

Quick Tips

GEORGIA
SEEDS
FOR SUCCESS



Our VISION is for all young children in Georgia to have strong social-emotional foundations for lifelong learning and enhanced academic success that are strengthened through a network of professionals, families, and community members.

Understanding Challenging Behaviors

Basic Assumptions about Behaviors

- Challenging Behavior is communicative. We know that behaviors are sending us a message.
- Persistent behaviors are usually working for the child and that is why they continue to do them.
- Behaviors occurs when students haven't learned the appropriate social/communication skills needed

What do Children Need?

- All children need to have confidence in what they are doing and what they are being asked to do.
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks.
- Capacity to develop meaningful relationships with peers and adults

Hot Buttons

- Take time to reflect on behaviors that push your buttons. For example, hitting, biting, scratching
- What are some ways you can change your response to these behaviors?



Key terms in this issue:

- **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.
- **Form of Behavior:** the physical description of the behavior– what it looks like.
- **Function of Behavior:** a hypothesis describing “the why” of the behavior.

What children need to know (behavior expectations):

1. What am I suppose to be doing right now?
2. How do I know I am making progress?
3. What do I do when I am finished?
4. What do I do next?

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Zooming in for a closer look...

Describe the Form of the Behavior

- The physical description of the behavior – what it looks like.
- Form should be objective and descriptive. Can you picture it from the words used?
- Describe what the child does when acting this way.
- This is the **form** of the behavior

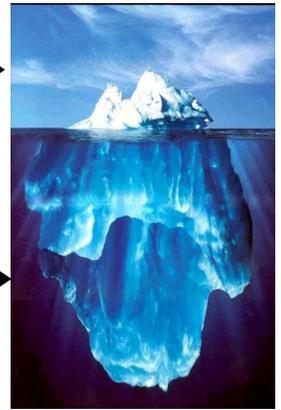
Describe the Function of the Behavior

- A hypothesis (best guess) regarding “the why” of the behavior.
- Answers questions like what is effecting the behavior (environment, stimuli, interactions, etc.)
- This is the **purpose** of the behavior.

There are Four Common Functions of Behavior:

1. **Social Attention**-A person may engage in a certain behavior to gain some form of social attention or a reaction from other people.
2. **Tangibles or Activities**-Some behaviors occur so the person can obtain a tangible item or gain access to a desired activity.
3. **Escape or Avoidance**- Many behaviors occur because the person wants to get away from something or avoid something altogether
4. **Sensory Stimulation**-The function of some behaviors do not rely on anything external to the person and instead are internally pleasing in some way – they are “self-stimulating”. They function only to give the person some form of internal sensation that is pleasing or to remove an internal sensation that is displeasing (e.g. pain).

Behavior
 → Is communicating...
 Potential unmet need
 → Skill to be developed



Strategies to Decrease Challenging Behavior

- Create visuals such as classroom rules, daily schedule, and appropriate choices.
- Model and role playing can really help the children understand what it is that you are trying to teach. (i.e. both teachers are students and act out fighting over a toy and then how you resolve the issue.)
- Create scripted stories to help with teaching a new skill. (i.e. I can walk inside, Taking Turns with my Friends, or What we do in Large Group.)



**Georgia Dept
 of Early Care
 and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Behavior Communication Self-Assessment

Use this brief self-assessment as you create and reflect on your own Classroom behavior communication

Components	YES	NO	What do I need to make this happen?	Who can support me?
Good communication with my Co-teacher about what our “hot buttons” are.				
Teacher/family communication about each child and their behavior.				
Are you able to “see” behavior as a sense of communication?				
Do you collect data to support the behavior?				