



... 15-Minute ...
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BEHAVIOR HAS MEANING

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NATIONAL CENTER ON

Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains



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CENTRAL DOMAINS					
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication Literacy	Mathematics Development Scientific Reasoning	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development



Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains



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- Approaches to Learning
 - Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation (Infant/Toddler & Preschool)
- Social and Emotional Development
 - Relationships with Adults (Infant/Toddler)
 - Emotional Functioning (Preschool)
- Language and Communication
 - Attending and Understanding (Infant/Toddler)
 - Vocabulary (Preschool)

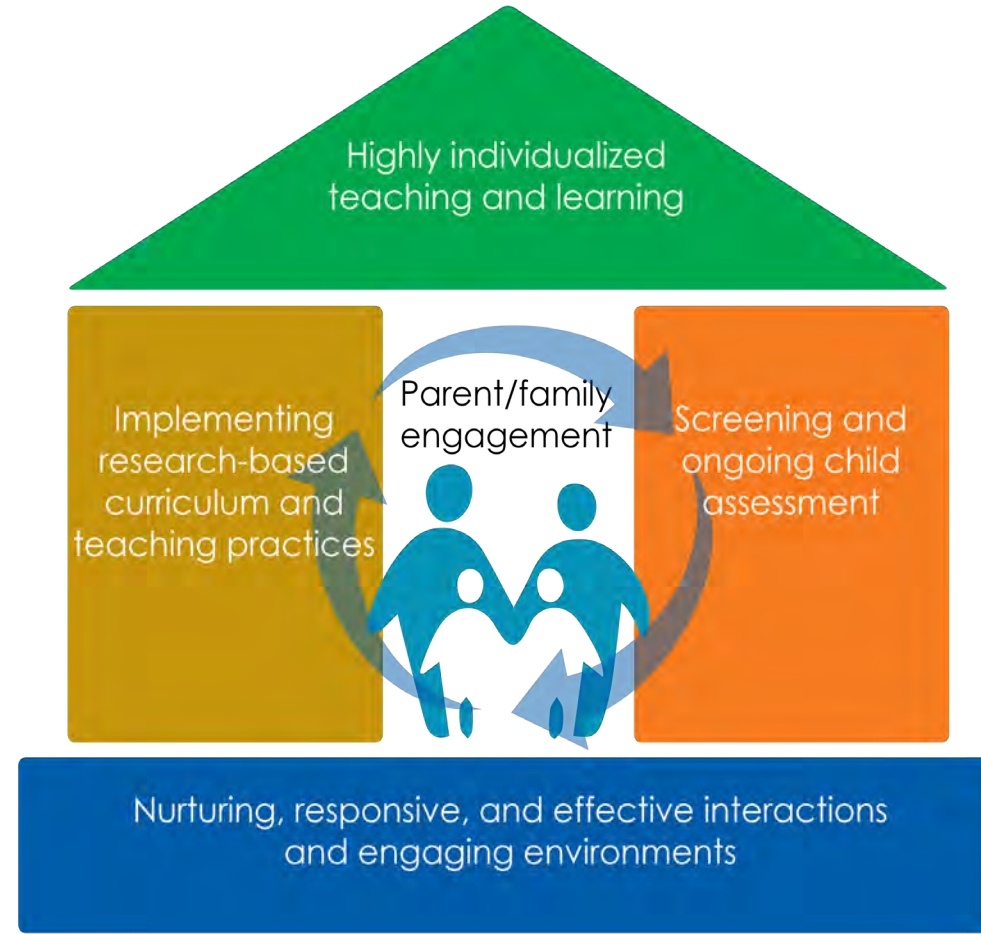


Framework for Effective Practice

Supporting school readiness for all children



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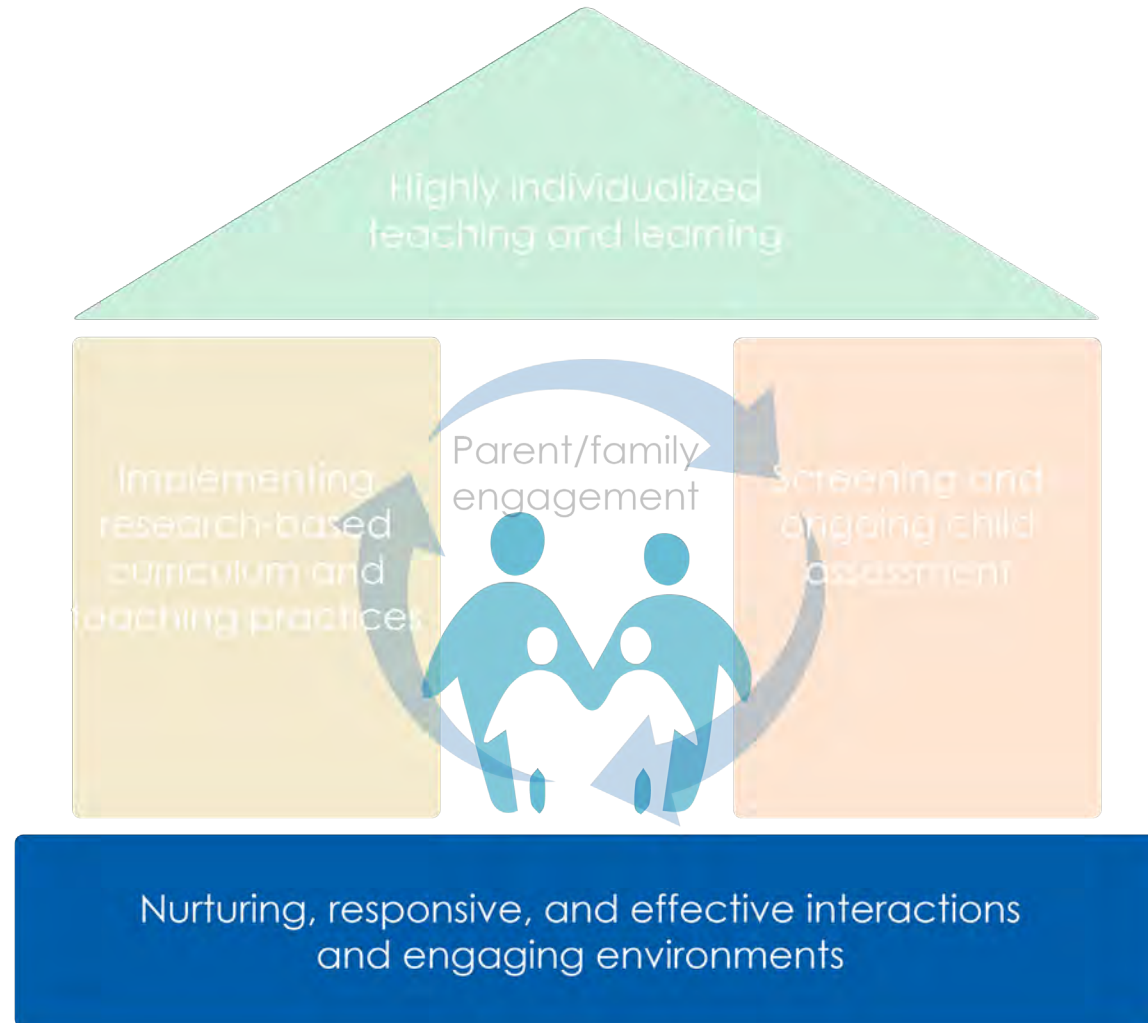


Framework for Effective Practice

Supporting school readiness for all children



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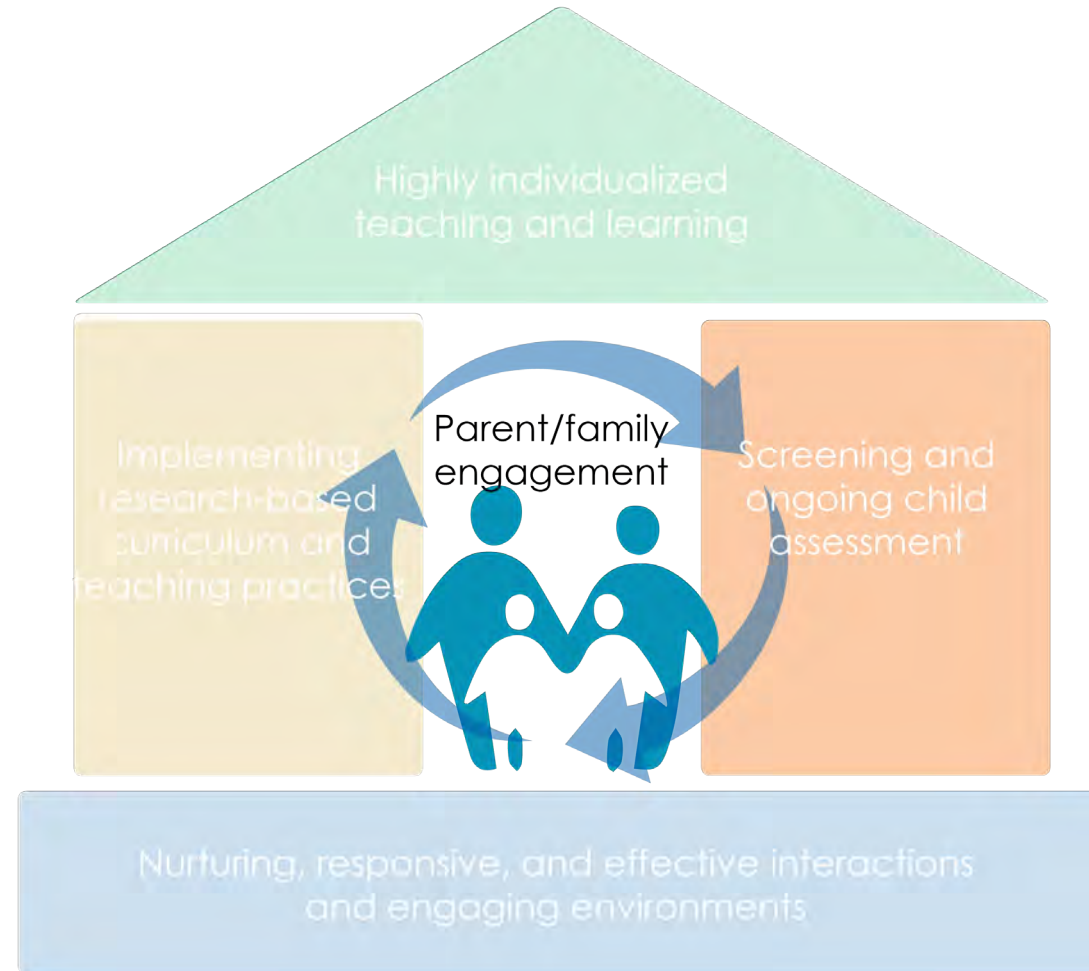


Framework for Effective Practice

Supporting school readiness for all children



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Objectives

- Explain the importance of children's behavior as communication
- Analyze and interpret the meaning of children's behaviors
- Cover strategies that address children's behaviors and build a supportive learning environment

Behavior



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- What is the behavior?
- What do you believe about young children and their behavior?





You Can't Not Communicate



- All behavior is a form of communication and has meaning
- Children give us cues to help us understand what they want to communicate long before they have words



“I’m trying to tell you something!”





Behavior

Every communicative behavior can be described by its form and function.

- **Form vs. Function**

- **Form:** the behavior used to communicate

- What **is** the behavior?

- **Function:** the reason behind the communicative behavior

- What is the **purpose** of the behavior from the child's perspective?



Forms of Communication

- Crying
- Cooing
- Reaching for caregiver
- Kicking their legs
- Gaze aversion (looking away)
- Squealing
- Biting
- Tantrums
- Pointing
- Smiling
- Pulling adult
- Clapping
- Words
- Jumping





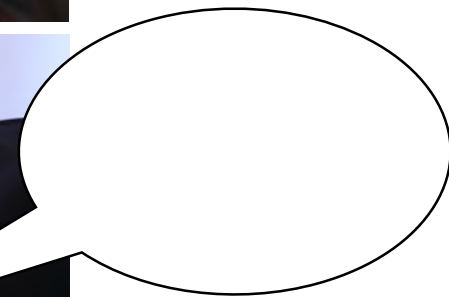
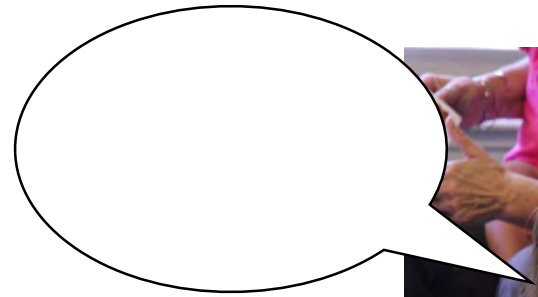
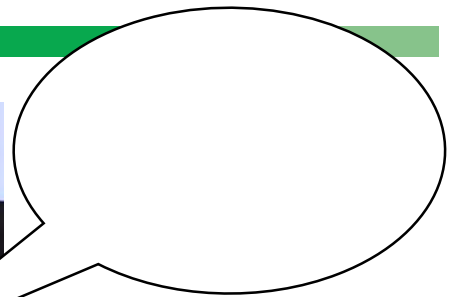
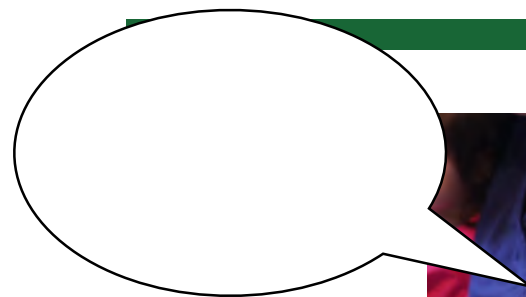
Functions of Communication

- Obtain an object, activity, person
- Request help
- Initiate social interaction
- Request information
- Seek sensory stimulation
- Escape demands
- Escape activity
- Avoid a person
- Escape sensory stimulation
- Express emotion
- Express pain or illness





Form and Function





Form and Function

- A single form of behavior may serve multiple functions
- Multiple forms of behavior may serve a single function





Behavior Has Meaning

Why is it important to understand children's behaviors?

- Children feel valued and important
- Children feel like competent and confident communicators
- Children learn to communicate their intentions, feelings, and emotions



Behavior Has Meaning

Why is it important to understand children's behaviors?

- Adults build nurturing and responsive relationships with children
- Adults pause before they react
- Adults determine what skills we need to teach children



Behavior Has Meaning: Scenario

Mom has left five-month-old Jenna in center care for the first time. It's been a rough two weeks so far for mom, baby, and the caregivers. When mom leaves, Jenna bursts into tears and screams. She only calms down when held by a teacher. Whenever they need to put her down, she immediately starts crying.

What might Jenna's behavior be telling us?

- What is the form?
- What might be the function?



Behavior Has Meaning: Scenario

- What can we do?
 - Observe Jenna's behaviors before she gets upset
 - Pause and reflect on what Jenna is trying to communicate
 - Communicate with Jenna's parents about strategies used at home to soothe her



Behavior Has Meaning: Video Example 1



Behavior Has Meaning: Video Example 2



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Children Who Are Dual Language Learners



During free play, Lucia wanders around the room. She stands and watches children play for a few minutes, but doesn't join in their play. Lucia doesn't stay at circle time longer than a few minutes and doesn't respond when asked to come back to circle time. What does her behavior mean? Is she acting this way because she doesn't understand what the expectations are during activities and in circle time? How do you know?



Children Who Are Dual Language Learners

- Talk with families to learn common words used at home
- Have families visit the classroom to become familiar with the routines and expectations
- Build the children's strengths and interests into the curriculum
- Interact with the child during classroom routines to help them engage



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Be a “Behavior Has Meaning” Detective



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Review

