

## Responding to Persistent Challenging Behaviors in Preschool

Announcer: Places, everyone. Are the lights ready? Three, two, one.

Saameh Solaimani: Hi, everyone, I'm Saameh Solaimani. Welcome to Teacher Time. Thank you so much for being here with us today.

Gail Joseph: Hi, everyone, I'm Gail Joseph, and I'm so excited to be joining you on Teacher Time today. Now, Saameh, I always think it's better when we start with a song. Shall we?

[Singing] Teacher Time, Teacher Time.

[Mid-tempo music continues]

Gail: We're still jamming out to Teacher Time. You saw all our feeling creatures carrying in a sign with a banner of what our topic is today. Welcome to our last episode of the year of Teacher Time. I'm Gail Joseph.

Saameh: I'm Saameh Solaimani, and we're from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning. We have been focusing on positive behavior supports this season of Teacher Time. We've talked about the importance of relationships, how to support emotional literacy, problem-solving, and relationship skills. Today we'll be focusing on ways to respond, prevent, and address persistent challenging behaviors with preschool children.

Gail: Big topic. I want to call your attention to the Viewer's Guide. You will find this in the resource widget. As you might already know if you've downloaded our Teacher Time Viewer's Guide before, this season our Viewer's Guide is a Viewer's Guide for birth to five. It includes specific age group information for infants, toddlers, and preschool children. It is packed full of information about development, teaching practices, helpful quick tips, handouts, and reminders that you can cut out and post in your learning environment.

There is also a really extensive and awesome resource list. Now, you can download the guide and use it throughout our time together for taking notes, for reflecting, and planning in how you want to use it. There's a few pieces we're going to interact with, some behavior cards. Those are also attached separately in the resource widget as well. If you've got a chance, go ahead, and download it. That's it.

Saameh: Thank you, Gail. If you've joined us for Teacher Time before, you might notice that our regular segments look a little different today. Here they are. Focus on Equity; Small Change, Big Impact; and Neuroscience Nook will be integrated throughout the webinar. During our time together, we're gonna be discussing positive behavior supports and what strategies at the top of the pyramid model look like. We're going to take some time to define what challenging behavior is. We will talk about form and function and how we can use the behavior equation to

create a behavior support plan. We will discuss the important partnerships we have with families and those we work with. And we will wrap up our time together, as we always do, with a very special BookCASE.

Gail: So special.

Saameh: We're very excited to share that with you, where we can connect our topic to books you can share with children and families. And this time, we're going to be focused on that transition to kindergarten, since it's that time of year.

Gail: It is that time of year. You don't want to miss the BookCASE. Make sure you stay on for that. Of course, we always want to check in at Teacher Time with how we're feeling. Please, go ahead and enter into the Q&A, find the feeling creature on our Teacher Time tree that boasts that best matches how you're feeling, and write that number in, and why. Let us know how you're feeling. How are you feeling?

Saameh: You know what, I was reflecting on this morning because I knew we were going to talk about it, and actually, I'm really feeling like — you see that little kind of cluster of 16, 17, and 18?

Gail: Oh, yeah.

Saameh: Because I'm surrounded by community. We're here for supporting children and feeling seen and heard, and we're all here together, and in it together for this wonderful bottom line, and I just feel so grateful to be part of this community.

Gail: I love that, and I think I'm going to get the numbers right. They can be kind of small. I think I'm feeling like three. I am needing a little bit of a lift. I got in late last night, we know, from a flight late last night. I'm feeling a little bit out of it. But I am like, you are lifting me up.

Saameh: OK, then I'll be number two.

Gail: You are number two, that lifted me up. But we also have so many people that are lifting us up. We've got the amazing, amazing question-and-answer team behind the scenes, and we've got our amazing producer. We really feel supported in our day-to-day.

Saameh: It's a team effort. This season, we've been focusing, as you know, on positive behavior supports and social-emotional development, which, as you may know, is one of the domains in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, also known as ELOF. The practical strategies we will be discussing today will focus on several goals within the Social and Emotional Development domain, as you can see highlighted here.

Gail: Now, if you've been with us this whole season, which we hope you have, you know that we've been working our way through the pyramid model. As you may already know, the pyramid model is a positive behavioral support framework for proactively addressing the social and emotional development and challenging behaviors of young children. The framework offers

a continuum of evidence-based teaching practices that are organized into three tiers of support. Down where you see the blue box, all children need nurturing and responsive relationships and a high-quality supportive environment, which is the first tier of the pyramid. That's where we put "all." Some children will need that second tier, which is around some social and emotional teaching strategies.

Then finally, at the top, the red part of our pyramid, for a few children, they might have behavior that persists despite having the first two tiers or the first three tiers of that in place, and so they might benefit from an intensive and individualized intervention plan that is needed to really help understand what their behavior is trying to communicate, and address that and to prevent those behaviors, which is what we're going to be focusing on today.

A key aspect of responding to, addressing, and preventing challenging behavior in a learning environment is ensuring that the strategies that are on those first bottom tiers are in place. It is really — we know from being teachers that it's very difficult to start addressing things at the top of the pyramid if you don't have a predictive schedule, if you don't have a well-organized learning environment, if you aren't building relationships with young children. You always want to make sure those are in place.

If you haven't seen the first episodes of our Teacher Time this season, please check those out and make sure that bottom, those bottom parts of the pyramid are well in place and we are ready to move up then to the top. Now, another check-in with our feelings. We want to hear from you. Please type into the purple Q&A one word, one feeling word that describes how you are feeling that comes up for you around challenging behaviors. Our Q&A team, our star-studded Q&A team are going to make sure to push those out so everyone can see how people are feeling.

We know that challenging behaviors can really bring out a lot of big emotions in teachers. Go ahead and add some of those words. I am seeing "exhausting," yes. "Overwhelmed," yes. "Sad," "defeated," oh. "Frustrated." A lot of "frustrated," a lot of "overwhelmed," a lot of feeling stressed. A lot of exhaustion. Oh, defeated. Again, exhausted. Yes, these — I think I've had all of these feelings in moments where I am feeling really challenged.

Saameh: You're not alone. That's one thing we're seeing here, is that you're not alone.

Gail: You are absolutely not alone. And sometimes it just helps to name that feeling that we're experiencing and to know that it's okay to have those feelings. And those feelings, we can think of them as actually kind of like warning signals to us that, like, "Uh-oh, this isn't quite right, and I need to try some other strategies here to help support this child." And we are here to help you with that. We're going to join together as a community and do that work together.

Saameh: Absolutely.

Gail: Now, when we talk about positive behavioral support, positive behavioral support is a positive approach and a proactive approach to preventing and addressing challenging behavior, or behaviors that adults find challenging. We will be differentiating between challenging behaviors and behaviors that adults find challenging throughout this webinar. The number-one thing to remember is that positive behavioral support is proactive. We are proactively thinking about the ways in which we can prevent challenging behaviors from occurring, and then we're also thinking about the ways that we can address them, again, proactively.

Now, at the heart, and what's really important about positive behavioral support is the recognition that challenging behavior is communication and it is used to communicate a message, like "I want to play with them, I want that blue block, I don't want to wash my hands, I don't want to come to small group, I need help," or even, "I'm very excited." One of the best strategies to — or mindsets to get into when you're thinking about positive behavioral support is to think like a detective. We're going to ask you to do your best detective work, together with families, to uncover what message the child is trying to communicate through their behavior, and then teach the child a more effective way to get their needs met. So we're going to have a lot of focus on that today.

Saameh: As we're thinking about responding, preventing, and addressing persistent challenging behaviors, we're going to focus on three key ideas. The first is understanding the behavior. We will think about reviewing, reflecting, resilience, which will help us to pause and think about the influences on the child's behavior and adult perceptions of the behavior. We'll provide information on how to develop a behavior support plan through observation and partnering with families since we know that connection and collaboration with families is necessary to do early on in the process and throughout. Finally, for a behavior support plan to be effective, the intervention and teaching supports must be tailored to match the child's developmental level, preferences, and unique needs. It's not a one-size-fits-all model. This is very individualized. You can check out your Viewer's Guide for a list of possible ways to provide individualized teaching supports.

We have a lot of ideas there. Each of these three key ideas will look different for every child, as we said, since we are thinking about intensive individualized supports. Again, we know and recognize that understanding, responding, addressing, and preventing challenging behaviors takes a great deal of intentionality, emotional awareness, and self-regulation, which is all a lot of work. It's important to remember that you are not alone. There's a whole team of people to support you in this work. We're here today, as Gail mentioned, to ensure you that we are a team in this work and collaborating to support each other and the children and the families we work with. We are all together in this.

Gail: Absolutely, you're surrounded. It's like the ones on the feeling creature tree that are being held up by some others. We need that support sometimes when we're doing this hard work, this heart work, as we talk about, too. Let's jump into some ways we can understand a child's behavior. It's adults who ultimately decide what behaviors they expect in their learning environment and when a child's behavior is challenging. Defining a behavior as challenging is

really influenced by the adult's culture, beliefs, and biases. You might have been raised in a culture in your family where you are expected to sit at the table until everyone finishes their meal, and then you can go.

You can imagine, maybe, you bring that expectation into teaching, and if a child doesn't have that expectation, they might want to get up and leave when they're done eating, and that's what happens in their family. You can see where we can start to kind of get into a little clash there because we are bringing our own culture, beliefs, and biases into that space. In addition, we need to consider how the child's temperament, how their home environment, and their cultural norms influence behavior. Now, some tips to consider when determining if a child's behavior is alarming and in need of intensive support are ...

Saameh: We start with a review, as you can see here, and consider the universal practices that all children need. You might ask yourself questions like, "How have I worked to establish a trusting relationship with this child and family?" The bottom of the pyramid again. "Are my expectations developmentally appropriate?" "How am I supporting the child to understand and regulate emotions?" "Is there anything outside the child's control impacting behavior?" "Could the child be sick, tired, hungry, uncomfortable, overstimulated?"

Gail: Absolutely. Then, we want to reflect on our own values, our thoughts, and feelings about the behavior. We might reflect on questions like, "Why is this behavior challenging for me, or for other children?" "Am I frustrated with the behavior or the child?" "Is there something about the child's cultural norms that are different than mine?"

Saameh: Then finally, we can build resilience by asking key questions like, "How does my typical response to the child's behavior make me feel?" "What steps can I take to calm myself when I start to feel triggered by the child's behavior?" "How is my typical response impacting the pattern of the child's behavior?" You can check out your Viewer's Guide for more questions to support you in working through these steps.

Gail: Now, when we think about intensive interventions and challenging behaviors, it's important to have a shared definition so we know where to start. What one person sees as a behavior that's challenging might be different from what somebody else finds challenging. It's important to talk about this with the others that we work with since our beliefs, our values, and experiences shape how we view behaviors and how we respond. I remember times when I taught with — in a co-teaching situation, and we definitely had different perspectives around our different values and experiences and had different expectations for children.

It's important to get on the same page. The definition of challenging behaviors from the National Center for Pyramid Model Implementation is any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with the child's optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults. That is kind of a long definition, but I think a helpful one for us to consider. We're looking at behaviors that are interrupting the child's ability to learn and develop relationships. That's what we're looking at. It's not really kind of what the behavior is, but it's how the behavior is functioning in that space.

Saameh: Something to keep in mind is that a lot of times, challenging — behaviors that are challenging that come up in the learning environment are behaviors that adults find challenging. We have all been there and experienced this, and we all have hot-button behaviors, behaviors that push our buttons or take us to our wits' end. The reason it's so important to acknowledge and address our own feelings around hot-button behaviors is that these behaviors can lead to some challenging behaviors from adults, like suspension or expulsion or the rise in child incidences, which are all adult behaviors in response to the child's behavior that is challenging to the adult. It's important to be very intentional about reflecting on our own biases, checking in with ourselves. Why is this behavior challenging to me? How do I think the child should behave? And why do I think that. It's super important to check in with ourselves about those things.

Gail: Yeah, absolutely. Now, this is a great time also to circle back to the bottom of the pyramid, because we could be tempted to just jump right to the top of the pyramid when hot-button behaviors come up. If that's happening, we really encourage you to check in with your relationships with the specific child who is engaging in a behavior that you find challenging. Maybe this is a time to add some more positive feedback or encouragement to the child, play with the child, make deposits into the child's relationship piggy bank.

One of the things we know is that when children engage in behaviors that we are finding challenging is that teachers tend to actually avoid that child, spend less time with them. I know it probably feels like you're constantly with them, but what happens is there's a lot of teacher avoidance and the only interaction you have with that child is to try and manage their behavior, which is not going to feel great. This is a time to check in and say, "Wow, can I make some deposits in this child's piggy bank?" And we're going to talk more about that later today. It's easy to say, hard to do, but it's really important.

Saameh: Such a good point. Something to definitely be aware of. It takes a lot of intention, right?

Gail: Absolutely.

Saameh: Thank you. Now that we have a shared definition of challenging behaviors, let's talk about form and function. We know that all behavior is communication, as we have shared, and the first step to understanding what the child is trying to communicate is to think beyond the form of the behavior and examine the function of the behavior. The form of the behavior is what the behavior is, what is happening or what the child is doing. It might be hitting, spitting, pushing, biting, running, or pushing away like we see in this picture.

The function is the purpose of the behavior, or the message, within the behavior. It's what the child is trying to communicate using the behavior. We want to think about what the child is getting from the challenging behavior and how the behavior is serving the child. Some possible functions might be to obtain an object, to obtain sensory input, like needing to fidget, to get attention, to get help, to avoid an activity or request, to avoid sensory input, so covering ears or avoiding crowded spaces or physical closeness, to avoid a change or transition. It's important to

look beyond what the behavior looks like, or the form, and understand the function, or what the behavior is communicating. If we only address the form of the behavior, it will most likely continue to persist. We want to think about the function and the message the child is trying to communicate, so we can teach them a new, more pro-social behavior that communicates the same message as the challenging behavior and gets their needs met, and that's a win-win.

Gail: Totally a win-win. We cannot stress enough how important it is to really figure out what the function is. One way that we can better understand the function of a challenging behavior is — we've got to do an equation here. It's not a mathematical equation, but it's a really important equation. We call it the Behavior Equation, and we often refer to this as an ABC chart. Maybe you've heard of something like that before. But the behavior equation has three components to it. First is the antecedent. What happens right before that sets the child up for challenging behavior?

Maybe there was a direction given. Maybe it was a transition that was starting. Maybe it was that the child was too close to somebody that was screaming. There was a loud noise that happened right before. A demand for them to move their body to another space. Something like that. What happens right before the challenging behavior, that antecedent. Then, what is the behavior, what did the child do? This is where, as Saameh was talking about, the form. This is the form of the behavior. Did they grab, did they bite, did they kick, did they hit? Did they use an unsafe word, as we talk about? What was it that they did in that moment? Then, the consequence is what happens right after. What's the response or feedback that the child gets?

When you look at this information each time the behavior occurs, you're going to start to see a pattern, and it allows you to make a hypothesis or your best guess at what the function is. What message is this child trying to communicate with their challenging behavior? If you notice that when a child sits down at small group time — here's the antecedent, sits down at small group time and the materials are kind of dispersed around, and you notice that what happens right before is that their neighbor gets a blue marker and the behavior is always to grab that child, and the result or consequence is always to get the blue marker, and you see that over and over again, my guess is that you're going to think the function is they're engaging in that challenging behavior in order to get the blue marker that the friend has.

Now you're going... An easy way to remember this is the ABCs. Remember the antecedent, the behavior, and the consequence. That's going to help us form the hypothesis, and a key piece of the behavior equation is observation. We're going to talk a little bit more about that now. This is where that Viewer's Guide is really helpful because you're going to see that in the Viewer's Guide and also in the resource widget that we have these ABC data collection forms, and they... You have some that are filled out and some that are blank because we would love you to use these. If you're really having a child that's engaging in some persisting challenging behaviors, we think these are going to be really helpful for you, okay?

As we said, one of those tools that's going to help us solve the behavior equation is collecting the ABC data to give us information about the behavior and, most importantly, what's happening before and after the behavior, to help us form a hypothesis about the possible

function of that behavior. Now, we can collect ABC data by using an ABC observation card like you see on the screen and in your Viewer's Guide. You can find that handout in the Viewer's Guide. We encourage you to make copies of the blank observation cards and use them in the learning environment to collect ABC data on each occurrence, if you can, of the behavior until you have enough information about the behavior to help you form a behavior hypothesis about that function.

Now as you are preparing to observe, remember to focus on the facts. Just write down what you see. It's not... If a child is running away, we're going to write "the child ran away," not "the child hates me." You're going to just look, write down the facts, and write things down exactly as you see them happening.

Now let's walk through an example that we might see in a preschool classroom. First, let me give you a little bit of context to the observation. Sonia is almost four and has been screaming, scratching, grabbing, and biting, a lot of forms of behavior, frequently during choice time. You've noticed that it's impacting her peer relationships, and her family is concerned. Remember, because it's impacting and interrupting her ability to form relationships, we are concerned, and we want to help support it.

Now you set yourself up with the observation, and you record that first, the antecedent, what I observed. Sonia was playing in the cash register in the dramatic play area and Baruch was using the pretend debit card. That was so popular in my classroom, that pretend card. Now, what's the behavior that we saw? Sonia scratched Baruch's arm and went to bite his hand. And then what's the consequence? Baruch dropped that card, and Sonia quickly grabbed it, and began playing with it.

Now, what was Sonia trying to communicate when she scratched Baruch and went to bite his hand? You can put some of your hypotheses into our chat or into our Q&A there. What do you think the function was? Let's see, watch for some of these functions. Well, that is right. Many of you have already solved this behavior equation, that Sonia wanted the toy Baruch had. She wanted to obtain the toy. An important note to remember is that it's key to observe the behavior multiple times in order to create your best hypothesis of the function.

As you'll see in your Viewer's Guide, the ABC data collection card has two cards on one page and another example of data collection on Sonia. Today we are focusing on behaviors that are so persistent and happen with such frequency and persistency that they interfere with a child's learning participation or the learning of others in the classroom.

Saameh: For an example of how ABC data is collected in the learning environment, that's hear from educator Julia, a lead preschool teacher of an inclusive classroom at the Haring Center at the University of Washington.

[Video begins]



Julia Um: Here you will see that quick just rough chart, the ABC's, which is antecedent, behavior, consequence. We had a particular student at the beginning of the year who was doing a lot of biting. We weren't quite sure why that was happening, and so what we would do is anytime the behavior happened, we would try to jot down right away what happened prior to that. Then we would talk about what we did after, what happened afterwards.

In collecting this information, it allowed us to just take it out of our head and be like, "Okay, he's biting, oh no!" You know, like living in the moment, but really being able to take that out and analyze it. Again, the team came down and worked together to figure out ways that we can support this particular student and figure out where and why this might be happening. This is simple, laminated, a white piece of paper. And I should almost show you the other one.

Let me grab the pen from this one. Here, I'll grab this, but these are little velcros. And having something so easy to have that available, because a lot of times, I mean, sometimes the basic thing of not having a writing tool could be your missed opportunity to collect data. We have these little Velcro things. We always have some sort of writing tool available. And then, you know, for the purpose — some kids in this age group are reading, and it's important for us to have some sort of sense of protecting privacy too, so we use initials. And then, whenever we hear a child say something or do something and notice something, we want to just write it as quickly as possible so it's as fresh as possible and it's preserved in its most true, accurate form.

I know you can't do everything word for word, but as much as we can, I think having these things — we have these little half-laminated sheets around the room strategically placed in the different sections of the classroom. Like here, you see science and games. We have another area right by the arts table and the crafts, and then we have another one in the dramatic play area, and then another one that used to be there, but may not be anymore, toileting. Just areas in the classroom where you do, as a teacher, might observe things and just want to quickly jot it down.

[Video ends]

Saameh: Such a wonderful video and practical example of how the ABC data and other behavioral information can be collected in a busy setting. I love her techniques with the Velcro and just making sure she can be there and also having something set up in all of the different areas in the classroom.

Gail: Yeah, that Velcro pen, that's so essential.

Saameh: Right, so simple.

Gail: Because you might miss it. And I like how it's laminated too, so you can use it over and over again. Then the other thing I just noticed with Julia is that she has to have those bottom levels of the pyramid in place in order to be able to have kind of the ability to write things down. She has a well-structured learning environment and a predictable schedule, so she has

the opportunity to be able to do that. So great. I think we see teacher Julia later today, so that's...

Saameh: We do. You have to check back in.

Gail: Now, we've talked about how we can use ABC data collection to hypothesize a possible function. We're being our best detectives here. We have a hunch of the challenging behavior. We can start thinking about and creating individualized behavior support plans. You really need to know the functions of the behavior — can't stress that enough — in order to develop a really sound and likely to be effective behavior support plan. But remember, you don't do this alone. You don't have to do this alone. You can connect with family, collaborate with other adults that you work with, and if you work with multiple adults in the learning environment, include them all in this.

And reach out to your coach. Your coach can be really helpful here. Now, remember on our behavior equation, we had antecedent, behavior, consequence, and then came up with a hypothesis. A behavior support plan has three components, too. There are three pieces in this individualized PBS plan. Planning for and using individualized strategies to prevent the behavior. That's the first one. Planning to select and teach the new behavior for the child to use in place of the challenging behavior. And intentionally planning and using strategies to respond to the child's behavior.

In the first component, "prevent," we will select and use individualized strategies and supports that will make it less likely that the child will even need to use the behavior to communicate. These prevention strategies should be chosen based on the information that we collected about the antecedent of the behavior during the ABC data collection process. The situations that might trigger a behavior, the activities and events that happened right before that behavior. Now, prevention strategies are usually changes or additions to the environment or our interactions with the child.

Some examples. You're probably using these right now in your classrooms and during home visits. Some examples are to let a child know about an upcoming transition, either verbally or with visual support, that warning. Using a timer, offering children choices. "Do you want to pick up the blue one or the red one?" Or changing how a material is being used. Prevention strategies also include things like using a staff zoning so that we can all see children and move in when they might need our support. Adjusting the order of activities that happen during the daily schedule and organization of the learning environment even can be really helpful as a prevention strategy.

Saameh: The next component here we see is "teach." Here we look at our ABC data that we just talked about and we've identified as a potential function — and what we've identified as a potential function of the behavior, and we select a new, pro-social, more appropriate behavior that will meet the same communicative functions as a challenging behavior. We call this the

replacement skill. For the replacement skill to be effective, it should serve the same function, meet the same need for the child, should be easier for the child to use than the challenging behavior, and be more effective at getting their need met — their needs met.

A critical part of the teach component is not only to teach the replacement skill, it's also to intentionally plan when and how you'll teach the child to use the new behavior. A lot of intention going into this. Model and use individualized teaching practices to teach the child to use the replacement behavior. Again, individualized, this will look different for each child. Collaborate and communicate with the family, again, partnering with the family from the beginning and throughout, about the replacement behavior and how and when to teach the replacement skill or skills. This happens at home too.

Provide many instructional opportunities throughout daily activities and routines to support the child to learn this new skill. We want to practice. As part of this individualized instruction, you may develop and use instructional materials such as visual or communication supports. As you provide instruction on the new replacement skill, carefully observe — again, the detective piece, and take note of changes in the child's skills or behavior to ensure your instruction is effective or maybe you need to make little tweaks here and there, to really understand what's happening. You can, again, check out your Viewer's Guide for more ideas to consider when thinking about teaching replacement behaviors.

Gail: That's right, it's so important, this teach part because I think when we're thinking about challenging behavior, we — some people might go to punish instead of teach. And this is what's so important, is to teach the child another way to get their needs met. The child that was biting or scratching or grabbing to get the marker that the friend has, maybe we want to teach them just a simple "my turn." You want to match where the child is at in terms of their developmental skill level and match it. Maybe it's "my turn." Maybe it's handing a card, a communication card to them to request it. Or maybe they can say, "May I have a turn, please?" And the teacher is right there, and here we're getting to respond.

The child uses that new replacement skill, and then the next part of this is "respond." How are we going to respond to the child's behavior? There's going to be two things that you want to think about with responding to the child's behavior. Now, remember, the child has had a pattern of getting their needs met with this challenging behavior, and now you're teaching them a new way, a new skill, to get their needs met. There's a couple things we want to make sure that happens. When the child is using the same challenging behavior that they used to use, we want to redirect them to use their new replacement skill.

If they were grabbing, hopefully, we can get it before there is a full grab, but we can say, "You can say my turn." We want to interrupt and redirect. "You can say my turn." And when they say "my turn," the other key part here is that the child actually gets what it is that they asked for because we want that new replacement skill that you're teaching them to work as quickly and as effectively as the challenging behavior did. That means teachers need to be and adults need to be really engaged when we're first learning that new skill, because we want to make sure that we're very consistent in responding to, when the child asks for it, they get it initially.

Later on, we might teach them to delay that a little bit, to wait a little bit, but initially if we really want them to start using their new skill instead of going back to their challenging behavior, it has to work for them really quickly. Then the other response to think about is that what are you going to do when the child engages in the old challenging behavior? Like we said, hopefully, we redirect them to use the new skill before they get their needs met, but really what we want to do is just make sure that the challenging behavior no longer works for them. It might be ignoring until they ask for your help, or it might be, again, kind of intervening and saying, "You can say my turn" and helping them say "my turn," and then they get that. So, respond, really critical in terms of if this is going to work or not.

Saameh: I love the way you put that, with, in the beginning, when that's kind of just — the learning is just happening around this, is to right away ensure the child is getting their needs met very quickly so that that association becomes very strong, that, "Hey, when I'm engaging in this more pro-social, new behavior, replacement skill, I'm going to get what I need right away." I love that. It makes so much sense.

Gail: These are things that are really important to communicate with families too about the ways in which you're going to address challenging behavior, so that if you are ignoring a certain behavior that wasn't necessarily going to hurt anyone but maybe a behavior that most people would intervene with, that families understand why you're doing that. I see some questions coming in about things like that. I just wanted to make sure to address that too.

Now, let's walk through what a behavior plan might look like. As you can see, the top row of the form is really that summary of that ABC data that's been collected. We've collected multiple things, we've engaged families to help us collect some data too, and then we're going to put it all together and make our best hypothesis of what the function of the behavior is. Across the top, we're going to see ABC, antecedent, behavior, consequence. Then a place for the function, and then you're going to see a spot that says, underneath that, where it says prevent, teach, respond, PTR.

Let's go ahead, and we're going to fill that in. Let's think back to our example of Sonia. We saw one instance of ABC data. And that, from the data collection process, where she hit Baruch's hand to get the toy. Are you remembering that, the toy that he was reaching for? That she was — he was reaching for. Based on all of the ABC information that was collected during the data collection process, the team looked for patterns in Sonia's behavior. They observed multiple times and created this summary of the behavior equation.

In the antecedent, "When another child reaches for, takes, or is playing with a toy that Sonia wants," and we fill in the behavior. Remember, this is the form. "Sonia screams, scratches, grabs, and bites." And then consequence. "The other child drops the toy, cries, or walks away, and Sonia picks up the toy and plays with it." The hypothesized function that many of you helped us solve early on, the hypothesized function is that Sonia screams, scratches, grabs, and bites to get a toy that she wants. She wants to obtain something, and the way that she gets that message across right now is with some behaviors we're finding challenging.

Now, to create an individualized behavioral support plan for Sonia, after multiple ABC data collections, the team will now come together and say, "All right, we think we've got it, and now we're going to try and figure out how we can prevent that behavior from occurring, what skills we're going to teach instead of using screaming, biting, grabbing, and how are we going to respond when she uses that challenging behavior and how we are going to respond when she uses the new replacement skill?" Now let's talk through some examples of what strategies the team might put on her individualized behavior support plan.

The first step is to select some prevention strategies. Knowing that the antecedent for Sonia's biting is when a friend reaches for, takes, or is playing with a toy that Sonia wants, what prevention strategies might the team choose? You can put some of those in our Q&A right now. What do you think would be some good prevention strategies, if you know that she is engaging in these behaviors when there is another toy, one toy that she wants?

I want to see what people are putting in. Yeah, we're seeing some. Adult proximity would be a great prevention strategy, to make sure somebody is nearby. Great, Jillian. Jillian says "have multiple of each toy." Having more than one item. A timer, pre-teaching. What that... Oh, great. Having teachers nearby, pre-teaching. We have so many great ideas. Our Q&A team is going to push all of these out to you. You can see them. And we had some similar ideas when we were thinking about Sonia.

Based on this specific information we have about the antecedents to Sonia's hitting, prevention strategies we thought of might be, again, same things that you did, having multiple items of some of Sonia's favorite toys. If she can access it, she doesn't have to get it away from a friend. Placing a visual reminder of safe body in the play area. Maybe our rules to have a safe body. Using a timer for turn-taking. Again, we didn't add it, but I love the one of having a teacher nearby, having an adult nearby.

Next, for the teach section, of Sonia's individualized behavior support plan, knowing that the potential function of Sonia's biting is to get a toy, what new replacement skill might the team select to teach her? What do you want to teach her to do instead? Now, remember that the new skill should meet the same need as the challenging behavior. Based on the hypothesized function that Sonia is biting to get a toy or object she wants, the team will want to teach her to request or ask for a turn with the toy. There are many ways that you can request. You could use a sign, you could use a gesture, "my turn," you could exchange a picture symbol, you could say, "More, I want more," "mine."

Or, if the child has more words, they could say, "My turn, please." What we want to do is make sure that it's something the child can do easily, and that they can. Again, this is where helps to have an adult nearby, because we want to work each time. For Sonia, the team chose teaching Sonia to say, "I'm using that," or "Can I have a turn?" to request a toy. To teach Sonia to say, "I'm using that," or, "Can I have a turn?" Sonia has some words that she can use, but for children that might not have those many words yet, we're going to use some sign or gesture, something like that.

Now, since this is a new skill for Sonia, the team will plan many opportunities to teach her to use the skills throughout the day. They really want to intentionally set it up so that Sonia has multiple opportunities to ask, because then that gives us multiple opportunities to respond to her new behavior by getting her needs met. And now she's learning that the way I get access, the way I obtain a toy is by using my words and asking for it. Now, remember, we want that plan and intentional responses for two different behaviors. One is, what are we going to do when she uses that new skill, and what we're going to do is make sure it works.

It's helpful, again, to have that teacher nearby so we can say, "Oh, Johnny, she's going to have a turn and then you're gonna get it, you can ask for it back." We want to make sure that it works right away. And then, when the challenging behavior comes back, the team might gently remove the toy and say, and then prompt her to say, "Oh, you can say 'I'm using that' or 'my turn, can I have a turn?'" And then when she says that, she gets it right back. She gets to have that good consequence or the good response to using her new skill. That is — I know it might be hard to play out in real life, but it really is kind of a simple plan there that you are putting together. Prevent, teach, respond. Prevent, teach, respond.

Saameh: Let's watch what teaching replacement behavior might look like in preschool.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Look at this, we'll mix it around.

Student 1: Can I feel?

Student 2: I don't want to feel that.

Teacher: Let's find out. We're going to stir it again.

[Children shouting, crying]

Teacher: So, what can Sara say? Sara, what can you say? What do we say at school? Look at me. Guess what you say. When you're done, what do you say? When you're done, what does Sara say? "When you're done, can I have a turn?" "When you're done..."

[Video ends]

Saameh: We see that Sara approaches the plastic bin and that the educator and group of children are gathered around and screams saying, "I want a turn to stir." Then she makes a crying noise. The educator stops and asks, "Sara, what can you say?" And she starts the sentence for her. She says, "When you're done..." and then pauses, giving Sara a chance to think about it. Next, she completes the sentence.

She says, when the teacher says, "When you're done, can I have a turn?" Kind of modeling that behavior, even though Sara doesn't say the words, right? She calms — you see that she calms down enough to hear the educator teaching her a replacement skill, asking for a turn in place of

screaming and crying. The educator asks, "What can Sara say?" and asks for her, kind of, in a way. Sara can see and feel what it is to pause, ask, and then have a turn and see kind of how that feels for her. What we're going to do now is shift to looking at the basics and strategies for responding to persistent challenging behaviors. The basics are a collection of strategies that can be used in any setting with preschool children.

The Teacher Time basics are behavioral expectations in advance, attend to and encourage positive behavior, scaffold with cues and prompts, increase engagement, create or add challenge, and specific feedback. In this season of Teacher Time, we have focused on two letters of the basics for each episode. We hope you have joined us for all of the webinars the season, and if you missed any of the previous webinars, you can access those recordings on Push Play. Today, we are going to provide examples of "A," attend to and encourage positive behavior, and "I," increase engagement, to respond, prevent, and address persistent challenging behaviors.

Gail: Absolutely, and I just want to say to our Teacher Time viewers, our participants, we are seeing so many questions come in, so many really important, great questions, and if we're not getting to them here through what we're presenting, we have the star-studded team of Q&A helpers and support, people that are really knowledgeable about supporting children, really knowledgeable about positive behavioral support, so they are providing some answers there as well. Keep asking those questions, and we're going to get to as many as we can.

Let's talk about this "A" in BASICS, of attend to and encourage positive behavior. I can't tell you how important this part is, especially, in supporting children who might be at the top of the pyramid there. To understand a child's cues and provide responsive care to behaviors adults might find challenging, educators must build those relationships with children and families. Again, we already talked about how the tendency is to avoid a child that engages in a behavior that pushes our button. We have to be incredibly intentional about that.

Really setting an intention that day to say, "Today I'm going to really make sure that I provide Susan or Tommy with some positive affirmation, positive time and attention," really being sure to make those deposits into the child's piggy bank. One thing that you can do is think about writing down as many things as you can think of that are strengths for that child and family and then making sure that you are saying those throughout the day. Take that time, and you can see that in your Viewer's Guide in the Focus on Equity section. Also, give yourself a challenge. Think about, "How am I going to communicate those?" "How am I going to shift into making sure that I'm giving the child lots of positive deposits" instead of just relying on that challenging behavior as something to signal my time and attention?

One thing that I like to do is challenge myself. Maybe I have some loops on my hand, and I'll put 10 on my hand, and then every time I notice that child's appropriate behavior or using their new replacement skill, I will mention it and then I'll move that loop to my other hand. I'm like, I have a goal in my mind to change my behavior, to attend to that child as often as I can. That can really be helpful. You can put pennies in your pocket and switch them. Just something physical

that reminds you, "Oh, I'm going to stand and find Andrew and make sure I'm giving Andrew some positive attention when they're engaged in appropriate behavior."

Saameh: I love those examples.

Gail: Yeah, isn't that something concrete that can really help you?

Saameh: It makes me want to use it in other areas of my life. Such a great way to remind oneself.

Gail: Let's watch an example of encouraging positive behaviors and adding to a child's emotional piggy bank. Let's go ahead and watch that. As you watch it, you can note what you're seeing in terms of building and nurturing a relationship and put those into Q&A.

[Video begins]

Teacher: You can ask for a hug.

Student: Can I have a hug?

Teacher: You sure can.

[Student 2 speaking indistinctly]

Teacher: But you know what? If you bring five more cheeses in next week, that will be enough to make it through the whole school year. You have enough for this week, and then next week if you bring some more in, you'll have enough until graduation. Thanks for asking for a hug.

[Video ends]

Gail: We have some observations coming in. You see the child is reaching out and kind of making a grunting noise, a grunting sound towards the teacher. And then the teacher says, which is a nice kind of responding to that, like a redirect to what she wants in terms of that teaching behavior. "You can ask for a hug." And in response to the child asking, "Can I have a hug," she responds warmly right away with, "You sure can."

She's making sure that new replacement skill is getting the response that the child would like to have, or what the child was seeking by just using the grunting noise. While the child is attending to another child, I love that she kind of keeps her arm around that child, like, "I'm still here, and I'm still giving you attention." And then she says, "Thank you for asking for that hug." It's really great. Just a short little video, but it shows us everything that we want to see happen.

Saameh: We are going to talk about how we can increase a child's engagement when there are persistent challenging behaviors. I'm going to go straight into the video. I see that we don't have very much time left. Let's check back in with teacher Julia as she shares her experience



with the importance of data collection and a behavior support plan to increase engagement in the learning environment.

[Video begins]

Julia: In the classroom, I think, what we always want for the child is for them to feel safe, for them to feel like they're contributing in their own way to the classroom community. We also want them to build and connect with other peers. I feel like when there aren't strategies and supports in place for kids who might struggle with some of those things, that they're not even able to access the classroom activities, circle time, even being able to make those relationships. There's like barriers that are there.

A lot of times, we have to think about OK, well, if they're not feeling even safe or if they're just anxious about something, and it's coming out in a certain way that's keeping them from connecting with friends, or being able to truly express what their needs are or what they want or what even they enjoy doing, then I just feel like they're not able to let their guard down to really fully access and engage. When you have a really good — again, like when you take that data, collect that information and have a really good understanding of what this student needs, then I think that whole — a lot of it is, you know, they're feeling safe, they're being heard, they're interacting and they're engaging and they're connecting. That's where you really see them flourish and really thrive.

[Video ends]

Saameh: So important. First and foremost that the child feels safe so that they can contribute and truly feel like part of their learning environment and community.

Gail: Absolutely. We also want to say that partnering and working with families to identify prevention and support strategies is just absolutely essential part of the process. We can't do that without families. Creating a behavior support plan in partnership with the family significantly increases the likelihood of success because you'll be on the same page, you'll be using the same strategies. We want to approach this partnership with open curiosity and respect. We have a few tips to keep in mind when working with families. You can see them listed there on the slide. Focus on the child and family strengths.

Always start from a strengths-based piece. Respectfully discuss concerns. Avoid placing blame on the child or the family. That is not what we're doing here. We are respectfully discussing, making sure that we are asking for the family for their perspective about their child. Partner with families to develop a plan. Honor the family's culture and values. That is so important; what is important to them, and how do we come together with a new skill that honors the family's culture, values, and language?

And be understanding of constraints that might be in place, you know. Is following a picture schedule something that can happen in that family, or maybe that is not what's going to happen. I know it couldn't happen in my family. We're a little bit disorganized. Then, provide

information about the process, about what positive behavioral support is, what the process is, and how you're going to work with other professionals if needed. So important, and more information in the Viewer's Guide about that.

Saameh: Again, we just want to finish up by saying, again it's important to remember that there is a whole team of people to support you in this work. We're a team collaborating to support each other and the children and the families we work with. You're not alone. We're in this together.

Gail: We are ready for the BookCASE. We're so excited, like we said, to be having the BookCASE. This time, our Teacher Time librarian, Emily Small, had a chance to meet and chat with an author and preschool teacher — that's important — Vera Ahiyya, for a very special BookCASE. We're going to go straight to that to hear her talk about her book, "KINDergarten."

[Video begins]

Emily Small: Hi, everyone, and welcome to this segment of the BookCASE. I'm Emily Small, your Teacher Time librarian, Today we have a very special guest. We have the author of "KINDergarten," Vera Ahiyya.

Vera Ahiyya: Hi, thank you.

Emily: Thank you for being here.

Vera: I'm so excited to be here. Thanks for coming to my home.

Emily: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and a little bit about "KINDergarten"?

Vera: Yes, my name is Vera, and I am currently a pre-K teacher. I was a kindergarten teacher for 17 years. I moved all over, taught in Texas, Massachusetts, New York, and now here in Oregon. And yeah, so the main character in the story, his name is Leo. And fun fact, Leo is the first part of my husband's middle name. Leo is pretty much my husband. And my husband, unlike myself, is an introvert. He's shy and he's quiet. And we were just talking one day about life and how his childhood was growing up in Vancouver, Canada. And he's always just been quiet. He talked about how he just kind of felt like he was never really a part of the classroom experience.

And that really bothered me because then I was thinking about, well, how many kids like that have been in my classroom? And I was approached by Lee Wade, who's an editor at Random House, and she's like, "We really want a book about kindergarten." I was thinking and thinking about kindness and my husband's experience and how do we help tell the story of those kids who are shy and quiet and introverted, but are so ready just as they are for the experiences of school? That's where "KINDergarten" came to be.

Emily: That's awesome. I'm curious a bit about, since you mentioned you teach pre-K and you have taught kindergarten, a bit about maybe using this in the transition to kindergarten for the preschoolers heading up?

Vera: Now is that time where those four- or five-year-olds about to transition in to kindergarten are getting antsy. They're ready for the next thing, they're so prepared, they've gone through a year of school, they want the next big bite. I think this is a great way to talk about, you're going to go through this experience and you may feel like you're not ready. You might feel like you don't know how to read all the words, you don't have to count all the numbers, but you're ready just as you are. As long as you approach things with this attitude of like, "I can do it, and if I can't, I know I can ask for help," then you're already ready. And I think it's a great story to read to pre-K into K just as a reminder of like, you're ready, you can do this. Kindness and being thoughtful to others is the true way to be ready for school.

Emily: When you're reading this, how do you keep your students engaged with the story?

Vera: Well, one thing that I had no part in, because Joey Chou was the illustrator, so I was just... Not just, but I was the writer. Joey did a fantastic job of weaving his own interpretation of the story through the illustrations. And as I go through the story, I read it, and then the kids, of course we talk about it, but then I go back and I say, "Let's look at it again." And if you notice Leo from the first part of the story till the end of the story, the hoodie he's wearing starts to come off.

And there's a moment at the end of the book where clearly he's so proud and he's beaming. It says "Leo stands in wonder," which is my favorite line in the story. But that, coupled with his progression throughout the story, his confidence that builds — I love to have that second look and take them back through the story again to be engaged through the illustrations. It's my favorite part.

Emily: That's awesome. Vera, thank you so much for being here with us today.

Vera: I'm so happy to be here. Thank you.

Emily: And check out your Viewer's Guide for the case for "KINDergarten" and for other great books for the transition to kindergarten. Thanks, everyone.

Vera: Thank you.

[Video ends]

Gail: Thank you, everyone, for staying a little bit extra with us.

Saameh: Thank you for joining us throughout the entire season, and we look forward to seeing you again in October.

Gail: Absolutely, and if you want to watch this again, or any of the other episodes, you can find them on Push Play.

Saameh: Thank you so much.

