



**Applying New Knowledge:  
Learning & Transfer**

**Child Care Training Consultants, LLC**

*Accredited by International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET)*

# What to do with Challenging Behavior

By Theresa Vadala, Ed. D.





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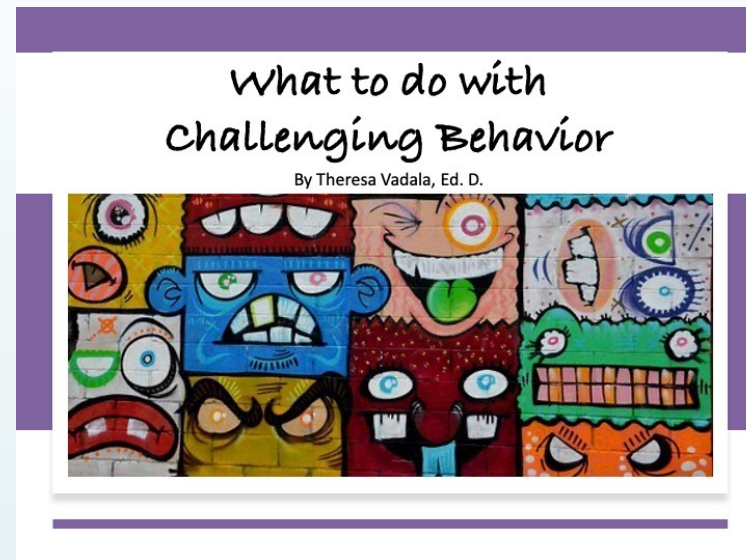
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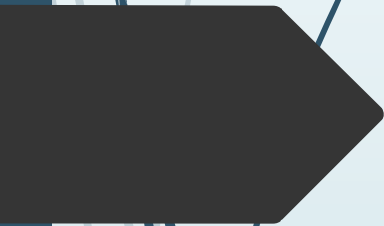
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<p><b>CKA 4: Guidance and Discipline</b>  <b>Title: 4.E What to do with Challenging Behavior</b></p>	<p><b>3 Hours</b></p>	<p><b>0.3 CEUs</b></p>
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**Dr. Theresa Vadala**  
**(Instructor & Curriculum Designer)**





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## **Child Care Training Consultants LLC., Goal**

The goal is to empower educators as they take Child Development Associate (CDA) courses to make a powerful difference in the lives of young children!

## **Mission Statement**

“Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s is committed to provide research-based professional growth and development training courses primarily focused on the Child Development Associate. The CDA is the nation’s premier credential that is transferable, valid, competency-based and nationally recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United State Military.

## **Vision**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s vision is to provide the early childhood community with courses based on CDA competency standards to obtain their CDA Credential and assist in reaching their goal as an exceptional early childhood educator to ultimately achieve higher child outcomes.



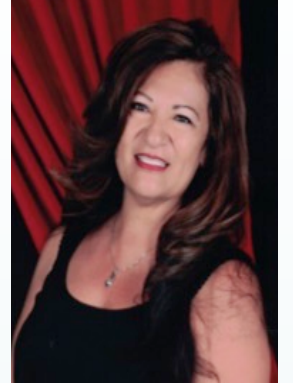
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## **About the Instructor**

Theresa has over 30 years experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. During that time, she served as a Preschool Teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, Program Facilitator, and Director of an Early Childcare Program. She has a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with Specialization in Curriculum and Instructional Design. Theresa is a Professional Growth & Development Trainer and Curriculum Designer and offers web-based courses internationally. She is the Executive Director/Owner of the training organization Child Care Training Consultants, LLC., (CCTC).



## **Business Description**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC. (CCTC) is an accredited provider (AP) with the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEU) for adult education nationally. The business is also a recognized training organization with the Council for Professional Recognition, Child Development Associate Council (CDA), National Credentialing Program.



# Research

Kindergarten programs present a time of change, challenge, and pressure for children (NAEYC, 2011). The American public school system does not include preschool as part of the kindergarten through Grade 12 education system (Harris, 2011). Studies indicate kindergarten teachers reported students without quality preschool experience have difficulty with academics, following directions, and working. The general problem is the education establishment does not include preschool as a legitimate part of the American public school system. Without preschool inclusion in the kindergarten through Grade 12 system; efforts in preparing students for success in kindergarten is impeded (Takanski & Kuarez, 2008).



# Learning Objectives

By the end of the training participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize mixed value messages children learn from adults.
- 2) Identify their own values as they work with young children given the resources from the Challenging Behaviors training Course.
- 3) Implement clear communication skills between adult care providers and the children in their care.
- 4) Organize an early child care facility environment to minimize challenging behaviors.





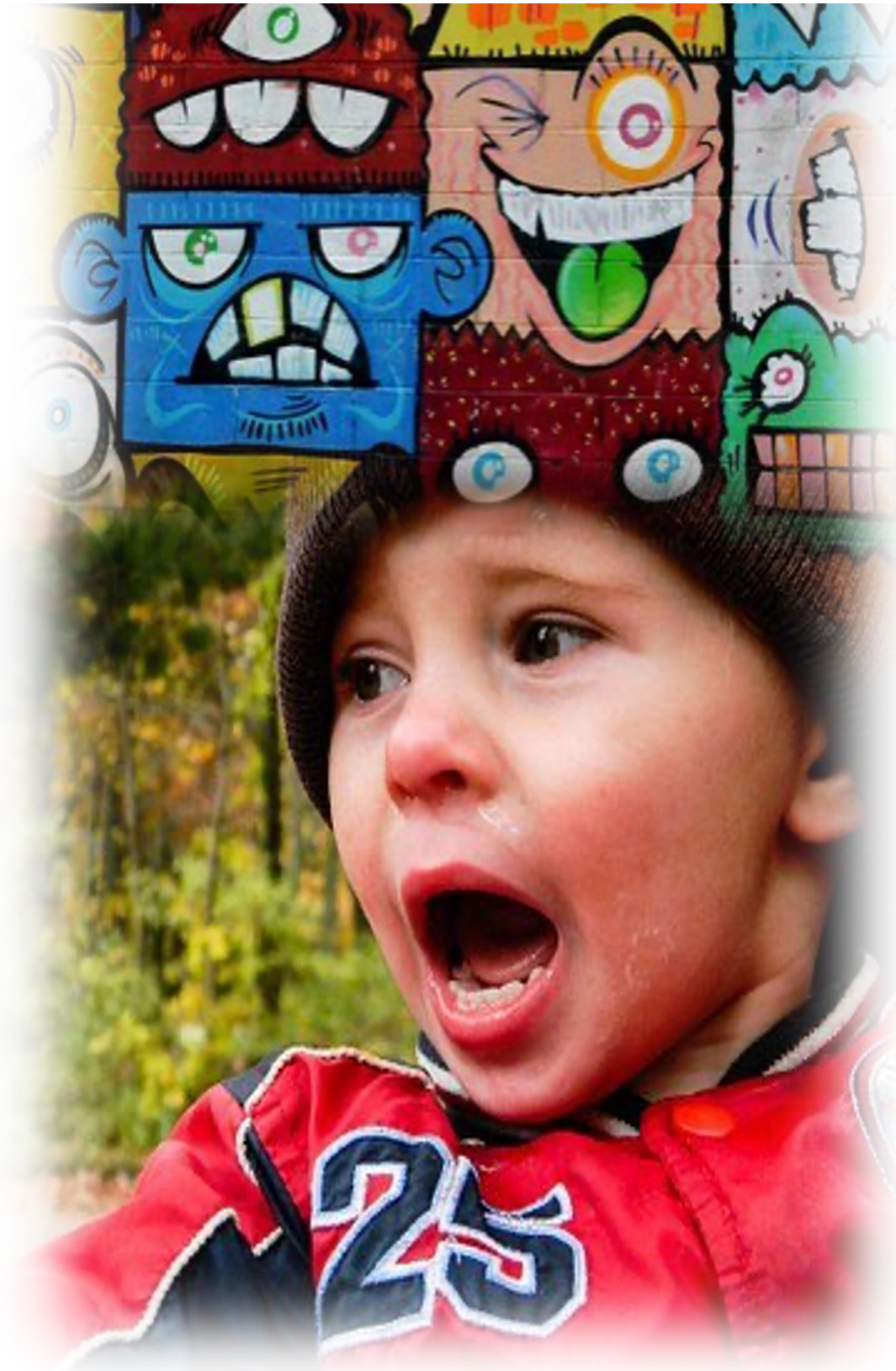
# Agenda

- What is Challenging Behavior?
- What are our attitudes about challenging behavior?
- Types of challenging behaviors
- Reasons behind certain behaviors
- Teaching strategies designed to decrease challenging behavior





Any child can exhibit challenging behavior. To begin with, it is developmentally appropriate early in life, and all children continue to use it as they grow—once in a while, when they're angry or having a bad day. Then there are the children whose problems are more difficult, the children who have come to rely on challenging behavior as the best way to respond to a situation. Their behavior is challenging in all three aspects of the definition and demands very special care and handling. With the appropriate information and strategies, the adults in their lives can play a pivotal role, helping these children avoid serious risk and blossom into the fully functioning people all children deserve to become.





# What is Challenging Behavior?

Behavior that.....

- interferes with children's learning, development and success at play
- is harmful to the child, other children or adults
- puts a child at higher risk for later social problems or school failure





## **What is CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR?**

Challenging behavior in young children is an issue for many teachers. Challenging behavior is any behavior that interferes with the child's optimal development, learning, or play.

The behavior may inhibit pro-social behavior or harm the child and those around the child. Examples include aggressive behaviors like hitting, spitting, biting, destroying objects, or bullying. Many children discover the use of physical aggression before their first birthday, as they become interested in controlling their own possessions and activities. In one study, most mothers reported that their children grabbed, pushed, bit, hit, attacked, bullied, or were "cruel" by the time they turned 2 years old. Children with siblings exhibit more aggressive behavior than only children, and when there's a brother or sister in the family, boys and girls behave equally aggressively. This behavior is challenging for the child. It puts the child in danger by preventing him from learning what he needs to know to succeed in school and get along well with his peers. It is also challenging for him because he probably doesn't have much control over it. Even if he knows what to do instead—and chances are he doesn't—his ability to regulate his feelings and actions just isn't up to the job yet. Improving matters will be an enormous challenge for him.



# What is Challenging Behavior?

- The reasons for challenging behavior are not always clear
- Young children often transfer their expectations about their closest caregivers onto their teachers
- It is scary for a child to feel out of control
- Behavior takes time to change
- A child needs to develop trust
- A child needs to feel safe



# Types of Challenging Behavior

- Separation Anxiety
- Biting
- Toddlers are not developmentally ready to share
- Temper Tantrums





# Biting

- There are many causes
  - Teething pain, Hungry or Thirsty
  - Exploration
  - Need more adult attention or wants attention
  - Unable to express needs
  - Frustration or Anger or Feels threatened
  - Overwhelmed, Too much noise, light or people
  - Stressful changes in life (new baby)
  - Showing affection





# What are Our Attitudes about Challenging Behavior?

- What behaviors push your buttons?
- How do these behaviors make you feel?
- How does this impact your relationship with a child and his/her family?







Perhaps more to the point, challenging behavior is challenging for us, the people around him, his family and teachers. In the face of this behavior, we often find ourselves at a loss. We don't know how to turn things around, how to make the situation tenable, how to help the child get back on track, behaving appropriately and feeling good about himself. Yet it is essential for us to rise to this challenge.

The child's future can depend on it—to say nothing of our own sanity and the well-being of the other children in the classroom. By its very nature, a challenge is difficult, but once conquered it brings incredible rewards. This is a challenge that is worthy of your very best efforts.

It is important to look first at ourselves. Is there something about my behavior that is influencing the child's behavior?

What are my expectations? Are they realistic?

What are the expectations for the parents?

Are they the same or different. It is important for caregivers and parents to work together.



# Attitudes about Challenging Behavior...

- We are responsible for managing our personal stress and often our thoughts influence how we feel
- These thoughts will affect how we feel
- Thoughts precede actions and actions are often related to our thoughts. So think CALM!

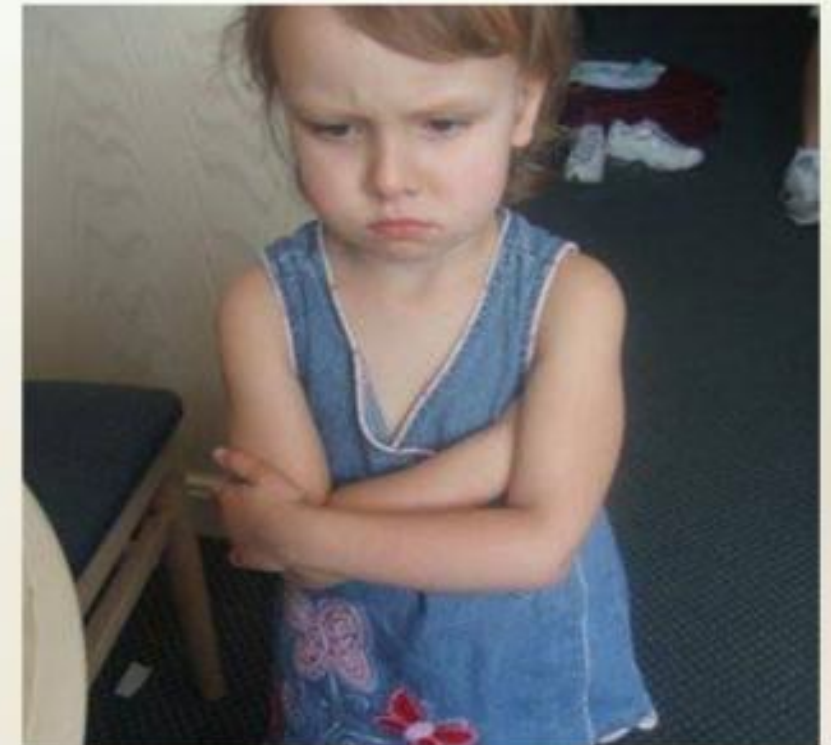




# All behavior is a form of communication

**Everybody communicates through behavior.**

An infant may cry when she is hungry or wet, just like an adult may yawn when he is bored at work. Adults and children are communicating something through their behavior during every moment in every day, even if they are not aware of it. A child's problematic or inappropriate behavior is a sign that he is upset and that something is not right.





# There is always a reason for problem behavior

- Challenging behavior usually has a message
  - *“I am bored” “I am sad”*
  - *“I need some attention”*





**There is always a reason for problem behavior.**

Children sometimes have trouble communicating, because they may not know the words to describe how they are feeling or what to do in a difficult situation. At these times, children may act out their feelings or needs. Thus children engage in challenging behavior for a reason. The purpose may be getting someone's attention, stopping an activity they don't like, or gaining sensory pleasure — but there is always a reason behind the behavior.

Challenging behavior usually has a message

*“I am bored”*

*“I am sad”*

*“I need some attention”*

I feel hurtful, I am angry, I am frustrated.

What are some other messages a challenging behavior may be saying?

Children often use challenging behavior when they lack social or communication skills. These are skills that need to be taught. Children need to be taught how to ask for help. How to say please. How to wait for a turn. How to be a friend.



# There can be many reasons behind one specific behavior

- Attention: Obtain or Escape
  - Attention from peers
  - Attention from adults





**There can be many reasons behind one specific behavior.**

Children with challenging behavior are sending adults the message that something is not right or that their needs are not being met. There could be many reasons for a single behavior, such as being hungry, scared, hurt, tired, bored, wet, sad or angry. Some children have a hard time knowing how to tell adults they are angry, so they act out in ways that get them into trouble. Other children may engage in behavior that seems destructive, because they enjoy the physical sensation, for example punching things or pulling threads from clothing. Sometimes children feel unsafe or out of control, so they take inappropriate action over the things they do control, like being able to kick or hurt someone. A child who has tried several times to communicate to adults about what he needs, but whose needs remain unmet, will often use problem behavior as a way of sending a very loud message. A child either wants to obtain or escape attention from peers or adults.

Can you think of an example where a child is trying to escape attention?

Can you think of an example where a child is trying to obtain attention?



# There can be many reasons behind one specific behavior

- Tangible (something you can touch): Obtain or Escape
  - Activity/task
  - Toy
  - Food
  - Materials







# Reasons Behind Behavior

- Time of the day
- Place or activity where it happens
- Who is with the child (adults, children)?
- What happened just prior to behavior?





# There can be many reasons behind one specific behavior

- Children may need to obtain or escape light, motion, noise or other stimulation





**A child may be sensitive to sensory stimulation.**

Children may need to obtain or escape light, motion, noise or other stimulation. Some children calm themselves down with repetitive motion such as rocking. Another child may want to obtain or escape noise. Another child may want to escape the texture or taste or smell of an item. One child may find water relaxing and another may find it stressful if they are super sensitive to temperature.





# Children behavior has a function – what are some of those functions?

Adults can learn to understand and interpret children's challenging behavior. Since children often use their behavior to tell us what they need, adults can help the child by figuring out the meaning behind the child's behavior. All children, but especially those who display challenging behavior, need the consistency of a reliable and loving adult who will provide support and guidance, especially during difficult times. Just as it is important to find meaning in children's behavior, it is equally important for adults to be aware of the meaning in their own behavior. Children learn a lot through the messages that adults send everyday.





# Support, not punishment

- Children's challenging behavior can be reduced with support, not punishment





# Support, not punishment

**Children's challenging behavior can be reduced with support, not punishment.**

Once adults understand what children are communicating through their behavior, they can respond better. When children feel respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behavior to communicate. Yelling at or punishing a child for a behavior may stop the behavior for the moment, but it does not give the child support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations.

When adults use punishment, they are sending the message that anger is a good way to solve problems. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life.



# Be Understanding

- Watch for warning signs
- Stay CALM
- Reflect feelings
- Distract or redirect
- Give two choices
- Help child express feelings
- Stay close, use soft calm words





# Talk to the Child

Teach child how to:

- Request attention
- Request help
- Ask for a turn
- Ask for item
- Ask for a hug
- Wait

Do not ignore the child's problem behavior and think that it will go away over time. Talk and calmly ask her why she has been acting out in . Explain to her that her behavior is improper and that it must stop. She may tell you the reason she has been acting out. For example, the other children may not be playing with her and she feels left out.







# What is the best place to start?

- Use visual schedules
- Have several same item
- Use choices
- Modify
- Use timers
- Follow schedule
- Express feelings
- Offer choices
- Anticipate transitions





# How do I involve the child's family?

- Family Involvement is Key





# How do I involve the child's family?

Family involvement is key to reducing challenging behaviors. Include the parents in the planning process and allow them to feel invested in the intervention process. Ask them about the child's behavior at home, life changes, or medical problems. As a teacher, you can be a helpful contact and source of information for the parents.

Involving the family in planning and implementing the intervention makes the reduction of challenging behavior longer lasting in young children. Teachers can take note of these essential features in reducing challenging behavior and utilize them in the classroom. Having researched based skills and techniques to use with children makes teaching exceptional children easier. Teachers have a large impact on young children and using these effective techniques is key.



# I don't have time in my classroom to implement additional interventions?

- Create a schedule
- Look at the physical environment
- Provide materials that reflect the children's interest
- Encourage social interactions





Many effective strategies in reducing challenging behavior can benefit all children, simple changes to the classroom's physical space and routine can reduce some children's challenging behavior. A positive relationship improves children's self-concept, confidence, and sense of security. This relationship can influence and improve children's behavior.

Preventative practices include teaching children about routine and expectations, creating a schedule and physical environment that fits the children, and providing materials that reflect the children's interests and encourage social interactions. Giving children attentions for using pro-social behavior is another important preventative practice. Teachers can help children with friendship skills, anger and impulse control, interpersonal problem solving, and emotional literacy. These skills help children identify their feelings and deal with them in a healthy and productive manner.



# What is the quickest and easiest way to reduce challenging behavior?

- Have “safe place”
- Use visual schedules
- Modify expectations
- First/then or When/then
- Use choices
- Reduce distractions





# What is the quickest and easiest way to reduce challenging behavior?

What is the quickest and easiest way to reduce challenging behavior?

Every child is different. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix to reducing challenging behavior. Simply forming a good relationship has numerous benefits.

Often, young children with challenging behavior are not identified and do not receive appropriate services. When children are not identified nor receive services, challenging behavior tend to become long lasting and negatively impact school success, peer interactions, and family interactions. When examining prevention, families who utilize physical and mental health services are less likely to have children with challenging behavior. Parents who are nurturing and use positive behavior strategies have healthy relationships with their children. This leads to fewer problem behaviors.

Likewise, teachers who have good interactions with children and create a high quality child care environment are less likely to see challenging behavior in their classrooms. Teaching children replacement skills, altering the children's social and physical environments, implementing interventions over time and multiple locations are essential in reducing challenging behaviors.



# Modify Physical Space

- Look at the picture. Some children may have difficulty in this room to over stimulation.







# Modify Physical Space

Modifications to the physical space and program of the classroom can reduce challenging behavior. Teaching social skills and creating a nurturing social environment are helpful. Positive behavior support along with guidance and appropriate punishment are also discussed.





# Class Overview

- State the behavior
- What are the child's strengths?
- What information can give you insights into the behavior?  
(Patterns)
- What is the function or goals of the behavior?
- What strategies could you use to teach the child new skills?



# Resources

- [http://www.crs.ymca.org/lib-local/assets/Documents/Brochures/ChallengingBehaviors\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.crs.ymca.org/lib-local/assets/Documents/Brochures/ChallengingBehaviors_Eng.pdf)
- <http://www.extension.org/pages/25735/handling-challenging-behaviors-in-child-care#.VLVsLk10yM8>
- <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/challenging-behavior/>





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