The Safety First Curriculum
A Set of Guidelines and Procedures for Maintaining a Safe Environment

Statement of the Problem
- Increasing rate of problem behavior in preschool settings
- Higher expulsion rate in preschools than schools
- Lack of training for staff to support children with problem behaviors
- Preschool staff requesting training, support, and procedures for maintaining a safe environment

Increasing Rates of Problem Behavior: National Data
- In 1980’s, 10-15% of preschoolers exhibited mild to moderate problem behaviors (e.g., Cornely & Bromet, 1986; Earls, 1980; Richman, Stevenson, & Graham, 1983)
- In 2000, estimated 25% of preschoolers met criteria for Oppositional Defiant Disorder (Webster-Stratton, 2000)
- In 2002, 22-39% of preschoolers exhibited clinically significant levels of problem behaviors (Kaiser, Cai, Hancock, & Foster, 2005).

Increasing Rates of Problem Behavior: Pre-Kindergarten Expulsion
- Almost 11% of Oregon’s pre-kindergarten teachers reported to have expelled at least one child during the 2003-2004 school year.
- Nationally, 6.7 per 1,000 children were expelled from pre-kindergarten classroom; 3.2 times higher than the expulsion rate for K-12 students (Gilliam, 2005).

Self Assessment
When working with young children:
- Have you felt at risk of being injured?
- Has a student ever scratched you, pinched you, bit you, kicked you, or pulled your hair?
- Have you wondered if there was a better way to deal with a potentially dangerous situation?
- Have you ignored student behavior because you didn’t know what to do or how to do it?
- Have you observed someone use more force than was needed?
**Responding to Young Children’s Problem Behavior**

- Strategies and interventions implemented in early childhood settings should be:
  - Research-based
  - Appropriate for the physical size and developmental level of young children
  - Embedded within a continuum of supports that includes a focus on prevention

**Interventions for Young Children who Exhibit Problem Behavior**

- Commercial curricula (e.g., Second Step, Incredible Years) or classroom-specific
- Usually include one or more of the following kinds of strategies:
  - Environmental (e.g., furniture arrangement, picture schedules, timers)
  - Verbal (e.g., use of de-escalation techniques)
  - Physical (e.g., moving a child)

**Getting Physical in Early Childhood Settings**

- Physically touching a young child may be required to maintain the safety of children and/or staff
- Natural to hold, hug, cuddle, tickle, and wrestle with young children
- Challenge in discriminating between appropriate and requested touch and physical touching directed towards reducing problem behavior or maintaining safety

**Physical First Responses and Physical Control**

- Physical First Responses: Something an adult does to or with a child to prevent or de-escalate dangerous behavior. May include physical escort, the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back of a student... for the purpose of inducing the student to walk to a safe location.
- Physical Control (Physical Restraint): An adult uses bodily force to substantially limit the child’s movement.

*"If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.
If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.
If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.
If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.
If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we...***** teach? 
*****punish?*
*Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?*

Tom Horner (NABE President, Counterpoint 1999, p.2)"
Primary Prevention: School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

Secondary Prevention: Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

Tertiary Prevention: Specialized Individualized Systems for Students with High-Risk Behavior

~80% of Students

~15%

~5%

CONTINUUM OF SCHOOL-WIDE INSTRUCTIONAL & POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

The Pyramid Model

- Nurturing and Responsive Relationships
- High Quality Supportive Environments
- Social Emotional Teaching Strategies
- Intensive Individualized Interventions

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Positive Behavior Support

Social Competence & Academic Achievement

OUTCOMES

Systems

DATA

Supporting Decision Making

PRACTICES

Supporting Student Behavior

Assumptions

- We want to prevent injuries and property damage
- We want to teach rather than punish
- Children, families and staff need consistent strategies, common language, and common goals
- Periods of reaction are NOT teachable moments

Format for the Day

1. Define terms used in Safety First Procedures
   - Dangerous behavior
   - Escalation and de-escalation phases
   - First response strategies
   - Physical control
   - L.E.A.D. (Label, ESI, Assist, Direct)
2. Documentation
3. Wrap-up
   - Questions and debrief
   - Assessment of training

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Training Objectives

- Use a common language and definitions for positive behavior supports
- Know when it is appropriate to use first response strategies
- Know how to implement first response strategies
- Know when it is appropriate to use LEAD
- Know how to implement LEAD

Definitions

Objectives

1. What is dangerous behavior and what is not dangerous behavior?
2. What is escalating and de-escalating dangerous behavior?
3. What are first response strategies? What are the different kinds of strategies?
4. What is physical control and what is not physical control?

Dangerous Behavior

- Behavior that:
  a. causes danger to self, danger to others, and/or property damage OR
  b. places the child, others, or property at imminent risk*

*Danger to self, danger to others, or property damage is likely to occur within 3 seconds
Danger to Self, Others

- Any behavior that:
  a. causes physical pain, injury, or tissue damage to the child  **OR**
  b. places the child at imminent risk of pain, injury, or tissue damage

Property Damage

- Any behavior that:
  a. breaks or destroys a permanent product  **OR**
  b. places property at imminent risk of being broken or destroyed

What is escalating and de-escalating dangerous behavior?

Escalating Dangerous Behavior

- A sequence of dangerous behaviors that increases in intensity, and/or frequency, and/or volume

THE ESCALATION CYCLE

What are first response strategies? What are the different kinds of strategies?
First Response Strategies

- Something a teacher does to prevent or de-escalate the child’s dangerous behavior that:
  - Occurs within 3 seconds of the dangerous behavior
  - Prevents access to reinforcement immediately following dangerous behavior
  - Based on the function of the dangerous behavior

Functions of Dangerous Behavior

- Get Something Desired
  - Internal
  - External
  - Example: Visual Stimulation
    - Attention
      - Example: Praise, Smile
    - Object/Activity
      - Example: Toy, Food

Functions of Dangerous Behavior

- Avoid Something Undesirable
  - Internal
    - Example: Hard Work
  - External
    - Attention
      - Example: Difficult Task
    - Task/Event
      - Example: Praise, Smile

Types of First Response Strategies

- Verbal first responses
- Physical first responses
- Environmental first responses
- Mixed response strategies

4

What is physical control and what is not physical control?
Physical Control of Dangerous Behavior

- An adult physically controls a child, against the child's will, in order to prevent injury to the child, others, and/or damage to property
- Also called: envelop procedure, cradle hold, basket hold, physical restraint

Physical First Responses and Physical Control

- Physical First Responses: Something an adult does to or with a child to prevent or de-escalate dangerous behavior. May include physical escort, the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back of a student... for the purpose of inducing the student to walk to a safe location.
- Physical Control (Physical Restraint): An adult uses bodily force to substantially limit the child's movement.

Check-In

Watch video clip and answer the following:

- Does Tim engage in dangerous behavior?
- Is his dangerous behavior escalating or de-escalating?
- Does the staff person use a first response strategy? Which one(s)?
- Does the staff person use physical control?

Response Formula

A Response Formula

1. Empathy Statement
   - "I can see that you really want to..."; "You look like you're feeling..."
2. Describe/Model
   - "If you want a turn with that, say "Can I..."
3. Encourage:
   - Prompt replacement behavior ("You try it--say "Can I...")
4a. If child follows prompt, then praise, encourage, and support
4b. If child isn't able/ready/willing to try replacement behavior, do it for the child ("I'll help you--"Can I..."
5. Assist:
   - Help child reengage by distracting, redirection, or pointing out acceptable choices.

Formulating Empathy Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Statement</th>
<th>Adult Acknowledges Child's Feelings</th>
<th>Adult Acknowledges Function of Child's Behavior</th>
<th>Adult Describes Action S/he Will Take to Help Keep Child Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I just want to play alone!</td>
<td>I can tell you're feeling frustrated.</td>
<td>It's crowded in the block area, but nobody is at the easel.</td>
<td>I'll hold your hand and we'll climb over the blocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I don't want to go outside!</td>
<td>You really like playing in the water.</td>
<td>You want to stay and play at the water table.</td>
<td>I'll help you put some boats in a bucket to take outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I had it first!</td>
<td>That's your favorite truck.</td>
<td>You want a turn with the truck.</td>
<td>I'll hold the truck while we make a plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part III: Judgments

Common Errors in Judgment

- Using physical control too soon
  - Problems: unethical, disrespectful to child, doesn’t teach alternative skills
- Not using physical control when you should
  - Problems: child’s behavior escalates, injuries more likely

Objectives

- When should staff use physical control and when should they not use physical control?
- What are common errors in judgment?

When should staff not use physical control?

- When the behavior doesn’t warrant physical control
  - Does not meet dangerous behavior definition
  - Physical control should not be used as punishment
- When behavior de-escalates following first response strategies or in absence of teacher intervention
- When behavior plan says not to use physical control under any conditions

Responding to Aggression

- Make the Situation Safe
- Support De-escalation
- Follow-Up
- Re-engage

A formula for responding to dangerous behavior
When should staff use physical control?

- When child’s dangerous behavior escalates after first response strategies or after the absence of teacher intervention.
- When the behavior plan says to use physical control following specific dangerous behaviors (rare, but possible).

Part IV: L.E.A.D.

Label
ESI (if necessary)
Assist
Direct

LEAD Considerations

- This technique is intended for all staff who work with preschool children
- Avoid designating one person to execute the LEAD process
- Anticipate the emotional effect on both participants and observers (children, staff and families)

Staff Training

- To support the maximum effectiveness of the LEAD process, it is essential for staff to understand:
  - The function of challenging behavior
  - The Pyramid Model
  - How to effectively implement behavior interventions

Part VI: Documentation and Communication

When do you document?

- Any time someone uses physical control (follows the L.E.A.D. process).
- Any time someone uses seclusion.
Safety First Recommendation: When do you have a meeting?

- Any time an emergency safety intervention is used with a child, regardless of whether or not the child has a behavior intervention plan (BIP), or an IEP.
- An ESI should not be a planned intervention for a specific student. The interventions in a BIP should focus on preventing the need for an ESI.
- However, if an IEP team decides to include the use of an ESI in the IEP or BIP, Kansas ESI regulations still apply.

The L.E.A.D. Incident Report

- Quick and easy to complete
- Should be completed as soon as possible after the incident and the child is back to his or her “normal activity” to ensure accuracy of report

Purpose of Incident Report

- Document that the incident occurred
- Provide information that might help prevent the need for a future ESI
- Ensure consistent and appropriate use of L.E.A.D.

Programs may modify the Incident Report form to meet their needs, but remember to KEEP IT SIMPLE!

Review of Incident Reports

- Review data from incident reports regularly for individual children and classrooms to determine:
  - Individual child needs
  - Individual staff training needs
  - Classroom training needs
  - Program training needs
  - Other needs

Part V: The Safety First Process
Is the child on a behavior plan?

De-escalate?

Is there imminent danger?

Follow behavior plan if it includes a safety plan

Use First Response Options

Continue program and reinforce calming

Implement L.E.A.D.

Complete incident report

No

Yes

No

Yes

No

Yes

SAFETY FIRST

SAFETY FIRST

SAFETY FIRST

Create behavior plan

Safety First Resources

ECSE Behavior Cadre Technical Assistance Manual
B.E.S.S.T. for Early Childhood Educators (Behavioral, Emotional, & Social Skills Training)
(Download these at sewg.edublogs.org)

Promoting Social-Emotional Competence (csefel.vanderbilt.edu)

Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

Teaching Tools (challengingbehavior.org)

Technical Assistance Center on Social-Emotional Intervention for Young Children

Positive Beginnings: Supporting Young Children with Challenging Behavior by Mary Frances Hanline, Amy Wetherby, and Julian Woods of Florida State University and Lise Fox and Rochelle Lentini of University of South Florida

Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies for Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood Environments by Mariana Kaiser and Judy Sklar Rasminsky

Request Safety First:

www.ksdetasn.org

Questions: prinkel@ku.edu

Needs Assessment

- Programs may wish to use formal or informal processes to assess staff training needs

- Inventory of Practices for Promoting Social Emotional Competence (CSEFEL)


Part VII: Questions and Answers

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