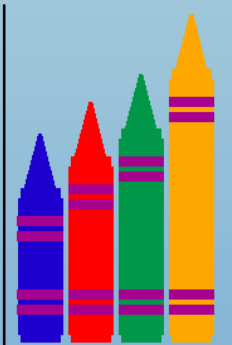


-  Learning words for different feelings
-  Learning how to recognize feelings in self and others



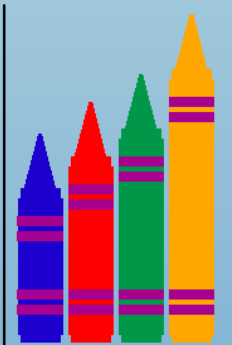
Ways to Increase Feeling Vocabularies

- 
-  Direct teaching
 -  Incidental teaching
 -  Use children's literature
 -  Use songs and games
 -  Play "How would you feel if?"
 -  Checking in
 -  Feeling dice and feeling wheels



Take-Home Messages

- The first and most important thing that we can do is to build positive relationships with every child and family
- Focus on prevention and teaching appropriate skills.
- Promoting social emotional development is not easy. There are no quick fixes to challenging behavior.
- It requires a comprehensive approach that includes building relationships, evaluating our own classrooms and behaviors, and **TEACHING**.





Websites:



- Juniper Gardens Children's Project:
 - www.jgcp.ku.edu
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
 - www.csefel.uiuc.edu

