

**Making
Connections
PART B:
Relationships,
Temperament,
Hot Buttons &
Reframing**




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Technical Assistance Center
on Social Emotional Intervention
for Young Children
STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL INTERACTIONS

Some Key Assumptions


- **Challenging behavior is defined as:**
 - severe and persistent
 - interferes with learning and relationships
- Behaviors have a function.
- Children use challenging behavior when they don't have the social, emotional and/ or communication skills to engage in other (appropriate) ways.
- Behavior that persists over time is usually working (has a function) for the child. Even if the outcome is negative.



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**"Every child needs one person
who is crazy about him [her]."**

Uri Bronfenbrenner



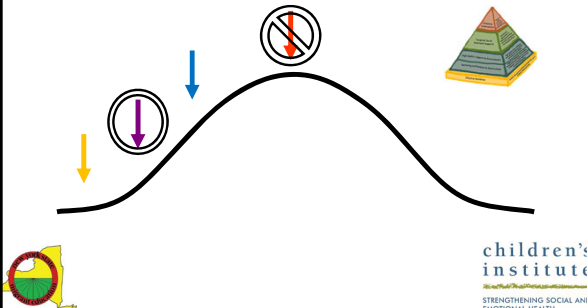
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"Every child needs one person who is not driven crazy by him or her."
-Ellen Leopold




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Identifying Teachable Moments




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Expectations (adult) -

Behavior capacity (children)=

Problem





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Temperament

- Appears to be biologically based
- Fairly constant over time
- Affects a child's reactions to other people and the environment

(Wittmer & Petersen, 2006 based on Thomas, Chess, Birch, Hertzog & Korn, 1963)





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Temperament Traits

- **Activity level** – always active or generally still
- **Biological rhythms** – predictability of hunger, sleep
- **Approach/withdrawal** – response to new situations
- **Mood** – tendency to react with positive or negative mood **Intensity of reaction** – energy or strength of emotion
- **Sensitivity** – comfort with levels of sensory information; sound, brightness of light, feel of clothing, new tastes
- **Adaptability** – ease of managing transitions or changes
- **Distractibility** – how easily attention is pulled from an activity
- **Persistence** – how long child continues with a difficult activity

Adapted with permission from Wittmer and Petersen, 2006



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Temperament Types


Flexible	Fearful	Feisty
Regular rhythms	Adapts slowly	Active
Positive mood	Withdraws	Intense
Adaptability		Distractible
Low intensity		Sensitive
Low sensitivity		Irregular
		Moody

**Activity: Fold into a booklet and complete
"Considering Temperament"**

On Page A, you will writing from your perspective; on pages B,C,D, you will be writing from the child's perspective. Choose a child that you would like to understand better.

Have the Temperament Traits visible to help you think about the child.






Activity: "Considering Temperament" Booklet



It may help to begin by thinking:

What the child is like?
How calm or active is she?
How does she respond to changes?
How does she deal with stimulation?
How does she let you know she likes something, dislikes something?



How Culture Influences our Behaviors

- Individual and culturally based beliefs, values and perceptions affect adult/ teacher attitudes about behaviors.
- Infants, toddlers, some preschoolers and older children don't come to care/ school knowing what behaviors are "appropriate".



Mean Age Expectation in Months for Milestone Attainment

	Caucasian	Puerto Rican	Filipino
Eat Solid Food	8.2	10.1	6.7*
Training Cup	12.0	17.1	21.9*
Utensils	17.7	26.5	32.4*
Finger Food	8.9	9.4	9.5
Wean	16.8	18.2	36.2*
Sleep by Self	13.8	14.6	38.8*
Sleep all Night	11.4	14.5	32.4*
Choose Clothes	31.1	44.2	33.1*
Dress Self	38.2	44.2	39.2
Play Alone	25.0	24.8	12.3*
Toilet Trained-Day	31.6	29.0	20.4*
Toilet Trained-Night	33.2	31.8	34.2

Carlson & Harwood (2000)

Behavioral Expectations of Two Groups of Mothers

	Korean-American Mothers	European-American Mothers
Believe parents and children should play together	54%	96%
Prefer children play with sex-typed toys (e.g., boys play with trucks)	71%	43%
Provide children with many chances to decide (e.g., give child choices)	11%	66%


Farver & Lee-Shin, 2000

ACTIVITY: Examining Attitudes about Challenging Behaviors

- What are your HOT BUTTONS?
- How do you they make you feel?
- What is your response?
What do you do or say?
- How does this impact your relationship with a child?...
With his/her family?





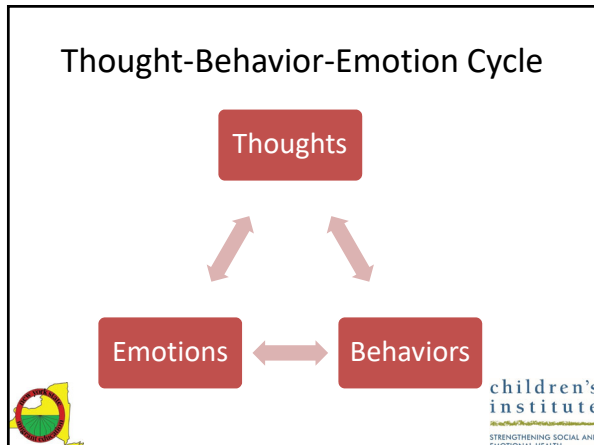
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Activity: In pairs, as a large group or individually, begin identifying and generating a list of your **HOT BUTTONS**. (These will obviously be personal.)


Next to the list of Hot Buttons, create a second list identifying your feeling(s) when the Hot Button occurs.





So, is this Really Important?

- ☐ Teachers who are stressed find it more difficult to provide praise, nurturance and structure within their classroom.
- ☐ Teachers who are stressed are more likely to use harsher discipline techniques.
- ☐ Students in classrooms where teachers are stressed are more likely to act out and demonstrate higher levels of stress themselves.




Managing Personal Stress: *Thought Control*

Upsetting Thoughts
"That child is a monster.
This is getting ridiculous.
He'll never change."

"I'm sick of putting out
fires!"

Calming Thoughts
"This child is testing to see
where the limits are. My job is
to stay calm and help him learn
better ways to behave."

"I can handle this. I am in
control. They have just learned
some powerful ways to get control.
I will teach them more appropriate
ways to behave."




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ACTIVITY: Reframing


If you change your mental "script," you can have different feelings about a behavior, and why the child does it.

OLD script...
She's clings from the moment she gets here until she leaves.

NEW script...
I wonder if she...




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Reframing Activity: Practice asking "I wonder if..."

Take your "hot buttons" and state the facts of the [challenging] behavior(s) in a non-judgmental way, e.g., "She rarely makes eye contact." Then brainstorm possible reasons. Begin with, "I wonder if she [he]..."

Stay curious and think of as many reasons as possible. Try not to solve the behaviors; restate them, gain insight, and make them— and your feelings about them— more manageable!



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We need to focus on *relationships* and *teaching children what to do* in place of the challenging behavior...

And that often means changing our feelings, our thoughts... And what we say or do!



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