



Unlocking Your *Inner Detective Superpowers*:  
Embracing an Investigative Mindset for Understanding Behaviors That Challenge Us




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Growing Stronger Together  
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Our Time Together!




Discuss how *all* behaviors have meaning and are a form of communication.



Identify our *inner detective superpowers* for responding to behaviors that challenge us.



Explore strategies and resources to help us determine and respond to the meaning behind the behaviors.



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Behavior Communicates! Behavior Has Meaning!

We are trying to tell you something!







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Detective Work Starts Early







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Behavior Can Mean Many Things

"I want..."

"I don't want..."

Sensory

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Behavior Can Mean Many Things!

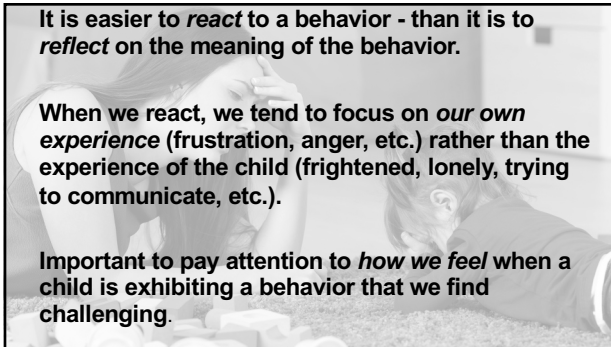



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**It is easier to *react* to a behavior - than it is to *reflect* on the meaning of the behavior.**

**When we react, we tend to focus on *our own experience* (frustration, anger, etc.) rather than the experience of the child (frightened, lonely, trying to communicate, etc.).**

**Important to pay attention to *how we feel* when a child is exhibiting a behavior that we find challenging.**



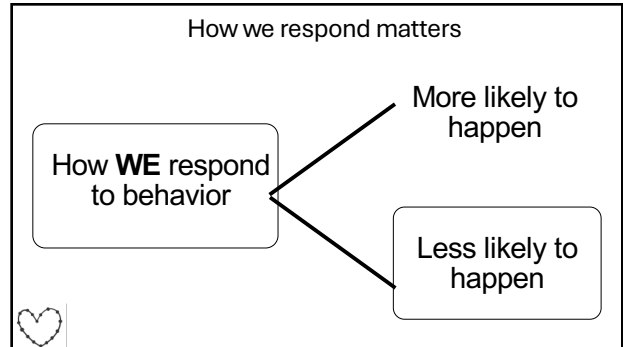
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How we respond matters

How **WE** respond to behavior

More likely to happen

Less likely to happen



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Mom says: "Kylie, it's time to go inside."

Kylie screams "No!" and starts crying.

Mom says: "Ok, you can have a few more minutes to play."

What did Kylie just learn?

That worked! I'll have to try that again!



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**What do we give attention to?**

Anything we give attention to, anything we emphasize in our experiences and interactions, creates new linking connections in the brain. Where attention goes, neurons fire. And where neurons fire, they wire or join together.

*Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson*

What if we are just giving our attention to the behavior that challenges us?



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**How We Respond to Behavior That Challenge Us**

- Reactive
 

Become aware of when and how you respond to behaviors that challenge you
- Proactive
 

Pause to reflect on your response

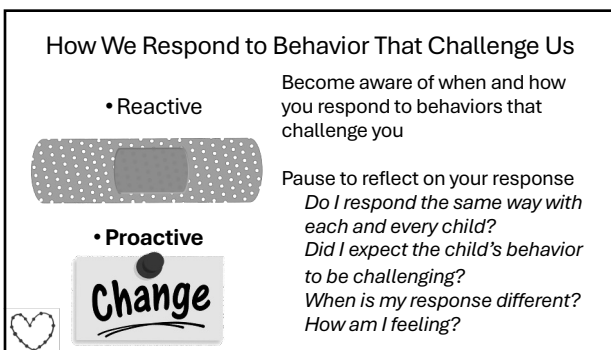
*Do I respond the same way with each and every child?*

*Did I expect the child's behavior to be challenging?*

*When is my response different?*

*How am I feeling?*

**Change**




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**Our Job!**


"When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's **our job** to share our calm. Not join their chaos."

L.R. Knost




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### What is Your Inner Detective Superpower?



1,2,3,4  
5,6,  
7,8,9,1  
0



Step 1: Tuck inside your coat and hide these three discs inside.



I can do this!  
I can do this!  
I can do this!

What helps you find your calm? What helps you wonder?"

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### Keep in Mind...

The most **powerful** tool we have for influencing behavior is the **RELATIONSHIP** we build with children or support families in having with their child .

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### Resources

**Emotional Piggy Bank**  
Fill up a child's "piggy bank" every day!

Think of all the ways you make connections with children as they go into their "emotional piggy bank".

I'm going to tell Hal how much he was missed and mean it!

I'm going to read Hal's favorite book.

I'm going to tell Hal's mom how he helped her when she had today.

Fill the Piggy Bank every day!

- Hal gets excited about everything we do!
- Hal loves to try to connect with adults and children

**HOT BUTTON!**

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### The Power of Encouragement with Positive Comments

What do you want to see less of?

What do you want to see more of?

Focus on the positive

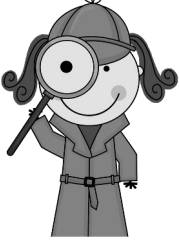
Behavior	Desired Behavior	Positive Encouragement and Feedback
Not listening	Follow directions	"Thank you for listening, Asha, and for putting your books away." (gives a hug)
Yelling	Use inside voice	"Wow, Jayden! You are using an inside voice. You are such a great big brother." (gives a high five)

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### Behavior Detective: Investigative Mindset

Look for clues:

- **BEFORE** the behavior
- What the child did or the **BEHAVIOR**
- **AFTER** the behavior ideas, Strategies, & Resources



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### Detective Work: Gather Clues

**ABC Observation Cards**

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence

**Support Planning Chart**

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Trigger	Behavior	Anticipating Consequences

Preventions: \_\_\_\_\_ New Skills: \_\_\_\_\_ New Responses: \_\_\_\_\_


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### Behavior Communicates

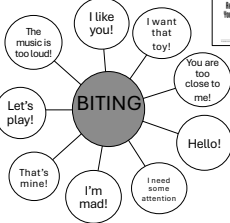
**Form (Behavior)**

**Biting!**


**Function (Meaning)**



That worked!  
Got my toy back!




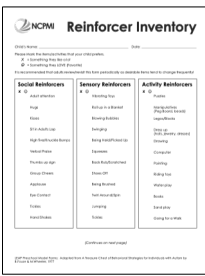
**MAD**




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### Resources











Positive Solutions for Families/challengingbehavior.org

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Co-Regulation  $\longleftrightarrow$  Self-Regulation

Age *doesn't* determine when a child is able to regulate. A child's experiences, development and temperament are key factors.

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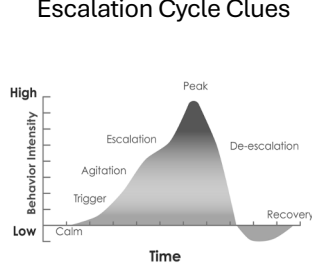
"He is fussy all the time! Help!"


When is he **NOT** fussy?



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### Escalation Cycle Clues





What makes it worse or intensifies the behavior for this child? (*what should someone NOT do*)

What helps this child calm down after the peak?

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Might be a new way of thinking!



**What you say...**

"No hitting your brother."

"Don't do that!"

"We don't cry when we don't get our wag."

"Stop running in the house."

**What your child hears...**

"If I can't hit my brother, maybe I should bite him?"

"Scream when I want a tog."

"Do that!"

"I don't know what you want me to do, so I'll keep crying"

"If I can't run, I'll jump!"



drbartonconsulting.com

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**What you said before...**

Don't do that!

Stop running in the house.

Don't scream when you want a toy.

No hitting your brother.

We don't cry when we don't get our way.

**What you can say instead...**

Remember, walking feet in the house.

I see you are upset. Do you want to keep playing or take a break?

Do you want the train or the blocks?

You can ask for a turn.

Tell me what to do!



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**Sign Language/Gesturing**

**BABY SIGNS**

A baby-sized introduction to signing with Sign Language

eat drink

more all done

Babysignlanguage.com



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**Think about the environment: Prevention**





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**Think about the Environment: Prevention**





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**What I Need...**

I need to know emotion words

I need strategies!

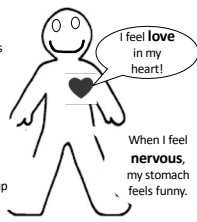
I need to know what different emotions feel like in my body

When I feel sad, my eyes cry.


When I feel angry, my fingers curl up really tight!

I feel love in my heart!

When I feel nervous, my stomach feels funny.




Jackson, 4 years old




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**Label Emotions**




You are so happy to have a dry diaper! Look at that big smile!


It's hard when Grandma leaves. You look sad. Let's figure out what will help you feel better. I can help you. Would a hug help?



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### Games and Songs

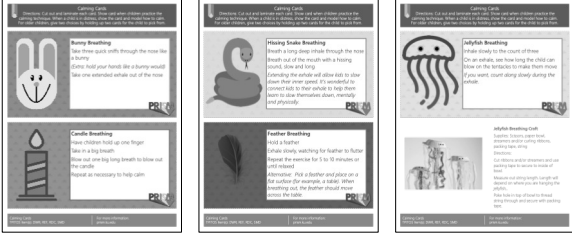
- Play different kinds of music and:
  - Do the **HAPPY** dance
  - Do the **SAD** dance
  - Do the **TIRED** dance
  - Do the **MAD** dance
  - Do the **SURPRISED** dance


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### Calming Cards



Prism.ku.edu



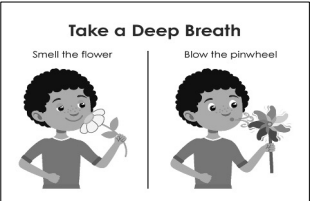
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### Pinwheels!

#### Take a Deep Breath

Smell the flower | Blow the pinwheel







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### Movement & Behavior

Jump like a kangaroo

**Jump like a kangaroo**



**Stomp like an elephant**

**Hop like a frog**

**Prance like a cat**

**Slither like a snake**

Let's stomp like an elephant to the car!


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### Movement & Behavior

**Animals**

**Emotions**





Happy



Flamingo

This is my happy flamingo dance!





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### It's ok to... hit, push, kick...


**Scavenger hunt:** Let's find all the things outside that are ok to:

**Hit** (flies with fly swatters, balls with bats, balloon hanging from a rope tied to a branch, bubbles in the air, beach balls, etc.)

**Push** (stroller, wagon, trucks, shovels into sand, swing, pegs into holes, push toys, etc.)

**Kick** (soccer ball, kick the can, kick down bowling pins, kick our feet when we are dancing; etc.)



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Time for breakfast!

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Prevention: First...Then

**First** | **Then**

**Breakfast** | **Dinosaurs**

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Hard Routines

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Listen to what you say: Expectations

**Be Gentle  
Gentle Hands**

**Calm Down  
Be quiet  
Inside Voice**

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First...Then Resource

challengingbehavior.org

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Classroom Practices

**5 Deposits for Every 1 Withdrawal**


Ideas, Strategies & Resources

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**Routine: Arrival**

**Routine within Routine:**  
 Cubbies  
**Wash Hands**  
 Sign In  
 Question of the Day  
 Table Time

**Routine within Routine within Routine:**  
 Turn on water  
 Get soap  
 Wash hands  
 Turn off water  
 Dry hands



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**Games Like Simon Says, Duck, Duck, Goose**

- Self-control
- Focus
- Remember rules
- Control their behavior

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**Expectations**

“Children are less likely to engage in challenging behavior when they know what to do, how to do it, and what is expected.”



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**Positive Descriptive Feedback**


NOTICE	COMMENT	CONNECT
	Sergio, you did a great job putting your markers away, washing your hands and going to the breakfast table.	Putting the markers back in the cup was being responsible.

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**Routines**

Large Group  
 Transitions  
 Centers  
 Bathroom  
 (Potty/Wash Hands)  
 Snack/Meals  
 Nap/Rest  
 Outdoor Play  
 Small Group  
 Computer or Device

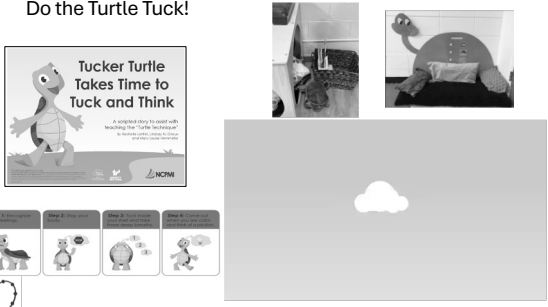
Getting Dressed/Undressed  
 Brushing Teeth  
 Centers  
 Bathroom (Potty/Wash Hands)  
 Snack/Meals  
 Taking a Bath  
 Bedtime/Nap  
 Play  
 Clean Up  
 Going Places  
 Shopping  
 Restaurants



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**Do the Turtle Tuck!**

Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think



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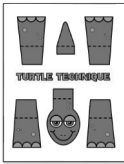




**Do the Turtle Tuck!**



**Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home**

A colorful story to assist with transitioning for "Turtle Tuck"!

**TURTLE TUCK**

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**Problem Solving in Action!**






**FISHING FOR SOLUTIONS**





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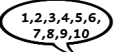
**When I am mad....**




**I can...**



**Do Wall Pushups**





**Count to 10**










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**Calm Down Area**



**Tip for Using**

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**Self-Regulation Requires...**

**Solutions**

Intentional Decision

I am NOT going to hit Jeremy because he wants my truck!

Play Together

Get a timer


+

Active Processes

Jeremy, let's play with the truck together!

→

Self-Regulation

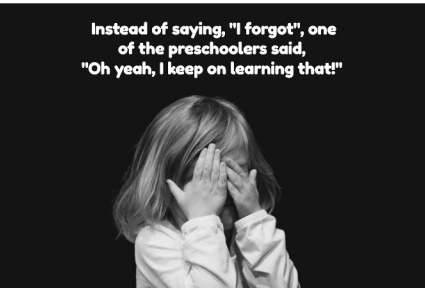



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**Yes!!!**

**Instead of saying, "I forgot", one of the preschoolers said, "Oh yeah, I keep on learning that!"**

**Mistaken Behavior**  
(Gartrell,

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**Remember!**

**When you see a child differently, you see a different child.**

S. Shank

PROBLEM FOCUSED	SOLUTION FOCUSED
bossy	→ natural leader, visionary
defiant	→ builds strong beliefs, bold, determined
demanding	→ knows what they want, outspoken
dramatic	→ expressive, passionate
fearful	→ cautious, careful
fussy	→ has strong preferences
hyperactive	→ energetic, enthusiastic, on the go
impulsive	→ spontaneous, instinctive
oppositional	→ advocates for a different perspective
rebellious	→ is finding their way
stubborn	→ persistent, determined, steadfast
talkative	→ enjoys communicating
tattletale	→ seeks justice, respects rules
overfocused	→ multitasks, pays attention to many things
wants attention	→ advocates for needs, seeks connection

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**When do we need more?**

Frequency –  
How often

Persistence –  
Continues over time

Intensity/  
Severity –  
Danger/How long it lasts

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So...What is your inner Detective Super Power?




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Just Breathe 1,2,3! You've got this!

THANK YOU!!!!



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