

St. Cloud State University

The Repository at St. Cloud State

Culminating Projects in Child and Family Studies

Department of Child and Family Studies

12-2022

Challenging Behavior: Effective Strategies to Implement in Early Childhood Settings; Supporting Families of Young Children with Challenging Behavior through Collaboration and Strategy Implementation

Alexandra Umerski

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/cfs_etds

Recommended Citation

Umerski, Alexandra, "Challenging Behavior: Effective Strategies to Implement in Early Childhood Settings; Supporting Families of Young Children with Challenging Behavior through Collaboration and Strategy Implementation" (2022). *Culminating Projects in Child and Family Studies*. 41.
https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/cfs_etds/41

This Starred Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Child and Family Studies at The Repository at St. Cloud State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Culminating Projects in Child and Family Studies by an authorized administrator of The Repository at St. Cloud State. For more information, please contact tdsteman@stcloudstate.edu.

Challenging Behavior: Effective Strategies to Implement in Early Childhood Settings

by

Alexandra Umerski

A Starred Paper

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science in

Child and Family Studies

December, 2022

Starred Paper Committee:
JoAnn Johnson, Chairperson
Deborah Wheeler
Kathryn Johnson

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.....	3
Research Questions.....	4
Importance and Purpose of Study.....	5
Literature Search Description.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
2. Literature Review.....	8
Formal Methods.....	8
Functional Behavioral Assessment.....	8
Antecedent, Behavior, Consequences.....	11
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.....	12
Pyramid Model.....	17
Informal Methods.....	20
Teacher- Child Relationships.....	20
Regulation Strategies.....	21
Visual Support Strategies.....	23
Peer Mediated Intervention.....	25
Video Modeling.....	27
3. Summary.....	29
4. Discussion and Recommendations.....	31
References.....	35

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since entering the education field as an early childhood special education professional, I have participated in annual trainings for teachers, paraprofessionals and special service providers which include topics on how to help children develop their social, emotional and behavioral skills. Yet, after these trainings, teachers are struggling day to day to handle young children's challenging behavior. Many early childhood educators are stressed and fatigued trying to manage challenging behaviors in the classroom and are often unsure where to begin. Challenging behaviors are any repeated behavior that interferes with optimal learning or engagement in prosocial interactions with both adults and peers (Meadan et al., 2016). Characteristics of challenging behavior include aggression, noncompliance (refusal/defiance), anger and tantrums.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is “a set of research- based strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person's environment” (apbs.org). When used meaningfully, positive behavior supports can effectively shape the positive behavior of a class. One example is Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) which helps to “manage classrooms [of children], decrease challenging behaviors, and teach socially appropriate replacement behaviors” (Green et al., 2019, p.6). Positive behavior supports are crucial to provide within the classroom setting. “By developing early and effective classroom-level interventions, teachers can help to prevent further development of problem behaviors and avoid serious social behaviors during later school years” (Park & Lynch, 2014, p. 34). Young children with challenging behavior should be given opportunities to develop positive relationships, stay in the classroom, and be accepted by their peers.

A child's first six years are the most critical in terms of brain development and therefore an important time to teach young children social emotional competency including social and behavior skills and regulation strategies. Self-regulation skills include "the ability to control one's behavior, thoughts, actions, and feelings" (Erwin et al., 2017, p. 70). There are several useful informal strategies to help children learn how to regulate their bodies and emotions such as yoga, relaxation and deep breathing. Regulation techniques assist all children whether they have challenging behavior or not. Young children often have big feelings they do not yet know how to manage or regulate without help from adults. Early childhood educators have the important job of teaching children about emotions, how to understand and express those emotions and what they mean. Early educators also help young children manage emotions that may make them feel out of control.

In preschool settings, teachers have serious concerns about challenging behaviors (Jolstead et al., 2017). Teachers must acquire skills to successfully and consistently utilize formal strategies of behavior management and intervention. Teachers must be able to understand the function, or the "why", of a child's behavior. Until the function of behavior is known, working with a child to improve their behavior can be very onerous. "If a child engages in challenging behavior over and over again, it [indicates] the behavior is working for the child" (Meadan et al., 2016, p. 5). Understanding the function of a child's behavior will guide the classroom teacher in making adaptations and deciding what strategies to implement.

Research Questions

In this paper, I have reviewed articles which discuss the most effective formal approaches to address challenging behaviors in the preschool classroom. In addition, I have reviewed articles

that explore more informal ways to address challenging behaviors. Through my research I have identified the following questions:

1. What formal measures can be used to effectively address challenging behavior in early childhood settings?
2. What informal strategies can be used to reduce challenging behavior in early childhood settings?

Importance and Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore formal strategies which can be utilized within the early childhood classroom to address challenging behavior. In addition to formal strategies, this study will also explore informal strategies to address challenging behavior: how can we help children regulate their bodies and emotions, how can we incorporate typically developing peers to be paired with peers with special needs? Teachers are struggling to successfully manage classrooms and the diversity of needs of children with challenging behavior. Educators desire progress and success for all children. Understanding and implementing effective behavior strategies with consistency will lead to success for young children and adults in the classroom.

Literature Search Description

In order to collect articles to be reviewed and analyzed for this paper, I utilized the St. Cloud State University library database. I found articles through the databases ERIC and EBSCO. I used the following terms when searching: early childhood, challenging behaviors, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Functional Behavior Analysis, pyramid model, special education and classroom strategies. All articles used are from peer reviewed sources.

Definition of Terms

ABC- “acronym used to identify the relation between the environment and behavior (A = antecedent, B = behavior, C = consequences). The ABC can help summarize the sequence of events that surround challenging behavior.” (Meadan et al., 2016, p. 7).

Challenging Behavior- “any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in prosocial interactions with peers and adults.” (Meadan et al., 2016, p. 3).

FBA- Functional Behavioral Assessment- “the process used to identify events in the environment that reliably predict and maintain challenging behavior.” (Meadan et al., 2016, p. 6).

Mindfulness- “being in the moment, which allows for greater awareness of the environment, breath, bodies, and feelings.” (Erwin et al., 2017, pp. 71-72).

PBIS- “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports refers to the systematic, data-driven process of selecting and implementing universal, secondary, and, sometimes, intensive intervention strategies to decrease challenging behaviors.” (Green et al., 2019, p. 7).

PBS- “Positive Behavior Support is a set of research- based strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person’s environment.” (apbs.org).

Peer- Mediated Interventions (PMI)- “interventions in which one or more peers are taught strategies to support their classmates in the acquisition of academic, behavioral, or social skills.” (Martinez et al., 2021, p. 84).

Prevent, Teach, Reinforce- “standardized model of individualized PBS that was designed to help typical early childhood educators implement function-based interventions in a manner that is feasible and effective. (a) Prevent, which involves antecedent manipulations; (b)

Teach, which involves instructional strategies; and (c) Reinforce, meaning the use of positive reinforcement for targeted desirable responses.” (Harvey et al., 2021, pp. 100-101).

Pyramid Model- “a multi-tiered system of supports that provides a framework for the prevention of challenging behavior and promotion of positive intervention practices to support the social-emotional development of young children.” (Green et al., 2019, p. 7).

VM- “Video Modeling is a video intervention that highlights desired behaviors in social situations for viewers to model after watching.” (Mitsch et al., 2021, p. 17).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Young children have behaviors which can be challenging. This literature review will discuss formal and informal strategies teachers can use to assist in decreasing young children's challenging behaviors. What determines challenging behavior from "normal" behavior is the "intensity, frequency, and co-occurrence with other behaviors" (Jolstead, et. al., 2017, p. 48). Early intervention during preschool has been proven to be the best time to intervene with challenging behavior rather than waiting until behavioral patterns become set, are more difficult to extinguish, and negatively impact educational progress. The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) promotes the importance of early identification of children with challenging behavior to increase school success and decrease potentially severe social and academic problems as the child gets older (Meadan et al., 2007). Because early childhood educators make over 1,000 decisions per day (Clasen & Cheathan, 2015), teachers need strategies to ensure a successful classroom environment for all children and to decrease teacher burnout rates.

Formal Methods

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

Functional Behavioral Assessment is the process used to identify events in the environment that reliably predict and help maintain challenging behavior (Meadan et al., 2016, p. 6). This formal process helps determine the function of a child's challenging behavior and develops a plan to decrease that behavior.

Often, adults use strategies including punishment or removing a request from a child due to challenging behavior. Because the function of the behavior is unknown at these moments, this is a short term fix and does not teach the child positive replacement skills to decrease challenging behavior (Meadan et al., 2016). Many teachers may not fully understand how to effectively use

these strategies. When universal classroom supports are not working for a child who is displaying challenging behavior, it is time for a classroom teacher and support educators to develop a personalized intervention plan. To make a personalized intervention plan, teachers must first understand the function of the behavior (Johnson & Monn, 2015, p. 24). What predictably happens before the challenging behavior occurs, or what is the antecedent that results in the behavior? What are the consequences after the behavior?

The FBA process includes direct and indirect ways of collecting information. Direct observations are completed within the classroom routines with a clear purpose. Indirect information gathering includes interviews with both the teacher and family, record reviews, surveys, checklists and rating scales (Johnson & Monn, 2015; Wood & Ferro, 2014). Once direct and indirect methods are completed, the information gathered includes the function of the behavior and other conditions that encourage the behavior to continue. Other conditions could include the routines and set up of the classroom, the way instructions are given, and preferred activities, items and friends. According to Wood and Ferro (2014), when direct observations occur, the “observer should record what occurred immediately before the behavior (antecedent), the behavior that occurred (behavior), and what occurred immediately after the behavior (consequence – if there was one)” (p. 9). Direct observations should continue until a clear pattern can be determined and the behavior becomes predictable. Interviews help to determine the targeted challenging behavior that needs to be replaced with positive behavior (Wood & Ferro, 2014).

According to Wood et al. (2014), based on research findings, early childhood teachers have a limited role in creating an FBA. Other educators, such as a school psychologist, take the lead role. It is important to have an early childhood teacher’s input in this process. The early

childhood teacher works closest with children and holds valuable information to help create a plan, based on the FBA, that will be the most effective in decreasing challenging behavior.

Teacher involvement in the entire process will ensure the plan will be implemented. When deciding if a plan will be effective, first educators must determine whether the child has the skill being targeted. If the child does not, the FBA must include a description of how the skill can be taught. If the child does have the skill but they don't choose to use it, the plan must include how to change the environment to reinforce the skill or replacement skill (Johnson & Monn, 2015, p.26).

When summarizing the findings of the FBA, using specific language and descriptions is key. Specific language makes the plan cohesive among educators so everyone is on the same page regarding the target behavior and determining whether the intervention is successful (Wood & Ferro, 2014, p. 7). A hypothesis statement should be made to describe what the behavior looks like, setting events or antecedents that impact the behavior and the function of the behavior- what the child gains or avoids. For the FBA and intervention to work, antecedent or consequence strategies may need to be adjusted and the replacement (target) behavior should be reinforced. If it is determined a child's challenging behavior is interfering with their educational progress and social skills, a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be written and implemented. The formal FBA results should guide educators to create a BIP, and consists of three intervention categories: "Prevent, which involves antecedent manipulations; Teach, which involves instructional strategies; and Reinforce, meaning the use of positive reinforcement for targeted desirable responses" (Harvey et al, 2021, p. 101).

Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence (ABC)

Using the observational method of ABC involves observing the antecedents, behavior and consequences for an individual child. “The ABC can help summarize the sequence of events that surround challenging behavior.” (Meadan et al., 2016, p. 7). Challenging behavior is a way young children communicate (McCollow et al., 2016). Because of this, it is important for teachers to help children learn different ways of communicating in more positive and appropriate ways in order to decrease challenging behavior (McCollow et al., 2016). All behavior has a function or purpose; if a child is engaging in the same challenging behavior repeatedly, it means the behavior is serving its purpose for the child (Meadan et al., 2016; Park & Lynch 2014). Once teachers can understand the function of a child’s behavior, interventions can be created and implemented to decrease challenging behavior. Within the interventions, the child will still have access to what they need and want (McCollow et al., 2016). When designing interventions, it is important to determine what will motivate the child based on their preferences (McCollow et al., 2016).

Stimuli/strategies that occur before the behavior are called antecedents. Stimuli/strategies that follow the behavior are called consequences (Meadan et al., 2016; McCollow et al., 2016). According to Meadan et al. (2016), planned antecedent strategies prevent challenging behavior through modifying the child’s environment or events that occur before a challenging behavior. Antecedent strategies should also include the child’s preferences in order to assist with motivation.

These include (a) providing explicit instructions, prompts, and reminders, including visual schedules and behavior expectations; (b) providing pre-exposure to the anticipated reinforcer (e.g., showing the child the preferred item that he will receive); (c) reducing

unpleasant stimuli in the environment (e.g., decreasing the noise level); (d) offering choices (e.g., providing the child with choices of reinforcers or the order of activities); and (e) providing frequent access to the reinforcer that maintains the problem behavior when the problem behavior is not occurring (i.e., allowing the child to play with his favorite toy freely and frequently throughout the day). (p. 10).

When addressing challenging behavior, teachers must introduce and teach replacement skills which focus on positive behaviors that serve the same purpose for the child in place of challenging behaviors (e.g., gaining access to a preferred item or avoiding a non-preferred activity). (Meadan et al., 2016; Park & Lynch, 2014).

Next, consequences to follow the behavior can either strengthen or weaken the chances of a child repeating the same challenging behavior. Behaviors which are strengthened, or reinforced, will continue to occur or possibly increase, while behaviors that are weakened, or punished, will be eliminated (Meadan et al., 2016). Consequence strategies change the events that happen after the behavior occurs. Once the function of the behavior is determined, teachers can use antecedent and/ or consequences strategies or they can teach replacement skills (Meadan et al., 2016).

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports refers to the systematic, data-driven process of selecting and intentionally implementing universal, secondary, and, sometimes, intensive intervention strategies to decrease challenging behaviors (Green et al., 2019, p. 7).

PBIS Explained. There are many strategies for teachers to use in the classroom to encourage social emotional growth in children with and without challenging behavior. There are different ways children can be recognized for engaging in positive behavior that can be

differentiated to meet the needs of the whole classroom as well as students who need more individualized support. Consistency is important in early childhood classrooms when it comes to recognizing children for positive behavior and upholding behavior expectations. Consistency is also important when using strategies for targeting challenging behavior.

PBIS is a schoolwide guidance for all teachers and support staff to follow. PBIS guidance creates positive behavior support strategies consistent within the classroom and other school environments and across different educators. Young children should be given positive feedback for following the schoolwide guidance on behavior expectations. Research on PBIS has shown consistent use of strategies improves not only student behavior, but children's academic skills and morale of the school as a whole (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). PBIS uses guidance at different levels in the classroom including universal (whole class) strategies and individualized intervention to decrease challenging behavior (Green et al., 2019, p. 7).

PBIS Implementation. There are multiple strategies that make up PBIS in addition to the schoolwide guidance all educators should follow. At the beginning of the school year, it is important for teachers to build a relationship with each student and their family. There should be open and honest communication from the beginning. Establishing a relationship with the family will be beneficial in case the teacher needs to discuss a child's challenging behavior. Without establishing a relationship, families may perceive school as being more negative toward their child, especially if the teacher does not include positive statements in addition to struggles taking place at school (Green et al., 2019).

The classroom environment can impact behavior within the classroom and should be a high quality and supportive environment (Green et al., 2019). Ways to create a high quality early childhood classroom include having visual schedules posted, planning engaging activities,

having a consistent routine, reinforcing appropriate behavior, minimizing transitions, using phrases specific to the behavior happening, and responding to challenging behavior. Visual schedules posted where children can see them assist children who may have difficulties with memory, auditory processing, transitions and challenging behavior. Visual schedules show what is currently happening and what is coming next in the classroom routine which can decrease challenging behavior (Green et al., 2019). (See “Visuals” Section.).

Green et al. (2019), Reinke et al. (2013), and Hemmeter et al. (2012) report planning engaging activities and having consistent routines can help decrease challenging behavior and improve academic growth. Young children benefit from activities that are hands- on, involve movement and allow children to explore interesting activities (Green et al., 2019). Children also need activities to be adapted to meet individual needs and should also be engaged in conversations and questioning by adults. Teachers must find ways to keep lessons and materials in the classroom engaging for children of all different developmental levels. Teachers who consistently reinforce positive behavior typically have more positive relationships with the children in their classroom. High amounts of praise increases engagement and decreases inappropriate or challenging behavior. According to Reinke et al. (2013), research has recommended adults interacting with children should include a ratio of four positive interactions to one negative interaction.

Teachers should acknowledge appropriate behavior when it occurs by using specific and descriptive language throughout the day (Park & Lynch, 2014). Descriptive language is more than saying “good job”. Saying “good job” does not tell the child what they are doing a good job at. A descriptive phrase could sound like “you worked really hard writing your name!”. Green et al. (2019) explain how children who display challenging behavior often need more positive

attention and descriptive acknowledgement when they engage in appropriate behavior. Specific praise is more beneficial for long term behavior changes, where general statements are more effective for short term behavior changes. If a child is engaging in challenging behavior in a way to seek attention, praise should occur more often to decrease the need for attention seeking behavior. According to Green et al. (2019), observations of teachers have shown how teachers often offer more negative feedback than positive feedback towards children who engage in challenging behavior. When responding to challenging behavior, teachers and support staff should have consistent, planned out responses. The child engaging in challenging behavior should be explicitly told the expectation that was not followed. This also helps the teachers in the classroom know what may need to be changed within the classroom environment. Explicit responses paired with a phrase that specifically states the desired behavior helps in decreasing challenging behavior.

Classroom Behavior Management. Both Reinke et al. (2013) and Green et al. (2019) discuss the importance of classroom management. Classroom rules should be developed as a class, behavior expectations should be clear and visually posted within the classroom, and behavior expectations should be explicitly taught. When developing classroom rules and behavior expectations, the class should work together as a whole to think of three to five easily followed rules. Reinke et al. (2013) states:

Effective rules are (a) age appropriate (in terms of language and expectations); (b) specific and observable; (c) stated positively, indicating what students should be doing rather than what they should not be doing (e.g., keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself; listen when others are talking); (d) easy to understand; and (e) enforceable. (pp. 40-41)

Young children benefit from rules being visually posted for the teacher to refer the child to or for the child to reference independently. Teachers should teach and reference the classroom schedule and rules daily to help children learn the routine and behavior expectations and create more independence. Children need to be explicitly taught the behavior expectations and “these rules need to be modeled, rehearsed and reinforced” (Green et al., 2019, p. 15). Some children will pick up on these expectations quickly, while some children with disabilities and/ or challenging behavior may need more reminders of the expectations throughout the day (Hemmeter et al., 2012). They may also need these reminders everyday they are at school in order to create more independence and positive behavior.

Levels of PBIS. There are different levels of PBIS guidance and strategies to utilize in the classroom. The universal level includes reinforcing positive behavior in a group setting, which is a great way to work on promoting positive social skills. For example, if the class is at circle time and many of the children are talking or not engaged in the lesson, the teacher could provide verbal and/ or tangible praise to the children who are following circle time expectations. The teacher could say “(child) is sitting with their hands in their lap, their eyes are looking at the teacher, etc.” and could pair the verbal praise with a tangible item such as a sticker, or an item to put into a jar for a whole class reward the children are working toward (eg. whole class dance party or bubble party). By praising the child who is following expectations, other children may follow expectations because they want positive teacher attention and praise, too. The universal level promotes positive behavior by removing reinforcement to inappropriate behavior an individual child is engaging in or to peers who are giving negative attention to the inappropriate behavior (Jolstead et al., 2017). PBIS can also be used in smaller group settings with similar

strategies listed above and can be more individualized for children with disabilities and/ or challenging behavior.

Barriers to PBIS. Teacher attitudes toward PBIS can impact the effectiveness of the guidance and strategies. If a teacher does not agree with the guidance of PBIS, they may all together not implement the strategies. If there are misunderstandings or disagreements about how to implement, teachers may be ineffectively utilizing PBIS. Some teachers and other educators may have opposition due to personal perceptions including believing PBIS is not beneficial or that it is just another program to add to the multiple other programs or curricula rather than a schoolwide approach to behavior (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). Other perceptions may include the belief that not all teachers will follow these guidelines, so why should only some teachers follow? This perception can impact the morale of the school and can lead to low rates of teacher implementation of PBIS. Another attitude could be based on whether a teacher feels confident in their classroom management. If a teacher is lacking confidence, they may be less likely to try using effective behavior management strategies. If a classroom has poor management, there can be negative impacts on both teachers and students which can lead to less academic growth and negative social and behavior skills. PBIS is less effective in classes with a lack of behavior management (Reinke et al., 2013).

Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a multi-tiered system of supports that provides a framework for the prevention of challenging behavior and promotion of positive intervention practices to support the social-emotional development of young children (Green et al., 2019, p. 7).

Tiers of the Pyramid. The pyramid model used for promoting positive intervention practices has four levels, or tiers, of support: effective workforce, universal, secondary, and

individualized. Hemmeter et al. (2012) and Hemmeter et al. (2016) address how each level works. The first tier, effective workforce, includes high quality teachers and school systems who are committed to receiving professional development consisting of high quality, evidence based practices. According to Hemmeter et al. (2012), the other three levels, universal, secondary and individualized are described as the Teaching Pyramid:

(a) developing nurturing and responsive relationships, (b) designing social and physical environments to support children's social emotional development and prevent challenging behavior, (c) teaching social skills and promoting emotional competencies, and (d) designing individualized interventions for children with ongoing challenging behavior. (p. 34)

The universal tier has many strategies to be utilized with the class as a whole. At this level, teachers should build strong, positive relationships with each child and their family. Allen and Steed (2016) describe how teachers should greet children daily, learn about interests by fully listening to the child and incorporating those interests. This can lead to a more positive relationship between the child and teachers. Other ideas to build positive relationships with students at this level include teachers engaging in play and conversations, teaching and enforcing rules and behavior expectations and supporting children with peer interactions. Teachers should also create a positive classroom environment by planning engaging activities, providing encouragement and feedback, clear directions and having a consistent daily schedule/ routine. In addition, teachers need to know the developmental level of children in order to use developmentally appropriate strategies including "redirections, clear directions, and positive, descriptive feedback" (Hemmeter et al., 2012, p. 33).

The second tier involves more targeted social emotional support for some specific children with challenging behavior. At this level, some children need to be intentionally taught social skills and may also need emotional competency to be encouraged (Hemmeter et al., 2012). Emotional competency includes self-esteem and confidence, self-regulation, attention, persistence, patience, conflict resolution, empathy and social skills. This targeted level promotes “skill acquisition, fluency, generalization, and maintenance” of prosocial behavior (Hemmeter et al., 2016). The goal is to have children gain and maintain skills across settings and adults. The third tier of the pyramid model, individualized, is considered when a child is displaying persistent challenging behavior. At this level, the teacher should develop and implement a behavior support plan with the assistance of other specialized educators such as a school psychologist to implement intentional and intensive supports.

Benefits of the Pyramid Model. When the pyramid model is implemented consistently, challenging behavior has been shown to decrease and social skills to improve. When implemented consistently, teachers report having better communication and patience with their students (Hemmeter et al., 2016). Classrooms with positive behavior outcomes often have higher amounts of social emotional support provided and have clear behavior expectations posted visually and enforced. Teachers in classrooms who build strong and positive relationships have more positive outcomes because they have knowledge of children’s interests and things that motivate them (Hemmeter et al., 2016). It is important to remember universal supports are provided to all children, and can also be beneficial for children who display challenging behavior. Teachers must be aware of which strategies are working or not working and should decide from there whether a child needs more targeted interventions or intensive behavior support.

Informal Methods

Teacher- Child Relationship

Building Positive Relationships. The teacher- child relationship consists of building positive relationships and creating a high quality environment and interactions. Because children seek attention and support from teachers, the relationship between a teacher and child is one of the most important factors to create with each student and with each family. When positive relationships are created, “children feel supported and safe, become more confident and willing to try new things, persist at difficult tasks, and ask for assistance when they need help” (Hemmeter et al., 2012, p. 36). Building positive relationships with children consists of greeting the child by name and making eye contact, engaging in conversations and interests and being in close proximity to the child (Coleman et al., 2013; Hemmeter et al., 2012; Allen & Steed, 2016). Building positive relationships can also consist of “guiding a child through a social problem and providing positive, descriptive, feedback about something the child has done well” (Hemmeter et al., 2012, p. 36).

Children who engage in challenging behavior often have more negative interactions with teachers based on their challenging behavior rather than positive interactions, feedback and support. Negative interactions can lead to long term effects on a child with challenging behavior. According to Levine and Ducharme (2013), this can include increased aggression and oppositional behavior, withdrawal in social situations, decreased participation in classroom activities and can create a dislike towards school. When there are more positive interactions including one- on- one time and the teacher follows child-led play, children often have decreased challenging behavior and the teacher- child relationship becomes positive and supportive.

Although it can be difficult to reframe negative thoughts, it is crucial for teachers to work with and engage children in ways to acknowledge positive behavior. To do this, Hemmeter et al. (2012) suggests increasing the frequency of one-on-one interactions around preferred items/activities, identifying skills that are lacking and focusing interactions on supporting the development of those skills, and reframing the thought of behavior is communication so the teacher can help the child communicate their message in a more appropriate way.

High Quality Interactions and Environment. High quality teacher-child interactions are crucial to creating a positive classroom environment and decreasing challenging behavior through helping children manage their own behavior and participation in learning activities. Clear behavioral expectations, consistent classroom routines and engaging activities all lead to a high quality environment with positive behavior and academic growth. A language rich environment and high levels of emotional support offered in the classroom benefit all children, especially children displaying challenging behavior or who are at risk. Emotional support consists of “warm, sensitive, responsive, and individualized teacher-child interactions” (Shearer et al., 2020, p. 161).

Regulation Strategies

Benefits of Utilizing Regulation Strategies. Mindfulness, yoga, deep breathing and relaxation techniques are all ways teachers can help children learn to regulate their bodies and emotions. The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) recommends teachers plan activities which provide learning opportunities through movement to “maintain or improve fitness, wellness and development” for young children (Division for Early Childhood, 2014, p. 8). According to Erwin et al. (2017) and Gagne et al. (2021), self-regulation includes the ability to regulate and control behavior, emotions, feelings, attention and

actions. According to Li- Grining et al. (2021), mindfulness has been defined as “purposeful moment-to-moment presence and self-awareness of one’s breathing, body sensations, emotions, and/or thoughts in a non-judgmental manner” (p. 227).

When children are able to self- regulate through explicitly taught techniques, academic and social emotional skills have positive growth outcomes. According to Li- Grining et al. (2021), mindfulness promotes “higher self-regulation, better sleep, fewer behavior problems, and greater academic skills in preschoolers” (p. 228). Teachers should prioritize supporting self-regulation skills to improve focus and engagement in the classroom and across other school settings (Erwin et al., 2017).

Implementing Regulation Strategies in the Classroom. Young children typically enjoy engaging in movement activities including dancing, hands on activities, jumping, running and climbing. Yoga is a way to provide movement in the classroom which can lead to gaining self-regulation and awareness of body, breath and emotions. Incorporating yoga and other mindfulness and regulation strategies can benefit children in their ability to engage in classroom routines and practice self regulation, in addition to balance and coordination skill growth (Erwin et al., 2017). Mindfulness activities have the flexibility of being used throughout the school day during many areas of the routine, including transitions and snack time.

According to Erwin et al. (2017) and Li- Grining et al. (2021), some examples of embedding mindfulness into the routine include practicing as a whole group being as quiet as possible, taking deep breaths, and practicing meditation. Other mindfulness ideas include being very quiet and then very loud, or very fast and then very slow. Children can move around the classroom like different animals, color or paint, notice things in nature- how they feel and how they sound. Children could sit or lay down with their eyes closed and the teacher can read or play

a guided meditation to help with anxieties and/ or regulation. Sensory play, such as playdough, shaving cream, sensory table with noodles, water, beans, manipulatives, etc., is another way to promote self- regulation and mindfulness.

Visual Support Strategies

Visual support can be very beneficial to young children with and without disabilities or challenging behavior. Visual support can help increase independence in routines, promote positive social behavior and decrease challenging behavior (Wahman et al., 2019). Social stories and visual activity schedules are examples of visual support. Social stories are created once a target behavior is identified during a social situation and the teacher understands the function of the behavior and the context in which the behavior is occurring. The purpose of a social story is to show a child, through words and pictures, what appropriate behaviors should happen in a social situation. When writing a social story, the developmental level of the child must be considered and the story should be written in a way that is clear, concise and appropriate. Social stories include the following types of sentences:

- a) descriptive, which identify the context of the target situation;
- b) directive, which describe a desired behavior in response to a social cue;
- c) perspective, which describe reactions or feelings in response to a social situation;
- d) affirmative, which express the value of a given context or culture;
- e) control, which provide analogies to promote understanding for the child;
- and f) cooperative, which include information about who will provide help and how that help will be made available for the child. (Sansosti et al., 2004, p. 195)

Social stories should have “two to five descriptive, perspective, and/ or affirmative sentences for every directive sentence in the story.” (Wahman et al., 2019, p. 2). Based on research, social stories have varying and inconclusive levels of effectiveness.

Visual activity schedules consist of pictures and symbols which show the order of the classroom routine and/ or behavior expectations. Zimmerman et al. (2017) and McCollow et al. (2016) describe how visual activity schedules can also use pictures to break down tasks into smaller steps for children in a way to prevent challenging behavior from occurring and to increase a child’s understanding of what is expected. Visual schedules can also be a way to provide opportunities for children to make choices (McCollow et al., 2016). When children can make choices, they have control which leads to a decrease in challenging behavior. Often, the pictures and symbols are laminated and have velcro on the back for durability which allows children to manipulate the different pictures.

Visual schedules can be available in multiple ways. There could be one or two pictures displayed at a time in a binder or on a clipboard and the child can move the pictures to a different spot once the activity is complete. More photos can be displayed at a time, in the order of the routine, based on what the child can comprehend (McCollow et al., 2016). Visual schedules can also include a child moving an item to the next activity after completing the previous activity (Green et al., 2019). A pocket chart can be used to hold and display the pictures and children can move them (Green et al., 2019). When children manipulate the visual schedule, this promotes their independence and understanding of what is happening currently, what is coming next, and when they can expect a preferred activity to begin (Green et al., 2019). It is important to note children must be explicitly taught how to use a visual activity schedule. The teacher may need to

provide physical and verbal prompting until a child begins to understand and shows more independence in following the schedule.

Peer Mediated Intervention

Young children with disabilities and/ or challenging behavior can benefit from having positive peer role models to model what is expected during routines and to model positive behavior. When young children display challenging behaviors, they often lack the skills needed for socially appropriate behavior. When a child can initiate a peer interaction and respond to a peer's request for interaction, social interactions become more purposeful. Martinez et al. (2021) reports positive social interactions are beneficial for children shown through growth in academic readiness, communication and cognitive skills. Having peer role models is an opportunity for children with challenging behaviors to observe and engage with peers who display prosocial behavior. Peer Mediated Interventions (PMI) and Video Modeling (VM) are two different ways for the modeling of appropriate behavior to occur.

Peer Mediated Interventions (PMI) are “interventions in which one or more peers are taught strategies to support their classmates in the acquisition of academic, behavioral, or social skills” (Martinez et al., 2021, p. 84).

PMI is an evidence-based practice which can be implemented in inclusive early childhood classrooms and can be embedded into the natural routines. Inclusive classrooms include children with and without disabilities. In order to implement a PMI, the teacher must identify a child who needs targeted intervention due to challenging behavior. The teacher must also choose a role model peer who displays age appropriate communication, social and behavior skills. This child should also have age appropriate imaginative play skills, follow classroom directions, have shared interests and should get along with, and show interest in, the child who

needs this intervention (targeted child), and should be close in age to the targeted child (Martinez et al., 2021; Harjusola-Webb et al., 2012). The identified child will assist the targeted child in engaging in appropriate social skills and/ or behavior skills.

Once the target child is identified, the teacher must identify specific behaviors to target and intervene. Teachers should observe the targeted child's behavior across settings, especially during free play time where there are many social interaction opportunities, and over a few days to determine how often the child is engaging in negative social or behavioral interactions. Preferred items, such as toys and activities, should be identified and utilized in social interactions to create motivation for the target child. Before beginning the PMI, teachers need to plan for times to embed the PMI naturally in classroom activities. Teachers, and paraprofessionals when appropriate, must teach both the target child and the role model peer what is expected out of the targeted social behavior.

Role model peers need to be explicitly taught how to engage with the target child. Martinez et al. (2021) states that teachers should follow these steps: "(a) explain the purpose of the intervention, (b) introduce or review the role of initiations or responses in being an effective social partner, (c) model and practice initiation/ response strategies through role-play, and (d) provide children with performance feedback" (p. 88). The purpose of training role model peers is to teach them how to be positive social examples based on what the target child's strengths and needs are. Once both children are explicitly taught, PMI sessions can begin. These sessions should be facilitated daily for 10-15 minutes so the teacher can observe the target child and whether they are engaging in the targeted positive behavior, and step in as needed. In addition to benefits for the target child, children who are peer role models often receive positive benefits including increased academic engagement and participation in classroom activities. PMI

encourages an understanding and appreciation for diversity among peers and the differences they may have (Martinez et al., 2021).

According to Harjusola-Webb et al. (2012), using role model peers paired with children who display challenging behavior can be more beneficial than a teacher modeling positive behavior. Common types of PMI include: peer proximity, peer prompting and support and peer initiation. Peer proximity is when the peer role model works or plays near the target child in order to demonstrate appropriate behavior which the target child can observe. Peer prompting and support consists of the role model peer giving the targeted child a verbal prompt such as “let’s play” and when the targeted child engages in the positive behavior the peer reinforces by giving a physical prompt such as a high five or descriptive, verbal praise. Peer initiation is when the peer role model initiates a conversation or asks the targeted peer to engage in a specific activity and the targeted peer then engages in the activity (Harjusola-Webb et al., 2012)

Video Modeling

Video Modeling (VM) is a video intervention that highlights desired behaviors in social situations for viewers to model after watching (Mitsch et al., 2021, p. 17).

Similar to PMI, video modeling utilizes peer role models to assist targeted children. VM creates a more concrete observation for children who may not be learning the desired behavior through teacher and peer modeling. VM can also lead to children gaining social and behavioral skills faster. When a peer role model is selected, they are taught how to interact and respond to desired behavior of the targeted peer. Also similar to PMI, peer role models must be open to feedback, show interest in the target child, follow directions and should have the ability to participate in the desired target behavior (Mitsch et al., 2021). Peer role models can have multiple roles in the VM process including acting in the video, watching the video with the target

child, and after watching the video, they can role play with the target child to model the desired target behavior.

Role model peers may be given a script of things to say or do by the teacher, which will be at the level of the target child and will depend on the context of the scenario. It is important for data to be collected before and after the VM intervention to determine how often the targeted behavior is happening. Once enough data is collected and shows the targeted behavior(s) is occurring more frequently, the VM needs to be faded either by “delaying the start of the video or ending it before it is over; therefore, less of the video is shown” (Mitsch et al., 2021. p. 22). The goal of fading the VM is to decrease prompts and to increase the maintenance of the desired target behavior, creating independence across classroom settings and across different peers.

Chapter 3: Summary

There are many formal and informal strategies classroom teachers can use to decrease and manage challenging behavior. When looking through articles the main findings included how classroom management is critical in how a classroom operates. Positive classroom behavior management can lead to a decrease in challenging behavior because those supports, routines and expectations are explicitly taught. High quality classrooms can lead to success with behavior management when qualities such as: posting a visual schedule and keeping it consistent, having engaging activities planned, reinforcing positive behavior, and responding to challenging behavior are implemented. If behavior management is lacking, positive behavior reinforcement will be less effective (Reinke et al., 2013). High quality behavior management leads to building positive relationships within the classroom. Building positive relationships between the teacher and child helps the child feel secure, supported and cared for.

PBIS offers universal supports to all children in a classroom setting. Many children will benefit from universal supports. However, if a child displays challenging behaviors that are not decreased by the universal supports, more individualized support and planning needs to occur for those specific children. In order to determine the function of challenging behavior, teachers must start the FBA process and observe the child multiple times to find the pattern of why the behavior is occurring (Johnson & Monn, 2015). Once the function is determined, a plan can be created and put into place to decrease challenging behavior. The Pyramid Model is a beneficial framework for teachers to understand which level of behavior support children need.

The ABCs of behavior help to determine how reinforcement affects challenging behavior and whether it continues to occur or decreases. The ABCs also identify the antecedent (what

happens before the behavior) in order to modify the environment to prevent and decrease challenging behavior. When negative behavior is reinforced, this can make the challenging behavior continue or could lead to an increase in challenging behavior. When negative behavior is not reinforced, the challenging behavior will decrease and could lead to elimination of the behavior (Meadan et al., 2016). Instead of responding to negative behavior, teachers should look for positive behaviors children are displaying and should reinforce the behaviors immediately to increase their occurrence.

Visual supports are very helpful to incorporate in early childhood classrooms due to the ages of the students. Many children ages three to five years old in these classrooms show interest towards pictures especially if they are presented in a positive way and if they are at the level of understanding of a child with developmental delays and challenging behavior. Pictures are a visual representation of expectations in the classroom. Visual supports help to create independence in young children by breaking tasks down into smaller steps and can be available for children to make choices (McCollow et al., 2016).

Peer role models are very beneficial to young children with developmental delays and/ or challenging behavior because the peers are their age, have similar interests, and can show children what is expected. Teachers should work with the peer role models to give them expectations of how they can help another peer. Teachers should also plan activities for self-regulation which include providing opportunities for movement and for calm throughout the school day. Children need assistance from an adult and strategies to use to learn how to self-regulate. Once they learn these strategies, it is likely, with a reminder, they will be able to engage in self- regulation.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Recommendations

Although I have been teaching for five years in inclusive early childhood settings, and in the field of early childhood for seven years, I continue to struggle as the teacher to manage challenging behavior at times. I have tried many strategies and have had multiple trainings revolving around social emotional and behavioral development of young children. Young children often come to school not knowing the basics of social-emotional development, including self-regulation, sharing, turn taking and following directions. As an early childhood special educator it is my job, along with other service providers and my paraprofessional in the classroom, to teach young children how to best manage their emotions and behaviors and to teach them regulation techniques.

I use many informal strategies daily from year to year, including: short yoga videos, deep breathing techniques, discussing feelings and emotions, creating rules together as a class, meditation, lights out in the classroom, movement activities during large and small groups and during transitions. It was challenging to find information on topics in early childhood which include mindfulness, yoga, deep breathing and the effectiveness of social stories due to limited research. I recommend more research is needed in this area because these strategies have worked in my classroom and my students show interest in learning self- regulation strategies.

In addition to these informal strategies I also use visual picture schedules with children who have cognitive and or communication delays. Pictures help young children with developmental delays understand what is happening currently in the classroom routine and what is coming next. I have noticed my students with developmental delays and children who are non-verbal gravitate to pictures. When using picture schedules, I have had the pictures on a velcro system on a clipboard. Children can move the pictures and be part of the process of our

routine so they can learn more independence. I have also used pictures in the form of a first/ then board (eg. first we do our work, then we play) where there are only two photos in order to keep the visual distractions low. More research is needed on the effectiveness of using social stories with young children. In my experience, using picture schedules and first/ then boards have been helpful to increase understanding and independence in routines and behavior expectations. I have also used social stories, but have had more success and consistency with picture schedules.

It can be challenging to get some children to participate in regulation activities. However, I do my best to make it fun and assist children who need help along with my paraprofessional. We encourage children to participate, give them expectations to be followed, offer praise and have conversations with them every single day. These strategies have helped me create very strong relationships with my students year to year. I have found when I can create strong relationships with my students in class, the children are often more likely to follow redirections and follow expectations, which overall decreases challenging behavior.

I also utilize peer role models every year in my classes. I have had success with this strategy, and often have children who really want to help children with challenging behavior or with other delays. This has been amazing to see typical peers helping children who may be non-verbal or may not participate in different activities of the day. Peer role models have helped other students participate and gain more independence in more ways than I, or my paraprofessional, could have. For that reason, I believe peer role models are extremely beneficial and every classroom should strategically utilize peer role models.

My interest in investigating the topic of behavioral strategies to use formally and informally within the classroom, is because I know so many teachers struggle with behavior management, myself included. I know of many teachers who have limited classroom

management strategies, which makes their classrooms very chaotic. Because of this, I believe the children within those classrooms are not getting their needs met. When doing research for this literature review, what I found reiterated many of the trainings I have already received around formal strategies. Social emotional learning and behavioral learning are some of the most important things to work on in early childhood education.

Taking the steps to formally understand the function of a child's challenging behavior is always going to be the first step in determining a plan that can be successful. PBIS is a training I have received multiple times year after year. Although I understand the importance of PBIS, I also understand some of the limitations to carrying out these strategies. I understand because I have been there. I have felt extremely overwhelmed at times and sometimes my thoughts, along with other educators' thoughts, may include, "how can I possibly fit in another strategy when I already have multiple curricula to follow and only a few hours per class session?" However, once I figured out what would work for me, my paraprofessional and for my students, I have put more effort into PBIS and have seen positive behavior results.

Ultimately, teachers have to find what strategies will work best with their classrooms, sometimes through trial and error. There are many informal strategies teachers can use daily, in addition to formal strategies. Through my research, it shows how many of the formal strategies work together with each other and have a lot of the same elements. Formal strategies can help to create a classroom environment where teachers can have more success in implementing informal strategies.

Moving forward in my teaching career, I plan to continue to use and build upon the strategies I currently practice. Something I would like to do differently is use the ABCs to determine what is causing challenging behavior and what its function is and find PBIS strategies

to implement in order to continue to improve systems in place and to improve my behavior management. I would also like to find more resources and techniques for mindfulness and movement activities. Ongoing trainings, discussion and support on topics including: mindfulness strategies with young children (deep breathing, relaxation and yoga), PBIS, utilizing visual supports, and the use of the ABCs and FBA would be very beneficial and will all guide my future teaching practices.

References

- Allen, R., & Steed, E. A. (2016). Culturally responsive pyramid model practices: Program-wide positive behavior support for young children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 36*(3), 165–175.
- Clasen, A., & Cheathan, G. A. (2015). Systematic monitoring of young children’s social-emotional competence and challenging behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children, 18*(2), 29-47.
- Coleman, J. C., Crosby, M. G., Irwin, H. K., Dennis, L. R., Simpson, C. G., & Rose, C. A. (2013). Preventing challenging behaviors in preschool: Effective strategies for classroom teachers. *Young Exceptional Children, 16*(3), 3-10.
- Erwin, E. J., Robinson, K. A., McGrath, G. S., & Harney, C. J. (2017). “It’s like breathing in blue skies and breathing out stormy clouds”: Mindfulness practices in early childhood. *Young Exceptional Children, 20*(2), 69-85.
- Gagne, J. R., Liew, J., & Nwadinobi, O. K. (2021). “How does the broader construct of self-regulation relate to emotion regulation in young children?” *Developmental Review, 60*, 1-7.
- Green, K.B., Robbins, S. H., & Bucholz, J. L. (2019). Positive behavior interventions and supports: Maximizing the universal tier for young children with or at risk for disabilities. *Young Exceptional Children, 22*(1), 6-21.
- Harjusola-Webb, S., Hubbell, S. P., & Bedesem, P. (2012). Increasing prosocial behaviors of young children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms using a combination of peer-mediated intervention and social narratives. *Beyond Behavior, 21*(2), 29-36.

- Harvey, H., Dunlap, G., & McKay, K. (2021). Primary and secondary effects of prevent-teach-reinforce for young children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 41*(2), 100–114
- Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M. M., & Corso, R. M. (2012). Preventing and addressing challenging behavior: Common questions and practical strategies. *Young Exceptional Children, 15*(2), 32-46.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Snyder, P. A., Fox, L., & Algina, J. (2016). Evaluating the implementation of the pyramid model for promoting social-emotional competence in early childhood classrooms. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 36*(3), 133–146.
- Johnson, L. D., & Monn, E. (2015). Bridging behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention: Finding your inner behavior analyst. *Young Exceptional Children, 18*(3), 19-35.
- Jolstead, K. A., Caldarella, P., Hansen, B., Korth, B. B., Williams, L., & Kamps, D. (2017). Implementing positive behavior support in preschools: An exploratory study of CW-FIT tier 1. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 19*(1), 48–60.
- Levine, D., & Ducharme, J. (2013). The effects of a teacher–child play intervention on classroom compliance in young children in child care settings. *Journal of Behavior Education, 22*, 50-65.
- Li-Grining, C. P., Vera, E., Janusek, L., Saban, K., Liston, Y., Naqi, Z., & Troske, M. (2021). Project CaLM: A pilot intervention integrating mindfulness strategies into head start classrooms. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 43*(3), 227–238.

- Martinez, J. R., Prykanowski, D. A., & Morgan, C. W. (2021). Individualized peer-mediated interventions to increase young children's social competence. *Young Exceptional Children, 22*(1), 82-95.
- McCollow, M. M., Curiel, E. S. L., Davis, C. A., & Sainato, D. (2016). Utilizing antecedent strategies in early childhood settings. *Young Exceptional Children, 19*(4), 5-19.
- Meadan, H., Ayvazo, S., & Ostrosky, M. M. (2016). The ABCs of challenging behavior: Understanding basic concepts. *Young Exceptional Children, 19*(1), 3-15.
- Mitsch, M. K., Riggelman, S., & Buchter, J. M. (2021). Responding to young children's social-emotional needs through video modeling. *Young Exceptional Children, 24*(1), 16-27.
- Park, H.L., & Lynch, S. (2014). Evidence- based practices for addressing classroom behavior problems. *Young Exceptional Children, 17*(3), 33-47.
- Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Stormont, M. (2013). Classroom- level positive behavior supports in schools implementing SW-PBIS: Identifying areas for enhancement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 15*(1), 39–50.
- Shearer, B. R. J., Bichay- Awadalla, K., Bailey, J., Futterer, J., & Qi, C.H. (2020). Teacher– child interaction quality buffers negative associations between challenging behaviors in preschool classroom contexts and language and literacy skills. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 40*(3), 159–171.
- Tyre, A. D., & Feuerborn, L. L. (2021). Ten common misses in PBIS implementation. *Beyond Behavior, 30*(1), 41-50.

- Wahman, C. L., Pustejovsky, J. E., Ostrosky, M. M., & Santos, R. M. (2019). Examining the effects of social stories on challenging behavior and prosocial skills in young children: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 1–13*.
- Wood, B. K., Drogan, & R. R., Janney, D. M. (2014) Early childhood practitioner involvement in functional behavioral assessment and function- based interventions: A literature review. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 34(1), 16–26*.
- Wood, B. K., & Ferro, J. B. (2014). An effective approach to developing function- based interventions in early childhood classrooms. *Young Exceptional Children, 17(1), 3-20*.
- Zimmerman, K. N., Ledford, J. R., & Barton, E. E. (2017). Using visual activity schedules for young children with challenging behavior. *Journal of Early Intervention, 39(4), 339–358*.

**Supporting Families of Young Children with Challenging Behavior through
Collaboration and Strategy Implementation**

by

Alexandra Umerski

A Starred Paper

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science in

Child and Family Studies

December, 2022

Starred Paper Committee:
JoAnn Johnson, Chairperson
Deborah Wheeler
Kathryn Johnson

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.....	3
Research Questions.....	5
Importance and Purpose of Study.....	6
Literature Search Description.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
2. Literature Review.....	9
Impact on Families.....	10
Parent Child Relationship.....	13
Building Collaborative Relationships with Families.....	14
Coaching.....	16
Strategies for Families.....	19
Check- In/ Check- Out.....	19
Home Visiting.....	22
Positive Parenting Program and Stepping Stones Triple P.....	24
Parent- Child Interaction Therapy.....	25
Incredible Years.....	26
Positive Behavior Supports.....	28
Behavior Skills Training.....	30
3. Summary.....	32
4. Discussion and Recommendations.....	35
References.....	37

Chapter 1: Introduction

In my first two years as a teacher in ECSE, most of my students, with and without special needs, rode the bus to school, so face-to-face contact with their parents rarely occurred. I would make an occasional phone call or write a weekly or twice monthly entry in a notebook. However, I found those forms of communicating were not always helpful, especially if I was not consistent. While progress is reported for students on an IEP through progress reports and at IEP meetings, it is still very important to have ongoing communication and collaboration with parents. School and home must be on the same page in order to work in unison to shape challenging behavior into more positive behavior. Working together with families allows the professional to understand family priorities and the strengths and needs of the child. Building rapport leads to establishing approachability, reliability and trust (An et al., 2019).

Challenging behavior is defined as “any behavior that interferes with children’s learning and development, is harmful to children and to others, and puts a child at risk for later social problems or school failure” (Fettig et al., 2013, p. 30). Challenging behavior in young children can affect day to day lives for families at home and in the community, and can put stress on family dynamics and functioning. Challenging behavior can also negatively impact a child’s social emotional skills and other areas of development. Family based practices focus on strengths within the family, provide them with choices about resources they want to utilize, and promote the importance of building collaborative relationships between families and professionals (Fettig et al., 2013). A positive collaborative relationship can lead to more success for children with challenging behaviors. Collaboration has many important benefits. Families complete reports specific to their family and give information about their child to describe their likes and dislikes and give insight into routines that go smoothly or are challenging. Acquiring background

information opens communication for the teacher to discuss strategies with the family which work or haven't worked at school or at home and behaviors observed in both settings.

While teachers may feel unsure of where to begin or feel lost with challenging behaviors, it is important to realize that parents may also feel the same way. This is where the teacher's expertise, in addition to formal strategies, come into play. Educators are not only teachers of young children, they also need to be collaborative partners with parents. This collaboration is important to assist families in using different strategies in order to have success at home. Professionals need to support families to meet their child where they are at while still providing opportunities for growth with behavioral skills.

Communication is important to establish not only with the adults and children in the classroom, but also with the child's parents. When working with families to establish a positive relationship, it is important to build "communication, respect, trust, commitment and equality between the parent and professional" (Fettig et al., 2013, p. 32). The relationship should also be supportive and encouraging. Parents know their child best and have the most insight into their routines, outside supports, stressors and family goals and values.

Educators must be careful how they approach topics of challenging behavior with parents. There is a need to be cautious, and not come across as judgemental. All families handle difficulties in different ways, and it is important for educators to get to know the family and ask questions about how they approach challenging behaviors in their home. From there, educators can construct or develop a plan with parents for realistic expectations within the home. If parents feel judged by educators, just like any other person, they may be less willing to accept and try suggested strategies. Educators should do their best to understand why a family might not be

following a behavior plan. Many factors contribute to a family's ability to follow through with strategies and the professional should help find ways to support the family to be successful.

Families, and educators, need to accept that changes don't occur overnight. Effort and consistency, over time, need to be made to see real changes. It is also important to understand things may seem worse or more chaotic before they get better, but being consistent will help the child and family in the long run. Parent's optimistic or pessimistic outlook regarding whether their child's behavior can change will impact the level of improvement of challenging behavior. Professionals must teach families how to gain confidence in creating, enforcing and following through with behavior plans. Without family and professional collaboration and follow through, children with challenging behaviors will more likely continue to have challenging behaviors later in life (Durand, 2021).

Open communication with families is crucial to successfully change behavior. Working collaboratively with families can lead to greater increase in desirable behaviors both at home and in school. Often children's challenging behaviors begin at home, where they spend the majority of their time. Parent input and teacher suggestions and guidance are necessary in order to change behaviors at home and in school. Together, the goal is to provide as much consistency as possible. Families know their children best and know what will work for their child and for their family as a whole.

Research Questions

In this paper, I have reviewed articles which discuss the most effective ways for educators to collaborate with parents to address young children's challenging behaviors. Through my research I have identified the following questions:

1. What are the overall effects of young children's challenging behavior on the family?

2. What positive behavior supports can the family successfully implement at home to assist with challenging behavior?
3. How can educators build strong, collaborative and successful parent- teacher relationships around challenging behavior?

Importance and Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore ways teachers and families can collaborate together in order to help children be successful and grow in their social emotional and behavioral skills at home and at school. Challenging behaviors negatively affect teachers, families, classrooms, home lives and others. The goals are to have an acceptable measure of calm at home and to have classrooms run smoothly so children get the most out of a structured school setting. Families and teachers may feel stuck and unsure of where and how to begin working on challenging behavior. Collaboration between families and teachers is crucial in molding and shaping young children's social emotional development. How can families support teachers, and how can teachers support families to make these changes?

Behavior changes usually begin at home because children spend the majority of time at home. When collaborating with families, there should be as much consistency between home and school as possible. Collaboration can build stronger relationships and improve parenting skills and confidence, empowering families to function successfully and make adult driven decisions. Children's improved skills won't generalize across settings unless home and school are consistent and use similar terms and strategies.

Literature Search Description

In order to collect articles to be reviewed and analyzed for this paper, I utilized the St. Cloud State University library database. I found articles through the databases ERIC and

EBSCO. I used the following terms when searching: early childhood, challenging behaviors, impact of challenging behaviors on families, collaboration with families, and special education.

All articles that were used are from peer reviewed sources.

Definition of Terms

Challenging Behavior- “any behavior that interferes with children’s learning and development, is harmful to children and to others, and puts a child at risk for later social problems or school failure.” (Fettig et al., 2013).

CICO- “Check-In/Check-Out is a behavioral intervention designed for students who require additional supports in classroom settings. CICO provides children with positive consequences contingent upon appropriate behaviors, such as stickers or checkmarks throughout the day, and a reward at the end of the day for reaching an agreed upon number of stickers or checkmarks.” (Green, 2018).

Pivot- “(1) saying and doing nothing in response to the behavior; and (2) providing a consequence when the child stopped engaging in the targeted inappropriate behavior.” (Sawyer et al., 2015).

Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Families- “a revised version of Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR), an evidence-based, manualized form of PBS for school-aged children.” (Joseph et al., 2021).

Redirect/ Use Reinforcement- “(1) getting within arm’s length of the child, interrupting the inappropriate behavior, and redirecting the child to an appropriate alternative behavior; and (2) providing a consequence when the child stops engaging in the targeted inappropriate behavior.” (Sawyer et al., 2015).

Use Reinforcement-“(1) telling the child what behavior was observed; and (2) providing a consequence contingent on the occurrence of a targeted appropriate behavior.” (Sawyer et al., 2015).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Research has shown how more and more children are starting their school careers lacking the essential skills needed for success in the areas of social, emotional, behavior and academics (Doubet & Ostrosky, 2015). When children have challenging behaviors from a young age, individualized interventions are necessary to reduce current and future behavior. Challenging behavior is defined as “any behavior that interferes with children’s learning and development, is harmful to children and to others, and puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure” (Fettig & Ostrosky, 2014, p.1). Children learn social emotional competence through nurturing caregiving, which helps them to regulate their emotions and behavior as they get older. Some children, with and without nurturing caregiving, may have persistent challenging behavior which requires intervention.

Families of children with challenging behavior often feel stressed and hopeless about improving their child’s behavior. Families need support from professionals who can teach them positive parenting and behavior management strategies. Coaching and collaboration assist families in becoming effective implementers of evidence- based behavior support interventions. When families use the interventions, the family benefits as a whole. If families do not know how to effectively manage their child’s challenging behavior, “inconsistent, overly passive, or hostile approaches” may be used instead which can increase a child’s challenging behavior (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017, p. 2656). This literature review will explore strategies and ways to collaborate between home and school to support families of children with challenging behavior.

Impact on Families

Who is Affected by Challenging Behavior

Challenging behavior affects the family as a whole in many ways. In addition to the effects on the child displaying challenging behavior, parents, siblings, other members of the family and family outings are affected. According to interviews completed with families of children with challenging behavior by Doubet and Ostrosky (2015) and Adams et al. (2021), the impacts to families include: “(a) constrained family activities (e.g., families stayed at home or canceled outings), (b) decreased social relationships with siblings (e.g., negative physical and verbal interactions among siblings), (c) increased family stress (e.g., parental and extended family members stress, and (d) lowered parents’ beliefs about their parenting capabilities” (Adams et al., 2021, p. 2). Doubet and Ostrosky (2015) found families also struggle with financial stressors, feeling isolated, finding resources and supports for their child and finding appropriate childcare.

Children who display challenging behavior are often affected by more limited opportunities or success in functions (activities) outside of the home and social events. When given the opportunity to participate in activities, children with challenging behavior sometimes disengage or are unable to follow rules and expectations. This can make it difficult for the family and child due to the misunderstandings by others about challenging behavior and their causes (Adams et al., 2021). Other children may not understand the child’s behavior, which may cause them to potentially feel scared and avoid the child altogether.

Siblings can be affected by having a brother or sister with challenging behavior in positive ways such as wanting to protect their siblings from others’ negative thoughts and having a deeper understanding of others who are different from them. Negative factors could be not

understanding why their sibling with challenging behavior is treated differently, having to help care for them, parents missing events they participate in due to managing challenging behavior and missing out on family outing opportunities. According to Doubet and Ostrosky (2015), some of these factors can lead to negative behavior and interactions in the other children due to jealousy or resentment towards their sibling and parents because time and attention are not distributed equally.

Themes of Impact on Families

According to Adams et al. (2021), families report many feelings they experience towards their emotional well being including guilt, fear, frustration and sadness due to their child's challenging behavior. Feelings of judgment from others can make it difficult for families to form and maintain personal relationships because others may not understand the child's behavior. Having to manage a child's challenging behavior can also make it difficult for families to participate in social events and conversations. Many families are unsure of how to manage and prevent challenging behavior and lack strategies and assistance from professionals. Because of this, many families avoid or adapt activities with other family and friends or in the community in order to prevent behavior (Doubet & Ostrosky, 2015). Avoiding activities intended to bring people together can lead to feelings of isolation from others.

Finding and keeping care providers, who can help care for and work with children with challenging behavior, can be difficult. Many young children with challenging behavior are expelled from child care settings (Doubet & Ostrosky, 2016). Communication between the family and child care setting is crucial in coming together to use the same or similar strategies between home and classroom to improve behavior, which can decrease family stress and prevent expulsion from child care programs. With ongoing positive communication and feedback, many

families will be receptive to trying strategies that work or show improvement in the child care setting. Changing child care programs can cause stress on families due to uncertainties and having to start over often with people who don't yet know their child. This can also lead to stress on families having to potentially miss work due to their child's behavior (Doubet & Ostrosky, 2015).

Unfortunately, seeking assistance for children with challenging behavior is not always easy. Doubet and Ostrosky (2016) describe challenges families face when seeking assistance. Families report a lack of action once they ask for help (eg. at the doctor), or the child may be prescribed medication rather than practicing behavior changes through appropriate antecedents and consequences intending to improve challenging behavior. Families describe frustration when others give unwanted opinions about their child and also believe they lack knowledge regarding how to access resources and services.

Rose and Nelson (2018) found families who had more optimistic outlooks had increased success managing challenging behavior. Families have to remind themselves they are doing their best to meet their child where they are at. Families must take time to recognize the small gains that are made. Pessimism in parenting can influence how behavior plans are implemented. Pessimism includes low confidence in parenting abilities to address their child's challenging behavior and the belief that their child's behavior won't improve. Pessimistic thoughts can predict ongoing challenging behavior as the child gets older if the family doesn't acquire skills necessary to decrease challenging behavior. Durand (2021) found how coaching families in ways to be optimistic involved recognizing parental pessimistic thoughts and how to use coping skills to manage and decrease these thoughts. Creating more optimistic thoughts helps families to recognize and appreciate when their children are behaving appropriately.

Parent Child Relationship

Developing positive relationships between parents and children early in development is an important way to help young children develop social emotional and regulation skills. “Parents help children to recognize, understand, and resolve negative emotional experiences, through sensitive and responsive parent-child interactions” (Kerr et al., 2021). Mothers and fathers play unique roles in parenting. When children are first born, it is imperative that parents, especially the mother, respond quickly and appropriately to their infant’s needs (Bureay et al., 2021). When the infant’s needs are met and responded to, this creates a secure attachment, which is important for a child’s sense of security. Secure attachment and quality parent and child relationships create a higher chance a child will learn and use positive behavior (Bureay et al., 2021).

Kerr et al. (2021) and Bureay et al. (2021) describe how mothers are typically more responsive and in tune to their young children’s emotions and make an effort to help their child become more regulated than fathers because they are more emotionally available and are often more positive in their interactions. Mothers are also more meaningful in their interactions with their child, whether that be responding to and expanding upon language and sounds or providing opportunities for learning. Mothers are often more involved with children in the infant and toddler stages than fathers, but research has shown fathers are more involved in toddlerhood (1-3 years) and become even more involved during the preschool years (3-5 years). Bureay et al. (2021) describe fathers’ increased involvement may be because as children get past their first year, they have “increased mobility, more meaningful play interactions, more exploration (discovery) behavior, increased communication and more independence from parents” (p. 168).

Kerr et al. (2021) discuss how there are many studies on attachment, but the relationship between the mother and child is more researched than the relationship between the father and

child. Aside from secure attachment, another level of security in relationships is the ability for a child to be guided and supported through discovery. Despite a lack of research on the father and child relationship, fathers play a unique role in a child's social emotional and regulation skills. Fathers often provide more opportunities for discovery by encouraging risk taking behavior and playing with their child in rough- and- tumble ways. When engaging in these discovery activities, children often become more emotionally heightened and require the parent to help regulate them from the exciting situation. This shows that fathers indeed play an important role in a child's emotional regulation (Kerr et al., 2021).

Negative interactions between parents and children such as criticism, punishment or interference in activities are related to higher levels of distress when it comes to completing challenging tasks. Fettig and Ostrosky (2014) explain how negative, inconsistent and controlling parenting behaviors can cause young children to be at risk for developing challenging behavior. On the opposite side, when interactions are positive through guidance and sensitivity to the child's needs, children are more likely to utilize appropriate regulation and coping skills (Kerr et al., 2021. p216).

Building Collaborative Relationships with Families

The most crucial step in achieving successful behavior interventions is building collaborative relationships with families. The professional and family should create a partnership through communication, respect and trust, (Fettig et al., 2013; Kuhn et al., 2017) and commitment, and equality (Fettig et al., 2013, p. 32). Communication should be positive and productive, occur consistently, be easy to understand and involve non- judgmental listening. Some families can be hard to read and interact with if they are more quiet and don't offer much information, or if they speak and/ or act negatively toward their child. This can make it difficult

to create a collaborative partnership between the family and professional. However, positive communication leads to problem solving conversations between the professional and family which can identify factors that trigger behavior, how to prevent the behavior and how to address challenging behavior (Kuhn et al., 2017). These conversations are important in encouraging regulation and positive social emotional and behavior development between home and school settings. Many young children with challenging behavior receive supports and interventions in school and in therapy settings outside of school. Fettig and Ostrosky (2014) explain how these supports are effective, but they are most effective when families implement behavior intervention strategies in the home setting and during other activities.

Professionals must respect the family's values and beliefs as well as their input. This can be shown through recognizing the family's strengths and the effort families are putting into changing and improving their child's behavior (Fettig et al., 2013). There needs to be a mutual trust between the family and the professional. Trust is gained when professionals build a supportive relationship and show consistency and commitment by being available for the family and providing resources to support development.

Equality in the collaborative relationship between the family and professional occurs when, in addition to the professional's expertise, the professional values the family as being most knowledgeable about their child and communicates that their knowledge and input is valued. Fettig et al. (2013), Fettig and Ostrosky (2014), Kuhn et al. (2017) and McLaughlin et al. (2012), discuss how professionals need to empower the family as crucial members of their child's team in problem solving successful interventions to improve challenging behavior. Kuhn et al. (2017) describe how the family and professional collaboration and problem solving efforts need to include the following steps:

identifying children's learning or behavioral targets that are shared priorities, recognizing potential learning opportunities and supports across home and school routines, generating interventions that are evidence-based and responsive to families' values and cultural beliefs, and designing practical methods for monitoring children's progress and evaluating chosen interventions (p. 82).

Coaching

Coaching Defined

Coaching is a useful strategy between families and professionals in early childhood. "Coaching is a relationship-based process that improves existing skills, develops new skills, and builds the competence and confidence of caregivers to support and achieve desired child and family outcomes" (An et al., 2019, p. 199). There are several important parts of the coaching process including "joint planning, observations, action, reflection and feedback" (Fettig & Barton, 2014, p. 50). Coaching should be collaborative between the early childhood professional and the family and goals should be created based on the family's needs and main concerns. Once goals are created, the coach needs to observe the plan in action, which is based on the created goals, and then needs to provide feedback of what was observed (An et al., 2019). Fettig et al. (2015) found without coaching, families may be inconsistent or ineffective with the implementation of strategies, resulting in little to no change in challenging behavior. Coaching increases competence, consistency and effectiveness of learned strategies and interventions and positive behavior between the family and the child. Fettig et al. (2015) describe how coaching also encourages the maintenance of learned strategies and the family's self reflection upon the use of interventions.

Research into the selection of most effective interventions found those most helpful should be contextually appropriate for the family. Interventions should examine the family's goals, values, and current strengths and supports in addition to the child's individual strengths and interests (Fettig et al., 2013). Contextual fit is described as "the congruence between the behavior support intervention and the values, skills, resources, and routines of those who will implement the intervention" (McLaughlin et al., 2012, p. 88). Having a positive contextual fit will impact the likelihood families will: "(a) implement the behavior support intervention with fidelity; (b) report the behavior support intervention is acceptable, feasible to implement, and effective; (c) generalize and sustain the intervention; and (d) participate in future interventions and services" (McLaughlin et al., 2012, p. 88). If intervention plans are not a contextual fit for the family, it is likely the strategies will not be implemented consistently or correctly and will not be utilized over time.

How to Use Coaching with Families

The first part of coaching includes performing assessments and making goals based on the needs of the family. Families are very involved in this process as they are the experts on their child. They know their child's interests and what will work for the whole family system. Families know their strengths, challenges and stressors, goals and routines and know what social and family supports and resources they have access to (Fettig et al., 2013, pp. 29-30). Coaches should value the family's input by being "more effective listeners and collaborative partners" (An et al., 2019, p. 201). When completing assessments with the family, priorities should be identified based on needs and the family should also identify the times during their home routines or activities where their child can have opportunities to practice new strategies to manage challenging behavior. In the beginning of the interventions, the coaches should help the

families break down the main goal into smaller tasks. Once the child has mastered the smaller tasks, the “difficulty, duration and/ or complexity of those tasks” should be increased (An et al., 2019, p. 204).

After identifying priorities and routines, the next step is for the coach and the family to participate in observations. The coach should observe the family implementing interventions during natural routines, in the home or in the community. This is helpful in creating goals and realistic plans for intervention and to provide feedback for improvement. According to An et al. (2019) and Fetting and Barton (2014) it is important for the family to observe the coach modeling behavior intervention strategies and then have a discussion about what was observed.

Next, as interventions are implemented, the goals should be updated based on successes or challenges the family is experiencing. Successes and challenges can guide how to increase the goal or how to scale the goal back into smaller tasks and can guide where further coaching may be needed. Families want to see progress with their child. Coaches need to make realistic goals for the families to work towards to encourage confidence and consistency in the interventions.

There are two types of feedback coaches can give to families: supportive and corrective. Supportive feedback includes recognizing and praising successes they are having with implementing interventions. Providing support to families builds confidence and sense of competency. Importantly, support also helps create a collaborative and positive relationship between the coach and family. When giving corrective feedback, this should be done without judgment or criticism. Rather, it should find opportunities for the family to practice a more efficient way to implement the interventions. Coaches should model the way to correctly and efficiently use the learned strategies. According to An et al. (2019), corrective feedback should be positively stated and should include: “(a) the specific situation of the unsatisfactory practice,

(b) the reason the practice did not align with shared goals and action plans, and (c) refinement needed to obtain intended outcomes” (p. 210). Fettig et al. (2015) found providing follow up coaching to families was beneficial in offering support and feedback which ultimately leads to improved consistency and positive behavior changes in children with challenging behavior.

Strategies for Families

Check- In/ Check- Out

Check- In/ Check- Out (CICO) is a behavior intervention strategy for children with challenging behavior who require more targeted support in the classroom. CICO is used in the early childhood settings to reduce challenging behavior and to increase communication between school and home. Behaviors in young children which could show a need for targeted intervention include “persistent noncompliance, difficulty regulating emotions, forming relationships, or engaging in learning activities” (Green, 2018, p. 205). The CICO strategy includes positive reinforcement for reaching targeted behavior expectations. When teaching behavior expectations, children need to be explicitly taught what the expectation is. The expectations should be explained and modeled by the teacher and positive feedback and opportunities for practicing should be provided. Positive reinforcement for following expectations could include positive one-on-one attention from an adult. This should be paired with putting stickers on a chart, or drawing symbols, to visually monitor positive behavior. Targeted behavior expectations should be positively stated (eg: “inside voice”, rather than “don’t yell”) so children are aware of which targeted expectations will be reinforced.

CICO is based on five components: (a) check-in at arrival to encourage the child and discuss positive-written behavior expectations; (b) daily behavior progress chart given or shown to the child at check-in; (c) structured teacher feedback throughout the day at

regularly scheduled intervals in the form of verbal feedback and/or point card ratings; (d) check-out at the end of the day to review the daily progress chart and reward the child with positive attention or a small tangible if the child meets their daily goal; and (e) a home–school collaboration component, in which the daily progress chart is sent home with the child’s parent (Green, 2018, p. 206).

According to Green (2018), there are seven steps for implementing the CICO intervention. The first step is for the teacher to observe the child and collect data on the occurrences of challenging behavior. After collecting the data, the teacher should decide upon one to three behaviors to target. The second step is deciding how many stickers or symbols the child needs daily on their chart in order to receive a reward at the end of the school day. Oftentimes, the expectation of how many stickers or symbols are lower in the beginning of the intervention and increase once the child shows understanding and improvements. The third step is finding rewards which will motivate the child to engage in positive behavior. The teacher can allow the child to have a say in what they would like to work towards for their reward as this can further increase motivation.

After observing the child, creating goals, determining expectations for rewards and finding motivating rewards, the fourth step is to implement the CICO chart with consistency in the classroom. The teacher should “check-in” with the child at the beginning of each day to discuss goals and expectations, and provide opportunities to practice and model expected behavior. The fifth step is to provide stickers or symbols on the chart when an expected behavior is achieved. The sixth step happens at the end of the day, or at the end of a specified time period, when the teacher “checks-out” with the child to see how many stickers or symbols they earned and whether they met their goals. The “check- out” system should include giving feedback for

observed positive behaviors and should be motivating for the child. If the child met their goals, they should be rewarded. If they do not meet their daily goals, the teacher needs to have a conversation with the child about how they can work towards their goal the next day and be successful. If a child does not meet their goal often, the teacher should reconsider the goal and whether the expectations are realistic at that time (Green, 2018, p. 206).

The final step is to send the CICO chart home to the family to encourage and increase communication between home and school. The chart is a visual for the family to understand their child's behavior throughout their day at school (or childcare). The visual aspect of the chart is also helpful for the family to reflect with the child about how their day was and what the positive parts were. Families can reflect about challenging parts of the day and ways the child can try again the next day. Teachers can also make a space on the chart to write brief notes, and should make sure they include positives in addition to struggles the child may have had that day. CICO is an intervention teachers, childcare providers and families can utilize. With coaching and modeling from the teacher, families can easily implement a CICO chart at home. Teachers should share successes they've had with the chart and should show the family how it is utilized by including the child in the conversation and providing examples. The family should share challenging behaviors at home they would like to target with the CICO chart. The teacher can assist in making a chart that is aligned with the family's goals, making sure it is a contextual fit to increase consistency and effectiveness in implementing a behavior chart at home. Teaching families how to utilize a behavior reward chart creates consistency and collaboration between the home and school settings and increases the probability of challenging behavior improving. Families can implement these strategies at home and in the community to support their child's behavior and increase positive relationships between family and child and the family and school.

Home Visiting

Home visiting occurs in the home or at other familiar places the family frequents which gives the teacher a chance to observe the family and child in their natural activities. Home visiting is a way for children with, or at risk for, disabilities to receive special education services.

The study by Frey et al. (2021) sought to determine if children with challenging behavior receiving home visit intervention, in addition to school supports and interventions, would increase positive social emotional and behavior development over classroom interventions only. The authors compared two programs: First Steps Next (FSN) and homeBase (hB). FSN is implemented for about one month in the classroom and is used to help children with identified challenging behavior. FSN also encourages home- school communication to create collaboration and engagement in families. The original FSN program contained a home visiting aspect, but the newer version removed the home visit and now focuses more on the importance of home- school communication.

FSN includes three parts: “direct social skills instruction; the green card game; and home-school connections” (Frey et al., 2021, p. 4). Social skills instruction teaches children how to build positive relationships, guides the development of problem solving skills and increases self-regulation skills. The green card game includes a color- coded card which the teacher can use to provide a visual, giving immediate and direct feedback to a child for whether they would continue a behavior or if they should stop and think about their behavior and change it from inappropriate to appropriate. As described by Frey et al. (2021), the green card game can be used across the school day and can be incorporated during many different times of the day. The green card game should also include the other students in the classroom because all children should be reinforced for their positive behavior. The home- school communication consists of the family

receiving “daily feedback in the form of a note or phone call from the FSN coach, and materials focused on promoting positive parenting strategies” (p. 4). The daily feedback keeps families involved in what happens at school in order to create collaboration and cohesion between home and school settings.

hB consists of three to six one hour home visit sessions which occur over several months. “During the sessions, parents are encouraged to align their parenting practices consistent with one or more of the five universal principles of positive behavior support” (Frey et al., 2021, p. 4). These components are: “(a) establishing clear expectations; (b) directly teaching expectations; (c) reinforcing the display of expectations; (d) minimizing attention for minor inappropriate behaviors; and (e) establishing clear consequences for unacceptable behavior” (Frey et al., 2021, p. 4). hB includes four steps: discovering family values, evaluating current parenting practices, sharing feedback and providing or offering further “consultation, education and support” (Frey et al., 2021, p4). During hB, the teacher or coach evaluates the family’s level of motivation and dedication to making positive behavior changes in their child and family practices.

This study discussed results of the FSN intervention alone and results of the hB and FSN interventions used together and compared the results with children in a control group who were receiving no intervention. Results showed how children receiving FSN intervention had significant improvements in their adaptive behavior and social skills in school. The FSN intervention led to decreased challenging behavior in school and improved participation in academic activities. The FSN and hB interventions used together showed the aforementioned improvements in addition to significant decreases in teacher- student conflict (Frey et al., 2021, p. 12). The results of this study show the importance and effectiveness of utilizing home visiting strategies with the family in their home or during other activities. Home visiting is beneficial as a

tool to teach families how to work on personal goals they have for their child with challenging behavior and their family as a whole. Unfortunately, the study only showed significant changes in behavior in the school setting and did not immediately show positive changes in the home. The study aims to follow up with families six months after the intervention to check on improvements in the home.

Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) and Stepping Stones Triple P (SSTP)

Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) is a parenting support program for preventing challenging behavior and emotional challenges in young children and teenagers. Stepping Stones Triple P (SSTP) is a variation of Triple P designed for families with children who have disabilities and high levels of challenging behavior. SSTP is used to teach parents the skills to gain confidence in managing their child's challenging behavior. Shapiro et al. (2014) and Farris et al. (2020) both explain how SSTP is a program which includes 10 individual sessions with the family and consists of interviewing the family to determine areas in which their child presents challenging behavior and factors which may trigger behavior. Professionals share results from the interviews and present different parenting strategies for effectively reinforcing positive behavior and managing challenging behavior. The professional will also observe the parents implementing the strategies and present ways the family can use these strategies in different settings. Depending on the severity of a child's behavior, there are options for how to receive parenting training from SSTP. If a child's behavior is less severe, there is an option for group sessions in addition to home visits. If a child has more severe challenging behavior, most sessions are completed within the home with a trained SSTP professional.

Some parenting strategies covered in the SSTP program include promoting social, emotional and language skills, building independence and increasing problem solving skills.

(Shapiro et al., 2014, pp. 2963-2964). Other strategies include teaching parents how to decrease challenging behaviors, maintain positive behavior changes and create a positive parent- child relationship (Farris et al., 2020, p. 4). Research by Farris et al. (2020), Hieneman and Fefer (2017), and Shapiro et al. (2014) on SSTP and Triple P has shown positive results in decreasing challenging behavior in children. The research has also shown positive impacts on parenting practices overall including parenting styles, moods towards challenging behavior and improved confidence using positive behavior strategies. SSTP improves and strengthens the parent- child relationship and overall well- being of the family as a whole.

Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

PCIT is a program used to train parents of children ages three to eight who display challenging behavior. Shapiro et al. (2014) and Zlomke and Jeter (2020) discuss how PCIT focuses on improving parent and child relationships and changing the way challenging parent-child interactions typically occur. These improvements and changes happen during in person coaching sessions. Zlomke and Jeter (2020) explain the goals for PCIT as: “enhancing the quality of the parent–child relationship, reducing child behavior problems while increasing in pro-social behaviors, improving parenting skills, and decreasing parenting stress” (p. 2042). During PCIT, families are taught skills to promote the formation of secure and positive parent-child relationships. Parents also learn strategies to “increase pro-social behaviors and decrease problematic behaviors” in their children (Zlomke & Jeter, 2020, p. 2042). Families are taught to control the environment to decrease antecedents (triggers) of challenging behavior and to have consistent and concrete expectations and consequences for challenging behavior.

Zlomke and Jeter (2020) describe the two phases of PCIT. The first phase is Child-Directed Interaction (CDI) and the goal is to improve the parent- child relationship through

positive parenting and increased positive child social skills. Parents are coached during CDI in ways to “effectively ignore attention- seeking behavior, provide positive attention for appropriate behavior, and to avoid using criticism, commands, and questions during a 5-min “special time” play” (Zlomke & Jeter, 2020, p. 2042). Families are also coached in “providing responsive verbalizations, including reflections, behavioral descriptions, and labeled praises” (Zlomke & Jeter, 2020, p. 2042). The second phase, Parent Directed Interaction (PDI), focuses on setting limits and increasing consistency in follow through of parent responses and directions. During this phase, parents are coached in ways to “give direct, age-appropriate commands and to provide consistent verbal reinforcement for child compliance. Parents are also taught a “compliance sequence” to utilize in response to a child’s noncompliance with parental commands” (Zlomke & Jeter, 2020, p. 2042).

Both Zlomke and Jeter (2020) and Hieneman and Fefer (2017) explain how parents are coached in real time to increase the parent child relationship through new, learned behavior skills until the child and family have mastered these skills and interactions. Coaching can happen during direct observations of the family and child where the coach provides feedback in real time. Coaching can also take place where the coach observes the family from a different area/room and provides feedback through technology by using headphones.

Incredible Years (IY)

Incredible Years (IY) is a program which consists of parenting classes in addition to teacher trainings for classroom strategies. The IY parenting program focuses on helping families build positive parent and child interactions (Masiran et al., 2022), promoting the development of social competence and reducing aggressive behavior (Morpeth et al., 2017). The IY parenting program also focuses on building a support network for the family which has been shown to

increase positive communication in the family and increase parent self- confidence (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017). IY promotes interactions between the parents and child which are supportive and reinforce positive behavior and also prevent negative and disruptive behavior.

The parenting program is a 12-14 week collaborative group based model and typically consists of 10-14 parents and meets weekly (Gardner & Leijten, 2017, p. 99). The collaborative component of IY promotes parents finding skills they use that work effectively in managing their child's behavior. IY empowers families to create goals and behavior strategies which will be compatible with their family's needs. Food, childcare and at times, transportation, are provided to families who participate in the parenting program (Gardner & Leijten, 2017, p. 99).

Morpeth et al. (2017), states how there are multiple goals of the IY parenting program.

The goals are to:

increase parents' positive communication skills, such as the use of praise and positive feedback to children, and reduce the use of criticism and unnecessary commands;
improve parents' limit-setting skills by replacing smacking and other negative physical behaviors with non-violent discipline techniques and by promoting positive strategies such as ignoring the child's behavior, allowing for logical consequences, providing re-direction and developing problem-solving and empathy skills; improve parents' problem-solving skills and anger management; and increase family support networks (p. 145).

Gardner and Leijten (2017) and Morpeth et al. (2017) explain how IY classes consist of presentations from IY instructors, opportunities for practicing new strategies and participating in activities individually and within small groups of parents, role playing and problem solving discussions based on parenting videos. Homework is also given to parents to practice the newly

learned strategies for managing their child's behavior and implementing positive parenting skills. Both Shapiro et al. (2014) and Morpeth et al. (2017) describe how their research found the IY program is beneficial for both parents and children. Results show a decrease in young children's challenging behavior and improvements in peer and family relationships. Parents were reported to increase their parenting skills and reduce negative parenting techniques.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a tool used for "supporting adaptive behavior and addressing behavior challenges" (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017, p. 2655). PBS is often used in school and childcare settings, but families can implement PBS in the home, too. Joseph et al. (2021) and Hieneman and Fefer (2017) explain some of the main features of PBS as promoting lifestyle enhancement, developing support plans based on functional assessments, finding routines to naturally embed plans and providing support via collaborative relationships between the family and professional. Lifestyle enhancement includes improving the family's quality of life through "a focus on daily routines that are valued by families, improved family interaction, and increased safety/physical well-being for all family members" (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017, p. 2659). PBS promotes families gaining strong support systems which can include members of the family, friends, teachers, therapists and service providers.

Assessment based interventions involve completing a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to determine the function of a child's challenging behavior, or why the behavior continues to occur (Fettig et al., 2013). It is important to have collaboration between the family and professional in order to complete the necessary assessments. Data gathered from the assessments are collected through interviews, records review and direct observations across settings. Families should share challenging routines of the day with their child and identify most challenging

behaviors for which the family would like to set goals. Once the data collected show a pattern of behavior, including the antecedent (what happens before the behavior occurs), behavior, and consequence (what happens directly after the behavior occurs), families and professionals will create a plan, using PBS, to decrease the child's challenging behavior.

Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Families (PTR-F) is a strategy within PBS and includes determining which antecedents to prevent, finding the functions of the challenging behavior and teaching positive behaviors to replace challenging behavior, and consequences or ways to reinforce behavior. Prevention strategies are used to decrease challenging behavior in young children by utilizing proactive, rather than reactive, strategies. Some strategies explained by Hieneman and Fefer (2017) are "using social stories, providing choices, increasing proximity to the parent, pre-teaching rules, modeling and prompting appropriate play behaviors, teaching self-monitoring, a reward choice menu, and parent attention and praise" (p. 2662).

Fettig et al. (2013) and Chai and Lieberman- Betz (2016) explain how teaching positive behavior replacement skills is beneficial because parents and professionals can help young children learn how to communicate their needs in a more effective way, with support, which leads to a decrease in challenging behavior. Replacement skills can also include teaching a child new skills they may not know so they can participate in activities. Positive reinforcement is crucial in the process in decreasing challenging behavior. Positive reinforcement should be immediate when the child is engaging in a targeted positive behavior and should be descriptive so the child knows what they did appropriately. Immediate and descriptive reinforcement and feedback increases the likelihood of the appropriate behavior continuing.

When PBS is centered around the needs of the family, collaborative family and professional partnerships are created. When teachers offer support and communicate regularly

with families about which PBS strategies are working in the school setting and how they can implement strategies at home, there is consistency between the two settings (Chai & Lieberman-Betz, 2016). When families are involved in the PBS process, they are more likely to effectively implement and maintain the intervention strategies (Joseph et al., 2021). To make sure families will implement the plan, the professional and family need to find routines in the day that are natural, to embed opportunities for learning and practicing PBS plans (Chai & Lieberman- Betz, 2016; Fettig & Barton, 2014; Sawyer et al., 2015). Finding natural routines to embed the strategies ensures a contextual fit for the family. Features of effective PBS practices include “defining specific skills to teach; arranging settings to promote independence and success; modeling, prompting, and shaping behavior; and using differential reinforcement to establish and maintain skills over time” (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017, p. 2659). According to research by Joseph et al. (2021), PBS for the family has many positive long- term outcomes including decreased parental stress levels, confidence in parenting skills and more positive outlooks for the future. PTR-F and PBS are each strategies families can be coached in, and the learned and implemented strategies can reduce challenging behavior across settings and routines.

Behavior Skills Training

According to Sawyer et al. (2015), Behavior Skills Training (BST) is another strategy parents can be taught to promote the generalization of a child’s newly learned behavior skills. BST focuses on children learning new skills through following instructions, modeling positive behavior, participating in role plays and providing feedback. BST trains families on three parenting skills which are strategies similar to behavior strategies utilized in early childhood settings. Each skill incorporates two steps. The three skills are Use Reinforcement, Pivot and Redirect- Use Reinforcement.

Use Reinforcement was defined as (1) telling the child what behavior was observed; and (2) providing a consequence contingent on the occurrence of a targeted appropriate behavior. Pivot was defined as (1) saying and doing nothing in response to the behavior; and (2) providing a consequence when the child stopped engaging in the targeted inappropriate behavior. Redirect-Use Reinforcement was defined as (1) getting within arm's length of the child, interrupting the inappropriate behavior, and redirecting the child to an appropriate alternative behavior; and (2) providing a consequence when the child stopped engaging in the targeted inappropriate behavior (Sawyer et al., 2015, pp. 266- 267).

When children are engaging in challenging behavior it is important for the family, and other providers, to view the behavior as an opportunity to practice implementing these new skills in effective ways. Families should be coached in ways to use these skills in their natural environment. In addition to these skills, families are taught to use praise and provide their child with breaks from task demands if their behavior becomes more escalated.

Chapter 3: Summary

Families of children with challenging behavior often face many obstacles. Collaboration and coaching between the family and educator are important to create in order to improve a child's challenging behavior across settings. Research has shown how the family system as a whole is impacted by challenging behavior in ways including overall stress, less participation in activities, having guilt and frustration around their child's behavior, isolation and feelings of judgment from others, having low confidence when it comes to managing behavior, difficulties finding and keeping childcare, and difficulties seeking assistance and support.

The parent-child relationship quality is crucial in helping children learn how to understand and regulate their emotions through guidance from a parent (Kerr et al., 2021). Mothers and fathers differ in their parenting roles, but both play large roles in encouraging positive child development. Children need their caregivers to be responsive and nurturing from the beginning stages of life. Negative interactions between parents and children can cause more dysregulation and challenging behavior (Fettig & Ostrosky, 2014).

Collaboration with families to teach positive parenting strategies and to build a relationship between home and school is important to establish. Families need to be empowered as members of the team to improve challenging behavior (Fettig et al., 2013; Fettig & Ostrosky, 2014; Kuhn et al., 2017; McLaughlin et al., 2012).

Once collaboration and effective communication are established, professionals can begin coaching families on strategies to implement to decrease challenging behavior by using intervention plans. Coaching consists of creating goals and intervention plans together with the family based on the needs of the family and difficult routines. Coaching also consists of observing the family implementing strategies, and providing supportive and corrective feedback

from the observation (Fettig & Barton, 2014; An et al., 2019). Coaches should model the correct ways to implement strategies effectively.

There are a number of strategies which can be implemented across home and school settings alike. CICO is an intervention which involves using a chart as a behavior reward system for positive reinforcement. The chart creates a visual for the child to further increase their understanding by using stickers or other drawn symbols when the targeted behavior is observed. Teachers can assist in making a chart based on the needs of the family and difficult routines at home and should model how to use the chart and implement strategies working in the early childhood setting (Green, 2018). CICO is effective because it provides visual feedback to the child and creates a relationship between the child and teacher, home and school, and the parent and child.

Home visiting is a strategy which heavily involves the family in creating goals for decreasing challenging behavior. Home visiting is also a way for professionals to provide feedback to families as the professional is able to directly observe and educate the family (Frey et al., 2021). Triple P and SSTP are programs for parents to attend when they have a child with challenging behavior. The goals of SSTP include increasing parent confidence in behavior management, helping the family understand what triggers challenging behavior and how to prevent it, promoting positive parent- child relationships, and maintaining positive behavior changes (Farris et al., 2020; Shapiro et al., 2014).

PCIT focuses on improving the relationship between the parent and child through in-person coaching sessions (Shapiro et al., 2014; Zlomke & Jeter, 2020). Families are taught skills to strengthen the parent- child relationship, prevent triggers to challenging behavior and are taught how to maintain consistent expectations and consequences for challenging behavior.

Parents are provided feedback during the coaching sessions while they are implementing new skills and strategies (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017; Zlomke & Jeter, 2020). IY is a program parents can attend which focuses on building positive parent- child relationships and teaching ways to reinforce positive behavior and prevent negative behavior. IY also offers support to families through group parenting sessions and has been shown to increase communication and confidence in parenting skills (Hieneman & Fefer, 2017).

PBS can be implemented at school, childcare and in the home. PBS includes the family participating in assessments which are then used to guide creating goals to decrease a child's challenging behavior. Children must be taught different behaviors to replace the challenging behavior, in order to decrease challenging behavior (Chai & Lieberman- Betz, 2016; Fettig et al., 2013). PBS also includes immediate positive reinforcement, whenever possible, to show the child what they did appropriately. BST is a strategy for training parents on three skills to decrease challenging behavior. Families are taught to reinforce behavior through: specific feedback and providing a consequence when the target behavior occurs; ignore the behavior and provide a consequence when the child is engaging in challenging behavior; and interrupting challenging behavior and redirecting the child to an appropriate behavior and providing a consequence when the child stops engaging in the inappropriate behavior (Sawyer et al., 2015).

Chapter 4: Discussion and Recommendations

Challenging behavior can be complicated to change without the necessary resources and support. Families, classrooms and young children are affected. Challenging behavior impacts many parts of the family system, including feelings of isolation, stress, and overall emotional wellbeing. Families also report difficulty finding resources and having effective strategies to manage and prevent. Effective and consistent coaching, communication and collaboration between home and school can create positive change in young children with challenging behavior. Teachers can provide reward systems and visually embedding schedules for families to use. I recently began my sixth year of teaching and am already starting to build relationships, problem solve with families, and will be available to do this throughout the year. I will also provide materials when needed and teach families how to utilize these resources effectively.

Through my research, I found home visiting has mixed results on effectiveness, however, children who receive special education services before they are of school age benefit greatly from professionals home visiting. Because of this, I would recommend school districts allow time for early childhood special education teachers to have regular home visits with children who display challenging behavior to offer support and coaching in the home. I believe this is beneficial because it is helpful to see the natural environment of a child so the professional can help problem solve and offer suggestions and modeling to the parents. In addition to making goals for school, it is also important to work with the family to make goals to work on at home. Future research is needed on the effectiveness of home visiting with young children with challenging behavior.

Another recommendation is to provide more professional development to teachers on coaching families, how to work with families who are less receptive to assistance and those who

have young children with challenging behavior. It would be beneficial to have ongoing trainings and discussions on these topics where teachers share real life stories and offer suggestions to their peers for how to interact with families. Another training could be based on effective listening skills to use with parents of children with challenging behavior and other disabilities, to be the best support for the family and form a collaborative partnership. Early childhood settings should have professionals available to assist families with resources. Early childhood programs should make teachers aware of resources to guide a family to, so they can access necessary supports outside of school.

One way I currently encourage home and school connection and collaboration is through universal PBS. The preschool program I am part of expects teachers to implement PBS strategies in the classroom which include giving “warm fuzzies” to our students. Warm fuzzies are pom poms to fill a jar, stickers and “tickets” parents can send to school to reward children at school for having positive behavior at home. If parents have access to learning PBS strategies, and they implement consistently, positive behavior changes can happen. The consistency between home and school is crucial to see changes in behavior across different settings.

In my current and future practice, I am excited to use CICO with some students and families. As a teacher, it can seem daunting to implement strategies consistently and with fidelity especially when feeling overwhelmed in the classroom and not having the necessary support. More research on CICO and its effectiveness in the classroom and home setting is needed.

The SSTP program appears to be a great program and I believe it should be accessible to all families. SSTP has been proven to decrease challenging behavior and increase positive parenting skills, which helps to build and maintain a stronger parent- child relationship. Overall, more research is needed on effective strategies in the home to decrease challenging behavior.

References

- Adams, N. B., McGuire, S. N., Meadan, H., Martin, M. R., Terol, A. K., Haidar, B., & Fanta, A. S. (2021). Impact of challenging behavior on marginalized and minoritized caregivers of children with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 1-13*.
- An, Z. G., Horn, E., & Cheatham, G. A. (2019). Coaching to build parent competency in addressing challenging behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children, 22(4)*, 198- 213.
- Bureau, J-F., Trepiak, P., Deneault, A-A., Boulerice, K. (2021). Stability of father- and mother-child synchrony in a playful setting from preschool to middle childhood: Associations with children's behavior problems. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 57*, 167-177.
- Chai, Z., & Lieberman- Betz, R. (2016). Strategies for helping parents of young children address challenging behaviors in the home. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 48*, 186-194.
- Durand, V. M. (2021). Supporting families with children who display severe challenging behavior. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 46(3)* 199–207.
- Doubet, S. L., & Ostrosky, M. M. (2015). The impact of challenging behavior on families: I don't know what to do. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 34(4)*, 223-233.
- Doubet, S. L., & Ostrosky, M. M. (2016). Parents' experiences when seeking assistance for their children with challenging behaviors. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 36(3)*, 176-185.
- Farris, O., Royston, R., Absoud, M., Ambler, G., Barnes, J., Hunter, R., Kyriakopoulous, M., Oulton, K., Paliokosta, E., Panca, M., Paulauskaite, L., Poppe, M., Ricciardi, F., Sharma, A., Slonims, V., Summerson, U., Sutcliffe, A., Thomas, M., & Hassiotios, A. (2020). Clinical and cost effectiveness of a parent mediated intervention to reduce challenging

- behaviour in pre-schoolers with moderate to severe intellectual disability (EPICC-ID) study protocol: A multi-centre, parallel-group randomised controlled trial. *BMC Psychiatry*, 20(35), 1-11.
- Fettig, A., & Ostrosky, M. M. (2014). Functional assessment based parent intervention in reducing children's challenging behaviors: Exploratory study of group training. *Child Development Research*, 1-11.
- Fettig, A., & Barton, E. E. (2014). Parent implementation of function- based intervention to reduce children's challenging behavior: A literature review. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 34(1), 49-61.
- Fettig, A., Schultz, T. R., & Ostrowsky, M. M. (2013). Collaborating with parents in using effective strategies to reduce children's challenging behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children*, 16(1), 230-241.
- Fettig, A., Schultz, T. R., & Sreckovic, M. A. (2015). Effects of coaching on the implementation of functional assessment– based parent intervention in reducing challenging behaviors. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 17(3), 170-180.
- Frey, A. J., Small, J. W., Seeley, J. R., Walker, H. M., Feil, E. G., Lee, J., Lissman, D. C., Crosby, S., & Forness, S. R. (2021). First step next and homeBase: A comparative efficacy study of children with disruptive behavior. *Exceptional Children*, 1-18.
- Gardner, F., & Leijten, P. (2017). Incredible years parenting interventions: Current effectiveness research and future directions. *Current Opinions in Psychology*, 15, 99-104.
- Green, K. B. (2018). Implementing check- in/ check out within family childcare centers: An intervention for preschoolers with attention seeking behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children*, 21(4), 204-215.

- Hieneman, M., & Fefer, S. A. (2017). Employing the principles of positive behavior support to enhance family education and intervention. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 26*, 2655-2668.
- Joseph, J.D., Strain, P. S., & Dunlap, G. (2021). An experimental analysis of prevent-teach-reinforce for families (PTR-F). *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 41*(2), 115–128.
- Kerr, M. L., Rasmussen, H. F., Smiley, P. A., Buttitta, K. V., & Borelli, J. L. (2021). The development of toddlers' emotion regulation within the family system: Associations with observed parent-child synchrony and interparental relationship satisfaction. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 57*, 215-227.
- Kuhn, M., Marvin, C. A., & Knoche, L. L. (2017). In it for the long haul: parent–teacher partnerships for addressing preschool children's challenging behaviors. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 37*(2), 81–93.
- Masiran, R., Ibrahim, N., Awang, H., & Lim, P. Y. (2022). Changes in prosocial behaviors among children with behavioral problems following incredible years parenting program. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1-10.
- McLaughlin, T. W., Denney, M. K., Snyder, P. A., & Welsh, J. L. (2012). Behavior support interventions implemented by families of young children: Examination of contextual fit. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 14*(2), 87–97.
- Morpeth, L., Blower, S., Tobin, K., Taylor, R. S., Bywater, T., Edwards, R. T., Axford, N., Lehtonen, M., Jones, C., & Berry, V. (2017). The effectiveness of the incredible years pre-school parenting programme in the United Kingdom: A pragmatic randomised controlled trial. *Child Care in Practice, 23*(2), 141-161.

- Rose, J., & Nelson, L. (2018). A preliminary exploration of the challenging behaviour perception questionnaire: A measure of parental cognitions about challenging behaviour. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 43*(2), 223-231.
- Sawyer, M. R., Crosland, K. A., Miltenberger, R. G., & Rone, A. B. (2015). Using behavioral skills training to promote the generalization of parenting skills to problematic routines. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy, 37*(4), 261-284.
- Shapiro, C. J., Kilburn, J., & Hardin, J. W. (2014). Prevention of behavior problems in a selected population: Stepping stones triple P for parents of young children with disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 35*, 2958-2975.
- Zlomke, K. R., & Jeter, K. (2020). Comparative effectiveness of parent–child interaction therapy for children with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 50*, 2041-2052.