

Finding Calm in the Storm

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A *Trauma-Informed* approach “emphasizes supports that help children...

- manage stress,
- avoid trauma triggers, and
- build positive relationships with teachers and peers”

(Craig, 2015)

Our de-escalation strategies have to be rooted in helping children feel safe.

Connecting with Families

- “In all of my years of research, I have never seen a child expelled when the parents and teachers like each other.”

- Walter Gilliam

- “We are so concerned and I know you must be, too.”

- Jessica Jacobs to a parent

Agenda

(Based on metaphor for walking a tightrope)

- Preparing the line
- Checking the conditions
- Walking the line

Preparing the Line

What can we do to create an environment in which each child walks in each day believing she has the potential to thrive (and be safe and nurtured and respected and loved)?

Five Critical Classroom Practices

- Positive climate
- Consistent and predictable environment
- Routines within routines within routines
- Consistent and developmentally appropriate behavior expectations
- Intentional teaching of social and emotional skills

Adapted from *Prevent Teach Reinforce for Young Children* by Dunlap, Wilson, Strain, & Lee

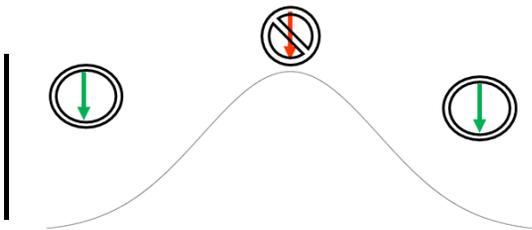
Intentional Teaching of Stress Management/Calming Skills

- ▶ Identify, label and acknowledge feelings
- ▶ Teach general calming/coping strategies to all children
 - Deep breathing (hand on tummy, counting, apps, pictures)
 - Finding “Be-by-myself” spaces
 - Manipulating sensory materials/activities
 - Practicing yoga
- ▶ For individual children, identify the trigger for the intense behavior and prevent the trigger if possible or teach coping strategies if trigger can't be prevented

Teaching Strategies

- Modeling with self-talk
- Demonstrating with puppets and role plays
- Discussing with pictures and stories
- Practicing
- Acknowledging efforts and attempts

When to teach calming strategies:



Checking Conditions



Instead of asking:
“What’s wrong with this child?!?!”

We could begin by asking:

- What might have happened to this child?
- What demands/activities/situations seem to be the most and least likely triggers for the difficult behavior?
- Why does this difficult behavior seem to be their “go to” strategy for coping with this demand/activity/situation?

What are their behaviors teaching us
about their needs and their strengths?

- Temperament (Goodness of Fit)
- Environment
- Attention
- Communication
- Hunger/Sleep/Thirst
- Emotions
- Stress

Walking the Line

“Connect, validate, listen, & restate what children say to show them that their emotions matter and you want to help.”

<http://prekteachandplay.com/how-to-deliver-effective-feedback-even-during-meltdowns/>

Adapted by Pretti-Frontczak and Lyons from No-Drama Discipline by Siegel and Bryson.

Step 1: Connect

- Get within physical reach – be close enough that the child knows you are attending to him
- Consider impact of stance, body language, tone of voice (eye level/eye contact)
- Take a few breaths

Step 2: Validate

- Make a simple, reflective statement
 - “You fell down and got hurt...”
 - “You were disappointed because you really wanted that truck...”
- Remember, this is not a time to teach, just validate
- Validation doesn’t mean you approve or that the child’s behavior was “okay”

Step 3: Listen

- Hear what and how the child is feeling
- Try not to “over-talk”
- Maintain proximity and touch if it is acceptable to the child
- Show that you are understanding of the situation; you don’t have to agree with it to acknowledge it

Step 4: Restate

- Restate what the child is expressing (reframing hurtful words)
- Keep your restatement brief
- Your restatement affirms that you “heard” them, not that you agree
- Possibly support child in representing their feelings through pictures/words

Step 5: Restore

- Look for signs that child is calmer and ready to engage with others
- Provide support for child as they re-enter group situation
- Remember that a child may feel embarrassed or ashamed of behavior

Resources

- www.michigan.gov/traumatotoxicstress
- <http://preteachandplay.com/how-to-deliver-effective-feedback-even-during-meltdowns/>
- No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind by Daniel Siegel and Tina Bryson (2014)
- Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Learning Communities Transforming Children's Lives by Susan Craig (2015)

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Feel free to visit website:
www.jenniferechampagne.weebly.com
for complete version of the ppt,
supplemental resources, or additional
references.