

Early Childhood PBIS

The Hitchcock County Early Child Care program uses a positive and proactive approach to helping all children develop social and emotional skills. We are implementing a program-wide approach, the Pyramid Model, to ensure that all teachers and staff use effective and culturally responsive teaching practices that promote the social and emotional competence of all children, provide more individualized interventions to children who need additional instruction or behavior support, and include family input to ensure that interventions are appropriate and relevant within their culture and values. Our program-wide approach is guided by a leadership team that uses data for decision-making, provides training and support to teachers, and fosters partnerships with families.

In our program, we have established the following program-wide expectations for all children and adults:

Be Safe — Be Kind — Be respectful

All staff members teach all children about these expectations and link classroom rules to these core values. The expectations can also be taught at home and link to the rules that you might have for your child at home and in the community. We find that when we are all on the same page with our expectations, children are more able to understand and meet those expectations.

Our staff members use only positive methods of child guidance including natural and logical consequences, redirection, anticipation of and reduction of potential problems, and the encouragement of cooperative behavior. Staff members are prohibited from using corporal punishment or humiliating, threatening, frightening, or shame-based disciplinary techniques. All staff members receive training in developmental[^] appropriate and child guidance procedures, practical strategies to support the equity of response across all children, and are monitored on their implementation of those practices.

If children have behavior challenges that are a concern, we will contact the family so that we can work together to develop and implement a plan for teaching the child social and emotional skills and reduce the behavior challenges. We also encourage families to ask us their questions about appropriate child guidance techniques and seek our assistance if they have concerns about the child's social, emotional, or behavioral development.

If children engage in behavior that is harmful to themselves or to others, staff might remove the child from the activity or room until the child is calm and able to return to the classroom. If the behavior incident is dangerous or might be physically harmful, we will seek to conference with the family immediately with the goal of developing an effective approach to support the child. For some children, an evaluation, consultation with professionals outside the program, or additional services might be needed to ensure the child can be successfully supported in the program.

Promoting the Use of Developmental[^] Appropriate and Positive Approaches

All program staff should be trained in how to encourage child appropriate behavior and how to redirect children who have behavior difficulties. All children are likely to have problem behaviors when they are sad, frustrated, angry, don't understand expectations, are overwhelmed, or are tired. Classroom personnel should be guided (and trained) to understand what behaviors might be expected from children at different developmental stages and the responses to use that are developmentally appropriate.

In the preschool classroom, it is expected that teachers will respond to a challenging behavior using all of the following three essential strategies:

1. Teacher implements developmentally appropriate strategies (e.g., redirection, planned ignoring) in response to challenging behavior;
2. Teacher responds to children by stating the expected behavior in positive terms (i.e., what to do) or providing instruction in an acceptable alternative behavior; and
3. Teacher provides positive attention or positive descriptive feedback to the child when the child begins behaving appropriately. The leadership team should address whether all staff have the training they need to be responsive to children when they have behavior challenges and that teachers are responding in a manner that is supportive and instructive. In addition, the leadership team should examine their data on child behavior incidents (using the Behavior Incident Report system or BIRs) to make sure that teachers respond to behaviors in a manner that is effective and equitable.

Developing a Program Plan for Responding to Crisis Situations

It is expected that at some point, a staff member might feel that a child's behavior is a crisis or that assistance is needed in the classroom to ensure that a child with challenging behavior is safe and not compromising the safety of other children. The leadership team should outline the process that they expect staff members to follow if a crisis was to occur. This plan might be called a "crisis management plan" or "safety net procedures" (see sample below). Once the leadership team develops the plan, all staff must be informed of the steps (verbally and in writing) and trained on the procedures and the occasions that would warrant their use. The leadership team should review the procedures and their use over time to ensure that the plan is being used effectively.

Safety-Net Procedures Crisis Risk Management Plan

1. When a child has challenging behavior and is a danger to themselves or others:
2. Use the intercom, phone, or loud voice to solicit assistance from another adult. "I need help immediately."

Teacher should implement first response de-escalation procedures that might include a verbal, physical, or environmental action. Teachers should verbally validate child's emotional distress (e.g., "I see you are frustrated."). Teachers should not increase or reassert demands on child (e.g., "You need to pick all of these up.") until child has de-escalated.

a) Verbal - Provide child with direction about what to do (e.g., "Put the sand in the sand box."), direction about appropriate behavior (e.g., "Ask for a turn"), direction to de-escalate ("Take a deep breath."), or validate emotion ("it looks like you are very angry.").

b) Physical - Position yourself between the child and dangerous items and others with whom the child is upset. Interrupt aggressive action with physical guidance (e.g., take block out of hand of child threatening to throw), and guide child to correct action.

c) Environmental - Remove materials from area. Remove children from

proximity of the child having challenging behavior. Put a barrier between child and others.

3. If first response strategies are not effective, prevent the child from hurting self or others by:

- a) Removing the other children, but keeping all children within visual range;
- b) Verbally redirecting the child to quiet space in the room;
- c) Demonstrating and encouraging the child's use of the Tucker Turtle strategy, or
- d) Blocking child aggressions or property destruction (without touching child).

4. Person providing classroom assistance will either remove the child (if safe to guide child to leave) from the area or ask the teacher to remove the other children.

5. Person providing classroom assistance will remain with the child until situation de-escalates.

6. After child de-escalates, adult will debrief with child using a developmentally appropriate process and support the child back to the group (e.g., "Let's talk about what happened. "What can you do if this happens again?"). This should include a restatement of program-wide expectations.

7. A Behavior Incident Report and any other required incident reports are completed.

8. Family is contacted by program administrator and informed of the incident.

9- Debriefing meeting with teacher is scheduled to occur at end of the day or following morning. If an individualized support plan has not been developed and is needed, the process will be initiated. If a support plan is

in place, it will be reviewed.

Promoting Collaboration and Problem Solving

Program staff members benefit from being able to problem solve with other teachers around classroom management strategies and addressing child challenging behavior. The leadership team can support this process by encouraging teachers to meet with other teachers or by offering planned meetings that provide a forum for teacher collaboration and idea sharing.

Implementing a Team Process for Behavior Support

The program must have an identified staff member or members who are trained to facilitate the functional assessment and behavior support planning process for children who have persistent challenging behavior. These staff members might be consultants to the program or staff members within the program who have behavioral expertise. These staff members might be referred to as a behavior specialist or behavior coach.

The person(s) filling the role as the behavior specialist is an important member of the leadership team and should attend the monthly meetings as a team member. The behavior specialist should receive training that is specific to the use of an assessment-based team process for the design of an individualized behavior support plan. This training typically includes a core training in a functional approach for addressing child challenging behavior (e.g., CSEFEL modules 3a and 3b) and a training in the procedures in guiding a team to design and implement a plan (e.g., Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children).

The behavior specialist guides the development and implementation of a behavior support plan; but is not the person who implements the plan. The behavior plan will be implemented by the persons who interact with the child in everyday routines and activities. Thus, the teacher and family are primary team members that are included in plan development and implementation.

Sample Flow Chart for Behavior Support - Phase 1

Step 1 Initial Identification: Teacher has child with behavior support needs (this might follow one dangerous incident or might be due to behavior that has not responded to classroom procedures).

1. Teacher contacts behavior specialist and provides copies of BIR.
2. Behavior specialist schedules observation and debriefing meeting with teacher
3. Teacher continues to collect BIR data.

Step 2: Behavior specialist observation and meeting with teacher

1. Behavior specialist reviews BIR forms
2. Behavior specialist observes during times/activities where behavior is most likely to occur
3. Behavior specialist debriefs with teacher following observation. Teacher and behavior specialist determine next step (selecting one of the paths below). In all paths, teacher continues to monitor using BIR.

Flow Chart for Behavior Support: Phase 2 Developing a Behavior Support Plan

Step 1: Functional Assessment:

1. Behavior specialist conducts interview with family and teacher (and others if needed).
2. Behavior specialist conducts additional observation in classroom as needed.
3. Behavior specialist summarizes functional assessment information for review at team meeting.

Step 2: Team Meeting for Support Plan Development:

1. Team meeting with teacher, family member, and behavior specialist

convened.

2. Behavior specialist reviews functional assessment summary and identifies hypotheses with team.
3. Team is guided to brainstorm plan by behavior specialist
4. After meeting, behavior specialist sends all team members written support plan, action plan for implementation, and data collection forms.

Step 3: Plan Implementation Support:

1. Behavior specialist meets with teacher to review written support plan and data collection forms.
2. Behavior specialist provides coaching session(s) for teacher on plan implementation.
3. Behavior specialist provides phone call or meeting with family to review behavior support plan and offer support for implementation (if appropriate).

Step 4: Team Evaluation of Progress:

1. Teacher provides behavior specialist with data collection weekly in first month of implementation.
2. Teacher contacts with weekly updates on child progress in first month of implementation.
3. Team meets to review child progress and make adjustments to plan if needed.

Supporting Children with Behavior Challenges in Partnership with Families

Families should be full partners in all processes designed to provide individualized supports to a child. Families bring unique knowledge about their child that can be vital to planning effective interventions. Moreover, the program can provide assistance to families for the use of effective social, emotional, and behavioral support strategies at home and in the

community.

The leadership team should examine how families will be supported as partners in all activities related to supporting children with challenging behavior. This includes communicating with families, asking for family input, addressing family concerns, providing families with practical strategies to use at home, and making sure that families are a part of team meetings. The leadership team might consider making changes in policies and procedures so that partnerships with families are promoted and supported. In addition, the leadership team might provide training to program staff or provide program staff with materials (e.g., family routine guide, back-pack connections) that help program staff provide information and support to families.