

# Natural Allies Session Handout

## ***Children with Challenging Behavior: Resources for Reflective Thinking***

**Facilitator:** Linda Brault

### **Objectives:**

- Participants will explore specific tools and resources adults can use to engage in reflective thinking about challenging behavior when:
  - Determining program elements
  - Examining relationships, values and emotions
  - Choosing and implementing intervention strategies
  - Promoting positive behavior in individual children

### **I. Setting the Stage for Reflective Thinking about Behavior**

- Handout #1: *Opening Activity*
- Handout #2: *Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Position Statement on Interventions for Challenging Behavior* ([www.dec-sped.org/positions/chalbeha.html](http://www.dec-sped.org/positions/chalbeha.html))
- Handout #3: *Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Concept Paper on the Identification of and Intervention with Challenging Behavior* ([www.dec-sped.org/positions/challenging\\_behavior.html](http://www.dec-sped.org/positions/challenging_behavior.html))

### **II. Taking a Broad View of Behavior**

- Challenging Behavior is in the eye of the beholder. What contributes to Challenging Behavior?
- See Handout #4 *The BRAULT Behavior Checklist (Behavior: **R**eflect, **A**nalyze, **U**nderstand, **L**earn, **T**ry something new)*

### **III. Four Major Contributors to Challenging Behavior**

- See Handout #5: *Children with Challenging Behavior: Resources for Reflective Thinking* (available in DRAFT form)
- *Reframing Discipline* video series highlights a reflective approach to challenging behaviors. (Video Clip from “Doing the Groundwork”)

#### A. Program Elements

- Children with disabilities or other special needs (including challenging behavior) are like canaries in the mines – When program elements do not follow recommended practices, they will not be successful in the setting.
- How can teachers better understand the link between curriculum, environment and behavior?

#### B. General Relationships

- Everything centers around relationships – with children, families, staff.
- Values, beliefs, culture, language and professional boundaries all play a role in understanding behavior.

#### C. Strategies with a Child in Mind

- Knowledge of group management techniques is crucial. Simple activities can help participants see the importance of attention to these strategies.
- Prevention is often the best intervention and most strategies can be used in this way.
- Problem-solving strategies can lead to development of positive behavior plans.

#### D. Child Characteristics

- Development, temperament and learning styles all influence behavior.
- Behavior is communication. What is the challenging child trying to tell us?
- Other factors can contribute to challenging behavior.
- Observation and communication with families are important skills to develop.

### IV. Exploring the Resources

#### A. In the Resource Library

- *Discipline: Teaching Limits with Love* (I Am Your Child, 2000)
- *Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies for Challenging Behaviours in Early Childhood Environments* (Canadian Child Care Federation, n.d.)
- *Painting a Positive Picture: Proactive Behavior Management* (Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, 1994)

- *Samantha* (Devault, Krug, Turnbull, & Horner, 1994)
- *So This is Normal Too? Teachers and Parents Working Out Developmental Issues in Young Children* (Hewitt, 1995)

B. On the Web

- OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (<http://pbis.org/>)

C. Small group activity and sharing

## V. Closing Thoughts and Evaluation

- How a caregiver views the child influences how the caregiver IS with the child which influences who the child becomes.

## VI. References

Canadian Child Care Federation. (n.d.) *Meeting the challenge: Effective strategies for challenging behaviours in early childhood environments*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Devault, G., Krug, C., Turnbull, A. P., & Horner, R. (1994). *Samathana*. Lawrence, KS: Beach Center on Families and Disability .

Educational Productions. (1998). *Reframing discipline. Unit 1: Doing the groundwork*. Beaverton, OR: Author.

Hewitt, D. (1995). *So this is normal too? Teachers and parents working out developmental issues in young children*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

I Am Your Child. (2000). *Discipline: Teaching limits with love*. Beverly Hills, CA: Author.

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. (1994). *Painting a positive picture: Proactive behavior management*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

## Handout #1

# Children with Challenging Behavior: *Resources for Reflective Thinking*

Welcome! Please read over the following words and then complete the Opening Activity before we begin. Write your responses below.

### **WORDS AND DEFINITIONS TO PONDER FROM WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY**

**REFLECT:** To think quietly or calmly; to express a thought or opinion resulting from meditation or reflection.

**WONDER:** To have doubt mingled with curiosity; to want to know; to be seized or filled with wonder; to be amazed, to marvel.

**REGARD:** To look at attentively; to hold in affection and respect. (e.g. to keep the relationship in the forefront while you work towards understanding and resolution.)

**EMPATHY:** Being in tune with another person; the projection of one's own personality into the personality of another in order to understand him better.

**UNDERSTANDING:** To grasp the meaning, import, intention or motive of; to perceive clearly and fully the nature of.

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## *Opening Activity*

Think of a person (older than you or an adult) from your youth who "held you in high regard". It may have been a child care provider, teacher, relative, coach, employer, older friend...

- What was it that they did that let you know they held you in affection and respect? What were the observable actions?
  
- What are some words that come to mind when you think of the relationship you had with them?

**BRAULT Behavior Checklist**  
 (Behavior: Reflect, Analyze, Understand, Learn, Try something new)

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**Complete this checklist to see what part of the Resource Guide might be of most help to you right now. Consider each section and answer every question. This should give you an idea of where to start.**

*For each question, think of your situation and check to answer **Yes, Maybe/Partly, No, or Do not know what the question means.** If you check any answer other than **Yes**, you may want to check the page reference listed for more information.*

<b>Program Elements</b>	Yes	Maybe/ Partly	No	Don't Know	Page reference
Is your curriculum challenging, interesting and developmentally appropriate?					9-10
Does your curriculum build on what you know about how children learn (child development)?					10
Do you provide a balance of active and quiet activities appropriate for the ages of children in your care?					12
Do you provide a balance of indoor and outdoor activities?					12
Are expectations for independence in eating, toileting and other self-help skills appropriate for the children in your care?					13
Have you carefully examined the following elements of the <b>physical</b> environment:					15
➤ Group size for all activities?					15-17
➤ How the room is organized and arranged?					15-17
➤ Variety and adequate numbers of toys and materials?					15-17
Have you carefully examined the <b>sensory</b> environment? (Auditory/sound, visual/color/clutter, tactile/hard/soft)					17-18
Have there been any changes in your setting? (changes in staff, curriculum, room arrangement, children in the group, etc.)					18

*To be used in conjunction with “Children with Challenging Behavior: Resources for Reflective Thinking” by Brault & Brault.*

## BRAULT Behavior Checklist

(Behavior: Reflect, Analyze, Understand, Learn, Try something new)

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*For each question, think of your situation and check to answer **Yes, Maybe/Partly, No, or Do not know what the question means.** If you check any answer other than **Yes**, you may want to check the page reference listed for more information.*

<b>General Relationships</b>	Yes	Maybe/ Partly	No	Don't Know	Page reference
Do you enjoy your interactions with the children in your care?					21
Do you have a positive, respectful relationship with most of the families of the children in your care?					21
Do you have a positive, respectful relationship with most of the staff members in your classroom or program (if any)?					21
Do you know what your temperamental characteristics and learning style preferences are and how these influence your work with children?					22-24
Do you know exactly which behaviors <i>you</i> find most challenging and why?					26
Have you ever carefully examined your values and beliefs about behavior, discipline and expectations for children?					27
Is your cultural and language background the same as the children and families in your care?					28-30
Do you have activities outside of your work with children that provide you with fulfillment and satisfaction?					30-31

**BRAULT Behavior Checklist**  
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*For each question, think of your situation and check to answer **Yes, Maybe/Partly, No, or Do not know what the question means.** If you check any answer other than **Yes**, you may want to check the page reference listed for more information.*

<b>Strategies with a Child in Mind</b>	Yes	Maybe/ Partly	No	Don't Know	Page reference
Do you have confidence in your knowledge of group management and guidance techniques such as using routines, natural & logical consequences and planning for transitions?					32-37
Do you focus on the prevention of behavior problems as your main strategy?					35
Do you have confidence that you and the other adults in the child's life have consistent expectations and ways to guide the child toward desired behavior?					36
Do you have a clear way to solve problems, including developing a plan of action to evaluate whether a solution you choose works?					37-42
Are you and the parent or family members communicating and sharing concerns in order to support the child?					42-43
Do you have opportunities to talk regularly with another knowledgeable adult about your work and your concerns?					44

## BRAULT Behavior Checklist

(Behavior: Reflect, Analyze, Understand, Learn, Try something new)

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*For each question, think of your situation and check to answer **Yes, Maybe/Partly, No, or Do not know what the question means**. If you check any answer other than **Yes**, you may want to check the page reference listed for more information.*

<b>Child Characteristics</b>	Yes	Maybe/ Partly	No	Don't Know	Page reference
Are you sure that the behavior you are observing is not normal for the child's age and developmental levels?					10, 46
Is it possible that the child is trying to communicate something through the behavior?					46
Have you considered the child's temperament (activity level, intensity of reactions, ability to adapt to new situations, regularity, mood, etc.) and how this plays out in behavior?					23
Have you considered the child's preferred learning styles and how this influences behavior?					24-25
Have you observed the child carefully to narrow down the specific behavior and when, where and how it occurs?					48-50
Have you explored whether the child needs to learn some new skills or replacement behaviors in order to change the behavior?					50
Have you considered whether the child understands the language you are using (either cultural or language differences)?					28-29
If there is a specific behavior that is challenging, do you know <b>why</b> the child engages in the behavior (the function or purpose of the behavior)?					33, 50
Have you considered additional individual differences that may be contributing to the behavior (disability, medical condition, changes in the home environment, recent stress or trauma)?					51-52