**VIRTUAL kit: RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS**

**Kit QT**

When children display challenging behavior, it’s easy to focus on the behavior itself and how inappropriate and uncomfortable it might be. Responding to the behavior is only half of the solution! Many times, challenging behavior can be mistaken as the child just being bad. It’s the child’s way of communicating to us that they don’t have the skills to handle this moment, they want your attention, or they want to avoid or escape a task/activity. Maybe it’s the big feelings that they are feeling – overly excited, tired, angry, scared, etc. Maybe they are being asked to do something that they are not developmentally ready to do such as waiting for extended moments or move through multiple transitions. Instead of just reacting to the behavior itself, it’s important that we step back and look at the WHOLE SITUATION. How we respond to children’s behavior is what makes management of behavior effective or ineffective.

Steps to work with challenging behaviors:

1. Make sure that you are calm and prepared to “see” the child, the whole child and not just the behavior.
2. Find the “why”. There’s always a why behind a behavior. (And, no, it’s not just the child being mean!!). It could be that they don’t have the social or emotional skills to handle this situation. Finding the why helps us to, not just respond to the behavior, but to help the child develop skills in the situation.
3. Make sure the child is ready for the teaching moment. Before trying to teach the child how to react in difficult situations, make sure that the child’s feelings are validated. For example, hitting is NOT appropriate, but the emotion that child feels IS! We need to make sure the child feels safe with us so that they can be prepared for this next step.
4. Tell the child WHAT TO DO. Your words should paint a picture of exactly what the child should do in the situation. For example, instead of telling a child “No! We don’t throw toys!”, you might say, “Oh! You want to play with \_\_\_\_. Let me show you some ways that we can use that toy.” or “You are wanting to throw? You can throw this bean ban into this bucket!”
5. Give the child choices. Many times, challenging behavior can evolve into a power struggle. The child needs to feel some sense of control but you need to keep them safe. Giving them choices helps redirect from the inappropriate behavior and give them appropriate behaviors to choose from. Keep it simple. Two choices are usually appropriate. (Note: A consequence is not a choice. It’s a consequence!)

**SHOW ME NOW – I NEED IT TOMORROW**

* [Practical Strategies for Implementing the Pyramid Model](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Program/strategies.html) – ideas, resources, and illustrations of strategies to promote young children’s social and emotional competence
* [Center for Inclusive Child Care – Tip Sheets: Development of Empathy](https://www.inclusivechildcare.org/sites/default/files/courses/swf/Development%20of%20Empathy.pdf) (.pdf)
* [Help Your Child Develop Self-Control](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/228-help-your-child-develop-self-control)
* [Tips on Helping Your Child Learn to Cooperate](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/222-tips-on-helping-your-child-learn-to-cooperate)

**WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE? (I HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME TO READ ABOUT THIS**

* [Guidance and Challenging Behaviors](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/guidance-and-challenging-behaviors)
* [Teaching Your Child to: Cooperate with Requests](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/teaching_cooperate.pdf) (.pdf)
* [Understanding Your Child’s Behavior: Reading Your Child’s Cues from Birth to Age 2](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/reading_cues.pdf) (.pdf)

**WHAT DOES THE ECRC HAVE ON THIS TOPIC**

Below are selected resources from the Early Childhood Resource Center. For additional resources go to the KITS website and access the Early Childhood Resource Center catalog by clicking on ECRC, or call (620) 421-6550 ext. 1638 for personal assistance.

Bailey, Becky. (2001). Conscious Discipline 7 basic skills for brain smart strategies to empower

teachers & students. Oviedo, FL. Loving Guidance.

Bryson, Tina; Siegel, Daniel. (2014) No-drama discipline: the whole-brain way to calm the

chaos and nurture your child’s developing mind. New York. Bantam.

Bryson, Tina; Siegel, Daniel. (2011). The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to

nurture your child’s developing mind. New York. Delacorte Press.

**HOW CAN I FIND TRAINING/TRAINING MATERIALS ON THIS TOPIC?**

* [**KCCTO Courses**](https://kccto.org/shop/)
  + [Behavior and Guidance of Young Children](https://kccto.org/course/behavior-and-guidance-of-young-children/)
  + [Guiding Infants and Toddlers: Understanding Behaviors](https://kccto.org/course/guiding-infants-and-toddlers-understanding-behaviors/)
* **KCCTO-KITS ITSN Community Based Training** (located on the [KITS website](http://kskits.org/))
  + Discipline with the Whole Child in Mind
  + Understanding Children’s Behavior as Communication
* Visit these links for collaborative training calendars:
  + [KCCTO Training Calendar](https://kccto.org/shop/)
  + KITS Training Calendar (located on the [KITS website](http://kskits.org/))

To inquire about a specific class, contact the KCCTO office 785-532-7197 or visit KCCTO.org

**IF YOU THOUGHT THIS WAS HELPFUL YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:**

[Executive Function & Self-Regulation](http://kskits.org/sites/kskits.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/Executive_Function_2019.pdf) (.pdf)

[What to Do About Biting](http://kskits.org/sites/kskits.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/Whattodoaboutbiting%282017%29.pdf) (.pdf)

**WHAT IF I STILL NEED HELP?**

You may request technical assistance from the KCCTO-KITS Infant Toddler Network Specialists by calling the KCCTO office. Please the most recent office phone number on the [KCCTO website](https://kccto.org/).

**EVALUATION**

Please take a minute to complete a brief survey on the Virtual Kits page to let us know what you think about this virtual kit, and what other topics you would like to see addressed in the future.

**REFERENCES**

Bailey, Becky. (2001). Conscious Discipline 7 basic skills for brain smart strategies to empower

teachers & students. Oviedo, FL. Loving Guidance.

Bryson, Tina; Siegel, Daniel. (2014) No-drama discipline: the whole-brain way to calm the

chaos and nurture your child’s developing mind. New York. Bantam.