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news from  
your HSB  
Regional  
Behavior  
Specialists

# OH, Behave!



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## How To Avoid Challenging Behavior



### Tip of the Month:

Did you know that children who are comfortable will be more engaged? Want children to act out less? Allow them to sit, lie, or stand as they desire. How important is it that children really sit criss-cross applesauce anyway?

### Connect with us!

Check out [Tucker's NC Nest](#) on Pinterest!

Follow OhBehaveTips on [X \(formerly, Twitter!\)](#)

Join our new online community by clicking [here](#)! By joining Social - Emotional Connections, you will have the opportunity to network, post questions, and share resources with other early childhood professionals in NC!

Open our latest public resource, a growing library shelf of virtual binders that include archived issues of the HSB newsletter, *OH, Behave!*, a collection of Disaster Response Resources, and a binder of scripted stories for classroom use! Click [here](#).

What if you had a magic wand and could wave away any and all instances of challenging behavior in your classroom? How would you feel if you could look forward to a day with little to no situations that required your immediate intervention before things escalated between children? Take a second and imagine how amazing that would be. Now, read ahead to learn how to decrease the occurrence of challenging behaviors in your classroom.

- Keep in mind that young children are naturally wigglers and squirmers. Let go of your expectations that they are able to sit still. Asking a child to remain still is only setting yourself and the child up for disappointment. Allow for movement.
- Along this same line of thinking, provide ample opportunities for children to move. Make movement permissible throughout the day. Remember some children need to move in order to focus and concentrate. Understanding this and making it ok in your classroom creates a universal space that is accepting of the needs of all children.
- Understand children are not born with the ability to self-regulate. This is a skill that children begin to learn around four years of age. Until then, children will need lots of reminders of what is expected of them. Let children know what they *can* do instead of always telling them what they can not do. Play lots of games that let children practice impulse control such as Simon Says; Freeze Tag; Red Light, Green Light; The Floor is Lava; Mother May I!; or Statues.
- Open up their world! Make outside play a priority. Think of the outdoors as an extension of the classroom. Anything that can be done indoors can also be done outdoors. Set up art, blocks, reading, and even dramatic play opportunities outside. If the children are exhibiting a lot of extra energy, allowing an impromptu one minute race from one end of the playground to the other will help their bodies settle down before circle time.
- Create classroom rules. Keep the rules simple and focus on what is most important. Be specific and have the children help create the rules. When children are a part of decision-making they will be more apt to remember, respect and follow the rules. Focus on how to keep one another safe and what they need to do to care for the classroom.
- Offer choices throughout the day. For preschool-age children, two choices are most appropriate. Be sure to honor the child's choice. Offering choices also helps prevent power struggles because you are giving some control to the child. Make certain you are ok with the two options you offer.
- Look for ways you can say "yes" more often. In order to make this possible, you have to be flexible. If your very carefully planned activity for circle time is thwarted because the children seem more interested in looking through the classroom window at the big, loud garbage truck in the parking lot picking up the trash dumpster, go with it. Respect and follow their interests and save your activity for another day. It really is okay.
- Everything is more manageable in smaller groups. If you have a co-teacher, divide the class into two parts. If you are the only teacher, invite two children at a time to do an intricate art activity with you during free play. This not only reduces the chances of problematic behavior, it also provides you more time to individually interact and support each child. It is a win-win!

**Question:** I am a center director and began to notice my preschool teacher becoming frustrated with a child's use of challenging behavior in her classroom. I began removing the child from the classroom to give her a break from time to time. Now, it seems that she is calling me in to remove the child at the slightest episode of misbehavior. Not only is it inconvenient for me, but I believe my teacher is reluctant to try new strategies to address the behavior.

**Answer:** It will be difficult for the teacher to understand why the child is using the behavior and learn strategies to manage it, if the child leaves the room at every occurrence. Instead of removing the child, you could join the teacher in the classroom. By letting the child remain in the room, you are able to help the teacher to identify causes of the misbehavior, develop response strategies and teach pro-social skills that help to prevent challenging behavior in the classroom. By now, the child might have realized that using a certain behavior means they'll get a break from the classroom. You might expect the behavior to intensify at first, because the child is accustomed to leaving the room. Be consistent and give the new-strategy a chance to work.

In each issue you will find a new card to help you build your very own "Calming Choices" Card Set for your classroom.

When I am upset, I can...

## SQUEEZE A SQUISHY



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

### Promoting Self-Control (Adapted from The Devereux Early Childhood Initiative)

Have children try balancing one mini-marshmallow on a spoon and walking around the room to music. Stopping the music means you freeze in place. When the music starts again, add another mini-marshmallow to the spoon. See how many each child can balance while stopping for breaks in the music. Practicing controlled movements fosters awareness of space and surroundings. **Tip:** Be sure children know to throw the marshmallows away that are dropped. Have extra available to eat. This is a wonderful winter time activity that parents can be encouraged to do at home as well. (Optional: Follow with hot cocoa!)



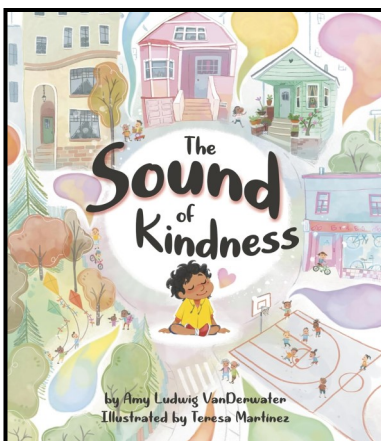
"It is vital that when educating children's brains we do not neglect to educate their hearts."

~ Dalai Lama



Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to [AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com](mailto:AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com). We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!

## Social/Emotional Book Nook



What does kindness sound like? How would you describe this to a young child who is struggling to understand such a concept? Sounds hard, doesn't it? But, it doesn't have to be. Follow an adult and a child in this beautiful picture book as they take a walk in their neighborhood listening for the sounds of kindness. Words of friendship, gratitude, support, generosity, and love...we can see and hear them if we try. Kindness is all around us every day, if we know where to look for it—and listen! This book is a gentle and encouraging acknowledgment of how much it matters to be kind...in our families, friendships, and communities. After all, you never know when someone might be listening and learning! This book is ideal for children ages four to eight.

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