

Minimizing Challenging Behaviors in the Classroom

1.

Preventing discipline problems. Effective classroom management can help prevent challenging behaviors from occurring. Tips from professionals include:

- Limit the number of children in one space or activity.
- Have an adequate ratio of children to supplies to keep all children active.
- Limit the amount of open space.
- Limit the amount of noise and loud music.
- Avoid competition.
- Set limits before an activity starts.
- Make transitions fun.
- Have materials ready and accessible so children don't have to wait.
- Change activities before children become bored or idle.
- Reinforce positive behavior
- Develop a positive, caring, respectful relationship with each child.

2.

Preparing children to understand what is expected of them.

- Model, demonstrate, and show by your actions what behavior you expect.
- Be consistent in what you expect from children.
- Establish routines.
- Select a few simple rules all children should follow to make the classroom safe and productive for learning activities. Review the rules frequently.
- Talk about and post classroom rules using simple words and symbols for nonreaders.
- Teach the concept that actions have consequences. Consequences should not be thought of as a punishment, but rather as a means to help children take responsibility for their behavior and learn to follow rules to guide that behavior. You may want to include these ideas about behavior:
 - What is fair? If you break it or mess it up, you fix it or clean it up.
 - What is right? If you did it, you say you did it.
 - What is kind? If you do something to someone, you say you are sorry.
 - What happens next? If you break the rule, then something happens.
- Enforce rules with consistency, fairness, and respect.
- Rebuild the relationship with the child following any discipline.
- Recognize, praise (with specificity) positive behavior.
- Review what worked and what didn't work. Think about what you will do differently in the future if this or a similar scenario presents itself.
- Use discipline as an opportunity to remind children of expected behavior and why this behavior is important.

3.

Communicating with families.

- Share your behavioral goals for the children with family members. Ask the children's most influential family members if they can help reinforce at home what you are teaching in the classroom about self-regulation, choices and consequences, and vice-versa.