

Using Function-Informed Support to Address Challenging Behavior within Routines

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations



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Introduction

Young children exhibit behavior that adults find challenging for a variety of reasons. They might engage in challenging behavior that is developmentally expected as they have not yet developed the social, emotional, or communication skills to express their needs. A child might be overwhelmed by strong emotions that make it difficult to use their skills, or they may have developed patterns of interactions with others where challenging behavior works to gain access or avoid attention, items, or activities. What is clear about behavior is that it is a form of communication that might meet a need or express a strong emotion.

It is important to understand what behavior is communicating to address challenging behavior. This is referred to as the function of behavior. The function of the behavior falls into two large categories: 1) behaviors used to avoid or escape, and 2) behaviors used to access or obtain. For example, a toddler might cry to obtain a teacher's support or comfort when waking from their nap. While the toddler is not intentionally planning to cry when waking, the behavior serves the function of accessing comfort. Another example is a preschooler with language delays who was not engaged in morning meeting activities. The child was fidgety, touched peers, and threw the rhythm instruments during the music activity. Frustrated by the child's disruptive behavior, the teacher directed the child to leave the group and sit at a table. The child's behavior served the function of escaping morning meeting activities.

Determining the function involves reflecting on what happens before the behavior and what we know about the child, their experiences, interests, and capacities. We consider the social context of the behavior (e.g., what the activity is, what others are doing, what is expected) and the events or interactions that occur before the behavior (i.e., antecedents). We also reflect on what happens immediately after the behavior or the responses to the behavior, and consider whether the behavior results in getting something or getting out of something. Often, the function is straightforward. For example, a child might tantrum to get a toy, to get another turn, or throw materials to get out of an activity. When the function is clear, we can identify how to change what happens before the behavior (prevention strategies) and our responses to the behavior (response strategies) to decrease the likelihood that the behavior will occur. However, we must consider an essential third element: helping the child learn the social and communication skills they need to participate in activities and interactions without challenging behavior.

Sometimes, a child will engage in persistent, challenging behavior, and the function of the behavior is difficult to determine. Teachers might reflect that the behavior occurs "out of the blue" or "all the time" and are unsure how to prevent, respond, and teach the child. On these occasions, a collaborative team that includes the teaching staff and family as core team members conducts a functional behavior assessment to determine the function of the behavior and develops a behavior support plan.

Purpose of TTYC

Teaching Tools for Young Children (TTYC) provides a simple resource for practitioners and coaches to guide children struggling with challenging behavior in routines and activities. TTYC suggests specific step-by-step strategies for practitioners to consider when they know the **function**¹ (or purpose) of a child's challenging behavior. *TTYC does not provide instruction on determining functions of behavior, nor does it replace a formal functional behavior assessment.* However, TTYC does offer strategies and resources to support children's successful engagement in early childhood routines and activities.

TTYC includes information about how to use the Routine Guide and develop a plan for the child. A practitioner (i.e., teacher or care provider) might use Teaching Tools independently or when working with a coach. This manual presents the steps to use the tools to support young children.

Teaching Tools and the Pyramid Model

TTYC is designed to be used in environments where practitioners actively implement the Pyramid Model and have a strong foundation of universal practices. When practitioners have nurturing and responsive relationships and high-quality environments paired with a focus on teaching children social-emotional skills, very few children will have behavior problems that exceed what is developmentally expected. However, for the few children who might need additional support (e.g., tier two targeted social-emotional supports), Teaching Tools is a resource that can help guide the identification of those strategies.

Teaching Tools can be used when:

- A child has difficulties in routines and activities beyond what is developmentally expected and is not responsive to the implementation of universal Pyramid Model practices.
- The function of the child's behavior is evident, and the implementation of a comprehensive functional assessment may not be necessary.
- The child's behavior can be addressed by modifying the environment and using individualized social and emotional teaching strategies.

General Considerations

Whenever we are concerned about a child's behavior, we want to consider the following before we decide on how we might want to respond:

- Account for medical needs. Partner with families to ensure that routines, activities, and expectations respect and respond to any medical needs the child may have.
- Consider the child's experiences outside of school by ensuring that families do not have unmet needs (e.g., food, housing, healthcare).
- Offer the child opportunities to make choices and guide their participation in activities in meaningful ways. Align activities with the child's interests and strengths, developmental needs, and family priorities to support authentic engagement.

¹ https://challengingbehavior.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BIR_Motivation_Tip_sheet.pdf

- Provide multiple ways for the child to engage. Offer varied forms of participation so that the child can connect with routines in a way that feels relevant and engaging to them.
- Honor the child's home language. Incorporate their home language into routines, visuals, songs, and activities to support and build on their confidence and emergent bilingualism.
- Ensure the child has access to a communication method they prefer across routines. Provide the child with individualized methods, such as visuals, augmentative or assistive communication (AAC) devices, and other supports to express ideas, preferences, responses, wants, and needs.
- Approach each child with the understanding that their experiences, whether or not identified as trauma, shape how they learn and engage. Build trusting relationships, establish predictable routines, and offer flexible responses to help children feel safe, valued, and understood.

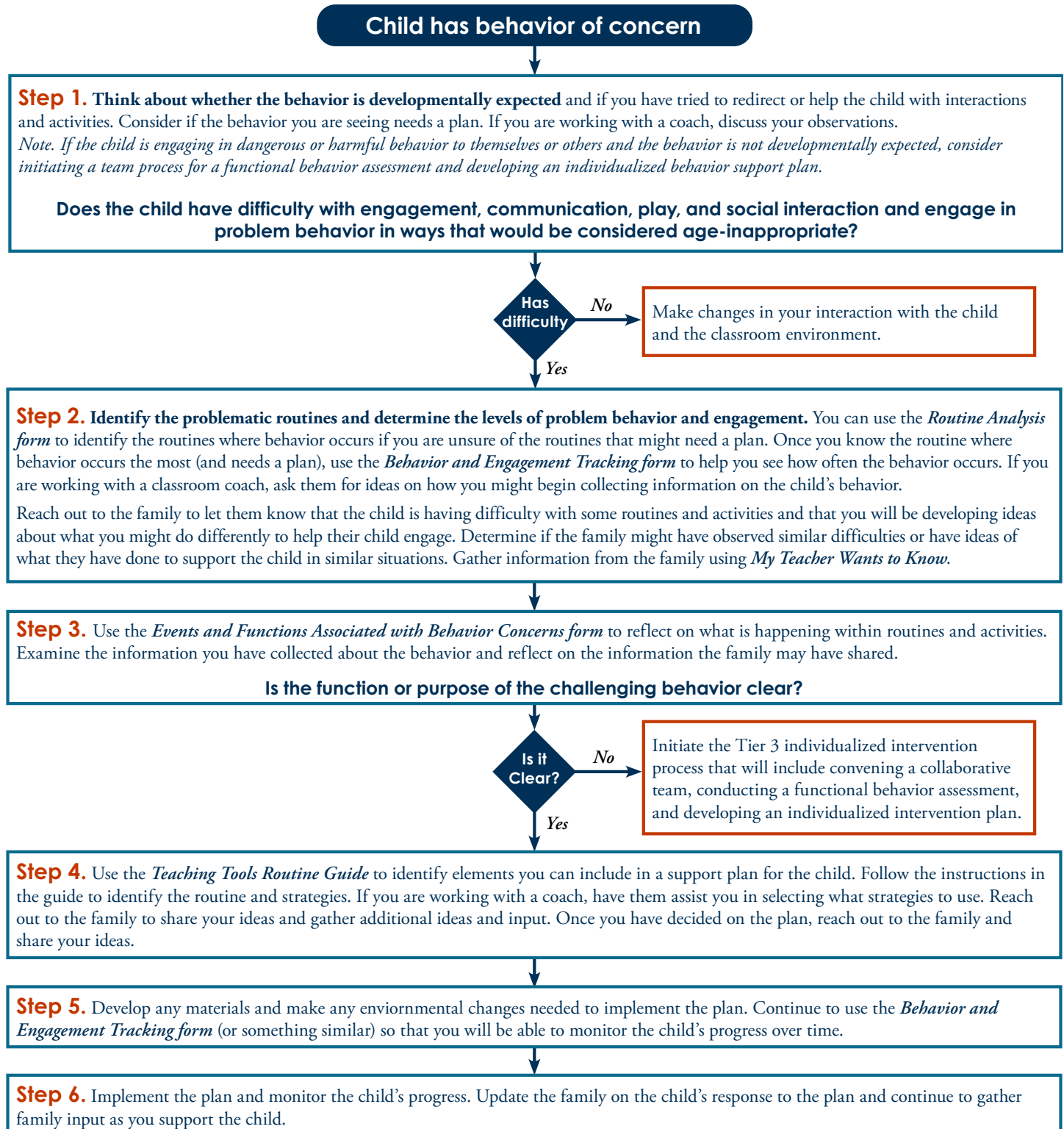
What Teaching Tools Include

Teaching Tools provide the following tools to develop and implement a plan of support for an individual child:

1. **Teaching Tools Flow Chart** – The flow chart will guide you in determining whether teaching tools are appropriate for addressing the behavior and the steps to take to develop support strategies.
2. **Tools for Partnering with Families** – Resources are included to inform families about the development of support strategies and to gather family information and ideas (e.g., My Teacher Wants to Know).
3. **Data Forms to Inform Planning Support and Monitoring Progress** – Teaching tools include data forms (e.g., Routine Analysis form, Behavior and Engagement Tracking form, and the Events and Functions Associated with Behavior Concerns form) to identify when behavior is occurring, identify possible functions, and monitor progress over time.
4. **The Routine Guide** – The Routine Guide provides strategies to prevent, teach, and respond to behavior within everyday routines and activities.
5. **Child Routine Plan** – You will use the Child Routine Plan form to write down the plan for implementing strategies to address the behavior within routines.

Using the Teaching Tools Flow Chart

Before using the TTYC, use the flow chart to determine whether the target child can be supported by using the TTYC and review the steps for using them. Each step is explained in more detail on the pages that follow the flow chart.



Step 1. Considering whether the child might need more support.

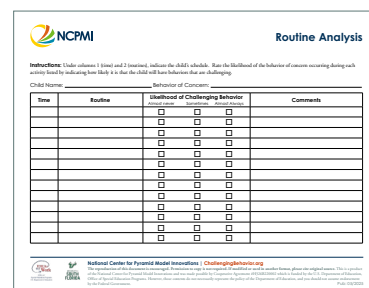
A critical first step in supporting children with challenging behavior is assessing whether you need additional tools and strategies in addition to developmentally appropriate practice and implementing the universal level of Pyramid Model practices. In this step, consider if the behavior you see needs a plan by thinking about whether the behavior is developmentally expected. If it is behavior that is typical of the child's age, think about what efforts have been made to develop a nurturing and responsive relationship with the child and if adults respond to the behavior consistently with developmentally appropriate redirection or assistance. Discuss your observations and gain their perspectives and ideas if you are working with a coach. You might not need to use TTYC, but you can resolve your concerns by strengthening your use of Pyramid Model practices for nurturing and responsive relationships and high-quality environments.

If the child is engaging in dangerous or harmful behavior to themselves or others and the behavior is not developmentally expected, consider initiating a team process for a functional behavior assessment and developing an individualized behavior support plan. TTYC is NOT sufficient to address the behavior support needs of children with severe and persistent challenging behavior.

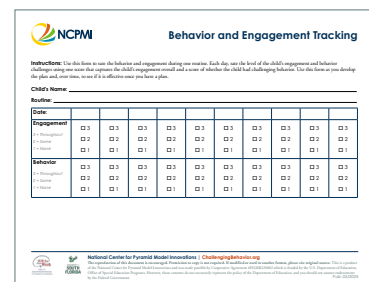
Step 2. Identify the activity or routine in which the behavior occurs, begin tracking when and how often, and reach out to the family.

Collecting data on when and how often the behavior occurs is important. If you are unsure of the routine where most behavior occurs, use the **Routine Analysis form** (Appendix A) to help you figure it out. This simple form will show you the time of day or the activity where challenging behavior occurs. Once you have identified the routine that will be the focus of your plan, you should also track the behavior over time. The **Behavior and Engagement Tracking form** (Appendix B) is easy to use and takes only two or three minutes to complete daily.

Routine Analysis – Use this form if you are unsure of what routine you might want to address with a plan. It will help you identify the routines where challenging behavior is most likely. The form is completed by reflecting on a typical day in your setting. You note the time of day and the major activities or routines. Then, you rate how often challenging behavior occurs within each routine. After you complete the form, you might see a pattern of when challenging behavior is most likely to occur. If multiple routines are identified, think about which is the most difficult for the child and use that routine to develop a plan.



Behavior and Engagement Tracking – Use this form to rate behavior and engagement during one routine. Each day, use a single score to rate the level of the child's engagement and behavior challenges. This score should capture the child's engagement overall and whether the child had challenging behavior. Use this form as you develop the plan and, over time, see if the plan is effective.



Communicate with families about the use of TTYC as early in the process as possible. Developing a plan *with* family input helps you move forward as partners. Reach out to the family to let them know that their child is having difficulty with some routines and activities, and that you will be developing ideas about what you might do differently to help their child engage.

Considerations when communicating with families

- Engage the family through in-person communication, phone conversation, or email (see *sample email* in Appendix C). Use the method of communication preferred by the family.
- Initiate communication by sharing strengths and positive comments about their child.
- Communicate in the family's preferred language.
- Consider the family's previous experience and relationships with the school system. Families might have been harmed or had negative experiences and interactions with previous communication involving school staff. Approach each conversation with positive intent and a collaborative mindset.
- Review the steps of the decision tree with the family.
- Help the family complete *My Teacher Wants to Know* (Appendix D).
- Invite the family to share any concerns with their child at home.
- Validate the emotions and feelings shared by family members.
- Use open-ended reflective questions to encourage more in-depth responses.
- Allow wait time for the family to respond and share information.
- Avoid in-depth conversations about specific behaviors. Keep the conversation focused on promoting the child's engagement in the routine and activities and what you, as the practitioner, will do differently.
- Review the handout [Talking with Families about Challenging Behavior Do's and Don'ts](https://challengingbehavior.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/talking-w-families-dos-donts.pdf).²

In the box, we provide ideas for reflective questions that you might use as you reach out to families to gather input to develop the plan. These are just a sample of what you might ask. You may add or omit as you see fit.

Sample reflective questions to enhance communication with families:

- What are your thoughts if we tried some new strategies to support your child in the _____ [specific routine]?
- Tell me what your _____ routine looks like.
- Have you observed anything similar happening at home or in the community? If so, what does that look like for your child?
- What are ideas you might have for helping your child during _____ [specific routine]?
- What have you tried at home to help your child with _____?
- What would be helpful for us to know about your child?
- What activities does your child like to do at home?
- How would you prefer to communicate about the ideas we might put in place (email, text, phone call, in person)?
- How would you like me to share updates and progress with you?

2 <https://challengingbehavior.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/talking-w-families-dos-donts.pdf>

Begin all conversations and communications with family members by sharing positive comments or strengths about their child. Determine if the family might have observed similar difficulties or have ideas of what they have done to support the child in similar situations. Share the importance of gathering additional information from the family and use the form, *My Teacher Wants to Know*, to get information that might help you use new and different strategies to support their child. Ensure there is time in the conversation for the family to ask questions. End the communication with a discussion of the next steps and a time to reconnect to share the strategies included in the plan. See “Conversation Starters” in Appendix E for ideas about discussing your concerns with the family.

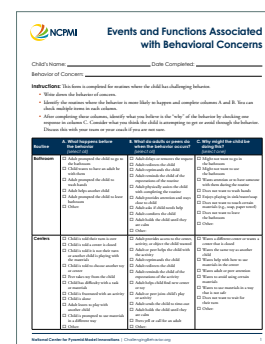
Step 3. Identify the function within the routine.

Now that you have some data and information from the family, you are ready to see if you can use the TTYC Routine Guide to develop your plan. As previously stated, TTYC is used to address behaviors within routines that are disruptive to the child’s engagement in routines or activities when the purpose or function of the behavior is easy to identify.

Use the *Events and Functions Associated with Behavior Concerns form* (Appendix F) to think about what might trigger the child’s behavior, what the child does in response to those triggers, and what follows the behavior. Identifying those elements around behavior helps us understand if the behavior might be to gain something (e.g., attention, activity, object, sensory) or to avoid something (e.g., attention, activity, object, sensory). In addition to this form, information obtained from the family may provide insight into what might influence the child’s behavior in this routine.

Events and Functions Associated with Behavior Concerns –

This form is used to reflect on the routines where the child has challenging behavior. It is completed by writing down the behavior of concern and then identifying the routine where the behavior is most likely to occur. For that routine, you indicate what happens before the behavior (i.e., what triggers it) and what adults or peers do when it occurs. Be honest and list all the things that might happen (e.g., reprimand, redirect, time-out). After completing those columns, you reflect on your responses and then identify why the child might be doing the behavior by considering what the child might be attempting to get or avoid through the behavior. If it is difficult to identify the “why”, you might find it helpful to consider what helps stop the behavior or how to stop it (e.g., let the child leave, give the child a turn).



After you have completed the Events and Functions form, the function or purpose of the child’s behavior within the routine must be clear to you so that you can continue with TTYC. The function you identified for the routine is used with the Routine Guide to develop the behavior plan. If it is unclear, and you can’t determine whether the child is gaining something or avoiding something through this behavior, you must initiate the tier 3 individualized intervention process. In the individualized intervention process, you will team with others to conduct a functional behavior assessment to determine the function and then develop a behavior support plan.

Step 4. Identifying the prevention and intervention strategies to use within a routine.

You will use the Routine Guide to select your prevention and intervention strategies in this step. If you are working with a coach, you should collaborate on this step.

The Routine Guide provides ideas for strategies to use within the routines that are commonly in most group care or classroom programs. The strategies in the guide are organized into different sections that begin with the why or function of the behavior. The function or why of the behavior should have been identified after completing the *Events and Functions Associated with Behavior Concerns form*. You use the function (e.g., the child wants to avoid the activity) to identify your strategies. The function or purpose of the behavior drives the strategies you select within each routine. Strategies vary by activity and by function. For instance, the strategies used for a child with attention-seeking behavior during snacks or meals will differ from those used for a child engaging in elopement or avoidance behavior in small group activities.

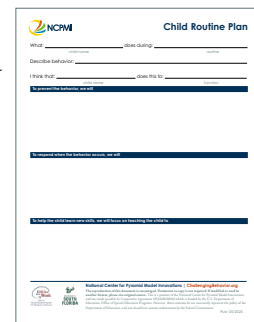
Once you determine the function or reason for the behavior, you will select three types of strategies related to how to **prevent** it, how to **respond** to challenging behavior when it occurs, and what to **teach** the child. Some tips for selecting strategies are offered in the box below.

Prevent	Respond	Teach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Select strategies that will help the child be less likely to have challenging behavior. ▶ Select several strategies that you think match some of the needs the child might have. ▶ Create the visual supports you will need to implement strategies in the plan and laminate them for durability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➡ Select the strategy you will use to respond to behavior when it occurs. Make sure all the adults in the room will be consistent with the strategies you select. ➡ Make sure you include a strategy that will help the child know what to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Think about the social or communication skill that would help the child not use challenging behavior. You only want to pick one or two new skills to focus on. Select the ones that are most important.

You will *not* use all the strategy ideas provided in the guide. You will select the ones that seem well-matched to the child you support and your teaching style. You must also ensure the strategies are individualized to match the child's interests, strengths, preferences, and skills.

Once you have identified the strategies you will be using, write your plan down on the *Child Routine Plan form*. You will complete one form for each routine you will be addressing. Once you have developed your plan, ensure all adults know what it is and how to implement the strategies.

As you use the Routine Guide and develop a plan for the child, reach out to the family to share your ideas and gather additional ideas and input. Ensure that families receive a copy of the completed plan. The plan can be sent home with the child or electronically shared through email or a communication app. Emphasize to the family that you can discuss the plan and explain the strategies. Offer materials or resources for families to use at home if the family expresses interest in implementing similar strategies at home or in the community. Appendix G provides a sample of how you might collaborate with the family in finalizing the plan.



The image shows a sample of the 'Child Routine Plan' form. It includes fields for 'Child's Name', 'Date', 'Describe behavior', 'Identify function', and 'Select strategies'. There are also sections for 'Prevention strategies', 'Response strategies', and 'Teaching strategies'. The form is titled 'Child Routine Plan' and includes the NCPMI logo.

Step 5. Develop materials needed for plan implementation.

The completed support plan will probably include using materials or environmental arrangements that might take additional effort to develop. This might involve visual schedules, communication boards, scripted stories, or offering new materials or modifying materials you use in your activities with children. While you prepare to implement your plan, continue collecting data on the child's behavior and engagement.

Step 6. Implement the plan and monitor the child's progress.

You are now ready to implement the plan. Ensure all adults know the plan and how to implement the strategies. If you are working with a coach, consider having the coach observe you on the first day the plan is used. It is great to have that support and someone to help with any strategies that might need fine-tuning. Do not expect the plan to work on your very first day. It takes time for the prevention strategies to be helpful to the child and for the child to learn new skills. Continue to collect data to monitor the child's progress.

Update the family on the child's response to the plan and continue to gather family input as you support the child. Communication regarding the child's progress in the selected routine will continue to build your partnership with the family. Be explicit and descriptive in describing the child's progress or lack thereof. Provide space in the conversation for families to reflect on any changes they have observed at home with their child or any new ideas for strategies that you might try. Appendix H offers ideas on how you might communicate with the family about the child's progress.



Teaching Tools Routine Guide

Introduction

The guide provides ideas for the routines and activities that often occur in an early childhood program. Each routine has a heading that refers to the behavior's function, purpose, or why. The guide can only be used when the function or purpose has been identified.

Under the purpose is a list of strategies that might be used to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the behavior from occurring in the routine. Prevention alone will not change the behavior of concern. In addition to identifying preventions, you must identify strategies for responding to challenging behavior when it occurs within the routine. These strategies help you know what to do when the child has a tantrum or uses other behaviors that you find challenging to meet their needs in the routine. The final list of strategies provides ideas for what you might teach the child. In some routines, you might also see suggestions for strategies for toddlers or developmentally young children. To develop your plan, select several strategies from all three lists – Prevent, Respond, and Teach.

Child Routine Plan

The *Child Routine Plan form*³ on the next page should be completed once you have identified the strategies that you will be using. Writing the plan for the individual routines on the plan form is essential. Writing the plan down increases the likelihood that all team members who support the child will be consistent in plan implementation.

3 The Child Routine Plan Form can be found online at <https://challengingbehavior.org/document/child-routine-plan/>



Child Routine Plan

What: _____ does during: _____
child name *routine*

Describe behavior: _____

I think that: _____ does this to: _____
child name *function*

To prevent the behavior, we will

To respond when the behavior occurs, we will

To help the child learn new skills, we will focus on teaching the child to



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Resources for Implementation

Many resources can help you implement the routine guide's prevention, response, and teaching strategies. Some links provide materials ready to use (e.g., feeling wheel, Tucker the Turtle story), and some provide ideas or examples for how you might develop materials specific to your setting or implement the strategy.

Topic	Link
Scripted Stories	https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/classroom/practical-strategies/#scriptedStories (e.g., <i>I Go to Preschool</i> , <i>Our Preschool Rules</i> , <i>Tucker the Turtle</i> , <i>Making a Scripted Story</i>)
Behavior Regulation and Calm-Down Strategies	https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/classroom/practical-strategies/#behaviorRegulation (e.g., <i>Turtle Technique</i> , <i>Take a Deep Breath</i>)
Teaching Emotions	https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/classroom/practical-strategies/#emotionalLiteracy (e.g., <i>Feeling Faces</i> , <i>Feeling Wheel</i>)
Teaching Problem Solving	https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/classroom/practical-strategies/#problemSolving
Teaching Friendship Skills (i.e., <i>Peer Interactions</i>)	https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/program-wide/practical-strategies/#friendshipSkills (e.g., <i>Greeting Board</i> , <i>Peer Mediated Social Skills</i> , <i>Stay-Play-Talk</i>)
Transition Visuals	https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/classroom/practical-strategies/#schedules
Using Visuals to Support Children in the Early Learning Environment	https://challengingbehavior.org/document/using-visuals-to-support-children-in-the-early-learning-environment
Images for Visuals	https://headstart.gov/children-disabilities/article/visual-supports?redirect=eclkc# (e.g., <i>images for routines, expectations, rules, infants and toddlers</i>)
Considerations for Working with Children Who Have Experienced Trauma	https://challengingbehavior.org/document/considerations-for-working-with-children-who-have-experienced-trauma



Routine: Large Group

The child wants to leave the large group.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Ensure large group expectations align with the child's strengths (e.g., some children have motor needs that make it challenging to sit "crisscross applesauce").
- ▶ Offer flexible seating choices or a preferred seating option.
- ▶ Have the child be a helper (e.g., song starter, book page turner) during large group.
- ▶ Embed the child's preferences into large group.
- ▶ Offer multiple ways for the child to engage during group activities, adapting based on their preferences and needs (e.g., While pointing to visuals for each choice, tell the child, "For today's song, you can join by listening, singing, using a puppet, or tapping the rhythm on your lap! You can choose what works best for you today.").
- ▶ Use a large group mini-schedule to show when preferred large group activities will occur.
- ▶ Present the child with a visual choice board, offering options for the child to choose from (e.g., where to sit, which song or activity to do, which book to read, who to sit or interact with, the order of the mini-schedule within the large group, or activity items like puppets and instruments).
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for staying in the large group.
- ▶ Lead large group in an area with fewer distractions or minimize distractions or motivation to leave the group (e.g., having the child's favorite center directly next to the large group may be too enticing for that child).
- ▶ Include highly engaging activities as part of large group.
- ▶ Anticipate when the child might want to leave the group (e.g., after sitting for three minutes, during a specific activity, or when seated near certain peers). Before they attempt to leave, prompt the child that they can say, gesture, or sign "all done" to indicate their need for a break.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to other children engaged in the large group.
- ▶ If more than one adult is in the environment, have one adult stay close to the child to encourage and support engagement.
- ▶ Offer a choice of a small item or a basket with multiple small items the child can use during large group time.

- ▶ Throughout large group, use visual supports that demonstrate the progression of time. As each activity finishes, move/remove/clip over the visual/object to show time passing (e.g., schedule board, easel, felt board, Velcro strip).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Consider offering large group without the expectation that all children will participate. The toddler will let you know when they are developmentally ready to participate in large group activities.
- ▶ Make your large group time smaller by dividing the class and having two adults lead two separate groups. Be prepared for toddlers who still choose not to participate.
- ▶ Large group for toddlers should be very brief. Ensure you only persist in presenting large group activities if most children are engaged.
- ▶ To promote engagement, provide “hands-on” activities using toys, materials, pictures, and movement.
- ▶ Provide activities and materials with high preference or interest.
- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials. To ensure the book’s content is relative to toddlers, select pictures with large, colorful, and well-defined pictures against their background and avoid small finger motions.
- ▶ Establish a routine within the large group time and consistently follow the sequence of activities (e.g., use a greeting song each day to establish a routine that large group time is beginning).
- ▶ Repeat the same activities over time and gradually introduce new activities.
- ▶ Use objects or object photos for a large group mini-schedule and visual choice board.
- ▶ Have the child put objects in a basket upon completing each activity.

Respond

- ➡ If the child appears to be preparing to leave large group, prompt them to use the replacement skill. For example, you could prompt the child to say, “all done” verbally, by sign language, with a picture, or with a communication device.
- ➡ If the child appears to be preparing to leave large group, quickly offer a choice opportunity to respond or engage in a preferred activity.
- ➡ Prompt again to look at a large group mini-schedule for upcoming preferred activity.
- ➡ If the child leaves the group or takes a break, reinforce to the child that they are part of the group by warmly welcoming them back.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Ask the child if they are “all done” when the child seems ready for a break. Encourage the child to respond with a gesture, sign, or head shake, and then the child can leave the large group.
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message (e.g., “I think you are telling me you are all done”) and then support the child in leaving the activity.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to communicate that they are “all done” with the activity using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child how to communicate (in their preferred language and communication method) so they are ready to return to the group once they have taken a break.
- ✓ Once the child learns to communicate that they want to leave the group, ask them to stay for one more minute or song.
- ✓ Teach the child how to follow a large group mini-schedule.

- ✓ Teach the child to make choices.
- ✓ Teach the child to recognize and use natural supports, such as peers and visual schedules (e.g., “When we want to know what’s next, we can check our schedule. Let’s all look together!” “Lucy is our Kindness Captain today. Let’s check with her on how we’re showing care in large group.”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to signal with the gesture “all done” (e.g., shake head or wave hand) or respond to the question, “Are you all done?”
- ✓ Teach the child the routine by consistently following the sequence and help the child follow the large group routine.

The child has difficulty with waiting and taking turns.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Review the length of the large group and shorten it as needed.
- ▶ Use a visual schedule that shows the order of the large group activities and allows the child to turn the pictures over or remove the images upon completion of each activity.
- ▶ Simplify the activities within the large group (e.g., have a weekly rather than a monthly calendar).
- ▶ Establish two appropriately timed groups to reflect the children who can engage in more extended large groups versus the developmentally younger children.
- ▶ Place the activities that are difficult for the child towards the end of large group time and give the child the choice to leave the large group early and choose an alternative activity.
- ▶ Use a “my turn” visual prompt to indicate whose turn it is when children have difficulty taking turns in the large group.
- ▶ Use a turn timer so the child knows when their turn will come.
- ▶ Offer the child(ren) a choice to have a peer with whom they can take turns supporting each other to stay engaged and follow class expectations.
- ▶ Embed the child’s preference into large group (e.g., use a favorite character, theme, or activity).
- ▶ Have the child hold a “manipulative” or some piece of an upcoming large group activity.
- ▶ Considering the child’s activity level preferences, integrate quick and structured movement breaks into the routine.
- ▶ Create a designated space for a brief break if the child needs it.
- ▶ When the child is waiting, provide positive descriptive feedback or quick, positive feedback (e.g., thumbs up, “Thanks for sitting!”), depending on the child’s preferences and needs.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide a well-defined space that helps children know the boundaries of large group time (e.g., put a quilt on the floor that shows children where to sit for large group).
- ▶ Keep the large group time area small.
- ▶ Have an adult close enough to the child to prompt the child to use skills (e.g., waiting, listening, taking turns).
- ▶ Have the child participate briefly in large group time. The child can leave the large group and go to an appropriate alternative activity if needed.
- ▶ Provide the child with clear, simple, and specific steps in their preferred mode of communication.

Respond

- ➡ Prompt the child to indicate “my turn” using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ➡ Prompt to indicate “all done” and allow the child to go to an alternative activity.
- ➡ Refer to the visual schedule and remind the child of the remaining activities.
- ➡ Offer a highly preferred item or activity.
- ➡ Provide positive descriptive feedback to those using the skill to encourage use by the child.
- ➡ Redirect the child to use the appropriate alternative behavior.
- ➡ Provide a choice of a preferred activity within the group (e.g., holding a puppet, leading a song) that allows the child to stay engaged while practicing waiting for their turn in other parts of the activity.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Provide additional direction through verbal and physical demonstrations to say, sign, or gesture “my turn” or “all done” (e.g., put your hand on the child’s hand and direct the use of the sign “all done”).
- ➡ Validate the child’s feelings (e.g., “I see you are frustrated.”), then redirect the child (e.g., “Ouch! Hitting hurts. Use gentle hands”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to indicate “my turn” using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to indicate “all done” using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the large group visual schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child to use self-checks and regulation strategies (e.g., take deep breaths, count) when they feel like interrupting.
- ✓ Teach the child how to use less “disruptive” forms of communication so they can still let others know of their needs or feelings (e.g., raising a hand, using a visual card, quietly tapping a nearby adult).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child simple turn-taking with a peer using materials appropriate for back-and-forth exchanges (e.g., blocks on the tower, toy in a container, activate an electronic toy).
- ✓ Teach the child to let the teacher know their needs using words, signs, gestures, visuals, or a device.

The child wants adult attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Play or interact with the child for a dedicated period before the start of the large group (e.g., Five minutes before a large group, spend time with the child, giving them lots of positive attention without asking them to do anything specific.).
- ▶ Create visuals showing different ways to connect with adults during large groups and throughout the day (e.g., sitting near the adult in the group, helping, playing nearby, helping care for other friends).
- ▶ During opportune times, create a gesture that the child and adult(s) can do when they sit next to each other in a large group. For example, a special hand gesture (e.g., placing a hand over the heart or crossing arms over the chest for a “hug”) can be used across a large group.
- ▶ Use a visual schedule to tell the child when they can play with an adult (e.g., center or special activity).

- ▶ Engage in a connection routine before the start of the large group when the child can check in about how connected they feel and choose or create a plan with the adult for the large group to ensure they feel connected during the routine (e.g., special clap or handshake right before you sit down for large group).
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for participating.
- ▶ Use a “raised hand” visual cue card to prompt the child to gain attention.
- ▶ Assure the child that you are close by if they need help.
- ▶ Provide activities that require minimal teacher assistance.
- ▶ Offer the child a choice in how they would like to engage with the adult (e.g., sit next to the adult, pass out materials, ask or answer a question at the beginning of the large group).
- ▶ Offer the child a co-learning/co-leading role, such as “question leader” or “idea helper,” where they can share ideas with peers and receive adult acknowledgment for their important contributions in the large group.

Respond

- ➡ When the child demonstrates or communicates a desire for attention, but it is not possible for you to offer what they want immediately, offer acknowledgment without delay and let them know what you can do (e.g., “I see you would like to show me something, let’s take a look together after this part of our morning meeting!”).
- ➡ Offer the child a choice of seating options (e.g., “You can sit next to me, or you can sit across from me so I can see you the entire time”).
- ➡ Show the visual schedule and remind the child when they can play with an adult.
- ➡ Model a request to get a teacher’s attention (e.g., hand-raising) using their preferred language and method of communication, then immediately provide attention to the child.
- ➡ Remind the child using a “first-then” visual of the favorite or fun activity with an adult that comes after the large group.
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message and then model or prompt the new skill (e.g., “Are you telling me you want to share something with me? Right now, it is Aya’s turn. Then it will be your turn to share.”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ If the child is learning to communicate “my turn” or “help me,” prompt the child to use words, gestures, signs, visuals, or device(s) while an adult provides immediate help or attention.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to raise a hand to get the teacher’s attention by prompting with a visual.
- ✓ Teach the child to request help from an adult in their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a visual first-then or a visual schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child to use an “I did it” card or fun symbol they can hold up to be quickly noticed by an adult.
- ✓ Use role-play during play or scripted stories to allow the child to practice asking for attention differently based on their preferences and needs.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to communicate a request for attention (e.g., come here, pick me up) in their preferred language and method of communication.

The child wants the attention of peers.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Have the child lead a large group activity.
- ▶ Let the child pick a friend to lead the next circle activity.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child is participating (e.g., “I see Anye doing the Hokey Pokey” or “Look how Eli clapped just like me.”).
- ▶ Choose children who will follow large group rules and pick the next activity while saying, “Phillipe is sitting with a calm body; you can pick the next song.”
- ▶ Use a scripted story (“What do we do in circle?”) to teach large group rules and prepare the child for a large group.
- ▶ Use visuals to redirect the child to engage in large group rules.
- ▶ Include partner-based activities where the child can engage directly with a peer, such as holding hands during a song.
- ▶ Offer the child peer engagement opportunities. Peer involvement can be welcoming friends to group time, handing out items, collecting materials, participating as a helper, or interacting with peers who are helpers.
- ▶ Reflect on the roles adults currently hold during large group (e.g., passing out materials, inviting children to choose a song) and explore ways for the child(ren) to take on these roles with one another to increase social interaction opportunities.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide interactive activities (e.g., turn-taking play) that encourage child-to-child interaction and attention.
- ▶ Offer each child a chance to “perform,” beginning with the child with attention needs. For example, the child could be asked to walk into the center, twirl around, and return to their spot.
- ▶ When conducting a large group, give each child lots of attention. You can accomplish this by stating the children’s names and making eye contact with each one.
- ▶ Encourage the toddler to sit near a friend or an adult.
- ▶ Encourage toddlers to help each other.
- ▶ Provide the child with clear, simple, and specific steps in their preferred mode of communication.

Respond

- ➡ Withdraw attention briefly for mildly disruptive behavior (e.g., laying down instead of sitting, making sounds unrelated to activity). Provide positive descriptive feedback for when the child engages in expected behavior.
- ➡ Provide positive descriptive feedback to peers for participating, and if the child begins participating, quickly provide positive descriptive feedback. For example, you could tell the child participating, “Anders is showing me he is ready for our story because he is sitting quietly.” If the child demonstrates large group rules or behavior appropriate for the activity, quickly acknowledge them by saying, “And Sabrina is showing me she is ready by having a calm body at large group.”
- ➡ Remind the child, “First sit, then you can choose the next song we sing.”

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Provide additional direction through verbal and physical modeling of joining a large group.
- ➡ Validate the child’s emotion and then redirect. For example, “You are so excited! It’s fun to hold hands and dance. Now, we are sitting for a story. Find a spot so we can all see the book.”

- ➡ Provide a choice of alternative activity if the behavior is too disruptive. For example, you might tell a child, “When you are crawling in front of your friends, they can’t see the book. Would you like to find another activity to do? Ms. JoAnn can help you.”

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to “First sit, then choose our next activity.”
- ✓ Teach the child to gain attention (e.g., a gentle tap, say their peer’s name).
- ✓ Teach the child to look for a peer following the large group rules (e.g., calm body, safe hands) to lead the activity.
- ✓ Practice seeking and giving attention to peers in a way that the child and their peers prefer.
- ✓ Teach the child how to share turns with peers, such as offering a peer the chance to go first, which builds social connection and offers social interaction.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to participate independently in the activities.
- ✓ Teach the child to engage in activities with peers they enjoy.
- ✓ Teach the child to make choices (e.g., provide an option for the child to choose between sitting near a friend or on the teacher’s lap).

The child does not know what to do

(e.g., needs help, needs to understand the expectations of the routine).

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ If the child’s family speaks a different language at home, provide directions in the child’s home language.
- ▶ Use a picture mini-schedule that shows the order of large group activities.
- ▶ Create and display/use visual supports for engagement options that show the different ways the child(ren) can engage during large group (e.g., listen, sing, use hand motions), including pictures of children participating in diverse ways.
- ▶ Before the large group, show the child the class schedule and give a transition signal. For example, an adult pairs holding up a picture while announcing that in two minutes, large group will begin.).
- ▶ Remind the child of group time expectations and provide a choice (e.g., “At group time, we may choose a flexible seat. Do you want to sit on the wiggle cushion or in the cube chair?”).
- ▶ Encourage the child to transition to the large group while holding a visual representing large group.
- ▶ Have a “sit picture” in front of where the child sits.
- ▶ Before the large group, read the child a scripted story about “large group time” and what is expected during large group time.
- ▶ Have an adult sit nearby to remind the child of the activity schedule and which activities are coming up.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for demonstrating rules or engaging in activities.
- ▶ Based on child preferences, use visuals that break down the routine into step-by-step actions, coinciding with the large group mini-schedule.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials.
- ▶ Repeat the same activities over time and gradually introduce new activities.
- ▶ Create a simple scripted story about what happens in large group, using a few photos of large group activities.

- ▶ Have a designated seat for the child that is close to the teacher.
- ▶ Encourage the child to sit near a friend or in an adult's lap.
- ▶ Model each action to the child and then look for the child to imitate and provide positive descriptive feedback.
- ▶ Provide the child with clear, simple, and specific steps in their preferred mode of communication. Help the child become familiar with the large group routine.
- ▶ Help the child decide when to join the activities.

Respond

- ➡ Use a "First-Then" visual if the child seems unsure of what to do next, showing the next part of the routine (e.g., a picture of children clapping hands for a song).
- ➡ Show the child a visual that demonstrates different ways to engage in the group (e.g., sit, clap hands, watch a friend) while using a gesture or modeling the skills (e.g., while patting the child's seat, clapping, pointing to your eyes and then to a friend).
- ➡ Notice when the child starts to fidget and model how to communicate "help" in the child's preferred language and method of communication. Offer assistance right away to support their participation.
- ➡ Offer simple choices related to the activity (e.g., "Would you like to use hand motions or clap along with the song?").

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Validate the child's emotion: "I see you are frustrated; you don't know the song." Then, offer help, "I can show you." If the child is learning to signal "help me" or "show me," prompt the child or provide directions to use the signal while you provide help.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child how to "ask for help" when they don't know how to do something.
- ✓ Teach the child how to follow a visual mini-schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child how to follow the class schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child the large group rules using a scripted story (e.g., "What Do We Do in Morning Meeting?").
- ✓ Teach the child to observe their peers and mirror their actions.
- ✓ Plan and embed peer partnering opportunities during group time (e.g., take a turn and then pass it to the friend next to you, show the friend next to you).
- ✓ Teach the routine using interactive songs or chants describing group time agreements or steps.
- ✓ Teach large group time routines during play by inviting children to lead a "Stuffed Circle Time" or "Baby Doll Circle Time" with their toys. Encourage them to use familiar routines, like singing a welcome song, sharing a story, or leading a simple activity.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to signal for "help" or "show me" by providing verbal or physical prompts (e.g., put your hand on the child's hand and guide the use of the sign for "help").



Routine: Transitions

The child might want to stay in the current activity and avoid the transition.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Prepare the child for a transition by providing a verbal warning about 5 minutes before the transition is set to begin and every minute thereafter. Tell the child, “5 more minutes, then time for _____, three more minutes, then time for _____.”
- ▶ Remind the child when they will do the activity again. Say, “We’ll do that again tomorrow,” and show them on the visual schedule when the activity will occur again.
- ▶ Use a timer, set it for 5 minutes before the activity ends, and tell the child when the bell rings that the activity is finished. Provide a verbal warning before the timer goes off (e.g., “one more minute, then bell and all done”).
- ▶ Provide the whole class with a prompt to signal the start of the transition (e.g., song, bells, lights off), then provide an individual prompt to the child.
- ▶ Have the child transition with a peer.
- ▶ Teach the transition steps to help the child understand the expectations of the transition. Make sure they know how, where, and when to move before they engage in the transition.
- ▶ Use a visual schedule to show the child upcoming fun activities. Encourage the child to manipulate the schedule by turning over or removing the visual when the activity is completed.
- ▶ Create a choice board for transitions for the child to choose how to transition to the next activity (e.g., with a friend, carrying a favorite object, selecting a transition song).
- ▶ Have or help the child put materials away to signal the end of the current activity.
- ▶ Give the child a helper role during the transition or in the next activity (e.g., door holder, line leader, collecting name cards, updating visual schedule).
- ▶ Make transitions fun by incorporating choices such as activities (e.g., “When we go outside today, let’s see how many people we can say hi to.”), sounds and songs (e.g., sing a preferred song in silly voices, try to make new sounds like a popping noise, practice the sounds of letters they are learning), and accessible movements representative of the physical abilities of all children (e.g., crawl like bears, fly like butterflies).

- ▶ Develop a consistent ritual that indicates the end of one activity and the beginning of the next (e.g., singing a specific song, updating the visual schedule).
- ▶ Offer to take photos of a child's block structure, work of art, or puzzle to document their hard work before they have to transition.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for putting away materials, completing transition steps or strategies, and beginning the transition.

Respond

- Say to the child, "I know you really like _____, but I think you'll have fun at _____. I can help you go to the _____, or you can go on your own." Pause, then assist if needed, and immediately give feedback.
- Acknowledge the child's feelings about leaving their current activity and help them create a plan for terminating what they are doing in a way that works for them (e.g., "I see you really worked hard on creating that house today in blocks, would you like to keep it somewhere you can play with it again tomorrow? Where do you think we can put it so that it's safe until then?").
- Discuss, label, validate, and show visuals of emotion words the child might experience with transitioning (e.g., frustrated, angry). Model the emotion with your facial expression, use pictures, and point out pictures in books or stories to discuss the feelings.
- Use the "turtle technique" with visuals and puppets or a calm down strategy (take a breath, blow out breath) to discuss and model regulating strong emotions.
- Use a first-then statement (e.g., "First we clean up, then we go outside to play.").

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to request one more minute or one more turn and then transition.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the visual schedule and predict when the activity will happen again.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow transition warnings (e.g., verbal prompts, timer, bells) and stop the activity.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose a preferred activity or friend(s) for the next activity.
- ✓ Teach self-monitoring during transitions by giving them a role, such as checking the visual schedule or counting down the minutes themselves.
- ✓ Teach the child to plan for transitions by giving them ownership over the process. Ask questions like, "What do you want to do first when we go to _____?" or "How will you put these toys away?"

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Help the child decide when to begin the transition (i.e., wait until the child finishes the activity).
- ✓ Toddlers often want to continue playing with an object until mastery. Give the child more time and then return to offer help in transitioning.
- ✓ Warn the child about upcoming transitions. Use predictable object prompts (e.g., getting out the toy bag for a large group), actions (e.g., putting balls in the shed before going inside while describing what you are doing), or auditory prompts (e.g., song) so the child can anticipate the transition.
- ✓ Transition with a photo or object that signals the next activity and explain to the child, "We are finished with _____. Now it's time for _____."
- ✓ Use object-to-object transitions that signal how to begin the next activity (e.g., push a stool to large group time, take a paintbrush to the table with an art project).
- ✓ Guide the child to transition by encouraging the child to say, "Bye-bye to an object or activity."

The child does not want to leave a parent or family member.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use the “I Go to Preschool” scripted story (at home and school) to prepare the child for the transition.
- ▶ Have the parent drop the child at the door (or designated drop-off area) and say a quick “Goodbye” and “See you after school.”
- ▶ Partner with the family to create an individualized, short goodbye ritual (e.g., secret handshake, hug, specific phrase) that is consistent with drop-off.
- ▶ Ensure families understand that you know how difficult it can be to leave an upset child. Collaborate on possible solutions they can use during challenging drop-offs.
- ▶ Have an arrival time mini-schedule that the child and parent can complete together, with the last item designated for how they say goodbye.
- ▶ Comfort and reassure the child that someone (e.g., Mommy, Daddy, or other caregiver) will pick them up when the day ends.
- ▶ Encourage the child to bring a comfort item from home or to carry a small item from their caregiver (e.g., keychain, picture) and hold it during the day.
- ▶ Provide a helper role as they enter the room (e.g., greeter).
- ▶ Have a peer from the class greet the child and help them to complete the arrival time routine.
- ▶ Put a picture of the caregiver on a visual schedule so the child can predict when they will be picked up from school. Prompt the child to review the schedule to expect when they will see their caregiver again.
- ▶ Plan for a highly engaging first activity of the day that the child enjoys so they have something exciting to look forward to after saying goodbye.

Respond

- ➡ Ask the child to say or gesture goodbye to the family member while waving (and vice versa).
- ➡ Offer to hold the child or have their family member give them to you to comfort them as they leave.
- ➡ Provide comfort to the child as they enter.
- ➡ Allow the child to pick a friend to complete the arrival routine with.
- ➡ Comfort the child by saying, “You’ll see _____ after school.” Guide them to the visual schedule and count how many activities they do until their family member comes to get them.
- ➡ If the child is upset, read them the “I Go to Preschool” story.
- ➡ Offer the child a comfort item and allow them to take it to the next activity.
- ➡ Create a space in the room for the child to have a “soft landing” after more difficult goodbyes with books they like to read or other comforting materials or activities.
- ➡ Offer the child the time to calm down and be ready to begin their day.
- ➡ Validate the child’s feelings (e.g., sad, lonely). Model the emotion with your facial expression, use pictures, and point out pictures in books or stories to discuss the feelings.
- ➡ Use the “turtle technique” with visuals and puppets or a calm down strategy (e.g., take a breath, blow out breath) to discuss and model regulating strong emotions.

- ➡ Review the daily schedule at a level of detail that is supportive for the child (e.g., “We’ll do our morning activities, and then we’ll have lunch and nap time, and when you wake up, it will be time to go outside where your Abuela picks you up!”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to ask or gesture for a hug or seek comfort from an adult.
- ✓ Teach the child self-regulation or self-soothing strategies (e.g., deep breathing, hugging a favorite toy, finding a quiet, relaxing spot).
- ✓ Redirect the child to the visual schedule and point out all the fun activities that are coming up. Show the child when the caregiver will return.
- ✓ Teach the child to say or gesture goodbye so that you can provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for saying goodbye.
- ✓ Teach the child the steps and expectations of the arrival time routine.
- ✓ Teach a transition song children can sing to remind themselves that grown-ups will come back.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Provide a photo book of family members children can look through during their day.
- ✓ Have the family member spend 10-15 minutes with the child before leaving.
- ✓ Let the child know when the family member is going to leave.
- ✓ Develop a quick, fun ritual that the teacher and child share when the child arrives so that the child looks forward to going to preschool.
- ✓ Support the child in waving goodbye to the family member and selecting a fun activity after the family member leaves.
- ✓ Reassure that the family member will be coming back and state when in the routine the family member will return (e.g., after a nap).
- ✓ Model transitioning from a family member through play (e.g., having animals say “bye-bye” to their family to go somewhere).
- ✓ Create and post a visual “I’ll see you later” chart with pictures or symbols representing the steps to saying goodbye, showing when the family member will return.
- ✓ Encourage pretend play around goodbyes in dramatic play or with stuffed animals or toys to model saying goodbye and reuniting.

The child does not want to go to the next activity.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Plan your day to limit unnecessary transitions and minimize disruptions.
- ▶ Arrange the environment to create simple and efficient transitions (e.g., designated bins for lunchboxes, a water bottle station, materials are readily available for an upcoming activity).
- ▶ In advance, prepare the next activity so children can begin engaging immediately after transitioning and minimize wait time.
- ▶ Use visual supports such as a countdown chart to show how much time is left before the transition.
- ▶ Use a timer, set it for 5 minutes, and tell the child when the bell rings, the activity is finished (or all done). Give the child a warning before the timer goes off.
- ▶ Shadow the child through the transition to the next activity.
- ▶ Review a visual schedule or first-then visual with the child to explain the transition.
- ▶ Have the child transition with a photograph of the area or activity where they are expected to go.
- ▶ Offer the child the opportunity to choose a preferred item to carry to the next activity.
- ▶ Ensure there is something specific for the child in the next activity, such as a special helper or something of interest.
- ▶ Break down transitions into smaller, more manageable steps.
- ▶ Give choices of where to sit, what to play with, or who to sit by.
- ▶ Use a transition activity, such as “move like a frog to ____,” or “hop on one foot to ____,” or “choo-choo like a train to ____,” or sing a song about the next activity.
- ▶ Use the “turtle technique” with visuals and puppets or a calm down strategy (e.g., take a breath, blow out breath) to discuss and model regulating strong emotions.
- ▶ Play calming music or sounds during transitions.
- ▶ Designate a “transition helper” who helps other children transition to the next activity.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for going to the next activity.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child of their special helper role in the next activity (if necessary, prompt with a picture or object).
- ➡ Use a visual schedule as a reminder to show something special is following an activity, or use a first-then schedule.
- ➡ Redirect and refrain from responding to mildly disruptive behavior (e.g., whining, complaining) when possible, being careful not to ignore the child while you may not acknowledge specific behaviors.
- ➡ Acknowledge and validate the child’s emotions (e.g., “I see you’re having so much fun with the trains, and it’s hard to stop. Let’s see what fun choices we have for snack time today!”).
- ➡ Prompt another child to show them where to go or to take the child’s hand to help.
- ➡ Redirect the child to the expectations or rules by pointing to a photograph or poster.
- ➡ Use a redirection by focusing on something exciting about the upcoming activity instead of focusing on the end of the current one (e.g., “I can’t wait to see what colors are at the table for us to paint with today! I wonder what color you’re going to start with!”).
- ➡ Provide a calm down space where the child can relax for a few minutes and join the next activity once they are ready.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to choose a preferred activity or friend to work or play with during the upcoming activity.
- ✓ Teach the child the steps and expectations of the transition (provide visuals if preferred and needed).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a peer or transition helper.
- ✓ Teach transition songs that denote upcoming transitions (e.g., clean up song, line up song).
- ✓ Teach the child to self-manage transitions (e.g., “What could make moving to the next activity easier for you?”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ If the next activity is an activity that the toddler does not prefer, consider not insisting that the child participate and allow the child to continue a preferred activity.
- ✓ Toddlers often want to continue playing with an object until mastery; give the child more time, and then return to offer help in cleaning up.
- ✓ Warn the child about upcoming transitions. Use predictable object prompts (e.g., getting out the toy bag for circle), actions (e.g., putting balls in the shed before going inside while describing what you are doing), or auditory prompts (e.g., song) so that the child can anticipate the transition.
- ✓ Transition with a photo or object that signals the next activity, pointing out to the child, “We are finished with _____. Now it’s time for _____.”
- ✓ Guide the child to transition by encouraging the child to say, “Bye-bye to an object or activity.”
- ✓ Offer simple choices and reduce the effort it takes to transition (e.g., “Would you like to put the red cars or blue cars away?”).

The child wants attention from a peer or adult.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Provide frequent and positive interactions and attention to reduce the child’s need for additional attention during transitions.
- ▶ Have the next activity set up so that when the children transition, it is ready, and the next activity can begin immediately.
- ▶ Give the child an activity to reduce wait time (e.g., look at a book while waiting, sing with movement, and share/pair with peers).
- ▶ Give the child a visual (picture, photograph, or real object) to walk with to the next activity to prompt them where to go and what to do.
- ▶ Create transition strategies that help all children know what to do and how to get there.
- ▶ Use a visual schedule, individualized mini-schedule, or first-then board to help the child focus on the transition and steps.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child engages in the steps of the transitions (or approximation).
- ▶ Encourage children to choose transition partners or pre-plan peer partners for transitions.
- ▶ Create a special role or helper opportunity for the child during the transition that gives them attention for caring and helping.

Respond

- ➡ Use a “You can” statement to help the child communicate their preferences, wants, and needs (e.g., “I see you want help. You can ask a grown-up or friend to _____”).
- ➡ Provide increased frequency of positive attention once the child is engaged in the next activity.
- ➡ Redirect the child with a visual prompt, carefully combined with verbal prompts only as needed, as to what to do or the next activity, helping the child succeed and immediately providing positive descriptive feedback.
- ➡ Have an adult or peer model expected behavior.
- ➡ Point out peers transitioning appropriately (e.g., “Jamal cleaned up his center and moved right to the carpet”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to follow the visual schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child the steps and expectations of each transition.
- ✓ Teach the child to transition with a visual prompt.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow peers.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose a transition activity (e.g., look at a book) while waiting for peers to arrive at the next activity.
- ✓ Teach the child how to ask for help.
- ✓ Teach the child how to gain the attention of adults and peers (e.g., tapping a friend’s shoulder).
- ✓ Teach collaborative transitions by planning transition activities that involve working with a peer or small group (e.g., carrying materials together or following a group leader).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Support the child during the transition by guiding the child to complete the steps taught during the transition.
- ✓ Review transition expectations.
- ✓ Have a peer help the child with the transition (e.g., “Malik, can you help Eliza put their book away and come to circle?”).
- ✓ Simplify transition tasks or steps by breaking them into smaller, manageable steps.

The child wants a specific spot or role for the transition (e.g., line leader, caboose, first to get a turn, be next to a preferred friend or adult).

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Create a helper board with a visual representation of which child will be the line leader.
- ▶ Create a schedule or rotation system where every child gets an opportunity to fulfill desired roles or have different spots on a predictable basis with a visual chart that shows when their turn will be.
- ▶ Introduce a choice board for roles based on availability.
- ▶ Encourage the child to pick a friend to line up with (e.g., stand in line with a buddy).
- ▶ Provide visuals on the floor and have the child select a stick or card that will indicate where to stand (e.g., “You pulled the red feet card, stand on the red feet.” “You picked letter A, go stand on letter A.”).
- ▶ Remind the child they will get a turn to be the line leader (e.g., “Today Bella is the line leader, but you will get a turn to be line leader very soon.”).

- ▶ Give the child a different helper responsibility when lining up (e.g., hold the playground bag, count the children as the class leaves, pick up the instruments after the music).
- ▶ Pick name cards out of a container, and the name pulled is the person who will get to choose the song, ask the first question, or be first to pick.
- ▶ Use the “turtle technique” with visuals and puppets or a calm down strategy (e.g., take a breath, blow out breath) to discuss and model regulating strong emotions.

Respond

- ➡ Acknowledge the child’s disappointment about not having the desired role or spot.
- ➡ Review the helper board and who the current line leader is before sending children to line up.
- ➡ Check in with the child and ask them to repeat who the current line leader is (e.g., “Kiera, look at our helper board, whose picture is on the line leader today? You are right, Bella is the line leader today.”).
- ➡ When possible, redirect and ignore mildly disruptive behavior (e.g., whining, complaining).
- ➡ Ask if one of their peers can show them where to go, encouraging them to take the child’s hand to help as they prefer this type of support.
- ➡ Redirect the child to the expectations or rules by pointing to the visual or poster.
- ➡ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child engages in the transition.
- ➡ Reframe the less preferred role positively by highlighting the positives of other roles (e.g., “Being the caboose is special too! You get to make sure we all stay together and no one gets left behind!”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child the steps and expectations of the “lining up” transition (provide visuals if needed).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a peer.
- ✓ Teach the child to recognize and follow the helper chart.
- ✓ Teach turn-taking and “fairness” concepts using simple games or stories to help the child understand that everyone gets a turn.
- ✓ Teach the child they might have to wait until the next opportunity if they do not get their desired role (e.g., “Oh well, maybe next time!”).
- ✓ Teach flexibility in roles and spaces, practicing switching spaces or roles within fun activities or games.
- ✓ Teach role-based songs or sayings that acknowledge the importance of the different roles in line (e.g., “Line leader, caboose, and everyone in between!”).
- ✓ Use role play with stuffed animals, dolls, or puppets to model different roles (e.g., “Let’s pretend that the elephant is the line leader and the giraffe is the caboose!”).



Routine: Centers

The child wants a different center or a center that is closed.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Develop a scripted story about what the child might do when a center they want is unavailable. Read the scripted story before the start of center time.
- ▶ Provide flexibility for the child to change centers when they want to move to a new available center.
- ▶ Ensure that there are enough materials to support multiple children's engagement in playing.
- ▶ Provide a rotation of materials to keep centers fresh and engaging for all children.
- ▶ Provide the child with choices for center time. Use photos that represent the centers available in your room.
- ▶ Assist the child in selecting a center by using the child's preferences and joining play. (e.g., "Look, we have dinosaurs in blocks today.").
- ▶ Use a first-then visual or a verbal prompt (e.g., "First this center, then blocks.").
- ▶ Provide a center choice board indicating which centers are open daily.
- ▶ Use a stop sign visual to indicate what centers are closed.
- ▶ Have the child invite a peer to go with them to an alternative center.
- ▶ Remind the child to use the "turtle technique" or a calm down strategy to handle disappointment if a center is closed.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for choosing and staying in the alternative center.
- ▶ Visually depict when the center will be available, either on the visual schedule or a week-long visual calendar.
- ▶ Role-play possible scenarios before center time begins so the child can prepare for what to do if the center they prefer is closed. Model how the child can express their feelings (e.g., disappointment, frustration, sadness).
- ▶ Use a timer that shows the child how long until the preferred center will be opened.
- ▶ Add the child's preferred elements from closed centers into open ones.

Respond

- ➡ Refer to the visual schedule and focus on preferred activities that are coming up.
- ➡ Show the child the center choices and when the center will be open.
- ➡ If the child becomes distressed about accessing materials or an unavailable activity, first validate the emotion (e.g., “I see that you are sad; you want the water table open.”) and then provide alternative activities (e.g., “Water table is closed. Let me help you find something else to do. You can play with blocks or look at books with me.”).
- ➡ If the child continues to demand the center and the problem behavior begins to escalate, use a “first-then” statement (e.g., “First, blocks, and then water table”) in a calm voice.
- ➡ Offer a brief transition activity (e.g., puzzle) that engages the child while they wait for another center to open.
- ➡ Positively reframe the child’s choices (e.g., “The water table is closed today, but look at all the fun cars we can play with in the block area!”).
- ➡ Notice what peers are doing in available centers (e.g., “I see Mia in dramatic play making cupcakes! Maybe you can help her bake!”).
- ➡ Offer shorter, manageable waiting periods (e.g., “Let’s play in this center for five minutes, and then we’ll check and see if Library Center is open.”).
- ➡ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child accepts the change and moves to a different center.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to understand “stop” using visuals (e.g., the visual stop sign indicating the center is closed).
- ✓ Teach the child to use a “first-then” visual schedule to predict upcoming events.
- ✓ Teach the child to use a center choice board to predict when the desired center is available.
- ✓ Teach the child when that center will occur through a week-long calendar visual.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose an alternative activity or item from the center choice board.
- ✓ Teach the child to engage with materials in a new center (e.g., provide a play organizer or scaffold play).
- ✓ Teach the child to use the turtle technique with visuals, a puppet, or a calm down strategy (take a deep breath, blow out breath) to regulate strong emotions.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to look at the timer.
- ✓ Teach the child to make an appropriate choice by offering two or three center options on a choice board.
- ✓ Hang visuals near or in the center areas to make it easier for children to select an activity.
- ✓ Introduce transition objects representing different centers that children can take to their next center.
- ✓ Teach toddlers the concept of sharing spaces and taking turns, using visuals and modeling simple language (e.g., “Your turn next”).

The child wants the same toy as another child.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Before center time (e.g., large group), give children instructions about turn-taking and how to take and offer a turn. Have children practice.
- ▶ Have multiple preferred or new items in the center.
- ▶ Join children's play in the center and model the flexible use of toys, encouraging creative and collaborative play (e.g., "Kai is driving the truck. Maybe we could build a road with blocks and play together!").
- ▶ Set a visual timer or count so the child will know when their turn is coming up next.
- ▶ Plan to go with the child to the center to prompt them to use turn-taking skills; use short turns to teach turn-taking.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child attempts or uses the steps for turn-taking (e.g., "Nico, you waited until Max was done using the truck! Now it's your turn!").
- ▶ Use the turtle technique with visuals and a puppet or a calm down strategy (e.g., take a deep breath, blow the breath out) to discuss and model regulating strong emotions and provide positive descriptive feedback when the child attempts or uses the steps.
- ▶ Read scripted stories on problem-solving and solutions with turn-taking.
- ▶ Create a visual turn-taking chart with the children's names or pictures to indicate whose turn it is with the toy. (e.g., "First Jalen's turn, then your turn").
- ▶ Introduce a "waiting box" with alternative toys or activities children can use while waiting for their turn.
- ▶ Rotate popular toys throughout the day so children have multiple opportunities to play with preferred items.
- ▶ Anticipate which toys may cause conflict and prepare alternative options or provide duplicate toys ahead of time to reduce potential challenges as the child(ren) develops the skills to wait and take turns.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide an ample number of toys so that toddlers will not have long wait times for turns.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child of the timer (keep it short for turns); say, "Listen for the bell," or "I am going to count: 1, 2, 3, your turn."
- ➡ Refer to the first-then visual and prompt the child that their turn is soon (e.g., "First Araya's turn, then your turn.>").
- ➡ Prompt the child to use the turtle technique or a calm down strategy to regulate strong emotions.
- ➡ Guide the child in considering solutions or using the Solution Kit to solve their problem.
- ➡ If the child is persistent in trying to get the toy, validate the child's behavioral message, "I know you want the toy," and remind the child of the expectations or rules and model solutions (e.g., how to trade to get a toy).
- ➡ Prompt the child to request the toy using words, signs, gestures, visuals, or device.
- ➡ Offer a choice between two other toys or activities the child enjoys (e.g., "While you wait, would you like to play with the puzzles or cars?").
- ➡ Acknowledge the child's feelings while offering a positive reframe (e.g., "I know you really want to play with the stroller, and it's hard to wait. Let's see what fun we can have with the dinosaurs while you wait for your turn!").
- ➡ Notice peers using turn-taking skills (e.g., "Emma asked for a turn, and now she's waiting. Once Emma has a turn, it will be your turn!").

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Validate the child's behavioral message, "I see you want the toy, but we do not hit our friends and hurt them. While Jonas is playing with that toy, I will help you find something else to play with." Then, guide the child to find another activity by offering two concrete choices.
- ➡ If a child is about to grab the toy another child is using, offer the child a different toy or activity.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child solutions such as turn-taking, sharing, using a timer, or counting when someone is playing with the toy the child wants.
- ✓ Teach the child how to use a first-then schedule to predict when it's their turn to use the toy.
- ✓ Teach the child to use the turtle technique or a calm down strategy (take a deep breath, blow out breath) to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Embed and teach turn-taking opportunities during other daily routines in which the skills are natural and meaningful (e.g., waiting to take a turn while washing hands at the sink, passing out snack cups, asking for a turn on the swing outside).
- ✓ Practice turn-taking and sharing by acting out scenarios with puppets or toys, allowing children to see playful ways of sharing and responding.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate, in their preferred language and method, how to communicate their preferences, ideas, and needs (e.g., "Can we play with it together?" "Can I have a turn?").
- ✓ Teach the child what they can do while they wait for a turn.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to engage in simple turn-taking with a peer while scaffolding the interaction.
- ✓ Use a simple "my turn" visual, such as a picture of a hand that says "my turn."
- ✓ Provide brief waiting times (e.g., 1-2 minutes) and gradually increase the waiting time as they develop the ability to wait.
- ✓ Engage in play with children and model how to share and take turns with toys, narrating your actions as you do.

The child needs help with how to use materials in centers.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Partner with families to understand their child's preferred home toys, activities, or themes and incorporate them into center time.
- ▶ Have the child ask a peer to help.
- ▶ Provide a choice board that includes materials the child prefers and knows how to use, minimizing the number of new materials to choose from (i.e., new materials or too many options may be overwhelming).
- ▶ Go with the child to the center and model the use of materials and toys; make it brief and fun, and use items with the child's preferred features (e.g., music, lights, favorite color, favorite character).
- ▶ Prompt the child to look at how their peer is playing.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for playing or using new play schemes (e.g., give the child a thumbs up and say, "You're pouring the sand right into the table!").

- ▶ Provide visual supports in the center area that show ideas for how children can use materials or play with toys that build on the child's individual preferences and strengths.
- ▶ Provide a step-by-step visual guide for sequenced activities that children can use while in the center if they need support for using the materials (e.g., Step 1: choose materials; Step 2: color picture; Step 3: cut picture; Step 4: put picture in "All Done" bin).
- ▶ Encourage the child's engagement with specific, positive feedback (e.g., "You're using the spoon to scoop!" "You're looking closely at the carpet with the magnifying glass! Here are some bugs you can check out, just like Emma is doing if you're interested!").
- ▶ Provide a few simple choices for starting at the center (e.g., "Would you like to play with the blocks or the animals?").
- ▶ Provide accessible or adaptive toys and materials that support the child's engagement and ensure peers can access these options, fostering an inclusive play environment.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate materials that are easy for the toddler to manipulate.
- ▶ Repeat the same activities with play items over time and gradually introduce new items or activities.
- ▶ Pair the child with a peer who can model how to play with the items.

Respond

- ➡ Join the child in what they are doing, emphasizing there is no "right way" to play and encouraging creative and flexible ways to use materials.
- ➡ Prompt the child to observe a peer engaging in the activity to think of ideas for play (e.g., "Let's watch Mateo build his tower. Maybe we can try that too!").
- ➡ Remind the child to use the choice board with a limited number of toys or materials to play.
- ➡ Help the child learn to play by using least-to-most prompting (verbal, gesture, model) to teach play schemes.
- ➡ Prompt the child to ask for help using their preferred language and method of communication (e.g., words, signs, gestures, visuals, or device).
- ➡ Present the child with visual supports and ask if they would like to try one of the ideas from what the pictures are showing (e.g., "You picked up the baby doll. Do you want to play one of these with the baby?" Once they choose, if needed, provide a visual guide that shows the steps for the activity they picked, breaking down each part to help them feel confident and follow along.).
- ➡ Prompt the child with selections for getting started at the center (e.g., "Would you like to play with the Play-Doh or the train tracks?").
- ➡ Validate the child's behavioral message (e.g., "I think you are getting frustrated. Playing with the magnet toys is hard for you."). Then, model and offer to help or prompt the child to ask for help.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child how to use the materials and/or play with the toys in the center. Introduce new play schemes to build upon the child's interests, preferences, and strengths with specific materials and/or toys.
- ✓ Teach the child to make a choice using a choice board.
- ✓ Teach the child to ask for help using words, signs, gestures, visuals, or a device.
- ✓ Model new ways to play with toys or materials that complement and build on the child's interests.

- ✓ Break down instructions if the child seems unsure (e.g., “You let us know you want to build a house. First, let’s find two blocks each that match, and then let’s stack them.”).
- ✓ Encourage practicing new ways of playing without expectation (e.g., “Let’s try it out and see what we can do. There’s no right or wrong way!” “You’re right, the block tower might fall again, but we can say, ‘No biggie’ and work together to build it again!”).

The child wants adult or peer attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Encourage the child to pick a peer buddy for the start of center time. If necessary, use photographs of peers to offer choices.
- ▶ Accompany the child to the center to get them started on the play, then tell the child, “I’ll come back to play with you in a few minutes.”
- ▶ Set a timer to let the child know how long before a teacher will return to play. This may need to be very short initially and then gradually extend the time the teacher is away.
- ▶ Set a timer to let the child know how long a teacher will play during center time.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for playing throughout center time.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to children who use appropriate strategies to get attention, share, or offer a play idea.
- ▶ Create a process that children can use (e.g., play with me card, visual, object) such as pictures or objects the child can give to a peer or teacher when they want to play together.
- ▶ Create centers with roles that naturally support cooperative play, like a “chef” and a “server” in the play kitchen. Rotate roles based on the child’s preferences and strengths.
- ▶ Offer a choice board for play options that displays multiple ways the child can engage in the center with peers or adults (e.g., alongside a peer, play together).
- ▶ Create a rotating “Play Leader” role that allows each child to lead play choices in the center.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate activities that the child can do independently or parallel to peers.
- ▶ Provide interactive activities with peers and scaffold their play by playing with them.
- ▶ Reassure the child that the teacher will be nearby if they need help.

Respond

- ➡ Tell the child, “When you are calm, I will play with you.” Make sure to play with the child immediately when the child becomes calm.
- ➡ Prompt the child to use the steps to ask a friend to play in their preferred language and communication method.
- ➡ Validate the child’s feelings (e.g., “I know you want to play with me because we have fun together, but I need to help other friends. Let me help you find a friend to play with.”).
- ➡ Remind the child they can get help with the activity when the timer goes off.
- ➡ If the child is learning to play more autonomously, validate their need for connection while encouraging growth (e.g., “You are looking for someone to play with you. Let’s find a center with a friend you can play with!” “Let’s play together for a bit, and then I’ll play with other friends nearby and still be able to see your amazing building!”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Validate the child's feelings and then prompt a new skill. For example, say, "Are you telling me you want me to sit with you? Just a minute, and I can be with you." Model a gesture or sign to the child while saying "You can tell me, come here please."

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to request "play with me" or "come here" to get attention from adults or peers.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose a peer to play with.
- ✓ Teach the child to play autonomously for a few minutes using verbal prompts or a timer. Slowly increase independent playtime.
- ✓ Embed opportunities to practice new skills in small groups (e.g., get attention and pass a toy around the circle, get attention and pass a ball back and forth).
- ✓ Teach the child how to gain the attention of peers (e.g., "Do you like playing this?" "Would you like to use this?" "Should we keep playing here or choose a new center?").
- ✓ Teach the child how to initiate, respond to, and maintain social interactions with peers and adults during play.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to ask for adult or peer attention using words, signs, gestures, visuals, or a device.

The child is sensitive to some sensory elements and avoids using certain materials.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use the family's input to thoughtfully select centers, activities, and materials that respect and align with the child's preferences, needs, and strengths.
- ▶ Design centers and activities that align with the child's sensory preferences, ensuring they feel welcomed in play and exploration.
- ▶ Provide a scripted story for choosing centers, activities, and materials that align with the child's sensory preferences.
- ▶ When possible, provide materials that achieve the same purpose but allow different sensory experiences (e.g., wooden blocks instead of sandpaper blocks for building, water-based markers instead of chalk for drawing). Ensure that these alternatives are available to all children, promoting inclusivity.
- ▶ If the child chooses a center that has caused discomfort, encourage the child to select another center to avoid negative sensory input (e.g., "Delilah, knowing the lights bother you at the tile table, would you like to choose a different center?").
- ▶ Use visuals that show how to use materials that align with the child's sensory preferences and strengths, breaking down each step to support comfort and engagement.
- ▶ If the child prefers to engage in an activity or materials that might not align with their sensory preferences, have an adult sit with them to support their engagement.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Adults should stay close by and guide the toddler through a simple (e.g., one or two steps) art activity.
- ▶ Avoid including materials that are difficult for a toddler to use appropriately (e.g., scissors, glue bottle, watercolor paint).

Respond

- For materials the child is interested in but may be sensitive to, encourage them to gradually explore, offering ideas like, “You can watch it or smell it.” “You can touch it with one finger instead of your whole hand.” “Try dipping just a corner of the sponge.” Remind the child that they can use a calm down strategy if they become angry or frustrated.
- Join the child and support them in completing the activity while using materials in ways that support their sensory preferences. Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child is using materials as planned to honor their preferences, needs, and strengths.
- If the child feels comfortable being around the activity, suggest they observe a peer using the materials or engage with a peer (offering different materials for the child when preferred or needed).
- Validate the child’s preferences and needs when they express discomfort (e.g., “You don’t like the smell of the markers. We can find different markers, or we can find something else that would be fun for you to do in this center.”).
- Encourage the child to watch their peers use the materials and remind them of their choices (e.g., “You want to draw on the easel, too. Tia is using the markers to draw a big tree. You can use the markers that are on the easel, or you can get out some crayons to use instead!”).
- Use adult proximity, catch the child doing what is expected for the activity, and provide positive descriptive feedback.
- Prompt and verbally remind the child of the activity expectations (e.g., one dab of your brush in the paint and then on paper, glue on paper, three shakes only of glitter: 1-2-3).
- Redirect the child to use the materials or complete the activity in a way that works for them (e.g., “Jayden, come choose your paint and paintbrush”) while offering choices that consider the child’s preferences and strengths.
- Remind the child they can choose a different center or an alternative activity while validating feelings (e.g., “Seems like the water beads are feeling strange today. That’s ok, and you should feel proud that you tried. Let’s find a different center to play in that’s just as fun.”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to choose an activity and follow visual prompts or a scripted story to complete the activity steps in a way that honors their preferences and needs.
- ✓ Teach the child how to use materials to avoid non-preferred sensory input (e.g., instead of glue, use tape; instead of scented markers, use colored pencils).
- ✓ Teach the child and prompt them how to switch centers using the center system.
- ✓ Teach the child to take breaks within centers (e.g., to use a special spot to do something different before re-engaging in the activity).
- ✓ Teach the child self-advocacy skills to communicate their sensory preferences in their preferred language and method of communication (e.g., “I like soft things” or “That’s too loud for me”).
- ✓ Teach the child to identify their feelings about different materials, supporting them to decide and choose what aligns with their feelings and sensory needs (e.g., “Let’s check in. You chose the sensory table and it’s wet and slimy. Is that ok? ... Great! If you don’t like it, you can choose a new center and I can help you!”).

The child seeks sensory experiences by engaging with materials in a particular way.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use the family's input to thoughtfully select centers, activities, and materials that respect and align with the child's preferences, needs, and strengths.
- ▶ Identify materials and activities that provide similar sensory input in safe ways (e.g., offer a chewable item while the child plays with Play-Doh to prevent mouthing, plan engaging activities on the outdoor play structure before transitioning to centers to help reduce the child's need to climb on shelves).
- ▶ Design centers and activities that align with the child's sensory preferences, ensuring they feel welcomed in play and exploration.
- ▶ Provide a scripted story for choosing centers, activities, and materials that align with the child's sensory preferences.
- ▶ Offer the child choices that align with their sensory preferences.
- ▶ Use visuals that show how to use materials safely and in ways that align with the child's preferences, needs, and strengths.
- ▶ Offer visuals that depict how the child can choose to use materials (e.g., clump sand, scoop sand, pick it up, and watch it fall back down).
- ▶ Have an adult sit with the child to guide them to use materials as planned to build on their interests and strengths (e.g., one dab of your brush in the paint and then on paper, glue on paper, three shakes only of glitter: 1-2-3).
- ▶ Use adult proximity, catch the child doing what's expected, and provide positive descriptive feedback.
- ▶ Provide alternate materials that achieve the same purpose (e.g., glue stick instead of glue, markers instead of paint, glitter pen instead of glitter).
- ▶ Provide flexible materials that enable the child to adjust the level of sensory input (e.g., soft and firm clay, wet and dry sensory bins).
- ▶ Before the child enters a center (e.g., sand play, water table), set expectations for how they will play in ways that align with their preferences and the center's rules.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Avoid including materials that are difficult for a toddler to use appropriately (e.g., scissors, glue bottle, watercolor paint).

Respond

- ➡ Redirect the child to use the materials in ways that align with their sensory preferences (e.g., "We keep the Play-Doh on the mat. We can roll it and make snakes!")
- ➡ Remind the child of a calm down strategy if they become angry or frustrated with redirection (e.g., "Let's take three deep breaths, then try rolling the Play-Doh again.")
- ➡ Join the child in the activity, modeling and supporting their use of materials in ways that build on their strengths and preferences while aligning with expectations.
- ➡ Provide materials for the child that meet the same sensory needs (i.e., instead of playing with glue, offer playing with slime as an alternative).
- ➡ Acknowledge the child's interest by affirming their engagement (e.g., "I see you like how the glue feels. Let's see how we can use it here on the paper.").

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ Distract or guide the child by inviting them to use materials in ways they enjoy that align with their sensory preferences (e.g., “Jayden, let’s paint on the paper and see what colors we can make!”).
- ➡ Offer an alternative activity while validating feelings (e.g., “Painting is fun! Paint goes on paper. You chose to paint a circle. First, paint one circle, and then you can play at the sensory table.”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to observe peers to consider how they want to use materials.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose between sensory-aligned options for materials and activities available in each center.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the visual prompts or scripted story to complete the activity steps. Initially, help the child to use the visual prompts or scripted stories by guiding them through each activity step, focusing on sensory-friendly alternatives when needed.
- ✓ Teach the child to use alternate materials that offer a similar experience and align with their sensory needs (e.g., glue stick, roller paint).
- ✓ Teach the child how to use materials while experiencing the sensory input they need (i.e., instead of the child putting glue on their hands, offer Play-Doh, slime, shaving cream, or something similar to meet the child’s sensory needs).
- ✓ Teach the child to recognize and label when they need sensory input and how to seek it out in ways that are permissible (e.g., “When I need to chew on something, I can ...”).
- ✓ Teach the child how to use materials safely.



Routine: Bathroom (Potty/Wash Hands)

The child might not want to go to the bathroom.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Offer the child a choice in timing for bathroom breaks (e.g., “Let’s figure out when you would like to use the potty. Do you want to go now or in five minutes?”).
- ▶ Limit the steps of the bathroom routine or have the child do each step one at a time to increase independence and success.
- ▶ Before using the bathroom, include the child in a large group conversation about how everyone uses the bathroom in different ways (e.g., “Some of our friends use pull-ups or diapers, some of us wear underwear, and some of us even use special equipment to go to the bathroom.” “Some friends wipe themselves, and some need more help.” “As long as we are responsible and safe, all of the ways we go to the bathroom are okay!”).
- ▶ Encourage the child to communicate how they would like the routine to go (e.g., “Can you tell me what you would like me to do while you use the potty?”). Adapt the routine in ways that work for the child if they communicate a preference.
- ▶ Offer reassurance to the child (e.g., “I will help you.”).
- ▶ Remind the child to ask for help in their preferred language or method of communication (e.g., words, gestures, signs, visuals, device) and offer assistance immediately.
- ▶ Provide a reminder to check the steps on the toileting schedule (e.g., “Let’s review the schedule to figure out our first step.”).
- ▶ Integrate fun elements such as playful songs or rhymes during each step of the toileting routine.
- ▶ Create a scripted story of the bathroom routine using real photographs and read it to the child before the bathroom routine. When possible, create the story with the child’s input, supporting them in choosing what photos to use and including their voice to promote their ownership.
- ▶ Review the potty routine before starting, using a visual schedule with photographs of each step. If the pictures are laminated and removable, the child can remove the image or turn it over to indicate completion while participating in the routine.
- ▶ Use a first-then visual. Offer the child a choice in what they will do once they have used the potty or plan to do something the child considers fun or preferred right after toileting. Say, “First potty, then _____ (preferred activity).”

- ▶ Whenever possible, offer choices throughout the bathroom routine and during each routine step (e.g., “Do you want to flush or should I? Do you want to wash your hands with clear or pink soap?”).
- ▶ Offer a choice of comfort items or supports (e.g., encourage the child to take a favorite toy or book into the bathroom or play a preferred song or music).
- ▶ Offer the child the opportunity to choose which trusted adult or peer they want nearby during the bathroom routine.
- ▶ Slowly increase expectations as the child is successful with the bathroom routine. Start by encouraging the child to enter the bathroom without using the toilet (e.g., to wash hands or throw the paper towel away).
- ▶ Set a visual timer for a short time (30 seconds), and have the child wait for it to stop before getting off the potty. Slowly increase the time as the child is successful.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for all attempts at the steps in the toileting routine and for staying in the bathroom. Keep initial bathroom visits brief, especially when the child is beginning to learn to use the toilet.
- ▶ Before the routine, help the child identify the feelings the child might experience using the potty (e.g., happy, sad, scared, excited). Provide a model for the child to express their feelings about using the potty. (e.g., say them, point to a visual, use a sign).
- ▶ To prevent frustration or upset when it is time for the bathroom routine, pre-teach strategies like the “turtle technique” and calm down choices, using visuals, a puppet, and their preferred calming methods (e.g., taking deep breaths). Review these strategies before the bathroom routine to help the children manage their emotions about using the bathroom.
- ▶ Give the child the time needed, and do not rush them through the steps.
- ▶ Monitor the bathroom environment to ensure it feels safe and comfortable (e.g., lights are on, step stools are in place, and toilet paper is accessible).
- ▶ Ensure the child is sitting on a toilet that enables their feet to touch the floor and that they have other environmental support such as handrails or steps as preferred and needed.
- ▶ Children who need additional support might need an adaptive seat or other adaptive support.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Use real objects (e.g., show the child the pull-up or diaper) to help the child understand the sequence of activities.

Respond

- ➡ Validate the child’s emotion and offer support (e.g., “It looks like you might be feeling nervous about using the potty today. I will stay with you in the bathroom.”).
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message and offer to stay with the child and provide support (e.g., “You are telling me that this is hard. I understand.”). If the child continues to demonstrate reluctance, ask them if they would like to try again later or offer more choices around support or comfort (e.g., “Would it help if I stood by the door or closer to you?”).
- ➡ Prompt the child to communicate “all done” in their preferred language and method of communication and end the routine immediately.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to ask for help or to communicate “all done” in their preferred or home language and in their preferred method of communication (e.g., words, gestures, visual support, device, signs).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the routine schedule for bathroom activity.
- ✓ Teach the child to imitate routine sequences in the scripted story for the bathroom routine (e.g., “My Potty Book”).

- ✓ Teach the child to follow the “first- then” visual or verbal prompt.
- ✓ Teach the child the “turtle technique” or a calm down strategy to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Teach the child to make choices (e.g., when to go, how to transition).
- ✓ Teach the child how to lead the routine by offering them a helping role.
- ✓ Teach the child the bathroom routine during play, such as through pretend play with dolls or stuffed animals. Encourage the child to teach the steps to their toy.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child the bathroom routine using visuals with photographs or real object representation to help the child understand the sequence of activities.

The child wants attention or to have someone with them during the routine.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Remain nearby. Stand near the child or in the doorway (slowly increase distance over time).
- ▶ Reassure the child that the adult will be there when they finish (e.g., “I will be right here when you’re all done.”).
- ▶ Use a scripted story with a picture of the adult at the end of the story waiting outside the door or at the doorway.
- ▶ Encourage the child to ask a peer to accompany them to wash their hands together.
- ▶ Use a “first-then” visual or verbal prompt (e.g., “As soon as potty is done, we can play in the dramatic play center together.”).
- ▶ Set a one-minute timer and check on the child after the time expires. Repeat this process throughout the routine.
- ▶ Provide attention and descriptive feedback once the child initiates part of the toileting or the handwashing routine (e.g., “You did the first step all by yourself! I’m right here when you need me for the next step!”).
- ▶ Structure the bathroom routine so the adult with the closest relationship is with the child in the bathroom.
- ▶ Offer the child choices around adult attention or how they receive attention (e.g., “Would you like me to stand by the door or would you like me to sit nearby?”).
- ▶ Offer a choice of comfort items. Encourage the child to take a favorite toy or book into the bathroom or play a preferred song or music.
- ▶ Ask the child if they would like to play the role of the adult and “direct” the routine, deciding what the adult should do.

Respond

- ➡ Use adult attention as encouragement (e.g., “I’ll be right over here if you need me, and I can’t wait to see how you do the next step! When you’re ready, let me know!”).
- ➡ Point to “first-then” prompt and say, “First potty, then wash hands with _____.”
- ➡ Using language or visual support, remind the child of the rule(s) or your boundary (e.g., “It’s hard for me to understand how to help you when there’s yelling. I’m right here when you’re calm and ready to try again.”). If the child’s behavior continues after the reminder, use a gesture to redirect them to the toileting routine. Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child begins to initiate the steps.
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message and explain why you cannot stay beside them (e.g., “You are telling me you want me to stay with you. I must help _____ and then I can be with you. I am right here and close by.”).

- ➡ Model ways to request the adult's attention using a device or sign language (e.g., "When you need me, you can press 'Come here!' or sign, 'Help!'" while modeling the skill for the child).
- ➡ Remind the child to ask for help in their preferred language and method of communication and offer immediate assistance.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to delay attention from adults and learn that adult attention can occur right after the potty routine or at a scheduled time.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the "first- then" visual or verbal prompt.
- ✓ Teach the child to imitate routine sequences in the scripted story for the bathroom routine (e.g., "My Potty Book").
- ✓ Teach the child to ask for help or for the adult to "come here" in their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Use role-play during play or social stories to offer opportunities for the child to practice asking for attention in different ways based on their preferences and needs.
- ✓ Teach the child how to recognize and manage their emotions related to their need for connection with a "feelings check-in" visual where they can point to or express how they are feeling (e.g., "I feel like I need someone close").

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child the bathroom routine using photographs or real-object representations to help the child understand the sequence of activities.

The child does not want to wash their hands.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Create a scripted story to read to the child about washing hands and read it before the handwashing routine.
- ▶ Use a washing hands routine sequence to review the steps before the handwashing routine begins. Use photographs of each step of the handwashing routine. If the images are laminated and removable, the child can remove the image or turn the image over to indicate completion. When possible, create a visual routine sequence with the child by offering them the opportunity to choose pictures, colors, or characters to make the routine feel more personal and engaging for them.
- ▶ Review the wash hands photo visual routine sequence with the child and ask them to label the pictures while pointing to each photo.
- ▶ Provide clear expectations using a verbal or visual first-then "first-then" prompt (e.g., "First wash hands; then ____ [preferred activity]").
- ▶ Before washing hands, remind the child of the expectations that they must wash hands to be safe. Reflect on what will happen if they don't wash their hands (e.g., "Washing hands keeps everyone safe. How do you want to help keep us safe today?").
- ▶ Make the routine fun by decorating the sink area with the child's favorite characters.
- ▶ Sing a fun song or play a song about washing hands to encourage the child to wash their hands.
- ▶ Create a game around handwashing that incorporates the child's interests (e.g., pretend to "wash away" superhero germs, create a challenge to see how many bubbles they can make in 20 seconds).
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for all attempts at the steps in the handwashing routine (e.g., "You turned on the water. You are on your way to clean hands. Way to go!").

- ▶ Offer choices to the child (e.g., the green or blue soap, stand on the stool or feet on the ground, use soap first or rinse hands first, rinse fast or slow).
- ▶ Ask the child if they want to be the handwashing guide for the routine and guide the adult or a friend through the steps of the handwashing routine.
- ▶ Make sure the child can reach the sink comfortably and that the water temperature is correct.
- ▶ Provide peer modeling and talk through the steps with the child (e.g., Look at ____wash their hands. They turn on the water, then they take two pumps of soap).
- ▶ To prevent an incident when it is time to wash hands, pre-teach strategies like the “turtle technique” and calm down choices, using visuals, a puppet, and their preferred calming methods (e.g., taking deep breaths). Review these strategies before hand washing to help the children manage their emotions if they feel frustrated, angry, or upset.
- ▶ Give the child the time needed, and don’t rush them through the steps.
- ▶ Consider the child’s sensory sensitivities; if they have them, provide different textures of towels, scents of soap, or water temperatures. Encourage the child to choose what feels best to them.

Respond

- ➡ Ask the child if they would like support (e.g., “Would you like me to help? I can turn on the water, or do you want to do it all by yourself?”).
- ➡ Use a first-then visual of first wash hands, then _____ (preferred activity).
- ➡ Count with the child how many more steps or how many times they need to rub their hands together (e.g., “Let’s put soap on. Now rub 123.” while making it fun or silly).
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message (e.g., “You are telling me you don’t want to wash your hands. We need clean hands to eat. I can help you.”) and then follow through with hand washing in a gentle and supportive manner using a prevention strategy to support the child.
- ➡ Acknowledge the child’s emotions and needs (“It looks like washing your hands feels hard right now. That’s okay. Let’s figure out a way to make it easier together.”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child by designing a handwashing routine around their interests and strengths (e.g., if the child likes music, create a song about the steps of the handwashing routine).
- ✓ Teach the child about germs and health (at the child’s age level).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the photograph or real-life object visual routine sequence.
- ✓ Teach the child the steps for handwashing using a scripted story.
- ✓ Teach the handwashing routine. Practice all the necessary steps, such as teaching how to turn on the water, wet your hands, access soap, rinse soap off, and dry your hands.
- ✓ Teach the child to imitate peers washing their hands.
- ✓ Teach the child the “turtle technique” or a calm down strategy to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Teach the child to ask for help using their preferred language and method of communication.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child the handwashing routine using photographs or real-object representations to help the child understand the sequence of activities.

The child seeks sensory experiences by engaging with materials in a particular way.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use the family's input to select materials for toileting and handwashing that respect and align with the child's preferences, needs, and strengths.
- ▶ Identify materials and activities that provide similar sensory input in safe ways (e.g., Offer time at the water table if a child enjoys splashing in the water. Offer bubbles outside if the child enjoys squishing bubbles in the sink. Offer a microphone to sing in if the child enjoys the acoustics in the bathroom).
- ▶ Offer the child choices that align with their sensory preferences (e.g., offer a removable cushioned potty seat for sitting, scented vs. unscented soap, or "you flush or I flush.").
- ▶ Use visuals that show how to use materials safely and in ways that align with the child's preferences, needs, and strengths to complete the steps of the toileting or handwashing routine (e.g., "Let's check the visual. Put the foamy soap on and rub. Let's count together 1-2-3...").
- ▶ Provide attention and descriptive feedback once the child uses materials in the intended way during the toileting or the handwashing routine (e.g., "You flushed the toilet one time. Way to go!").
- ▶ To prevent an incident during the toileting and handwashing routine, pre-teach strategies (e.g. turtle technique, taking deep breaths) for the child to use to cope with the routine. Review these strategies right before the routine to help the children manage their emotions if they feel frustrated, angry, or upset when redirected around using materials during toileting or handwashing.

Respond

- ➡ Validate the child's behavioral message (e.g., "You are telling me you want to lay on the cold bathroom floor, but we need to wash our hands. We need clean hands to play. I can help you.") and then follow through with handwashing or toileting steps in a gentle and supportive manner using a prevention strategy to support the child.
- ➡ Acknowledge the child's emotions and needs (e.g., "It looks like splashing in the water feels fun right now. Let's finish up so we can splash at the water table in centers.").
- ➡ Redirect the child to use the materials in ways that align with their sensory preferences (e.g., "We keep the soap and bubbles in the sink. Let's watch them go down the sink and find the fuzzy towel you like so much!").
- ➡ Acknowledge the child's interest by affirming their engagement (e.g., "I see you like how the water sounds when you flush the toilet. Remember, we flush the toilet one time. Let's see what else we can find in our classroom that makes a sound with water.").
- ➡ Join the child in the activity, modeling and supporting their use of materials in ways that build on their strengths and preferences while aligning with expectations.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to observe peers to consider how they want to use materials.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose between sensory-aligned options for materials in the toileting and bathroom routine.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a visual prompt or a scripted story to complete the activity steps. Initially, help the child to use visual prompts or scripted stories by guiding them through each activity step, focusing on sensory-friendly alternatives when needed.

- ✓ Teach the child how to use materials that can provide the sensory input they are seeking. For example, instead of the child playing with water while handwashing in the sink, they might play at the water table, play with slime, or finger paint. This offers a similar experience to help meet the child's sensory needs.
- ✓ Teach the child to recognize and label when they need sensory input and how to seek it in line with expectations and rules (e.g., "When I need to splash in the water, I can ...")
- ✓ Teach the child how to use materials safely.



Routine: Snack/Meals

The child doesn't like the food that is offered.

Prevent the Behavior

NOTE: Children should never should be forced or coerced to eat.

- ▶ Develop a scripted story about trying new foods. In the story, provide the script for what the child can do if there is food they don't like. Read before meals.
- ▶ Have preferred food items available for the child as another option.
- ▶ Use a first-then visual or verbal prompt, "First snack, then (preferred activity)."
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for eating or trying new foods.
- ▶ Provide food choices or preferred sauces (e.g., ketchup, BBQ, mustard, salad dressing). Consider using a "food choice" board with visuals of available food options, textures, or sauces.
- ▶ Remind the child to gesture, sign, use a symbol, or say, "All done."
- ▶ Introduce nonpreferred foods by giving very tiny portions alongside preferred food. There should be no expectations for the child to eat the nonpreferred food. Allow the child to build up a tolerance for undesirable food on their plate.
- ▶ Pair the new food with a preferred food and repeatedly present it until it is no longer new.
- ▶ Always have backup food you know the child will eat when a child rejects food. You do not want your encouragement to try new foods to escalate into a power struggle. If you have backup food that the child will accept, you will know that the child will not go hungry.
- ▶ Modify the food texture, flavor, smell, temperature, or appearance.
- ▶ Discuss different food origins, colors, textures, and flavors.
- ▶ Encourage the child to explore food, including touching and smelling. Model curiosity about food by using language that does not pressure a child (e.g., "I wonder what this tastes like" or "This snack feels kind of bumpy!").
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to peers for eating (e.g., "I see Susan is enjoying her potatoes.").
- ▶ Remove distractions in the room to help the child focus on the meal.
- ▶ Offer the child choices and do not pressure the child to eat when the child has rejected a food.
- ▶ If they seem interested, suggest a playful way to try the food (e.g., "Do you want to be a scientist and test this new snack?").

- ▶ Ensure that mealtimes are pleasant (e.g., inviting table, not rushed, children are not pressured).
- ▶ Create a “food feelings” chart with visuals of different facial expressions and phrases like (“yummy,” “crunchy,” and “too soft”) that the child can use to express how they feel about each food.
- ▶ Create a “No thank you” plate, where the child can place food they prefer not to taste or eat during the meal.

Respond

- ➡ Use a first-then visual, saying, “First snack, then (favorite item).”
- ➡ Prompt the child to gesture, sign, or say, “All done.”
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message, “You are telling me that you are finished eating carrots. Let’s try something else.”
- ➡ If crying, say, “I see you are unhappy. You don’t want to eat.”
- ➡ Acknowledge the child’s discomfort and validate their feelings (e.g., “It’s ok not to like every food. We all like different things.”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to expand food tolerance or preferences by pairing with highly preferred foods or sauces.
- ✓ Teach the child to make food choices.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a first-then visual.
- ✓ Teach the child to say “all done” or “No thank you” using their preferred language and method of communication.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to explore and taste foods.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate what they want using their preferred language and method of communication.

The child wants to leave the table.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Provide the opportunity for the child to communicate that they want to leave the table when they gesture or say, “All done.” Gradually build up the time spent sitting at the table by saying, “One more bite, then all done.”
- ▶ Set a timer for a short period (1 minute), and have the child wait for the timer before leaving the table (slowly increase time as the child is successful).
- ▶ Develop a scripted story on mealtime expectations and read it to the child before the activity.
- ▶ Create a mealtime choice board that supports the child in making choices during mealtime, such as whether they want to start with a drink or a small snack item.
- ▶ Provide the child with highly preferred foods to encourage sitting.
- ▶ Have the child help prepare the table for snacks or meals to encourage participation in the routine.
- ▶ Invite the child to sit next to a peer or next to the teacher to encourage sitting.
- ▶ Give the child choices of where or what cushion to sit on.
- ▶ Provide a dish, cup, or placemat with preferred characters that the child will find engaging.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for sitting while eating. Use a visual prompt (like a smiley face card) or brief verbal acknowledgment every few minutes to let the child know they’re doing well sitting.

- ▶ Give a thumbs-up, a gentle smile, or a light touch on the child's shoulder as subtle, supportive ways to encourage continued sitting without verbal prompting, which may feel like pressure.
- ▶ Provide a visual first-then of "first sit, then eat" or "first sit and eat, then _____ (preferred activity)."
- ▶ Provide quiet, calming activities before mealtime to help the child transition from play to mealtime.
- ▶ Keep the mealtime routine consistent.
- ▶ Have the food ready before the child sits at the table.
- ▶ Provide a preferred chair or table or adapt the chair based on the child's need.
- ▶ Sit next to the child.
- ▶ Allow the child to stand at the table versus requiring the child to sit in a chair.
- ▶ Have the child sit at the end of the table in the quietest part of the room with a peer.
- ▶ Turn on calm music.
- ▶ Set an appealing table (e.g., colored napkins, bright tablecloth).
- ▶ Incorporate social routines or roles during mealtime (e.g., create conversation cards that prompt children to answer questions or communicate about topics of interest, create helper roles such as passing out napkins or water bottles).

Respond

- ➡ Gesture and tell the child, "Say all done," and help the child say, sign, gesture, or use a visual to indicate they are done. Let the child leave (slowly increase the time required to sit).
- ➡ Prompt the child to wait and look at the timer.
- ➡ Refer to the first-then visual to "first sit, then eat" or "first sit and eat, then preferred activity."
- ➡ Redirect the child who leaves the table. "We sit to eat," or "We stay at the table to eat. You can sit or you can stand.", and gently guide the child back to the table. If the child persists in leaving, remove the dish from the table until the child chooses to return. Do this with a supportive stance (i.e., do not reprimand the child), "We sit to eat. When you are ready to sit, you can finish lunch."
- ➡ Consider reframing leaving as a routine "check-in." If the child does leave, consider it to be a short break to "check in" with another area, then invite them back by saying, "Our meal is still here for you when you're ready."

Teach New Skills

- ✔ Teach the child to sit to eat with other classmates by embedding choices and preferences.
- ✔ Teach the child to say, "All done," using their preferred language and method of communication. Slowly increase the time you ask the child to sit before you prompt them to indicate if they are all done.
- ✔ Break down sitting time into short, achievable milestones (like one minute or three bites), gradually building up to more extended periods.
- ✔ As you increase the expected time to sit, teach the child to wait and look at the timer.
- ✔ Teach the child the mealtime rules using the scripted story.

The child wants other children's food.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Before mealtime, remind children of the rules and how they can respond kindly when a friend reaches for their food (e.g., "You can let your friend know that they can ask a teacher for more food.").
- ▶ Develop a scripted story on mealtime rules and read it to the child before the activity.
- ▶ Increase portions or provide more filling food if the child takes other children's food because they are hungry.
- ▶ Remind the child to gesture, sign, or ask for more and serve the child additional food.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for eating food from their plate.
- ▶ Have a peer model how to gesture, sign, or ask for more. Comment on how the child asked when you provide more (e.g., "Jose asked for more snack. Here you go, Jose.").
- ▶ Check with the family about their mealtime traditions and if the child can access a sibling's food.
- ▶ Consider putting a plate with an additional serving near the child to access.
- ▶ Create a larger space between children that makes it difficult to reach the food (while still keeping the child with the "group").
- ▶ Use a placemat or designate the eating space with colored tape.
- ▶ Place a visual support on or near the child's plate that reminds them to request "more, please" in their preferred language and method of communication.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child that food on other children's plates belongs to them, and they can ask a teacher for more (e.g., use words, gestures, signs, visuals, or a device to request "more").
- ➡ Prompt the child to "ask for more" or "show me more."
- ➡ Remind the child to only eat from their plate on their placemat.
- ➡ Remind the child of mealtime expectations by reading the scripted story.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to request food from the teacher (e.g., sign, gesture, or say "more").
- ✓ Teach the child only to touch their plate.

The child wants to stay at the table and continue eating when the activity ends.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Reflect on and partner with the family to determine whether or not the amount of time offered for the child to eat their meal is enough for them. Create a plan to extend the time the child can eat when possible.
- ▶ Use a scripted story to help the child understand the steps of the routine and when it will end. Read to the child before the activity.
- ▶ Provide a countdown of time left in the activity so that children will know when the snack or mealtime ends. Provide the countdown to the entire group and prompt the child individually after the group direction.
- ▶ Provide an individual warning to the child that the mealtime will end in X minutes.

- ▶ Show the child a first-then visual chart when warning the child individually that the mealtime will end and what activity will follow.
- ▶ Provide the child with additional time to finish their food or snack.
- ▶ Consider if the child might be too distracted to finish their meal or snack by the time the activity ends. If so, plan to create smaller mealtime groups (e.g., a table of two or four) so the child can complete their meal.
- ▶ Monitor the child to ensure they have time to complete their meal during the activity.
- ▶ If the child is provided a large amount of food for multiple meals, meet with the family to ask what food was for snack versus lunch. Suggest how they might organize the food to make it easier for the child to know what to eat at various meal times.
- ▶ Help the child plan what they will eat for the meal or snack.
- ▶ Establish a fun, non-verbal signal for the last few bites (e.g., ringing a small bell or showing a special picture card).
- ▶ Place a small plate for “leftover” items the child can return to later in the day.
- ▶ Use a timer to support the child with self-pacing, helping them naturally pace their eating during mealtime and build a developmentally appropriate awareness of time passing.
- ▶ Consider the current routine for gathering children at the table and its impact on their ability to sit and eat comfortably. Could adjusting the routine—such as seating the child earlier or minimizing their wait time before eating—help support them better?

Respond

- ➡ Validate the child’s emotion (e.g., “You are not ready for lunch to be over. You want to finish your food.”) and enlist the child to identify a potential solution to resolve the problem (e.g., finish later when we have an afternoon snack, finish now in 10 minutes and then join us at the rug).
- ➡ Give the child a few more minutes to finish their meal or snack, and set a timer to signal when the time is over so they can transition to a preferred activity.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to balance eating with socializing so they can finish their meal by sitting with the child and prompting them to eat (e.g., “Let me tell you a funny story while you take some bites of your sandwich.”).
- ✓ Teach the child to notice and anticipate the time left by guiding them to look at a visual timer or clock.
- ✓ Teach self-pacing by having the child pause and check in with a “halfway” marker (like a visual prompt at the meal’s midpoint).
- ✓ Teach the child to request more time to eat so that they can finish their snack or meal by using a simple request in their preferred language and method of communication (e.g., “more time to finish,” “a few more bites”).
- ✓ Teach the child to plan and prioritize their mealtime eating (e.g., Choose two foods to finish, and we’ll save the rest for lunchtime.”).
- ✓ Teach the child to consider certain foods as “later foods” if they do not finish everything during a meal.



Routine: Nap/Rest

The child doesn't want to nap/rest.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Collaborate with families to create a culturally meaningful routine and offer items that comfort the child during rest time.
- ▶ Read a scripted story about the routine and rules for rest time.
- ▶ Post visuals of the rest time rules where the child rests.
- ▶ Have the child bring a favorite sleep or comfort item from home (e.g., stuffed animal, pillow, blanket).
- ▶ Use a first-then visual or verbal prompt: “First rest, then (offer a preferred activity after a nap)” to show the child the sequence of activities.
- ▶ Use a visual timer to show the child how long they must stay on their cot or mat.
- ▶ Darken the room or the child's nap area.
- ▶ Have the child rest in an area of the room with fewer distractions and where they are less likely to try to access the door or other activity areas.
- ▶ Offer to rub the child's back once they lie down. Rub their back briefly and then leave for a minute or two. While the child is still lying and quiet, return to the child and rub their back intermittently.
- ▶ Provide the child with a book or quiet activity while staying on the mat or cot.
- ▶ Provide the child with a series of items to play with or look at for nap time (e.g., books, small cars, fidget toys). Give them to the child one at a time.
- ▶ Play soothing music.
- ▶ Take a group of children who do not nap into another area and provide a quiet activity supervised by another adult.
- ▶ Reduce stimulation in the room during naptime.
- ▶ Move from a period of active play to a restful activity before nap (e.g., outdoor play, followed by toileting, reading books, and then nap).
- ▶ Encourage children to participate in the transition to nap (e.g., getting their comfort object, arranging cot).

- ▶ Personalize the child's nap area based on the child's preferences, including personal comfort objects, blankets, and cot/mat placement. Some children might need visual privacy from others to fall asleep, others might need complete silence, or some may enjoy sounds or music during their slumber.
- ▶ Rock a child who is unable to settle down independently.
- ▶ Offer choices that promote resting in their way (e.g., "You can close your eyes or look at your book quietly."). Offer a range of individualized quiet activities (e.g., sensory items, soft toys, picture books) and encourage the child to select one or two that align with their preferences and needs, ensuring options that engage them without requiring physical rest.
- ▶ Whisper or provide gestural (e.g., thumbs up) positive feedback to the child for staying on their mat or cot.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child of their favorite or fun activity after a nap using a first/then visual or a visual of the activity following rest time.
- ➡ Tell the child, "First, lie down, and then I will rub your back." Wait for the child to become calm, and then rub their back.
- ➡ Validate the child's feelings and offer an alternative, "I think you are showing me that you don't want to rest, but it is quiet time. You need to stay on your mat. I can sit with you and rub your back; or you can look at a book."
- ➡ Offer the child a choice of alternate quiet activity (e.g., stuffed animal, book, coloring page, squishy ball).
- ➡ Guide the child to look at the visual timer to see how long they need to stay on their mat or cot.
- ➡ Encourage the child to rest positively (e.g., "It's okay not to feel sleepy—let's lie down with your book. We can have a quiet time together.").

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to rest quietly (i.e., the child might not need naps) with a favorite item.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose an appropriate alternative activity during nap time after resting quietly for a designated period.
- ✓ Teach the child the rules of rest or nap time using a scripted story.
- ✓ Teach the child self-soothing techniques (e.g., deep breaths, gentle stretches) they can use when they need help relaxing.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a brief, child-friendly guided relaxation (e.g., "Let's close our eyes and imagine a cozy place." "Take a big breath with me and let it out slowly.").
- ✓ Teach the child to check the visual timer, creating predictability for when quiet time will be over.

The child wants adult attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Engage in a connection routine before the start of rest time when the child can check in about how connected they feel and choose or create a plan with the adult to ensure they feel connected during rest time.
- ▶ Emphasize connection opportunities throughout the day. Try to focus less on reducing attention-seeking behaviors and helping the child feel secure and valued at the frequency and in the amount and type of adult connection they prefer and need.
- ▶ Build time into the routine when the adult checks in with the child, regardless of whether they have requested the adult's attention or help. Plan for and provide regular check-ins by setting up brief, scheduled times to check in with the child, focused on providing assurance and connection.

- ▶ Create a gesture (with the child whenever possible) the child and adult(s) can use to make a connection when they are not in the same area, such as a special hand gesture (e.g., place hand over heart, cross arms over own chest for a “hug”).
- ▶ Read a simple scripted story about how the child can follow the rules for rest time.
- ▶ Keep the child’s rest area consistent, predictable, and near an adult.
- ▶ Use first-then visual or verbal prompt (“First lie down, then I will rub your back.”)
- ▶ Rub the child’s back and slowly step away, or decrease the time you rub their back over a few days.
- ▶ Schedule a short, fun activity with the child following rest time so that they can have time with the teacher.
- ▶ Assure the child that the teacher will be nearby if they need help.
- ▶ Use simple pictures that show the progression of nap time, helping the child understand that the teacher will be nearby while encouraging the child to rest quietly.
- ▶ Set a visual timer for a short period (1 minute), and have the child wait for it to stop before having their back rubbed by an adult (slowly increase the time as the child is successful).
- ▶ Individualize the child’s resting area with items they find comforting, like a special blanket or pillow (aligned with any developmental or regulation requirements for safety), to increase their feeling of security and reduce the need for adult attention.
- ▶ Offer positive descriptive feedback periodically for moments when the child rests calmly, recognizing their success in waiting and resting.

Respond

- Use a first-then prompt to remind the child, “First rest or lie down, and then I can come and rub your back.”
- Say, “I will sit with you (or rub your back) when you are quiet and lying down.”
- Offer the child a comfort item to have with them on the cot or mat.
- Briefly withdraw attention and then redirect the child to rest quietly. Once quiet, respond to the child and help them lie down or choose a different quiet activity.
- Use a gentle visual or verbal reminder of the nap routine (e.g., “I’ll be close by, and you can rest with your cozy blanket.”) to encourage expectations without extended adult attention.
- Validate the child’s preference or need for adult support/attention while maintaining the rest routine (e.g., “I see you want me close, and I’m nearby. Let’s rest together quietly.”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to “first rest,” then the teacher will rub their back. Set a visual timer for a short period (1 minute), and have the child wait for it to stop before having their back rubbed by an adult (slowly increase the time as the child is successful).
- ✓ As you increase the time for the child to stay on their cot or mat independently, teach them to wait and look at the timer to know when rest time is over.
- ✓ Teach the child to ask, using preferred language and method of communication, for an adult to come over and assist them in quiet, minimally disruptive ways.
- ✓ Develop a scripted story to teach the child what they can do during rest time to be comfortable and follow the rules. Address how and when the child will receive an adult’s attention in the story.
- ✓ Teach the child to use self-soothing strategies that they can use independently to alleviate discomfort (i.e., a cozy blanket, holding a favorite stuffed animal, or taking deep breaths).

The child wants peer attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Schedule a brief, quiet peer-based activity (e.g., sharing a book or quiet partner play) before rest time.
- ▶ Have the child choose a peer partner to help set up rest time together (e.g., get out mats, select music to play, turn off lights).
- ▶ Place the child near the teacher and away from other children to prevent the child from disturbing others.
- ▶ Use first-then visual or verbal prompt: “First rest, then you can play with (name friend).” Create a first/then visual with a space for the child to select a photo of a peer and add it to the board.
- ▶ Read a simple scripted story about rest time and the rules for children. Include instructions about not disturbing rest time for their friends who are resting.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for resting quietly.
- ▶ Set a visual timer for rest time and have the child look at the timer to see how long they need to be on their mat or cot. Include a reminder of their next peer interaction after nap time.
- ▶ Help the child choose a “rest buddy” with whom they can connect in pre-determined ways during rest time (e.g., trade books or pictures, use silent hand signals, draw a picture to exchange after nap time).
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for moments when the child rests quietly on their own (e.g., “I see you’re resting quietly; you’ll be ready to play with your friends later!”).
- ▶ Take a group of children who do not nap into another area and provide a quiet activity supervised by another adult.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child of the activity with a friend that comes after the nap. Use visuals to show the child the activity with peers that will follow.
- ➡ Validate the child’s feelings and offer an alternative, “I think you are showing me that you want to play with your friends and don’t want to rest, but it is quiet time. You need to stay on your mat. I can sit with you and rub your back, or you can look at a book.”
- ➡ Offer an alternative activity that the child can engage in quietly (e.g., stuffed animal, book, coloring page, squishy ball).
- ➡ Use a visual timer and encourage the child to “watch the timer” to know when rest time will end and they can rejoin friends.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to choose a different activity they can engage in quietly after appropriately resting for a designated time.
- ✓ Teach the child the rules of rest or nap time using a scripted story.
- ✓ As you increase the time for the child to stay on their cot or mat, teach them to wait and look at the timer to know when rest time is over.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate their wish to play with friends after nap time in their preferred language or method of communication (e.g., point to a friend’s picture to communicate their intention to interact after nap time or ask a friend, “Can we play after nap?”).

The child has difficulty settling down or soothing themselves to sleep.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use a scripted story or visuals to review the rules and expectations for rest time before the activity begins.
- ▶ Offer to put on music, rock the child, or rub the child's back using a first/ then visual or verbal prompt ("First get on your cot, then I can rub your back or rock you for a bit.").
- ▶ Have the child positioned in a consistent and predictable place in the room with minimal distractions.
- ▶ Provide a choice of a doll or stuffed animal (or a comfort item from home) to nap with.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for resting quietly.
- ▶ Reduce stimulation in the room during rest time.
- ▶ Move from a period of active play to a restful activity before nap (e.g., outdoor play, followed by toileting, reading books, and then nap).
- ▶ Encourage children to participate in the transition to nap (e.g., getting their comfort object, taking off shoes, arranging cot).
- ▶ Personalize each child's nap area based on the child's preferences, including personal comfort objects, blankets, and cot/mat placement. Some children might need visual privacy from others to fall asleep, others might need complete silence, or others may prefer hearing music or sounds.
- ▶ Rub the child's back to assist the child in falling asleep.
- ▶ Rock the child who is unable to settle down independently.
- ▶ Create a "quiet bucket" or "calm down basket" with quiet, soothing items the child can use when lying down.
- ▶ Offer deep breathing or relaxation visuals in the form of cards or a visual guide hung near the child's nap mat they can use to settle down.
- ▶ Develop and follow a predictable pre-rest routine that helps the child get ready for nap time.

Respond

- ➡ Reassure the child that an adult is nearby and remind them to use calming strategies (e.g., "I am right over here. Can you try a calming breath? I can help you if you need me to.").
- ➡ Say, "First, lie down quietly, then I will put on the music and rub your back (or rock you)."
- ➡ Offer a choice of a comfort item.
- ➡ Prompt the child to hold the comfort item.
- ➡ Provide support to the child to stay on the cot or mat.
- ➡ Hold or rock the child who is unable to settle down independently.
- ➡ Allow the child to leave naptime if it seems the child is not sleepy.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child calming or self-soothing strategies.
- ✓ Teach the child simple relaxation exercises (e.g., pretend to blow up a balloon, belly breaths) they can use to calm down.
- ✓ Teach the child to "first rest, and then the teacher will turn on music and rub back (or rock)."
- ✓ Teach the child to participate in transitioning to nap.
- ✓ Teach the child to stay on the cot or mat.



Routine: Outdoor Play

The child is uncomfortable (too warm or cold) and wants to go inside.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Ensure the child does not have a medical need. If they do, partner with the family to understand their needs and develop an accommodation plan that addresses them.
- ▶ Consider having an adult return inside with the child who is becoming overheated or too cold.
- ▶ Develop a scripted story to review with the child that describes the options outside and what to do when they are uncomfortable.
- ▶ Have a drink available outside.
- ▶ Offer a cooling bandana or neck cooler the child might choose to wear.
- ▶ Provide a shade shelter for children who are sensitive to the heat.
- ▶ Guide the child to the playground's cooler area and begin playing with the child in the area.
- ▶ Bring a fan outside.
- ▶ Offer a mister or handheld fan for the child to use.
- ▶ Point out the activities that help children remain cool, such as the sandbox, swings, or play spaces under a tree.
- ▶ Have highly preferred activities available (e.g., activities the child enjoys, bubbles, trikes, big bouncy balls).
- ▶ Provide water play activities.
- ▶ Provide a warm-up bench with blankets for children to wrap themselves in while sitting together.
- ▶ Provide hats, gloves, boots, or scarves for children to wear.
- ▶ Provide a hat or sunglasses to wear.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child of alternatives (e.g., get a drink, sit under a tree, mist with water) verbally or with visual supports.
- ➡ Suggest the child take a break from active play to do something that is low-energy, such as looking at books or drawing with sidewalk chalk in the shade.

- ➡ Validate feelings (e.g., “I know it’s hot, a few more minutes, and we can go inside.”). Then, state the alternatives.
- ➡ Validate the child’s feelings by mentioning, “You are hot!” and then comfort the child. You might then fan the child, use a mister, loosen the child’s clothing, move the child to the shade, or pat the child with a damp cloth.
- ➡ Ask the child how they would like to cool down or warm up while reminding them of their choices verbally or with a choice board.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to choose an alternative activity that is “cooler,” or helps warm the body.
- ✓ Teach the child to use a neck cooler, mister, fan, or get a drink.
- ✓ Teach the child to invite a friend or teacher to join them on the warm-up bench.
- ✓ Teach the child to express in their preferred language and method of communication “hot” or “cold” or request to be held (e.g., “up”).
- ✓ Teach the child to recognize when they experience discomfort and practice solutions depending on their discomfort (e.g., “When I feel too warm, I can go to the shade or get a drink.”).
- ✓ Use the scripted story (read before the activity) to teach the child the alternatives for what to do when they become uncomfortable outside.

The child wants to leave the designated outside play area (i.e., runs away).

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use a scripted story about “staying safe outside” that describes the boundaries for the outside play area and where the child should stay.
- ▶ Review expectations and rules before transitioning outside.
- ▶ Post visuals of outside rules and review them individually with the child.
- ▶ Create and provide a visual reminder of expectations and rules that the child can wear (e.g., a wristband).
- ▶ Position an adult near the gate or exit path to remind the child to return to the play area.
- ▶ Provide high-interest toys and materials the child prefers to support their play engagement.
- ▶ Check in with the child frequently, helping them determine if it is time to change activities or move to a different part of the play area.
- ▶ Plan peer partnership opportunities for children to help one another engage in play.
- ▶ Create clear, visible boundaries using cones, flags, or other items to define the play area.
- ▶ Use a visual timer that shows how long outside playtime will last.
- ▶ Plan activities children can choose to participate in, including running or movement activities (e.g., races, obstacle courses).
- ▶ Embed child-preferred activities and materials when going outside.
- ▶ Ask the family to identify outside games or materials that the child might prefer and offer those to the child.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child stays in the play area.

Respond

- ➡ Redirect the child's attention to an interesting activity or peer(s) within the play boundary when they first start to leave a play area (e.g., "Let's go see what Amaya is building with that big shovel in the sandbox!").
- ➡ Remind the child of outside play boundaries.
- ➡ Remind the child to stay with the class.
- ➡ Return the child to the play area and provide them with materials to play near an adult who can monitor them.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Assist the child in learning when and where it is permissible to run (e.g., through a scripted story).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow outside rules.
- ✓ Teach the child to self-check their location by asking questions such as, "Am I inside the play area?"
- ✓ Teach problem-solving and practice identifying and using solutions when the child may feel the urge to leave the designated play area (e.g., "If I want to leave, I can tell a teacher or run on the bike path").
- ✓ Teach the child to choose play activities if running is preferred or needed. Consider teaching the child to use a choice board with running and high-movement games and activities the child can use to plan their play.
- ✓ Teach the child how to participate in active play activities inside of the boundaries.

The child is unsafe using equipment, toys, or materials to obtain peer or adult attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use a scripted story about the safe use of equipment, toys, or materials that are a concern (e.g., "Sand stays in the sandbox.", "I can play safely outside.").
- ▶ Post visuals of outside rules and review them individually with the child.
- ▶ Place visual reminders and ideas for using equipment, toys, and materials creatively and safely.
- ▶ Provide high-interest toys and materials the child prefers to support their play engagement.
- ▶ Plan and provide opportunities for peer play activities that an adult facilitates or supervises.
- ▶ Plan peer partnership opportunities for children to help one another remain engaged in play.
- ▶ Strategically set up play zones and structure adult support based on children's preferences and needs for more attention (e.g., an active zone for ball and bike play where one adult remains for a designated period to provide attention and support).
- ▶ Join the child in play to provide adult attention.
- ▶ Periodically check in with the child to provide attention, offering encouragement for safe play and support if they demonstrate early signs of needing more attention.
- ▶ Provide frequent positive descriptive feedback to the child for playing safely with others and materials.

Respond

- ➡ Provide frequent positive descriptive feedback when the child uses equipment, toys, or materials safely.
- ➡ Redirect the child to the appropriate way to use the equipment, toys, or materials and join the child's play to model and facilitate their engagement.

- ➡ Ask the child to show you how to play safely and then provide immediate positive descriptive feedback.
- ➡ Ask the child if they need help selecting another play activity to play safely.
- ➡ Help the child join the play with other children in their chosen activity (e.g., “I see you want someone to play with you. Let’s find a safe way to play together.”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child how to safely play with equipment, toys, or materials and explain what actions are unsafe.
- ✓ Teach the child to ask a peer or adult to play with them through their preferred language and method of communication.

The child wants an adult as a play partner *(adult attention)*.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Develop and read a scripted story to the child before going outside that describes the options for playing with peers or alone when outside. Include information on how the adult might play with the child or join other children in their play.
- ▶ Prepare the child before getting up to leave from playing (“Three more scoops of sand, then I need to go push at the swings,” “One more time around the track, then a friend can pull you in the wagon,” “One more minute ball play, then I play with another friend”).
- ▶ Support the child in choosing a peer to play with and frequently provide positive descriptive feedback when the child plays with a peer and vice versa.
- ▶ Use a timer to let the child know how long it will be before a teacher returns to play.
- ▶ Plan play with the child, using a visual support/schedule as they prefer or need, so they know that their playtime includes activities with adults, peers, and independent play.
- ▶ Offer helper opportunities for children to assist and have choices around setting up toys, putting away materials, or leading peer activities. Interact with the child as they help in these ways.
- ▶ Help the child transition from playing with an adult to playing with peers or independently by offering or co-creating a clear plan (e.g., “First, we build the tower together, then you can show Max how to build the next one.”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials that are highly interesting for toddlers.
- ✓ Sit with a group of toddlers and facilitate their play together.
- ✓ Assure the child that you will be nearby if they need help.
- ✓ Provide positive verbal support for play between children and independent play.

Respond

- ➡ Prompt the child to communicate in their preferred language and method of communication to “play with me.”
- ➡ Prompt the child to ask a friend to play.
- ➡ Remind the child of the timer and that when it goes off, the teacher will return.
- ➡ Acknowledge the child’s feelings if they become upset when you leave while encouraging them to play with peers (e.g., “You want to keep playing with me, but I am going to go play with some of the other children for a little bit. Let’s see if one of your friends wants to play while I play with someone else.”).

- If a significant amount of attention has been provided preventatively, take a break from directly attending to the behavior if it is not hurtful, disruptive, or dangerous (e.g., crying or whining) and prompt the child to use new skills.
- While the child is playing independently or with a peer, offer brief but meaningful interactions (e.g., high-fives, verbal encouragement) without needing to stop the activity you are currently engaged in with another child.
- Reflect with children later in the day about when they got peer and adult attention safely outside.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to ask an adult to play using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to ask a peer to play using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to increase the time they will play alone by gradually increasing your expectations.
- ✓ Teach the child that adults must take turns playing with different children and remind them when it is time for the adult to switch (e.g., “Your turn next!”).
- ✓ Teach the child to use simple self-regulation strategies during wait times.
- ✓ Use the scripted story to teach the child the options for playing with peers or alone when outside and how the adult might play with the child or join other children in their play.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Provide the child with developmentally appropriate materials that will be of interest and teach the child to play independently for very brief periods.
- ✓ Teach the child how to ask for an adult (e.g., “up,” “come,” or state the teacher’s name) using preferred language and method of communication.

The child wants objects or equipment that another child is using.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Provide multiple items or activities that have high child preference.
- ▶ Use a timer when necessary to indicate turns (preferably one that indicates time passing in a visual manner).
- ▶ Anticipate when the child wants an object or activity, and prompt the child to ask, gesture, or sign a request to join in play (“Can I play?” or “My turn”).
- ▶ Use a first-then visual of “first ask, then play.”
- ▶ Provide a “My turn” chart where the child can place their name or photograph on a list for a turn with highly preferred objects or activities.
- ▶ Develop and read a scripted story about waiting for a turn to use an object or equipment another child uses.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Toddlers might not have the developmental skills to understand waiting for a turn. For high-interest materials, provide enough of an item so that all children within the activity will have the toy (e.g., enough buckets and shovels for all the children in the sandbox; enough push toys of similar features).
- ▶ Provide verbal support to scaffold play between children.
- ▶ Keep turn-taking brief, gradually increasing the time as children become more comfortable with waiting.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child to ask, sign, or gesture to play or request a turn.
- ➡ Offer an alternative activity or toy.
- ➡ Remind the child when their turn is on the “My turn” chart.
- ➡ When the child continues to demand the objects or activity by engaging in behaviors that are challenging for adults or their peers, calmly use a “first-then” statement (e.g., “First, Charlie, and then your turn”).
- ➡ Offer alternatives for sharing (e.g., “You can ask to play with it after they are done, or you can choose another toy to play with.”).
- ➡ Acknowledge the child’s attempts to communicate that they want to play or to have a turn.
- ➡ Stay with the child and model patient waiting while offering encouraging ideas of alternate activities (e.g., “Let’s see what else we can do while we wait.”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ If the child gets involved in a toddler tiff (e.g., pulling on another child’s toy, crying when a child gets an item they wanted), observe and wait, intervening if things get physical to help the child(ren) learn how to navigate social relationships.
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message (e.g., “I know you want the toy now. You will have a turn once (child’s name) is done. Right now, you are waiting.”).
- ➡ If the child is aggressive, you can say, “Hitting hurts. We can’t hit our friends.” Then, provide the child with alternatives (“Emily has the wagon; you can ride trikes or play in the sandbox while you wait for a toy. I will help you find something to play.”).
- ➡ When the child continues to demand the object or activity by engaging in behaviors that challenge adults or peers, then use a “first- then” statement (e.g., “First, Charlie, and then [another child’s] turn”).
- ➡ Prompt the child to “tell/show us” and model how to say, sign, or gesture to communicate their wants.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to ask to use an object or activity (“Can I play?”), in their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to wait for a turn. Provide opportunities to practice sharing and turn-taking during other times of the day and with less highly preferred objects or equipment.
- ✓ Use visual supports such as timers, stop signs, hand signals, or waiting cards to help children practice waiting patiently for turns.
- ✓ Teach turn-taking with a countdown system (e.g., “Five more seconds, then it’s your turn.”).
- ✓ Teach the child to “think of a solution” (e.g., What could they do? Get another item, ask to join, ask the other child to let them know when they are done?).
- ✓ Use a scripted story to teach the child about waiting for a turn to use an object or equipment another child uses.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to make choices.
- ✓ Teach the child to say “want” in their preferred language and method of communication. Stay close by to scaffold interaction just in case the peer does not want to give the toy.
- ✓ Encourage parallel play with similar toys or activities before transitioning to teaching cooperative play to build a foundation for sharing and turn-taking.

The child wants a turn immediately.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use a timer to indicate turns (preferably one that indicates time passing in a visual manner).
- ▶ Use a “My turn chart” where the child puts a photo with their name on the chart to indicate when it’s the child’s turn.
- ▶ Provide multiple items or activities that have high child preference.
- ▶ Provide choices of high interest or have an outside play choice board available.
- ▶ Make supports for self-regulation accessible and available for children to use (e.g., turtle technique with visuals and a puppet, calm down strategy cards) autonomously, together, or with an adult to discuss and model regulating strong emotions.
- ▶ Introduce a short, familiar “waiting song” that signals waiting and turn-taking.
- ▶ Offer the child supports from a “waiting basket” (e.g., fidget spinner, stress ball, pop tube) that can help distract their focus while they wait.
- ▶ Offer support for transitions by providing gentle reminders (e.g., “Three more scoops of sand, and then it is time for your turn with the ball!”).
- ▶ Develop and read a scripted story about wanting a turn immediately and how to wait for a turn.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Toddlers might not have the developmental skills to understand waiting for a turn. For high-interest materials, provide enough of an item so that all children within the activity will have the toy (e.g., enough buckets and shovels for all the children in the sandbox; enough push toys of similar features).
- ▶ Ensure that expectations for the time a child waits are developmentally appropriate and brief.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback, acknowledging the child’s effort while waiting.
- ▶ Acknowledge and encourage even brief signs of waiting, especially when children first learn how to wait.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child to wait by showing the “My turn” chart and offer choices.
- ➡ Remind the child that it will be their turn when the timer goes off and prompt them to watch it.
- ➡ If the child is becoming upset, calmly redirect them to another activity while reminding them of the expectation (e.g., “I see you want the toy now, but first, we wait for the timer. Why don’t we play with the blocks while we wait?”).
- ➡ When the child continues to demand his turn by engaging in challenging behavior, use a “first-then” statement (e.g., “First, Torin, and then your turn”) and be calm about the problem behavior.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ If the child gets involved in a toddler tiff (e.g., pulling on another child’s toy, crying when a child gets an item they wanted), observe and wait, intervening if things get physical to help the child(ren) learn how to navigate social relationships.
- ➡ Validate the child’s emotion: “I know you want the toy now. You can’t hit. Hitting hurts.” Then, give the child alternatives: “You can ride trikes or play in the sandbox.” You might need to use visuals or hold up toys for the child to choose.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to choose an alternative activity while waiting.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the “My turn chart.”
- ✓ Teach the child to wait for the timer to go off before taking a turn.
- ✓ Teach the child how to self-regulate and use skills such as the turtle technique with visuals, a puppet, or a calm down strategy to discuss and model how to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Teach the child how to wait and develop patience through simple, structured, and fun turn-taking games (e.g., rolling or throwing a ball back and forth, building blocks at the bottom of the slide, and taking turns sliding down to crash into them).
- ✓ Use the scripted story about wanting a turn immediately and how to wait for a turn to help the child learn how to wait.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child how to take turns within simple back-and-forth exchanges. Use simple, direct language and visuals to explain turn-taking and waiting.
- ✓ Teach the child to choose an activity.
- ✓ Teach the child to state what they want using their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Toddlers learning to take turns may be simply trying to communicate “I want,” so teach the child to say “I want” in their preferred language and method of communication.



Routine: Small Group

The child does not know what to do and needs help.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Plan activities and select materials that align with the child's preferences, strengths, and needs.
- ▶ Offer a variety of ways for the child to engage based on their interests, developmental strengths, and sensory needs (e.g., multi-modal interaction, watching, contributing ideas through an AAC device that is pre-programmed with necessary vocabulary).
- ▶ Create a scripted story about the small group routine using real photos and read it to the child before small group activities. Create the story in the child's preferred language and method of communication, explaining what to expect and how to participate.
- ▶ Before the small group activity, show a visual class schedule and provide a transition prompt. Say, "Five more minutes, then small group," while showing pictures of "small group" or "activity" to the child.
- ▶ Before transitioning to the group, use a visual mini-schedule that illustrates each step of the small group activity and refer to each visual after each step.
- ▶ Ensure all materials are ready for the activity before the child transitions to small group and that the sequence of the activities is clear. Review the activities before transition or provide visual supports depicting the sequence of activities in the small group area.
- ▶ Review the rules for small group activities with the child before starting the activity.
- ▶ Make the activity an appropriate length (e.g., less than 20 minutes).
- ▶ Model how the child can request help from the teacher (e.g., raise their hand, use a sign, tap the teacher on the shoulder).
- ▶ Encourage the child to ask a peer to be their small group buddy for the activity.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for participation.
- ▶ Encourage the children to support each other (e.g., clapping, thumbs up, high five).
- ▶ Have designated preferred seats for the child and offer a choice (e.g., close to the teacher or close to a preferred peer).
- ▶ Provide the child with clear, simple, and specific steps in their preferred mode of communication.
- ▶ Review the small group activity directions using simple and specific language with the child.
- ▶ Repeat the same activities over time and gradually introduce new activities.

- ▶ If the child's family speaks a language other than the classroom language, incorporate key phrases and visuals in their home language within the small group activity instructions.
- ▶ Offer flexible seating, allowing the child to choose where and how to sit in the small group space (e.g., near a teacher, beside a friend, on a cushion).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate activities and engaging materials of high interest to toddlers.
- ▶ Model each action to the child and then look for the child to imitate.
- ▶ Help guide the child to join the small group once they show interest in the activity.

Respond

- ➡ Show the child the visual mini-schedule so they can see what is next in the sequence of steps.
- ➡ Validate the child's emotion and then offer help (e.g., "It looks like you might be feeling frustrated that you do not know how to do it. Would you like some help?").
- ➡ Show the child a visual of the rules for small group activities and provide positive descriptive feedback as soon as the child begins participating in the activity.
- ➡ Prompt a peer to help the child ("Could you please show ____ how to ____?").

More strategies for toddlers and developmentally young children

- ➡ If the child is learning to communicate "help me" or "show me," prompt the child to use words, gestures, signs, visuals, or a device while you provide help.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to follow the mini visual schedule for the sequence of the small group activities.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate (with words, gestures, signs, visuals, or device) "help" or to ask, "What's next?"
- ✓ Encourage the child to watch how friends do things differently, describe how peers complete the activity, and invite them to try it when they are ready.
- ✓ Embed opportunities for peer partnerships and mutual learning (e.g., "Pass the glue to Miguel" or "Do you want to ask a friend to show you the next step? How can we ask them?" "You noticed she is having a tricky time getting that open. How might we help?").
- ✓ Teach the child to make choices, such as selecting materials or choosing a seat.
- ✓ Teach the child to advocate for how they want to participate (e.g., "I want to watch first," "Can I do this by myself?").

The child wants peer attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Ensure the child has frequent opportunities to connect meaningfully with peers throughout the day, especially before and during small group time.
- ▶ Create a scripted story about the small group routine using real photos and read it to the child before small group activities.
- ▶ Provide activities that require minimal teacher assistance and playful interactions with peers.
- ▶ Review the rules for small group activities with the child before starting the activity.

- ▶ If the small group is a teacher-directed activity, schedule time with preferred peers immediately before or following the small group activity.
- ▶ Use a visual schedule to show the child when they can play with friends (e.g., center or special activity).
- ▶ Offer the child a choice of who they sit next to during the small group.
- ▶ Incorporate collaborative turn-taking and peer interaction into activities.
- ▶ Encourage the child to invite a peer to join them in the small group.
- ▶ Encourage the child to be a helper to a peer buddy.
- ▶ Model and encourage social interaction skills throughout the day (e.g., getting the attention of a peer, asking a friend to play, giving a compliment).
- ▶ Provide visuals of different ways to get a peer's attention.
- ▶ Encourage children to support each other (e.g., clapping, thumbs up, high five).
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for participating.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for the child to lead part of the small group activity.
- ▶ Provide the child a preferred helping role in the activity (e.g., encourage the child to be a helper to a peer, have the child help pass out materials to the other children).
- ▶ Create and offer a choice board the child can use to plan when and how they will complete the activity or play together with peers.

Respond

- ➡ Use a first-then visual: "First a small group activity, then _____ (a preferred activity with a peer).
- ➡ Show the visual schedule and remind the child when they can play with a peer.
- ➡ Model a strategy for getting a peer's attention or use visuals showing the friendship skill (e.g., tap a friend on the shoulder or say to a friend, "Look what I did!").
- ➡ Validate the child's emotion and then remind the child what comes next (e.g., say, "I think you are showing me that you want to play with your friends. Let's finish the math game together, and then you can go paint with your friends.").
- ➡ When the child starts to lose interest, prompt them to check in with a peer about the activity (e.g., "Ask Levi what he thinks about your picture" or "Can you show Harper how to finish this part?").

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ If the child is learning to communicate, "come here" or "show me," prompt the child to use words, gestures, signs, visuals, or a device while you provide immediate help or provide attention.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child different ways to get a peer's attention by prompting with a visual.
- ✓ Teach the child how to maintain interactions with one another during small groups aligned with their preferred language and communication method (e.g., "Can you help me?" "Your turn." "My turn." "I like yours." "Can I see yours?").
- ✓ Teach the child to request peer attention in their preferred language and method of communication (e.g., "Look at me" or "This is fun!").
- ✓ Teach the child to ask a peer to accompany them to the small group activity.

- ✓ Teach the child to follow a visual first-then or a visual schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child to make choices.
- ✓ Teach the child to self-advocate by expressing (in their preferred language and method of communication) their preference to participate in small group with peer interaction (e.g., Encourage them to communicate, “I want to do this with a friend,” or “Can I sit by Maya?”).

The child wants adult attention.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Build time into the routine when the adult checks in with the child, regardless of whether they have requested the adult’s attention or help. Plan for and provide regular check-ins by setting up brief, scheduled times to check in with the child, focused on providing assurance and connection.
- ▶ Create visuals showing different ways to connect with adults during small group and throughout the day (e.g., sitting together, helping, playing nearby, helping care for other friends).
- ▶ Offer a visual reminder that the adults care for them and they are supported (e.g., a picture of an adult giving a thumbs up when away from the child during small group time).
- ▶ Create a gesture (with the child whenever possible) the child and adult(s) can do when they are not in the same area/ small group, such as a special hand gesture (e.g., place hand over heart, cross arms over own chest for a “hug”) that can be used at a distance.
- ▶ Engage in a connection routine before the start of the small group where the child can check in about how connected they feel and choose or create a plan with the adult for the small group to ensure they feel connected during the routine.
- ▶ Schedule “time” with an adult immediately following the small group activity.
- ▶ Use a visual schedule to tell the child when they can play with an adult (e.g., center or special activity).
- ▶ Provide the child a verbal reminder when the adult is leaving the small group (e.g., “In one minute, I have to go help our friends at the water table,” “One more turn, then I am going to play the game at the blue table.”).
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback for participating.
- ▶ Use a “raise hand” visual cue card to prompt the child to gain attention.
- ▶ Provide the child with a preferred helping role in the activity (e.g., let the child be a helper to the teacher or have the child help pass out materials to the other children).
- ▶ Assure the child that you are close by if they need help.
- ▶ Provide activities that require minimal teacher assistance.
- ▶ Offer the child a choice in how they would like to engage with the adult (e.g., sit nearby, share something they made during small group, ask a question at the beginning of small group).
- ▶ Offer the child a role, such as “question leader” or “idea helper,” where they can share ideas with peers and receive adult acknowledgment for participating independently.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate materials, activities, and engaging materials that are of high interest to toddlers.

Respond

- ➡ When the child demonstrates or communicates a desire for attention but it is not possible to offer what they want immediately, offer acknowledgment without delay and let them know what you can do (e.g., “I see you would like to show me something, let’s take a look together after this part of small group!”).
- ➡ Use a first-then visual: “First a small group activity, then _____ (a preferred activity with an adult).
- ➡ Show the visual schedule and remind the child when they can play with an adult.
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message and then model or prompt the new skill (e.g., say, “Are you telling me you want me to help you? Let me finish with Delilah, and I will be right there.”).

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ➡ If the child is learning to communicate “come here” or “show me,” prompt the child to use words, gestures, signs, visuals, or a device while you provide immediate help or attention.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to raise a hand to get the teacher’s attention by prompting with a visual.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate (with words, gestures, signs, visuals, or device) “Look at me” or “This is fun.”
- ✓ Teach the child to create connection opportunities by teaching them to lead interactions (e.g., “Let’s play with blocks together!” “We could all build a tower!” “Come see what I’m making!”).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a visual first-then or a visual schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child to ask for adult attention using words, gestures, signs, visuals, or device.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ✓ Teach the child to communicate “come here” and use the teacher’s name, ask to be picked up, or for an adult to provide attention with words, gestures, signs, visuals, or device.

The child might consider it a nonpreferred activity and want to avoid the small group.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Use visual supports that demonstrate the progression of time throughout the small group, and as each activity finishes, move/remove/clip over the visual/object to show time passing (e.g., schedule board, easel, felt board, Velcro strips).
- ▶ Provide the child with choices of a preferred role in the activity with a voice of excitement to build anticipation and visual support whenever needed. Ensure the “role” choices are preferred and include the child in determining role choices when possible.
- ▶ Engage the child in setting up the activity and selecting the materials used in the small group.
- ▶ Plan for and incorporate flexible participation options so the child has multiple ways to engage in the small group activity (e.g., observe first, do a part of the activity).
- ▶ Incorporate the child’s strengths, preferences, or preferred theme into the activity (e.g., decorate materials with a favorite character or have a stuffed version of the character in the activity).
- ▶ Keep the activity short and use a timer to indicate the time in the activity.
- ▶ Remind the child they are welcome to take a break or step away when needed, and make sure they have an easy and quick way to do this (e.g., pointing to a break card, making a hand signal) and know how it works.

- ▶ Provide choices as much as possible (e.g., where to sit, who to sit next to, which materials to use, the order of the activities, and how long to participate). Choices can be displayed on a choice board or with other preferred visual supports.
- ▶ Use a visual mini-schedule (e.g., puzzles, math manipulatives, matching) to show each small group routine activity and refer to the mini-schedule after completing each activity.
- ▶ Set a timer and give a visual prompt to limit the time and to give the child a sense of when the activity will end.
- ▶ Encourage the child to be a helper to a peer.
- ▶ Encourage the child to ask a “friend” or peer to join them during the small group.
- ▶ Use first-then visual and verbal statements (“First small groups, then _____ (a preferred activity).”)
- ▶ Provide the child with positive descriptive feedback for participating.
- ▶ Teach other children to encourage the child and each other (e.g., clapping, thumbs up, high-fives.).
- ▶ Consider the environmental arrangement of the small group area. Arrange the group or table to minimize the ability to leave the small group area.
- ▶ Provide the child a preferred helping role in the activity (e.g., encourage the child to be a helper to the teacher, have the child help pass out materials to the other children).
- ▶ Offer choices for flexible seating, including having the small group activity on the floor or in a preferred space in the classroom.
- ▶ Offer the choice of supportive and adaptive materials that achieve the same purpose (e.g., adaptive scissors, glitter pen, wide grip writing utensils).
- ▶ Embed small breaks during the activity at natural pauses (e.g., wiggle break, stretch break).
- ▶ Introduce novel or particularly engaging materials.

More Strategies for Toddlers and Developmentally Young Children

- ▶ Remove the chairs from tables (toddlers prefer to stand as they do activities).
- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate activities and engaging materials of high interest to toddlers.
- ▶ Let the child leave if not interested or select a different activity.
- ▶ Keep the activity simple (one step, two steps, and then all done) and provide a visual of the steps.
- ▶ Repeat the same activities over time and gradually introduce new activities.

Respond

- ➡ Use a visual mini-schedule or first-then visual to remind the child of upcoming preferred activities.
- ➡ Refer to the timer and say, “_____ more minutes, then all done.”
- ➡ Say, “One more turn or one more _____, then all done.”
- ➡ Help the child by starting the activity for them or with them.
- ➡ Take turns with the child to get them through the activity.
- ➡ Validate the child’s behavioral message (e.g., “It looks like you are telling me that you are all done. First let us know that you are all done, then you can be finished.”).
- ➡ Monitor the child’s interest and look for signs that the child might be ready to move to a new activity. Prompt the child to communicate that they are “all done.”
- ➡ Offer choices and help the child select a different small group activity.

- ➡ Offer support to complete the activity. Consider adaptive materials to increase independence/success.
- ➡ If the child appears to be preparing to leave the small group, quickly offer a choice or an opportunity to respond or engage in a preferred activity (e.g., standing instead of sitting at the table, using alternative materials if they do not prefer the provided ones).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child the routine by consistently using a visual mini-schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow verbal or visual first-then statements.
- ✓ Teach the child to look at the visual schedule to see what fun activities follow.
- ✓ Teach the child to make choices.
- ✓ Teach the child to model their peers.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate “all done” using words, gestures, signs, visuals, or device.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate or signal when they need a break, make different choices, or would like to change the activity.
- ✓ Teach the child to track progress by reviewing the visual support, asking an adult or peer for reminders, or using a timer so they know how much time remains without feeling pressured to stay for an unknown period.



Routine: Computer or Device

The child wants more time on computer or device.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Invite the child to co-create a plan by offering input on how long they will use the device, how they want their time to be monitored (e.g., sand timer, visual timer), and what they want to do when the time is up.
- ▶ Plan with the child, offer visual choices for what they will do when their device or computer time ends, and encourage them to choose a preferred center or activity.
- ▶ Use a timer to indicate the length of time on the device or the computer.
- ▶ Review the schedule with the child (e.g., “Let’s check the schedule to see when we will use the computer again.”).
- ▶ Use a verbal or visual first-then prompt of “first computer, then ____ (choice of preferred item or activity).
- ▶ Use features on the device or computer that limit time use.
- ▶ Provide multiple verbal prompts that computer or device time is ending (e.g., five more minutes, 2 more minutes; then it is time to pick a new center). Pair verbal prompts with visual supports as the child prefers/needs.
- ▶ Prepare the child for emotions they might experience about having to end time on the device or computer by discussing, labeling, and showing feeling words (e.g., frustration, anger). Model the emotion with your facial expression, use pictures, or point out pictures in books or stories to discuss the feelings. Model how the child can express their feelings about their device time ending (e.g., say them, point to a picture, use a sign).
- ▶ Create an easy-to-use storage system to help children at the end of computer or device time, such as labeling space for device storage or using baskets or bins for children to return the devices.
- ▶ Plan for the device or computer time to end when there is a natural transition happening in the environment, such as snack or outdoor playtime.
- ▶ To prevent frustration or upset when the device or computer time ends, pre-teach strategies, like the “turtle technique” and calm down choices, using visuals, a puppet, and their preferred calming methods (e.g., taking deep breaths). Review these strategies before device or computer time begins to help the child manage their emotions if they feel frustrated, angry, or upset when their turn is over.
- ▶ Use positive descriptive feedback when the child successfully transitions from computer or device time, offering additional positive feedback as they show increasing success in managing this transition (e.g., “I noticed that Mateo put his device away on the shelf. Thank you for being such a helper!”).

- ▶ After any successful transition, have a brief conversation with the child about what helped them move from device or computer time so easily. This helps them reflect and recognize their progress (e.g., “You put your tablet away so fast today. What helped you make that choice?”).

Respond

- ➡ Offer choices for how the child can transition and for what the child will do next.
- ➡ Prompt using a first-then visual of “First computers, then _____” (child’s choice of preferred item or activity).
- ➡ Validate the child’s emotions (e.g., “It looks like you might be feeling frustrated that computer time is over. It can feel hard stopping something we like.”).
- ➡ Use a visual schedule to remind the child when they can use the computer or device again.
- ➡ Prompt the child that it is another child’s turn, and the device must go back in the _____ (bin, basket) while pointing to the bin to prompt the child to put the device away.
- ➡ If the child does not follow expectations for using computer or device materials (e.g., if they take a computer mouse from another child or if they keep the mouse in their hand vs. putting it down on the mouse pad), provide a verbal prompt (e.g., “You can put the mouse down, or I can help you do it.”), wait, then help, and then quickly provide positive descriptive feedback.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Encourage the child’s use of self-monitoring strategies, teaching them to track how long they have been using the device or computer or when their time is almost up by checking a clock or visual timer with support or independently.
- ✓ Teach the child to negotiate transitions (e.g., “Can I have two more minutes?” “I need help putting the device away.”) when their computer or device time is done.
- ✓ Teach the child to use visual supports to create a plan for managing and ending their computer or device time. For example, they can decide how long they will play (e.g., “I will play for ____ minutes”) when they will get a reminder (e.g., “A grown-up will tell me when I have ____ minutes left”) and what they will do next (e.g., “When my time is up, I will _____. Then, I will play _____.”).
- ✓ Teach the child to choose a preferred activity for the next activity.
- ✓ Teach the child to set their own timer.
- ✓ Teach the child to request a reminder about how much time they have left on the device or computer or any other reminders they might want/need to transition successfully.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow a visual schedule and predict when the activity will happen again.
- ✓ Teach the child to identify their feelings through “feeling” words.
- ✓ Teach the child the “turtle technique,” a calm-down strategy to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Teach the child to self-reflect on how they felt and what strategies helped them succeed (e.g., “How did you feel when it was time to stop playing on the computer? What helped you put it away?”).

The child wants a turn and has to wait.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Preview turn-taking expectations before the device or computer time, review the process with children, and remind them of the supports in place.
- ▶ Provide a “my turn” visual chart for children to post their photographs or names for taking turns to indicate who is next to use the computer or device.
- ▶ Model how the children can use the “my turn” chart or the sign-up sheet to get a turn on the computer or the device.
- ▶ If multiple children share a computer simultaneously, give each child a mouse pad and explain that the mouse should stay on the mouse pad of the child using the computer.
- ▶ Use a timer to show the amount of time the child has to use the device or the computer (preferably one that indicates time passing in a visual manner).
- ▶ Offer alternative and engaging waiting activities that the child might choose (e.g., a “waiting basket” with small materials and activities to use while they wait).
- ▶ Incorporate a helper job for children by designating a peer who helps manage turn-taking by reminding other children of expectations.
- ▶ Discuss, label, and show feeling words the child might experience about waiting for a turn (e.g., frustration, anger). Provide a model for how the child can express their feelings about waiting for a turn (e.g., say them, point to a picture, use a sign).
- ▶ To prevent frustration or upset when waiting for a turn, pre-teach strategies, like the “turtle technique,” and calm down choices, using visuals, a puppet, and their preferred calming methods (e.g., taking deep breaths). Review these strategies before device or computer time begins to help the child manage their emotions if they feel frustrated, angry, or upset when their turn is over.
- ▶ Read scripted stories on problem-solving steps and use “Solution Kit” solutions focusing on waiting for a turn.
- ▶ Practice turn-taking in other activities throughout the day.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child waits, even for short periods, to acknowledge their growth and effort as they demonstrate progress with waiting and turn-taking.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child to look at the “my turn chart” to see whose turn it is and when it will be their turn.
- ➡ Acknowledge and validate the child’s emotions (e.g., “I see that you’re feeling frustrated about waiting. It’s ok to feel that way. I can help you find something to do while you wait.”).
- ➡ Prompt the child to check the timer and remind them of their turn (e.g., “When the timer goes off, it will be your turn.”).
- ➡ Remind the child that it is another child’s turn, and the mouse needs to stay on the other child’s pad as you point to the pad to prompt the child to put it on the other child’s pad.
- ➡ Calmly redirect the child’s attention to a preferred, alternative toy or activity while the child waits for a turn.
- ➡ Encourage the child to use the Solution Kit to find a solution to their problem (e.g., What could they do? Get another device, ask to join, ask another child to let him know when they are done?).
- ➡ If the child continues to seek a turn by engaging in challenging behavior, calmly provide a first-then statement (e.g., “First Alejandro, and then your turn”).

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child turn-taking.
- ✓ Teach the child to “think of a solution” (e.g., What could they do? Get another device, ask to join, ask another child to let him know when they are done?).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow and use the “my turn” chart or sign-up sheet to get a turn on the computer or the device.
- ✓ Teach the child to identify their feelings using “feelings” vocabulary.
- ✓ Teach the child the “turtle technique” or a calm-down strategy to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Teach the child how to wait by playing games and activities that naturally build patience and waiting.

The child does not know what to do and needs help.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Create a scripted story about the computer or device routine using real photos and read it to the child before the activity.
- ▶ Review the rules for using the computer or device before the child begins the activity.
- ▶ Offer two or three choices of activities for children who need more structure and ideas when using the device or computer.
- ▶ Use fun, play-based activities to help the child become more comfortable and familiar with the device or computer or with skills that will promote their success when using technology (e.g., using a mouse or pushing buttons on a device).
- ▶ Use a visual mini-schedule to introduce and show the order of activities on the computer or the device, breaking down tasks into smaller steps as children prefer and need.
- ▶ Provide a “help” visual (e.g., a designated help card) or button that children can use to signal when they need support.
- ▶ Create a visual support for everyday challenges (e.g., “If I do not know what to do, I can ask a friend, ask the teacher, or check the mini-schedule.”).
- ▶ Encourage the child to ask a peer to go to the computer or use a device together.
- ▶ Establish a peer partnership system that pairs children to support one another during computer or device activities.
- ▶ Encourage children to help each other.
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to the child for following the computer or device routine.
- ▶ Review or model how the child can request help from an adult (e.g., raise their hand, use a sign, tap the adult on the shoulder), using visual supports as children prefer and need them.
- ▶ Repeat the same activities over time and gradually introduce new activities into the computer or device routine.
- ▶ When the child has accessed support to get help or has requested help from someone, celebrate their effort with positive descriptive feedback.

Respond

- ➡ Validate the child’s emotion and offer help (e.g., “You look like you might be feeling frustrated and need some help. Let me help you.”).
- ➡ Reassure the child that you or a friend can help them solve problems (e.g., “I can see you are not sure what to do. Let’s figure this out together.”).
- ➡ Ask the child, “Do you want to ask a friend?” and help the child ask a peer to join them on the computer or the device.

- ➡ Prompt the child to review the mini-schedule.
- ➡ Monitor frequently, and if the child appears to need help, model a request for “help” using their preferred language and mode of communication and immediately offer help.
- ➡ Provide additional help through verbal and physical demonstration of the computer or device routine.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to ask a peer to join them.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate, in their preferred language and mode of communication, “help” or for the adult to “show me.”
- ✓ Teach the child problem-solving strategies beyond asking for help when they get stuck (e.g., “First, check the mini-schedule. Next, ask a friend. Last, ask a grown-up.”).
- ✓ Teach the child to use and follow a mini-schedule.
- ✓ Teach the child the computer or device routine.

The child does not want to participate in the computer or device activity.

Prevent the Behavior

- ▶ Offer a flexible, preferred alternative if the child consistently resists computer or device time that meets the same learning objectives (e.g., “If you don’t want to use the computer, we can use books or puzzles.”).
- ▶ Ask the child for input on what they need to participate in computer or device time (e.g., use a choice board that helps them identify and choose their support).
- ▶ Create a scripted story about the computer or device routine using real photos and read it to the child before the activity.
- ▶ Embed the child’s interests and preferences (e.g., if the child likes animals, offer an educational game or video related to animals).
- ▶ Offer choices of a preferred activity after computer or device time (e.g., show a child a choice board with picture icons representing each choice they may choose from, say, “After computer time, you can paint or build a tower with friends.”).
- ▶ Use a first-then visual or verbal prompt: “First math on the computer, then _____ (offer a preferred activity the child completes the activity)” to show the sequence of activities.
- ▶ Use a timer to indicate the length of time on the device or the computer (preferably one that indicates time passing in a visual manner).
- ▶ Start the child with a small amount of time on the computer or device (e.g., 2 minutes), then gradually add more time as the child successfully engages in the activity.
- ▶ Encourage the child to ask a peer to go to the computer or use a device.
- ▶ Establish a peer partnership system that pairs children to support one another during computer or device activities.
- ▶ Provide immediate positive descriptive feedback following the child’s engagement in the computer or device activity.
- ▶ When the child engages with the computer or device, offer regular encouragement through comments, nonverbal gestures (e.g., thumbs up), or visuals (e.g., picture icon).

- ▶ Discuss, label, and show feeling words the child might experience about spending time on the computer or the device (e.g., frustration, anger). Model the emotion with your facial expression, use pictures, and point out pictures in books or stories to discuss the feelings. Model how the child can express their feelings about having to spend time on the computer or the device (e.g., say them, point to a picture, use a sign).
- ▶ To prevent frustration or upset when waiting for a turn, pre-teach strategies, like the “turtle technique,” and calm down choices, using visuals, a puppet, and their preferred calming methods (e.g., taking deep breaths). Review these strategies right before the device or computer time begins to help the child manage their emotions if they feel frustrated, angry, or upset about having to spend time on the computer or the device.

Respond

- ➡ Remind the child using a “first-then” visual of the favorite or fun activity that come after the computer (e.g., first computer, then _____ [preferred activity]).
- ➡ Validate the child’s emotion and state the expected behavior (e.g., “I noticed that you might be feeling frustrated that it is time for the computer. One more minute and then you can be all done.”).
- ➡ Provide reassurance, “I know this is not your favorite activity, but we will do this together, and then we’ll do _____.”
- ➡ Refer to the timer and say, “_____ more minutes, then all done.”
- ➡ Guide the child to look at the timer to see how much remaining time they have on the computer or device.
- ➡ Ask the child, “Do you want to ask a friend?” and help the child ask a peer to join them on the computer or the device.
- ➡ Say, “One more turn or one more _____, then all done.” Help the child by starting the computer for device time with them.
- ➡ Take turns with the child to help them through the activity.

Teach New Skills

- ✓ Teach the child to ask a peer to join them.
- ✓ Teach the child to make choices.
- ✓ Teach the child to self-advocate (e.g., express when they feel overwhelmed or resistant, communicate their need for help, breaks, or alternative choices).
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the “first- then” prompt.
- ✓ Teach the child to follow the computer or device routine using a scripted story.
- ✓ Teach the child to engage for extended periods by starting with short, supported routines, offering encouragement and positive descriptive feedback, and gradually increasing the time spent on the device or computer.
- ✓ Teach the child to identify their feelings through “feelings” vocabulary.
- ✓ Teach the child to use the “turtle technique” or a calm-down strategy of their preference and choice to regulate strong emotions.
- ✓ Teach the child to communicate “all done” in their preferred language and method of communication.
- ✓ Teach the child to self-monitor their time on the device or computer, setting goals and tracking how long they participate.

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Routine Analysis Form



Routine Analysis

Instructions: Under columns 1 (time) and 2 (routines), indicate the child's schedule. Rate the likelihood of the behavior of concern occurring during each activity listed by indicating how likely it is that the child will have behaviors that are challenging.

Child Name: _____ Behavior of Concern: _____

Time	Routine	Likelihood of Challenging Behavior			Comments
		Almost never	Sometimes	Almost Always	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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This form can be found online at
<https://challengingbehavior.org/document/routine-analysis-form/>

Behavior and Engagement Tracking Form



Behavior and Engagement Tracking

Instructions: Use this form to rate the behavior and engagement during one routine. Each day, rate the level of the child's engagement and behavior challenges using one score that captures the child's engagement overall and a score of whether the child had challenging behavior. Use this form as you develop the plan and, over time, to see if it is effective once you have a plan.

Child's Name: _____

Routine: _____

Date:										
Engagement 3 = Throughout 2 = Some 1 = None	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Behavior 3 = Throughout 2 = Some 1 = None	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1



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Pub: 05/2025

This form can be found online at

<https://challengingbehavior.org/document/behavior-and-engagement-tracking-form/>

Sample Email to Family

From: Ms. Graham

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2025 6:19 PM

To: Ms. Nelson

Subject: Greetings

Greetings Ms. Nelson,

**Greeting
and Check-in**

It was great seeing you this morning. I noticed Amir was so excited to show you his art project! I am happy to report that Amir has become a classroom helper! Recently, two new children joined our classroom, and Amir made them feel welcome by providing tons of support. Just yesterday, he helped put away both children's belongings in their cubbies. He seems to love helping others!

**Share
a Strength**

The last time we touched base; we talked about a few ideas for helping Amir stay engaged and play with peers during our center time. Amir continues to have difficulty with peer interactions and staying engaged in play. We want to ensure we have the right materials and strategies for helping him stay in centers and play with his friends.

**Clearly
Communicate
the Purpose**

I want to schedule a conversation with you to help develop ideas about how we can better support Amir during playtime. We can talk in person or over the phone; whatever options work best with your schedule. In this meeting, we will discuss what we have observed in the classroom and ask for your help developing ideas to meet Amir's needs better.

**Make
a Plan**

Your partnership in this process is important to us. You know Amir best and are a wonderful source of information. Please call me at _____ or let me know if any of the meeting times below work for you. I am looking forward to talking through this process with you. If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me at _____ (phone) and _____ (email).

List times and days

Review

Sincerely,

Ms. Graham

This is a sample “My Teacher Wants to Know.” We encourage you to develop one for your program to use. Make sure to translate the form into the languages spoken by families in your program.

Sample My Teacher Wants to Know Form

Child's Name: _____ Date Completed: _____

We suggest you provide a statement of commitment about your program, and your desire for information that might help teachers as shown below..

In Sunshine Preschool, we aim to partner with families to support all aspects of their child’s learning, including social-emotional learning and addressing behavior that is challenging. We want to make sure we are responsive to your child’s needs and help you and your child feel supported. To the extent that you feel comfortable, we ask that you please share any information that would be beneficial for your child’s teacher to know to best support your child. If you feel comfortable, please share information that would help your child’s teacher support your child.

The questions below will help us support your child during routines and activities.

1. What are your child's favorite activities?

2. What are your child's least favorite activities?

3. What objects, characters, or materials are preferred by your child?

4. What makes your child frustrated, angry, or upset?

5. What makes your child happy or excited?

6. How does your child let people know (i.e., what do they do) when they:

- **Are angry or upset** (e.g., crying, screaming, hitting, uses words)?

- **Are happy** (e.g., laughing, jumping, hugging)?

- **Want something** (e.g., reaching, talking, yelling)?

- **Don't want something** (e.g., push away, say no)?

- **Like something** (e.g., smiling, talking, laughing)?

- **Don't like something** (e.g., crying, throwing, talking)?

7. What helps your child when they are angry or upset?

8. Is there anything else we should know?

Conversation Starters for Communicating with Families

Parts	Ideas	Examples
Opening and Check-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a warm greeting Validate challenges 	<p><i>How is everyone?</i></p> <p><i>How are you?</i></p> <p><i>Sounds like it's been an exhausting week.</i></p>
Share a Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate the child's strengths or progress 	<p><i>We have noticed that Liani has made a lot of progress during the morning drop-off. She comes in smiling every morning and joins the group activity with the other children.</i></p>
Clearly Communicate the Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the reason for the communication Specify the routine the child is having difficulty with Inform the family that you will be developing ideas about what you might do differently to support their child 	<p><i>The last time we chatted, we talked about naptime. We understand that having Liana take a nap at school is very important to your family. Over the past two weeks, we have observed Liani yelling loudly at rest time and getting off her cot, which tends to wake up other children. We want to try different strategies to help support Liani during nap time. If we change up a few things and try a few new things, we hope to support Liani better at nap time.</i></p>
Make a Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the form, <i>My Teacher Wants to Know</i>, and develop a plan for the family to complete and return the form Inform the family that you will share the plan for new strategies once it is developed 	<p><i>We hope you have some additional ideas for us to try. You know her best, and you mentioned that Liani naps at home on the weekends. There is a form called "My Teacher Wants to Know" that can provide us with great information. Would you be interested in filling this form out?</i></p> <p><i>We appreciate your collaboration! Your ideas will help us with brainstorming strategies.</i></p> <p><i>We will share a draft of the plan for naptime once it is complete. You can review it, and then we can connect and discuss the ideas more.</i></p>
Problem Solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to any new concerns or questions Provide suggestions for troubleshooting 	<p><i>How do you feel about this plan to support Liani during nap?</i></p> <p><i>I heard you mention that you had concerns about Liani playing with other children during recess. I will make sure we observe her playing over the next few days, and then we can find a time to talk about what we see.</i></p>
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and summarize ideas Confirm the time for the next conversation Offer to share notes, email, or a text to summarize the conversation 	<p><i>Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. To recap, I will send the form home for you to complete. You can send it in Liana's backpack.</i></p> <p><i>You mentioned Tuesdays were a good time to talk. How would talking at this time next Tuesday work for you? We can review the ideas in the plan together.</i></p>

Events and Functions Associated with Behavioral Concerns Form



Events and Functions Associated with Behavioral Concerns

Child's Name: _____ Date Completed: _____

Behavior of Concern: _____

Instructions: This form is completed for routines where the child has challenging behavior.

- Write down the behavior of concern.
- Identify the routines where the behavior is more likely to happen and complete columns A and B. You can check multiple items in each column.
- After completing those columns, identify what you believe is the “why” of the behavior by checking one response in column C. Consider what you think the child is attempting to get or avoid through the behavior. Discuss this with your team or your coach if you are not sure.

Routine	A. What happens before the behavior (select all)	B. What do adults or peers do when the behavior occurs? (select all)	C. Why might the child be doing this? (select one)
Bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult prompted the child to go to the bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> Child wants to have an adult be with them <input type="checkbox"/> Adult prompted the child to wash hands <input type="checkbox"/> Adult helps another child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult prompted the child to leave bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the routine <input type="checkbox"/> Adult physically assists the child with completing the routine <input type="checkbox"/> Adult provides attention and stays close to child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult asks if child needs help <input type="checkbox"/> Adult comforts the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Might not want to go in the bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> Might not want to use the bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> Wants attention or to have someone with them during the routine <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to wash hands <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys playing in sink/water/soap <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to touch certain materials (e.g., soap, paper towel) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to leave the bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Centers	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is told their turn is over <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told a center is closed <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told it is not their turn or another child is playing with the materials <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to choose another toy or center <input type="checkbox"/> Peer takes toy from the child <input type="checkbox"/> Child has difficulty with a task or materials <input type="checkbox"/> Child is frustrated with an activity <input type="checkbox"/> Child is alone <input type="checkbox"/> Adult leaves to play with another child <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to use materials in a different way <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult provides access to the center, activity, or object the child wanted <input type="checkbox"/> Adult or peer helps the child with the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult helps child find new center or toy <input type="checkbox"/> Adult or peer joins child's play or activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Peers yell or call for an adult <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants a different center or wants a center that is closed <input type="checkbox"/> Wants the same toy as another child <input type="checkbox"/> Wants help with how to use materials in the center <input type="checkbox"/> Wants adult or peer attention <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to avoid using certain materials <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to use materials in a way that is not safe <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to wait for their turn <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Events and Functions Associated with Behavioral Concerns

Routine	A. What happens before the behavior (select all)	B. What do adults or peers do when the behavior occurs? (select all)	C. Why might the child be doing this? (select one)
Clean-Up	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to clean up or put toys away <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told “no,” “don’t,” or “stop” <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to put materials in bins or on shelf <input type="checkbox"/> Adult removes an object from the child <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request <input type="checkbox"/> Adult permits the child to continue playing <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the routine <input type="checkbox"/> Adult or peer assists the child <input type="checkbox"/> Peers yell or call for an adult <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to continue playing <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers to engage in dump and fill play during clean-up <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain peer attention <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Does not know how to clean up and needs help <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Computer or Device	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is told “no,” “don’t,” or “stop” <input type="checkbox"/> Timer indicates the child’s turn has ended or adult tells child their turn is over <input type="checkbox"/> A peer gets a turn before the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult or peer tells the child to wait their turn <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to do a difficult or non-preferred activity on the device. <input type="checkbox"/> Child is frustrated with an activity on the device <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to complete an activity on the device or computer <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult gives the child the device <input type="checkbox"/> Adult tells the child to pick a different activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Adult offers assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Peers refuse to take turns with the device <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants more time and does not want computer or device time to end <input type="checkbox"/> Wants a turn and has to wait <input type="checkbox"/> Does not know what to do and needs help <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to participate in computer or device activity <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Large Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is told it is time to transition to a different activity <input type="checkbox"/> Another child gets attention <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to stay in the large group or to sit down <input type="checkbox"/> Adult removed an object from the large group <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to participate in a non-preferred activity within large group <input type="checkbox"/> Child is asked to wait for a turn <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request to join the large group <input type="checkbox"/> Adult moves the child next to an adult <input type="checkbox"/> Adult provides prompts for assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child to return to the large group <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adults remind the child of the expectations of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adults send the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adults hold the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Peers look at the child <input type="checkbox"/> The adult gives access to preferred activities or items <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants to leave large group <input type="checkbox"/> Wants the attention of peers <input type="checkbox"/> Wants the attention of adults <input type="checkbox"/> Needs practice with large group expectations and routines <input type="checkbox"/> Wants another activity or object <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Events and Functions Associated with Behavioral Concerns

Routine	A. What happens before the behavior (select all)	B. What do adults or peers do when the behavior occurs? (select all)	C. Why might the child be doing this? (select one)
Nap/Rest	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is told it is time to take a nap or to get ready for nap <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to stay on their mat or cot <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to be quiet during rest time <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to keep their hands to themselves during rest time <input type="checkbox"/> Peer gets help before the child <input type="checkbox"/> Child is left alone or ignored <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told “no” or “stop” <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request to nap or rest quietly <input type="checkbox"/> Adult moves to sit next to the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult moves the child’s cot or mat away from other children <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult rubs child’s back or helps them settle down <input type="checkbox"/> Offered assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to nap/rest <input type="checkbox"/> Wants adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Wants peer attention <input type="checkbox"/> Has a hard time settling down or soothing self to sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Outdoor Play	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to go outside to play <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told outside play is almost over <input type="checkbox"/> Adult tells the child they must stay outside <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to stay in the area <input type="checkbox"/> Child wants a toy or equipment another child is using and told no or to make a different choice <input type="checkbox"/> Child is alone with a toy, activity, or equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Child is frustrated with an activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult takes a toy away or tells the child to stop when there is unsafe play <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of outdoor play <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Adult plays with the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult comforts the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult comes over when peers yell for help <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable (too warm or cold) and wants to go inside <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to leave the designated outside play area (i.e., runs away) <input type="checkbox"/> Wants peer or adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Wants adult as play partner (adult attention) <input type="checkbox"/> Wants objects/activity that another child is using <input type="checkbox"/> Wants a turn immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Small Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is frustrated with an activity <input type="checkbox"/> Child is provided with a difficult or non-preferred activity <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to complete a task <input type="checkbox"/> Peer gets a turn <input type="checkbox"/> Adult helps or interacts with another child <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to stay in the group <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request to join small group <input type="checkbox"/> Adult moves the child next to an adult <input type="checkbox"/> Adult provides prompts for assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child to return to small group <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Peers give the child attention <input type="checkbox"/> Adult provides access to preferred activities or items <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not know what to do and needs help <input type="checkbox"/> Wants peer attention <input type="checkbox"/> Wants adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Might consider it a nonpreferred activity and wants to avoid the small group <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Events and Functions Associated with Behavioral Concerns

Routine	A. What happens before the behavior (select all)	B. What do adults or peers do when the behavior occurs? (select all)	C. Why might the child be doing this? (select one)
Snack or Meals	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to eat <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to only touch food on their plate <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to return to the table to eat <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to sit on their chair <input type="checkbox"/> Adult removed food or told child "no" <input type="checkbox"/> Adult prompted the child to leave table when activity ends <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult offers to help child with meal <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of snack/meal time <input type="checkbox"/> Adult physically assists child to sit at the table <input type="checkbox"/> Adult removes food that child has taken from others <input type="checkbox"/> Adult separates the child from others <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Adult feeds the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult physically assists the child with leaving the table when the snack/meal time ends <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not like food being offered <input type="checkbox"/> Wants other's food <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to leave the table <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to stay at the table and continue eating when the activity ends <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Transitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to say "bye" to family or family member when they leave <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told the activity has ended <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to get ready for another activity <input type="checkbox"/> Child is prompted to go to another activity area <input type="checkbox"/> Child is told to line-up <input type="checkbox"/> Child left alone <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays separation from parent <input type="checkbox"/> Family member comforts the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult comforts the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult delays or removes the request to transition <input type="checkbox"/> Adult provides prompts or additional assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Adult redirects the child to follow the transition steps <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reprimands the child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult reminds the child of the expectations of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Adult sends the child to time-out <input type="checkbox"/> Adult holds the child until they are calm <input type="checkbox"/> Peers look or laugh at the child <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to leave activity <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to leave family <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to go to next activity <input type="checkbox"/> Does not understand where to go or what to do <input type="checkbox"/> Wants attention from peers <input type="checkbox"/> Wants attention from adults <input type="checkbox"/> Wants a specific spot or role for the transition (e.g., line leader, caboose, first to get a turn, next to preferred friend or adult) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:



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This Form can be found online at

<https://challengingbehavior.org/document/events-and-functions-associated-with-behavioral-concerns/>

Partnering with Families in Finalizing the Plan

Parts	Ideas	Examples
Opening and Check-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a warm greeting Validate challenges 	<p><i>Hi. I am excited we were able to connect today.</i></p> <p><i>I heard you had a busy weekend with your family visiting.</i></p>
Share a Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate the child's strengths or progress 	<p><i>You shared that Liani likes to read a book before naptime at home. I decided to add that as an idea to try. Once she had settled into her cot, I had Liani pick a book for us to read together, just the two of us. It seemed to help her get on her cot at the same time as the other children!</i></p>
Clearly Communicate the Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the drafted plan 	<p><i>You mentioned you had the chance to read through the plan last night. I wanted to take just a few minutes and review the big pieces of the plan with you...</i></p>
Make a Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask family for their ideas Review the strategies included in the plan 	<p><i>Were there other ideas, like the one you shared about reading a book before nap, that I did not include that you think should be added?</i></p> <p><i>I hope the first-then visual and reviewing the naptime rules before napping will help settle her into the routine.</i></p> <p><i>I appreciate you sending in her stuffed puppy for her to use at nap. She was very excited to show us today!</i></p>
Problem Solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to any new concerns or questions Provide suggestions for troubleshooting 	<p><i>Now that I have reviewed the different prevent, teach, and respond strategies, are there things I can clarify?</i></p> <p><i>I was wondering if we could send home a poster of the nap time rules at school. Could you review them with Liani? I think reviewing the rules with you at home might be helpful. What do you think?</i></p>
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and summarize ideas Confirm the time for the next conversation Offer to share notes, email, or a text to summarize the conversation 	<p><i>The next step is to try these new strategies during naptime for several weeks. Would it be helpful for you if I sent home an email each Friday afternoon summarizing our progress?</i></p> <p><i>What would work best for you when sharing progress? We can talk by phone or set aside a few minutes at drop-off next week.</i></p>

Communicating with the Family about the Child's Progress

Parts	Ideas	Examples
Opening and Check-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a warm greeting Validate challenges 	<i>Good morning! I am glad that Liani is feeling better. It seemed like that cold was a rough one!</i>
Share a Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate the child's strengths or progress 	<i>We have quite a few things to celebrate today. I am excited to share Liani's progress.</i>
Clearly Communicate the Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the child's response to the plan 	<p><i>We have been following the strategies in the plan for the last three weeks. Here are some things we are observing during naptime...</i></p> <p><i>Starting last week, Liana fell asleep every day!</i></p> <p><i>When Liani tries to get off her cot, we tell her, "First, lie down with a quiet voice, and then I will rub your back."</i></p>
Make a Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the family for their ideas Update strategies included in the plan 	<p><i>What are you noticing that you can share? Were there differences you noted last week at home when Liani was taking a nap at school?</i></p> <p><i>I wanted to add one more strategy for teaching Liani a few self-soothing techniques to help her relax. Even though she fell asleep last week, it still takes her longer to fall asleep</i></p>
Problem Solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to any new concerns or questions Provide suggestions for troubleshooting 	<i>Thank you for sharing that Liani said the music during naptime bothers her. I wonder if we could try something different, like a soothing sleep sound instead.</i>
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and summarize ideas Confirm the time for the next conversation Offer to share notes, email, or a text to summarize the conversation 	<p><i>After we get off the phone, I will send an email summary of our updates. We have so much to celebrate.</i></p> <p><i>We hope to try the updated plan for two more weeks, and then we can schedule a phone call. What time would work for you?</i></p>