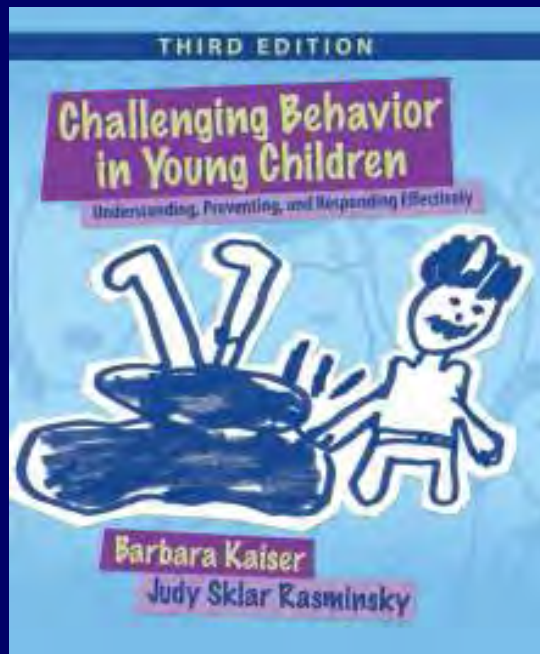


# How to support ECE staff who work with children with challenging behaviors



Barbara Kaiser

[www.challengingbehavior.com](http://www.challengingbehavior.com)



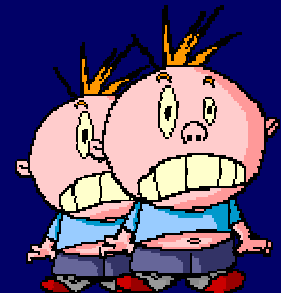
# How do you define your role as Director?

- **What are your priorities?**
- **What are your responsibilities?**
- **What are your expectations of the staff?**
- **What are your goals for the children?**
- **What/who are your supports?**
- **What are your challenges?**



# One important challenge

May be.....



**What does challenging  
behavior mean to you?**

# What do I mean by challenging behavior?

**Makes it  
impossible  
to achieve  
our goals  
& interferes  
with learning  
opportunities**

**Not a diagnostic term  
There may be no diagnosis  
Need to survive period before diagnosis**


# Challenging behavior

- **Interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play**
- **Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults**
- **Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure**

**Timid and withdrawn behaviors also qualify as challenging**



# Challenging behavior is NOT a label

- 
- **How does labeling affect your attitude?**
  - **Have you ever been labeled?**
  - **How did the label affect your behavior?**



# CHALLENGING behavior is challenging for:

- **The child**
  - prevents him from achieving important outcomes.
  - probably doesn't have much control over it.
  - wishes that he could change his behavior more than anyone.
- **The other children**
  - become frightened and confused
  - don't know how to respond or defend themselves
- **Teachers/Family**
  - don't know how to turn things around,
  - responses may even make things worse.



# How does the presence of a child with challenging behavior influence:

- **Your role?**
- **Your goals?**
- **Your supports?**
- **Your challenges?**

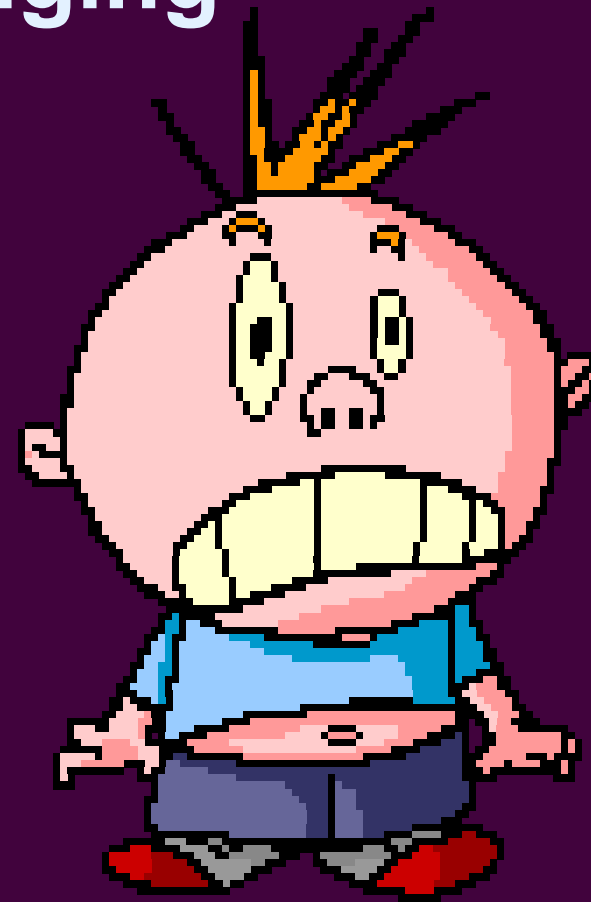
# Being There

- **How much time do you spend with the children?**
- **Does the staff feel that you know what's happening?**
- **Can they talk to you without feeling judged?**
- **Find a role in the classroom**
  - **The more you're there the more naturally people will act**
  - **Observe unobtrusively**





**How do the educators feel about having a child with challenging behavior in their class?**



**“This child does not belong here!”**

**“I do not have the training to deal with him.”**

**“Nothing I do works!”**

**“I can never complete an activity”**

**“I have no time to give the other children the attention they deserve.”**

**“I worry about what the other children are learning!”**

**“I worry about the safety of the other children!”**

**“He never shows remorse.”**

**“I can’t predict what he will do next, his behavior comes out of no where.”**

**“He’s only 4, I think we are expecting too much of him.”**

# Between a rock and a hard place

## How do the other children's families feel?

**“He shouldn't be here”**

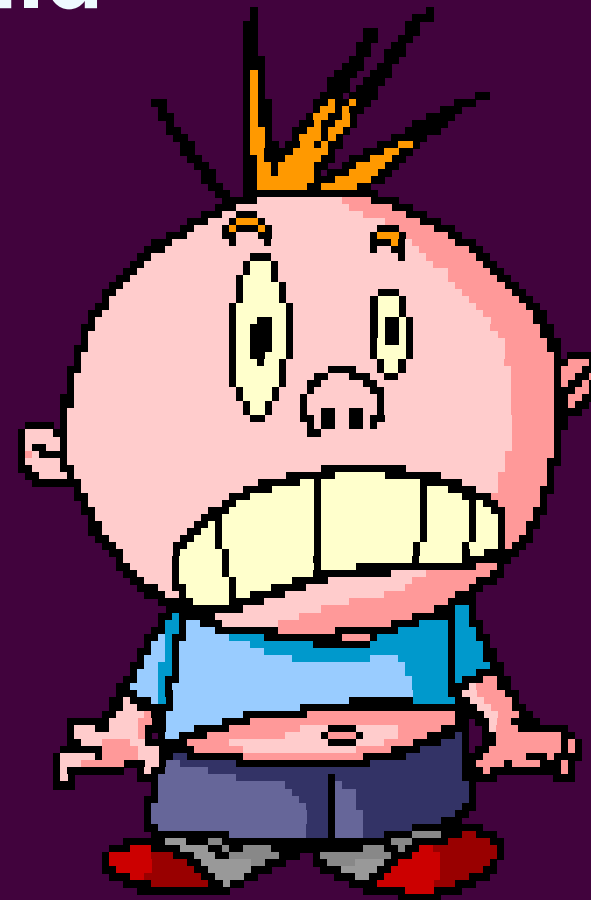
**“My child is afraid to come to school!”**

**“The teacher is spending so much time with Andrew that my child is getting no attention.”**

**“It isn't fair that my child's group doesn't go to the library because the teacher cannot control Andrew”**

**“I will remove my child unless you ask Andrew to leave!”**

**Do you think that a child with  
challenging behavior should  
remain in the center?**



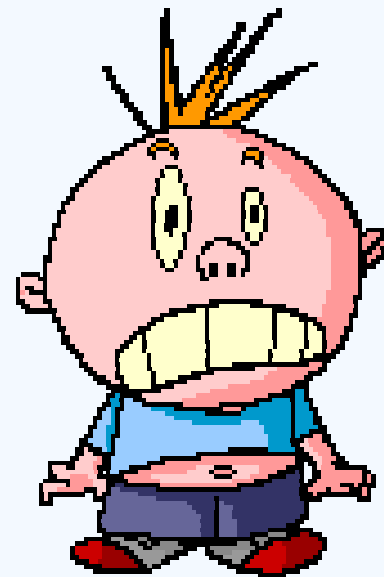


# Why should he stay?

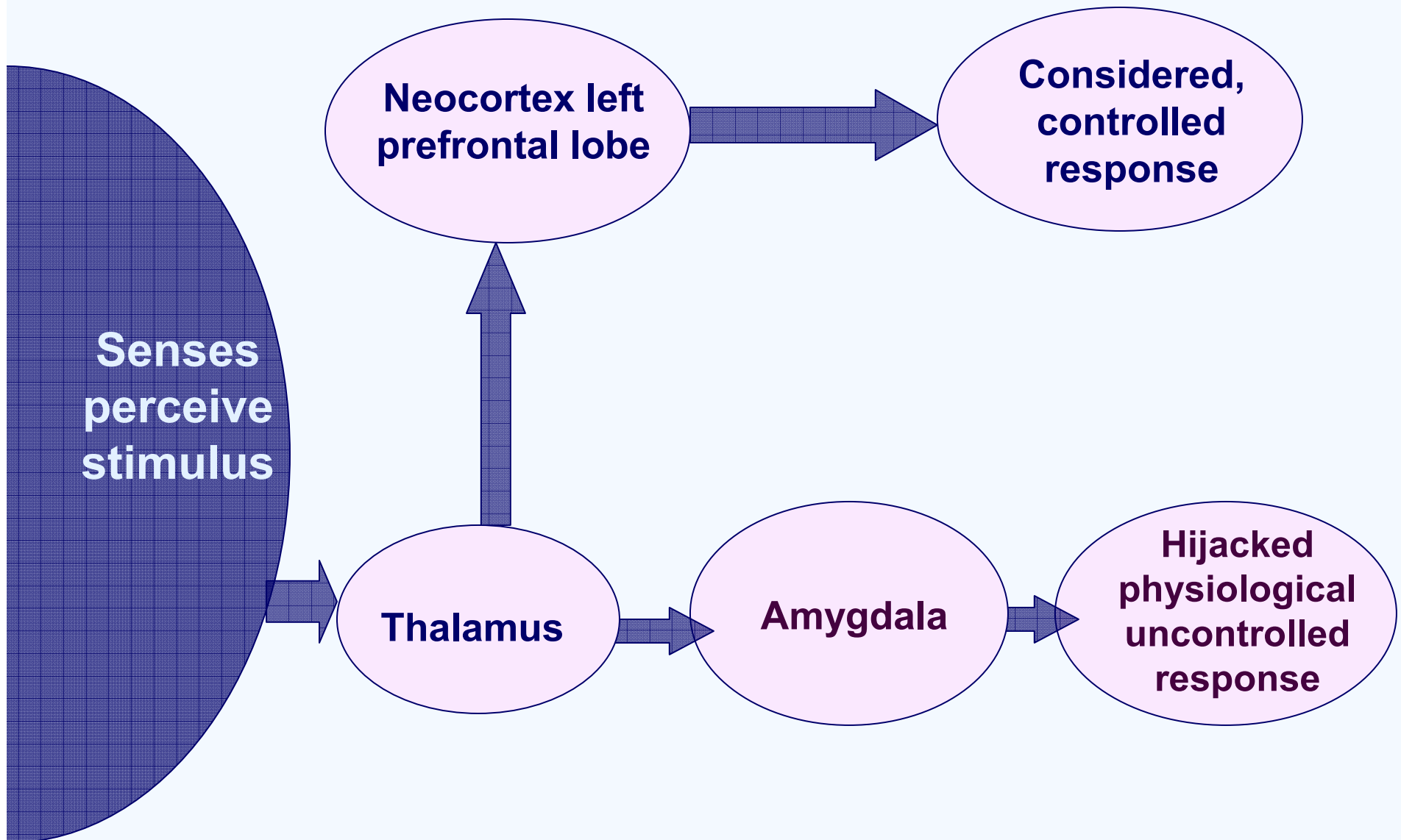
- Moral obligation – can't give up on a child
- If you know what to do it's possible to make it work
- Tells the teachers that they are competent
- The other children are positive role models
- Will make teachers better teachers
- Gives the child a bad message:
  - he's unteachable
  - you don't want him
- Where should he go?



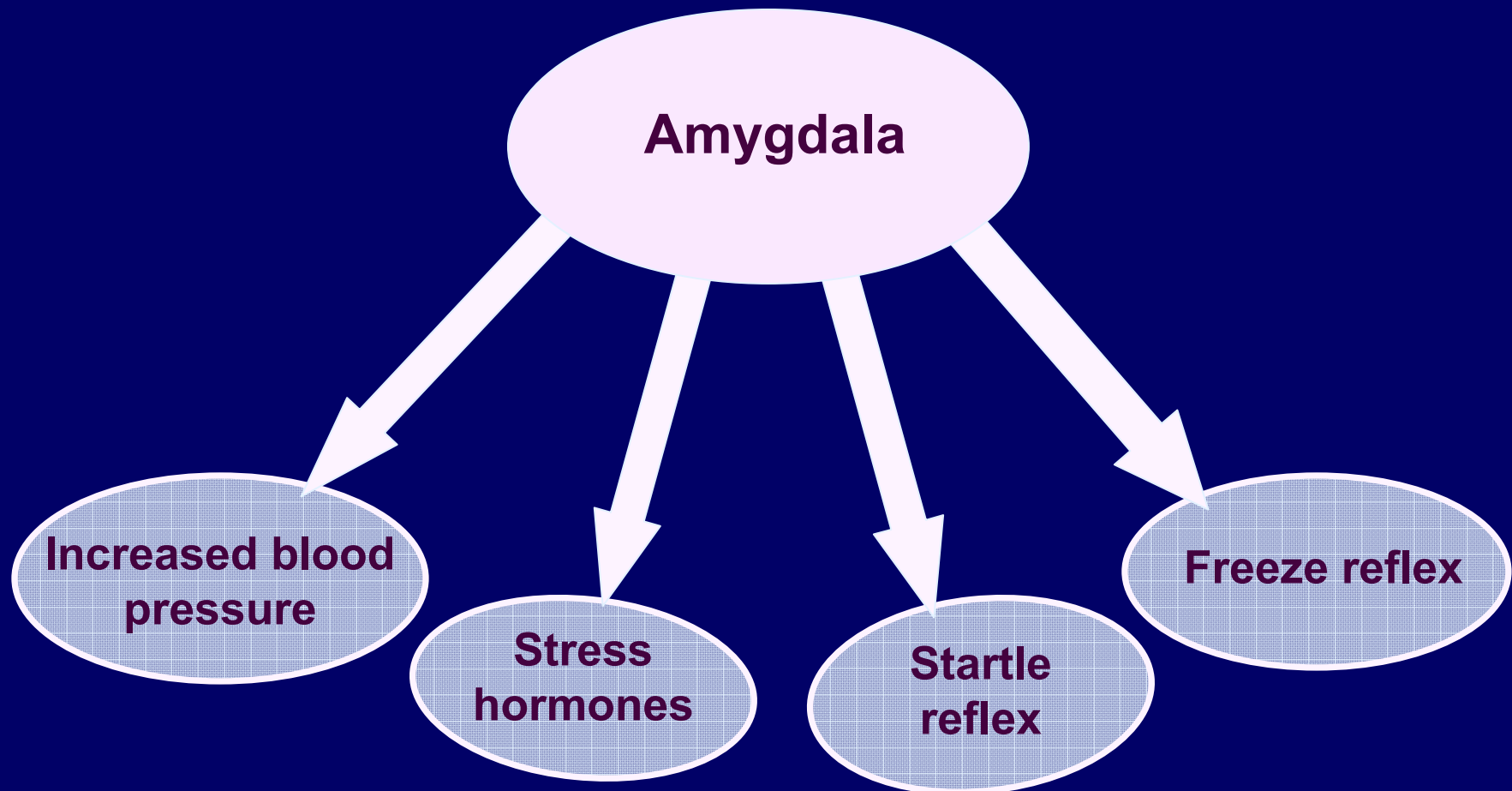
**What happens when the teachers are faced with challenging behavior?**



# Amygdala Hijack

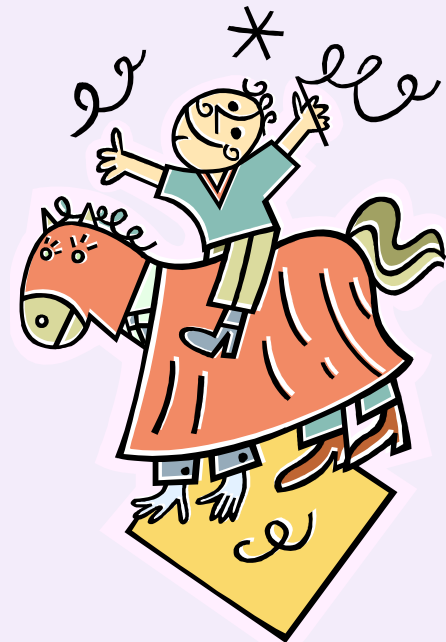


# The amygdala's immediate physiological effects



# Out of control emotions

- Impair reasoning (even smart people sometimes act stupidly)
- Can result in not choosing the best response
- May increase the likelihood that you will escalate the child's behavior



# Managing an emotional hijack

**Your brain needs 6 seconds to take back control**

- **Thinking about it makes you more upset**
- **Perform an analytical mental function**

**S = Stop**

**T = Think**

**A = Act**

**R = Review**

**Count to 10 in a foreign language**

**Take a deep breath and count to 6**

**Think of all the places you have  
lived**

**Visualize your favorite beach**

**Name several positive things  
about the child**

**How does having a child with challenging behavior in the group/class change a teacher's attitude and/or behavior?**



**Do you know what behaviors each staff member finds challenging?**





- **Hitting**
- **Kicking**
- **Biting**
- **Throwing things**
- **Whining**
- **Constant crying**
- **Tantruming**
- **Defiance “NO!”**
- **Not participating**
- **Teasing**
- **Running off**
- **Swearing**
- **Hiding**
- **Destroying other children’s work**
- **Choking**
- **Grabbing**
- **Pushing**
- **Not caring**

## **Everyone has different button pushers**

- Past experiences with children
- Training experiences
- Level of support for dealing with challenging behaviors
- Culturally based beliefs



**Why is it important for you to help your teachers identify their buttons?**



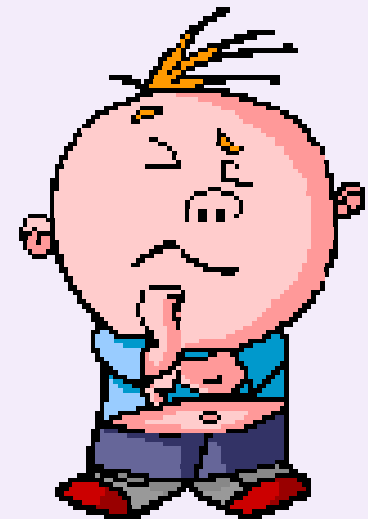
## Keep in mind

- **All teachers do not have the same behavioral expectations;**
- **All activities do not require the same social and behavioral skills;**
- **Consistency in feedback about behavior is often inconsistent because expectations differ from teacher to teacher;**
- **The behavioral requirements in child care and/or school are quite different from those in the everyday world.**

# How can you promote a philosophy of staff ownership of the solution as well as the problem?

Do you know....

- What the teachers know about children with challenging behavior?
- What they feel they need to learn?
- How they perceive their role?
- What they feel you should be doing?



# Communicate your expectations effectively

- **Let the staff know in advance what is expected**
- **Be clear in your own mind**
  - What you think they already know
  - What you want her or him to learn
- **Be specific.**
  - Do not assume that everyone will interpret your message the same way
  - It's a good idea to use specific examples
- **Listen**
  - Rephrase the comments made by others to show you understand.
  - When you are talking, make sure others are listening and that they understand
- **Communicate your priorities**
  - Encourage the staff to ask questions
  - Check back from time to time to make sure your directions were understood
- **Emphasize behaviors.**
  - Accept that we all bring our different attitudes to the workplace
  - Respect and utilize the different perceptions of each staff member

# When you meet resistance?

- Continuous **LEARNING** demands that people continuously **UNLEARN** past lessons, which leaves them vulnerable
- Individuals do not expand their thinking or change their practice in linear or evenly paced stages
- Variations in qualifications and experience must be considered in terms of people's
  - understanding and accepting the challenge of new ideas
  - willingness to put in the time and commitment necessary to re-evaluate their practice

# **The administrator's role**

**Enhance staff capacity to provide the best behavioral supports for all children**

- **Create an atmosphere of trust**
- **Understand the teacher's reality**
- **Recognize the staff's personal and professional knowledge**
- **Let your teachers know when they are on the right track**
- **Role model ways of dealing effectively with the child and his/her family**
- **Provide physical, emotional and informational support**
- **Create a team that works together**
- **Believe in the educators' ability to succeed**



**THE  
DEVEREUX  
EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
INITIATIVE**

# **CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR TRAIN THE TRAINER**

**FEATURING:**

*Facing the Challenge DVDs &  
Challenging Behavior in Young Children*

## **FACING THE CHALLENGE**



**What is Challenging Behavior?**  
**Developmentally Appropriate Behavior**  
**Why Do Kids Misbehave?**  
**Parents As Partners**  
**Prevention Strategies**  
**Behavioral Planning I**  
**Behavioral Planning II**  
**Intervention Strategies**

**Dates: October 10-12, 2012**

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- **What would the teachers say if you asked why children behave inappropriately?**
- **Their interpretation affects their attitude and response**



- **Hungry, tired**
- **Wants attention**
- **Doesn't know what else to do**
- **He's angry**
- **Frustrated**
- **Confused**
- **No boundaries set at home**
- **Doesn't have any social skills**
- **Doesn't have the words**
- **Sensory issues**
- **Feels rejected or misunderstood**
- **To escape a task**



# He has difficulty:

- **Seeking attention in appropriate ways**
- **Solving problems**
  - Acts impulsively
  - Doesn't consider likely consequences
- **Expressing himself in words**
- **Managing emotional responses**
  - anger
  - frustration
- **Understanding social cues**
- **Entering into groups, making friends**
- **Following directions**
  - Doesn't always understand what is being said/instructions
  - Deviating from the routine
- **Handling transitions**
  - Shifting from 1 task or mind set to another
- **Staying on task**
  - Persisting when the task is difficult
  - Maintaining focus

# What do the theorists say about aggressive and anti-social behavior?

- **Early-onset (life-course persistent aggressive behavior) theory:**
  - Aggressive and antisocial behavior is the result of the ongoing interaction between a child's genes, experiences, and culture, starting from conception
- **Frustration-aggression theory:**
  - When people are frustrated—when they can't reach their goals—they become angry and hostile and act aggressively
- **Social learning theory:**
  - Based on principles of conditioning and reinforcement
    - People learn aggressive behavior from their environment
    - Children observe and imitate the role models around them
    - When they see a behavior reinforced, they're likely to try it for themselves
    - When they experience the reinforcement directly, they're likely to repeat it

# **So, Why Do They Misbehave?**

**BECAUSE THE BEHAVIOR IS WORKING  
FOR THEM!**

- 1. To obtain an object or attention**
- 2. To avoid/escape a situation or person(s)**
- 3. To change level of stimulation**

# Time to Reflect

**Since many children use challenging behavior at times, why do some children come to depend on these behaviors while others discover more effective strategies to help them meet their needs?**

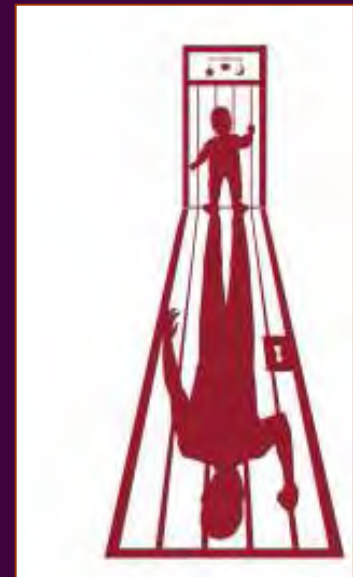


- **BIOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS**

- **Genes**
- **Temperament**
- **Complications of pregnancy and birth**
- **Developmental delays**
- **Gender**

- **ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS**

- **Family factors and parenting style**
- **Poverty and the social conditions surrounding it**
- **Exposure to violence**
- **Violent media**
- **Cultural dissonance**
- **School**



# The impact of multiple risk factors

**“Give me one tennis ball, and I can toss it up and down with ease.**

**Give me two, and I can still manage easily.**

**Add a third, and it takes special skill to juggle them.**

**Make it four, and I will drop them all.”**

James Garbarino *Lost Boys* (1999), pp.75-76





**We can't change a child's life,**

**BUT.....**

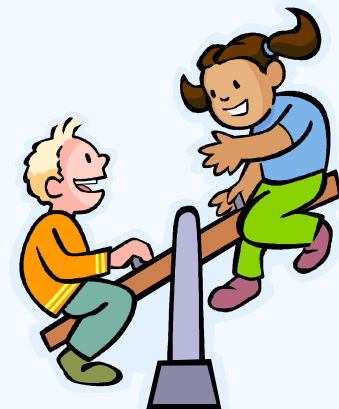
**WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**





# Prevention is the best intervention

**Effective teachers spend more time promoting appropriate behavior than responding to inappropriate behavior.**



# **Create Rules and Policies**

- Develop a list of three rules for your classroom**

## **3 Basic Rules**

- Stated in the positive**
- Covers every possibility**
- Can never be broken**

# Rules and Expectations chart

Rule	E X P E C T A T I O N S	Setting				
		ARRIVAL	CIRCLE/MEETING	CHOICE/CENTERS	SNACK	OUTSIDE
<b>Respect yourself</b>  <b>Be safe</b>		Walk to our cubbies. Take off your outdoor shoes Put on indoor shoes	<b>Sit on mat</b> <b>Participate</b>	<b>Be aware of others</b> <b>Walking feet</b>	<b>Wash hands</b> <b>Ask for help if we need it</b>	<b>Follow directions.</b> <b>Ask for help</b> <b>If we need it</b>
<b>Respect others</b>  <b>Be Kind</b>		<b>Greet others</b>	<b>Take turns</b> <b>Listen</b> <b>Keep hands and feet to ourselves</b>	<b>Take turns</b> <b>Share</b>	<b>Use our manners</b> <b>Talk quietly to each other</b>	<b>Include others</b> <b>Share</b> <b>Take turns</b> <b>Use our words</b>
<b>Respect the environment</b>  <b>Be careful with our things</b>		<b>Put things away</b>		<b>Clean up after yourself</b> <b>Gentle with books</b>	<b>Be careful</b> <b>Put things away</b>	<b>Treat things carefully</b> <b>Put things away</b>

# Prevention

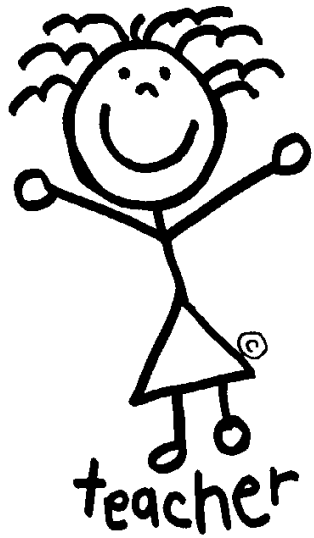
**Creating opportunities for ALL children to succeed**

- **Changing the social context**
  - **Changing your approach with the children**
  - **Utilizing preventative pro-social skills curricula**
- **Changing the physical environment**
- **Changing the program**



**What word stands out on the  
previous slide?**

**CHANGE!!!**



***“If there is anything that we wish to change in others, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves.”***

Carl Jung



# Reasons why educators resist change

- **Decisions or requests are sprung on teachers without notice**
- **Not knowing enough about the change**
- **Feeling that changes are being done to, rather than done by, those affected**
- **Concerns that change will require teachers to question familiar (and comfortable) routines and habits**
- **Expectation that the initiative is temporary and it will stay incomplete**
- **Change implies that the former way of doing things was wrong**
- **Educators can question their ability to be effective after a change: Can I do it? How will I do it?**
- **Change in one area can disrupt other projects or activities, even ones outside of work**
- **Organizational change often increases workloads**

***Sometimes the Threat Is Real.* Change often creates real winners and losers, and people worry about where they will end up when the project is complete**

# Helping staff navigate the change process

- Listen and understand their emotions (i.e. fear, anxiety, anger, loss, etc.)
- Consistently provide information that reinforces why change is important
- Encourage them to ask questions
- Help them to develop strategies for effectively dealing with the upcoming change(s)
- Help staff to completely understand the meaning of the change taking place
- Do not take staff responses personally
- Do not expect large leaps of acceptance immediately, it will take time for staff to adjust
- Give staff time to process the change as needed
- Present a positive stance surrounding the change - the potential benefits

**What happens when you cannot prevent  
challenging behavior?**



# What role do you play?

When the teachers have a problem with behavior, what do they expect you to do?

What do you want **THEM** to do?



**“We tend to teach the way we’ve  
been taught [and] discipline the  
way we’ve been disciplined”**

**Carl Rogers and Jerome Freiberg**

# Typical Responses to Misbehavior

## Reactive Responses

### Consider:

- The child separate from the context of the behavior

### Assume:

- The child is not trying to behave appropriately
  - Misbehavior is deliberate
  - The student knows the right behavior and is being uncooperative
- They will behave appropriately next time
  - the child has learned his/her lesson

### Provide:

- Aversive consequences

## Proactive Responses

### Identify:

- The functional relationship (purpose) between behavior & environment
- The expected or acceptable behaviors

### Modify:

- The environment (context of the behavior) to support expected behaviors

### Provide:

- Differential reinforcement

### Teach:

- Appropriate replacement behavior

**Any challenging behavior that persists over time is working for the child.**

**Any intervention that does NOT produce a change in behavior is NOT working for the child or the teacher**



# Punishment

- **Damages the relationship**
- **Quick fix**
  - **Does not teach children alternatives**
  - **Does not provide long term solutions**
- **Creates a hostile environment**
- **Becomes a win/lose situation**

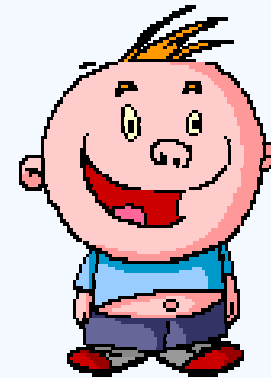


- “If a child doesn’t know his letters, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know his colors, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know his numbers, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to behave, *we.....*”

**“Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”**

*Tom Herner (NASDE President, Counterpoint 1998, p.2)*

- **Do you have a Behavior Management Policy?**

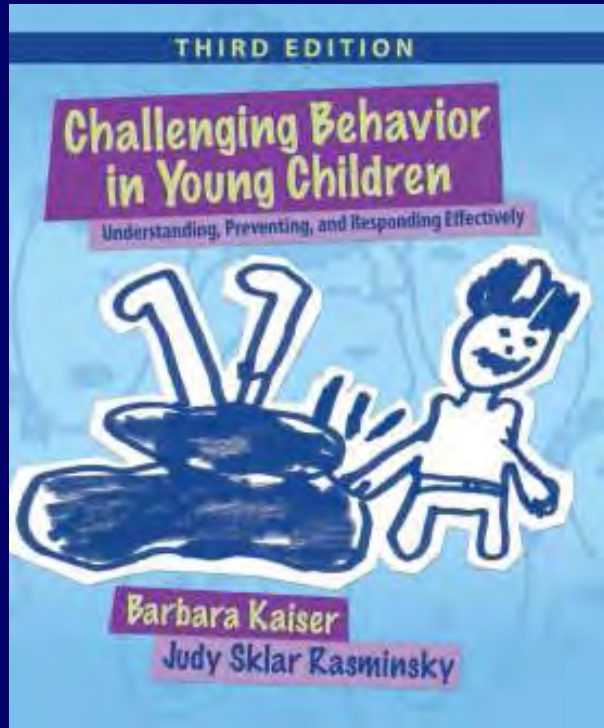


# Summary

- **Teachers need support to focus on prevention and teaching appropriate skills**
- **There are no quick fixes to challenging behavior.**
- **Working with children with challenging behavior requires a comprehensive approach that includes:**
  - **Building relationships**
  - **Focusing on adult behavior – evaluating our own behavior**
  - **Investing in evidence-based practices**
  - **Teaching & acknowledging behavioral expectations**

**A COMMITMENT!**





**Thank you**

***Challenging Behavior in Young Children:  
Understanding, Preventing, and Responding Effectively***

**Barbara Kaiser and Judy Sklar Rasminsky**

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