

AIAN Education Manager Webinar Series: February 2013

Vanessa Maanao French: This is Vanessa and Sher'ee. We're really happy you're able to join us on a Friday afternoon for a quick webinar on supporting children with challenging behaviors.

And we always like to start with introductions, and so, I'll go first really quickly. My name is Vanessa Maanao French, and I work here in Seattle at the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. And that little kiddo with me is my daughter, Cecelia.

Sher'ee Maxwell: And she is so cute. Just like her mama.

Vanessa: Thanks.

Sher'ee: This is Sher'ee Maxwell. And welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us. I am a Tribal Liaison here at the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. And the photo that you see of me is with Lillian, who is my mother-in-law, and she's soon to turn 99, and she's very spry and spunky, and I adore her and like to share her with everyone as often as possible. So, Mitakuye Oyasin, and thank you for joining us.

Vanessa: And we have two other wonderful women to be sure that we include in our introductions, because without them, these webinars would not go nearly as smoothly, or as beautifully as they do. So, Dawn and Susan?

Dawn Williams: Hi, everyone; this is Dawn. Those are my two little girls there with me. They're two and four years old, and they keep me very active and grounded in the work that I do as a Curriculum Specialist. So, if you need any support, please let us know.

Susan Stewart: Hi, and this is Susan, and I'm back here to provide support as well. So, give us a holler through the questions panel if you have any questions or need anything. And I'll turn it back to Vanessa and Sher'ee.

Vanessa: Thank you, so much. And just so everybody knows, we are recording these webinars, because our goal is to eventually put them somewhere online and archive them so you can go back again and again to retrieve this information or share it with others. And also, along with that, as you're thinking and going through this webinar and you have questions, even if they're not on our topic today, feel free to make full use of that questions box, because we have Dawn and Susan behind the scenes, ready to answer questions along the way. So, they're there for you.

Sher'ee: Yes, so, our time together. Once again, we like to start by just summarizing our time together with you today, which is to first reflect on ways we can support the success of all children in our program. To offer resources to support the work that you are already doing out there. And to learn from each other, drawing on your own knowledge and experiences.

Vanessa: And as you guys know, this webinar is going to be focused on challenging behaviors, but it's important that we start with some basic assumptions about our topic today. And the first basic assumption is that challenging behavior usually has a message underneath it. And perhaps that child is trying to express that they're sad, that they're -- or that they're bored, or that they're sad or that they just need some attention.

Sher'ee: Mm-hmm. Yes, and I just have to say for a second that first photo of that girl looked so familiar. It looks like my daughter, when she doesn't get what she wants. But, so some basic assumptions is that children often use challenging behavior when they don't have the social or communication skills they need to engage in more appropriate interactions

Vanessa: And I'm sure you guys know this is true, that behavior that persists over time is providing the child with something that they need. So, those challenging behaviors do repeat themselves over and over and over again. And we should note that this repetition of behavior can be positive or negative, depending on how it's reinforced.

Sher'ee: That's right.

Vanessa: So, our work is to provide the child with positive options to replace those challenging behaviors. That brings us to our topic. How do we support those kiddos? And, you know, Sher'ee and I have talked about this, as we've planned this webinar, that 45 minutes to an hour is really not enough time to cover this topic. We could spend weeks, months, or even earn a Ph.D. over just this very topic. And so our goal today is to -- well, we can't solve the problem in 45 minutes to an hour, but our goal

today is to kind of focus on a couple of key strategies, but really showcase some resources that can really help you for the long haul. And we've selected four, in particular, that we really like; so, let's get started.

Sher'ee: I'm ready. So, first we'd like to share your experience and ask you what challenging behaviors push the buttons of your teachers? And examples that we have here on our slide include biting, spitting, or whining, none of which we do right here, but you may be familiar with it. So, and as a reminder and to guide our webinar's newcomers, please, you can use the question box to add your thoughts. And it is found on your GoToWebinar control panel.

Susan: So, I'm hearing things like hitting, biting, whining. Someone leaving circle. Whining and tattletaling, yeah.

Sher'ee: Yep.

Vanessa: Yeah, tattletaling didn't come up yesterday, but that's on my list.

Sher'ee: Pushing came up yesterday. Yeah.

Susan: Got some fighting going on.

Sher'ee: Okay.

Susan: Thank you all for your contributions.

Sher'ee: Yeah, thank you.

Vanessa: Perfect!

Sher'ee: Okay, so questions to reflect on. How do we suspect these behaviors may make your teachers feel? So, we will not be asking you today to submit your answers online for these questions, but we do want to give you some time to think about each of these. The behaviors you shared with us range in intensity, and each may have an impact on your teachers. So, how do you think these behaviors make your teachers feel? How might this impact the teacher's relationship with the children who exhibit challenging behaviors? And what possible impact might it have on the teacher-parent relationship?

Vanessa: And, Sher'ee, these are really great questions. And I think we all know this as managers and directors and maybe even some teachers who are out there participating in the webinar today, that teachers strive really to do their very, very best work, but even the most experienced, most knowledgeable teacher has that push-button behavior.

Sher'ee: That's right, we all do.

Vanessa: That can eventually impact the relationship they have with the child and that child's parents. And teachers can then feel frustrated and angry. Or even worse, they feel helpless or hopeless in the situation. And as a result, teachers may avoid the child or may even feel even feel relieved when that child doesn't show up for school on a day. And teachers may even feel frustrated with the parents, or even blame them for the child's behavior.

Sher'ee: Yes, I agree with you. And these feelings and thoughts that the teachers have just only serve as barriers to that healthy, positive relationship that they would like to have with the child and parents. And also the stress of these feelings may have an impact on job performance and morale of the teacher. So, it's important to shift our focus. And what can we do? How can we see the child and the child's needs underneath the disruptive behavior that we've been talking about? So, what Vanessa and I were discussing is shifting our focus. And that's what we'd like to talk with you about today, is shifting that focus to avoid these negative impacts. We need to shift our focus and discover what is really needed by the child. Is it an unmet social need or a missing social skill? Would this change our attitude and our approach, if we could see the child as yearning for a positive attachment with an adult or struggling to build a friendship with a peer? Would this change our attitude and approach? It would mine.

Vanessa: It would mine, too.

Sher'ee: Yep. Would we be proactive instead of reactive? Could we find the ways to be proactive, finding ways to fill this need and teach the social skills needed to create those friendships rather than being reactive?

Vanessa: That's really going to be the key for us today, is really looking at a proactive way to respond.

Sher'ee: Mm-hmm. So, let's practice shifting our focus by reframing these problem statements that we've all talked about and shared earlier to find the child's unmet emotional need or missing social skill.

Vanessa: And so, the first one we're looking at now is the problem statement that I'm sure folks are familiar with: "I have to watch her like a hawk or she'll run down the hall or go out the gate, down the street, and I don't know where." I've definitely had runners.

Sher'ee: Are you talking about me?

Vanessa: So, we could reframe this. And we could reframe this to: She's an active child. I mean, just quite simply, she's a very active child. So, if that was our new reframing of this problem behavior, that certainly shifts our focus in thinking proactively about, well, this is a child who's naturally a kinesthetic learner, needs to move and shake, has extra energy.

What can I do in my classroom to give her positive ways to exercise the way she loves to be? So, whether that's during circle -- not circle time -- during choice time, that there is an opportunity for her to dance, for example. Or, there's an exercise station where there's cue cards that tell you to do, you know, 15 push-ups and 26 -- 26, that's a random number -- jumping jacks, whatever that might be to help her get that energy out. So, when you're outdoors, creating opportunities for structured play.

So, now she's running with an intention; she's running as part of a game with her peers. And one more idea, especially for outdoors: If it's hard to get her back inside, to give her a leadership role. You know, maybe she's the one who has the bell that cues everybody that it's time to line up. So, she's going to make sure she finds her friends and is the one responsible for bringing the whole group together to go inside. So, again, one idea after reframing in this way.

Sher'ee: And I think that also, Vanessa, what you're saying, too, helps that child to sense that how she feels is okay. And she's being supported, acknowledged, and encouraged.

Vanessa: Absolutely.

Sher'ee: But it's positive rather than negative reinforcement.

Vanessa: Absolutely, and this is just one way to reframe a problem statement. You may have other ways of reframing this very same problem statement. So, let's try another one. And this one is my push button. "He whines from the moment he gets here, until he gets on the bus to go home."

Sher'ee: That makes for a long day.

Vanessa: But reframed, it's quite different. You know, "He must really miss his family." That's that emotional need underneath the behavior that I'm feeling and seeing and experiencing on the outside. And this reminds me that when I'm thinking about it this way and reframed is that every child enters our classroom with a different temperament. And we have those children who can walk into a room, and 20 minutes later, everybody in the room is her best friend. And then we have kids like this little guy who may be slow to warm. And it'll take him an entire year to build three friendships.

So, recognizing that every child is different. And so some key strategies, you know -- a teacher might try -- are picture schedules, you know, visuals. We're going to talk about visuals quite a bit today, but a picture schedule that shows him when he is going to be reunited with his family is one idea. Or a photo of his family taped to his cubby, so that he can kind of go back, see their faces, and get some comfort there. And then, also, writing letters and drawing, so he can share his feelings with not only his teacher, but with his family as well, when they're back together. And my favorite strategy comes from one of my teachers here in Washington State and she took the photos of those children with their family and printed it on fabric paper. And because she was in a full-day program and kids take naps, she sewed those pictures onto pillows.

Sher'ee: I love that idea.

Vanessa: So, they can cuddle up with their family, when it's time to go to sleep -- which is a time, typically, when kids most miss and feel like they need their families; so, that's perfect.

Sher'ee: Oh, I love that. I had a favorite blanket that I took with me when I was in kindergarten; but, yeah -- same thing.

Vanessa: Same thing.

Sher'ee: Okay, so now it's your turn, everyone. We'd like to know how would you reframe one of the button-pushing behaviors you shared with us earlier? And as we mentioned earlier, this time to share with us some ways you could reframe it as an unmet emotional need or missing social skill.

Vanessa: And I think the one we're going to be having you guys all kind of practice with is the child who runs out of circle time.

Sher'ee: That's right. That's a good one. And we had somebody mention that earlier, so that's a great one.

Vanessa: So, how would you reframe that?

Susan: So, the first reframe that we have is that he has difficulty expressing his emotions verbally.

Vanessa: Nice one.

Sher'ee: Yes. Very true.

Vanessa: Very, very true. I was going to say the same thing.

Susan: This is a really good question, because somebody in the questions asked, you know, how do you control children that run in the classroom, and I think this gives us the opportunity to really share with

one another different reasons that a child might be running in the classroom, especially away from circle. So, hopefully more people will share some of their thoughts, like this one is: He may need it physically. He may need something that helps him to focus. This person said that they reseated all the children and they have assigned seats, and the aide is seated behind the two that get up. So, talking about a strategy rather than the reason. And then this person asked is the circle time interesting enough?

Sher'ee: Good question. That would probably be the reason I would run. Get bored. Boredom.

Vanessa Thank you, everyone, for your participation. I think that you've really brought up some key points. I saw the one in there that said it depends on why they're running.

Sher'ee: That's right.

Vanessa: Being bored is certainly one of the reasons why a child might leave.

Sher'ee: Okay, so I would like to read this quote to everyone. "If there is anything that we can wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is something that could better be changed in ourselves." I love this one. This quote, I think, says it all. Before we look to change the child, we owe it to that child to take the time to examine if there is something we can do to create an environment and activities to better support that child. If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach.

Vanessa: If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach.

Sher'ee: If a child doesn't know how to do math, we teach.

Vanessa: If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach. I wouldn't recommend at this age. I thought it was a cute picture.

Sher'ee: I love that photo.

Vanessa: And then finally, if a child doesn't know how to behave...We teach? We punish? I mean, why is it not as easy to finish this sentence as it was for all of the others? And I think that children don't learn these things just by walking around and watching us. We have to explicitly teach children some of these social skills, these ways to be a friend, make a friend, that aren't easy. They take practice, and they certainly take support.

Sher'ee: That's right. And children need the capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults. Or said in a different way the ability to make a friend and be a friend.

Vanessa: And so we talk about what kids need to learn and to be taught. I mean, there are those key social-emotional skills that also feed into school readiness. And so, one of the first things that we need to be able to support and teach kids, give them opportunities to practice, is confidence. The ability to try new things, to take risks, and to believe that they can be successful.

Sher'ee: And the capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults, as I mentioned earlier.

Vanessa: And the ability, too, to be able to concentrate and to persist in tasks, even when they're challenging.

Sher'ee: The ability to effectively communicate emotions. And this is to be able to express their own feelings, as well as, recognize the emotions in others.

Vanessa: The ability to listen to instructions and to be attentive. You know, we think about this in the domain of language and literacy, and maybe even also in approaches to learning but it's so key in social skills and in being a friend -- I keep saying that: Being a friend and making a friend; I mean, that's the simplest way for me to say it.

Sher'ee: And finally, the ability to solve social problems, which is certainly a task a child needs to be taught through both modeling and direct instruction.

Vanessa: And the key thing to our list is that if children don't have these skills on this list, that's when these challenging behaviors tend to bubble up. So, we have to focus on teaching these very specific skills.

Sher'ee: I agree. And so what are we teaching? We are teaching and reinforcing skills all children need. The first one that we can talk about is friendship skills. And that would include teaching them how to take turns, entering and leaving play, sharing play space and toys, and pro-social language -- "thank you," "please" -- and giving and receiving compliments. Those would all be under friendship skills. The next is emotion words and feelings. And children need to learn the words for feelings and go beyond those happy, sad, and angry words to express and include other words such as confused, overwhelmed, lonely, bored, anxious. And how to recognize feelings in oneself and others.

Vanessa: And, of course, key when we're thinking about challenging behaviors is how to calm down. And that's not an easy one. One example we talked about earlier, Sher'ee, is going through your interview process to get the job you currently have. If we reacted on the feelings we were feeling inside our body, which is, you know, that tense feeling in your tummy, your dry throat, your sweaty hands, your can't think quite straight, your heart is pumping out of your chest. If we reacted to what was going on inside our bodies, our instinct would be to get up and run. Which is exactly what our kids do, when they're feeling anxious or angry is their body tells them to do something, and we learn through practicing and through learning from others that this moment will pass, that we can be calm in this moment and there are other options to be able to express how we feel. And that's certainly true when we're thinking about how we control anger and our impulses. And then finally, problem solving. We're going to show some really nice tools and techniques, as part of our presentation today. So, I'm going to quickly just say that and move us on.

Sher'ee: Okay. So, we've covered some things so far. But I've found this kind of layout for thinking about challenging behavior to be helpful. And it worked out perfectly that we were talking about challenging behavior before and, specifically, a child who leaves circle.

Vanessa: Mm-hmm, right.

Sher'ee: And so we have little Jack, who does just that. And what this grid does nicely is it kind of gives us the space to reflect and write down why we think this might be happening. What's the underlying social need that's not being met, or the skill that's not there yet, right? And then next is how could we prevent this behavior? What can we do to be proactive? And then, finally, what are the new skills that

we can help Jack learn? So, one thing that may be happening for Jack is that he's bored. And that was actually one of the responses that we got. Circle time is boring.

Sher'ee: Mm-hmm; it can be.

Vanessa: So, what can we do to prevent this behavior? You know, one idea is to give him a job during circle time. That's certainly one idea. Another idea is to find out what Jack really likes and embed it into circle. Make it not boring but really interesting to Jack. And the other is to have a picture schedule that shows him when his favorite part of circle is going to happen. And I think also being able to predict all of the elements of circle time may help him to attend.

Sher'ee: Right.

Vanessa: So, what about those new skills we would hope to teach Jack? Well, one is to indicate when he's finished with an activity. And we included this one, because you can't expect Jack to go from Monday no circle to Tuesday, Wednesday, or even Thursday, participating completely the entire time in circle. This is going to happen in a series of small but meaningful victories. We're going to build on Jack's success slowly. And so it can be that Jack has a signal that he lets us know, you know, "Okay, I'm done with circle time now, but I've sat here for the first two activities of circle, and now I'm ready to go to my other place where I get to go and do something that is appropriate."

Whether it's reading books by himself or drawing, whatever you choose, but that's definitely a skill, to be able to show when he's done with an activity. Of course, our ultimate goal is that he's able to attend for longer and longer periods of time, which is a skill in and of itself, and that he is there for the entire circle time. So, one thing that we have on the bottom of this grid is that it's empty, right? We can have many, many rows for this grid, because this "he is bored" is one guess. Unless we asked Jack and he directly told us, "I'm bored," which he could tell us, and then we can still build this out -- and he might be able to help us fill out this chart -- you know, there are other reasons why he may be disruptive during circle. It could be he doesn't know what to do in circle, which is a completely different set of how to prevent this behavior and new skills to teach. So, this grid is just, again, a nice way to think and be truly reflective and make a solid plan on how we're going to support Jack.

Sher'ee: And what I like about this idea, Vanessa, is that it also shows respect to Jack and his feelings and emotions. And instead of trying to have him act or be in a particular way, he has some choice. And it can support him in really expressing his own needs and what he wants.

Vanessa: Absolutely.

Sher'ee: In a positive way.

Vanessa: We do talk about individualizing instruction, and this is -- we have to individualize instruction for circle time.

Sher'ee: That's right.

Vanessa: Which brings me to the house.

Sher'ee: Perfect.

Vanessa: And we have this slide in particular in each of our webinars, because truly our work is all focused on effective practice and our house framework. And today we're primarily going to be talking about the foundation of the house, which is engaging interactions and environments. And specifically within the foundation, well-organized classrooms and social and emotional support.

Sher'ee: Very good. And we also would like to share a pyramid with you today, as well as, the house. And this is another model that you may be familiar with. It comes from the Center on the Social Emotional Foundation for Early Learning. And this pyramid model is inspired by the public health model of promotion, prevention, and intervention and may also be described as the universal, secondary, and tertiary levels.

Vanessa: So, we'll walk through this pyramid model, because we haven't walked through the pyramid the way we've walked through the house in previous webinars. And the pyramid sits on a foundation of an effective workforce. And this includes your training and professional development for staff and the systems within your program that really support high-quality early learning.

Sher'ee: The next level is called the universal promotion for all children. And these are strategies to support all children develop healthy social-emotional skills and include those two tiers that you see there on the slide.

Vanessa: And specifically those two tiers are nurturing and responsive relationships, which parallels nicely with the house social and emotional support. And high-quality supportive environments, which of course fits well with well-organized classrooms. I like it when things come together like that.

Sher'ee: I was just going to say the same thing. Gosh! Okay, what else can we say about this?

Vanessa: We can talk about the next level up, which is the targeted supports for children that are at risk for challenging behaviors.

Sher'ee: I can do that.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Sher'ee: So, this level talks about explicit guidance and teaching to develop social and emotional skills. Identifying and expressing emotion, initiating and maintaining interactions, friendship skills, and problem solving

Vanessa: And then finally we have the tertiary, or intervention, level, which is for those kids who are already exhibiting challenging behaviors. And this of course, too, makes me think about the roof of our house as well. We're going to use that individualized instruction for children. For the sake of what we're doing today, we are going to focus, like we mentioned earlier, on two key strategies or two areas within programming that can really make a difference. And before we do that, we want to kind of point out where each of them kind of lie. And so within the house framework, what we're going to talk about next is the social-emotional support. And within the pyramid model, if you're familiar with that, really fits with nurturing and responsive relationships.

Sher'ee: Both very grounding. So, let's talk about what helps us to feel grounded. One thing is social membership. And that is membership, belonging, that feeling of belonging, acceptance and positive

relationships. And also in the community, to have a sense of belonging and acceptance is something we as human beings need to thrive, regardless of our age.

Vanessa: Yes.

Sher'ee: Membership is important for all children. Even if we think about our own lives, you know, what groups -- what groups are you a member of? Your family group, your friendship group, your groups based on a shared interest or a hobby. And just going back to membership being important for all children and really for all people, even you and me, Vanessa.

Vanessa: You know, and I was just thinking about that, that it really makes a difference to me if I feel imbalanced with my membership participation. If I'm getting a lot of work-colleague interaction but not enough family interaction, I feel unbalanced.

Sher'ee: Yes.

Vanessa: And so finding that balance is also important, but membership is so key.

Sher'ee: So, for children with challenging behavior, membership is the foundation, or as we talked about, another way to think about that is grounding, for positive peer relationships and social skill development. For children exhibiting challenging behavior, membership is, you know, it's really those friendship skills and those positive peer relationships that we're going to focus on right now.

Vanessa: Yeah, you know, it can be key to turning a child around. One positive friendship, one really strong attachment to a teacher can make all the difference

Sher'ee: Can build that confidence.

Vanessa: So, we have some questions to consider, as we think about membership, and these might be questions that your teachers might take and reflect on their own. And before I forget to mention this -- and if we did forget to mention this already -- that we are going to send out a copy of this on PowerPoint after this webinar is concluded, so, just know that you'll have these questions if you want to

share them with your team later. So, the first reflection question is does every child feel that they are an important member of the classroom community? And if I could highlight, underscore, italics, anything I need to do to really focus in on that word "important."

Sher'ee: Mm-hmm.

Vanessa: It's not just that that child shows up, it's that that child -- people miss that child when they're not there. How are key friendship skills taught intentionally to children? And for those of you that have, like, published curriculum, you probably have some nice guidelines and some ways to kind of bring that into your curriculum, but it's a question to think about. And then finally, are there different strategies to teach those same skills to kids who are already exhibiting challenging behaviors? Messaging and teaching it one way may not work for all children.

So, the Head Start Center for Inclusion has an overarching goal to increase the competence, confidence, and effectiveness of staff in Head Start programs to include children with disabilities. And there are resources for teachers and classroom staff, facilities coordinators, supervisors and coaches, family service folks, and for families. So, we're really going to encourage you to check out this website. And the other reason, too, is that it's part of our National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning. And it includes some great resources. We've talked about the in-service suites that we have at NCQTL. And it's very similar, what they have for the Head Start Center for Inclusion. And they'll have some videos that are 15 minutes long and some great resources that you can grab and go. They've got additional video clips where you can see some of these key strategies being really just demonstrated in a live classroom. The print and go resources are probably my favorite, and we're going to share some with you in just a second. And even more and more and more helpful stuff. So, this is one example of other really, really helpful stuff. And it's a resource for families in particular, but I can see how this could be used for teachers as well in the classroom.

So, these tip sheets are wonderful in that they look at very specific behaviors and give the "what you can do" after it. So, in this one, in particular, we pulled out for you is around transition. And it says, "Help, my child yells, cries, and throws things whenever there's a change in activity." And then there's the what you can do, and things that you probably already do in your classroom. But this might be something really nice to be able to share with a family.

Sher'ee: I certainly could've used this tip sheet when my children were younger.

Vanessa: I can use it now. My child is two. The print and go resources, I pulled just a couple for us to look at. This one is kind of like a choice map, where you have these problem solving ideas and good examples that kids can understand about how they might solve a problem. So, if these children are arguing over a toy, for example, here are some options: You can ask nicely, you can flip a coin, which I thought was great, or you can do "eenie, meenie, miney, moe" to figure out who gets to play with it.

So, this is one example of those print and go resources. And here's another. And we talked about learning how to calm down. When those things that are going on inside our body that we don't quite understand yet, like the sweaty hands, the heart pumping happens, what can you do to slow everything down? And this choice map gives some nice ideas. You can bounce a ball, blow some bubbles. My favorite is doing the chair push-ups. Never did that when I was a teacher. I think that's a great one. Because you have all that extra energy, and where do you put it?

Sher'ee: Right.

Vanessa: And chair push-ups is one great way -- a contained way, might I add. So, these are two quick examples of those print and go resources. And then one more is this, because it goes back to membership, that we were talking about earlier. And how do you ask a friend to play? I mean, that is truly a social skill that we need to really teach, support, and give children opportunities to practice. It's not something that -- you know, my child is a toddler now. Asking to play is not what she does. She just plays and takes. So, I'm going to be using this -- my print and go -- as well. But it gives children options. And what I love about this one in particular is that they're photos of real children. And so what I would encourage you to do is to go and visit the site, check out these print and go resources, but make them on your own. I think about this one in particular; it's something to reinforce what you're already doing in your circle time during your small groups. You know, teach these skills. Have kids role-play. Take pictures of them role-playing these new skills and make it into a classroom poster. I think it'd be fabulous.

Sher'ee: Well, and what I really like about this idea is that the teacher doesn't have to be telling them, reminding them all the time. With those printed pictures, the kids can just look at them at any point in time and make those smart choices for themselves without any conversation.

Vanessa: Absolutely. So, I've put the website up there for you to jot down really quickly. And I think that at the end of our webinar, Susan and Dawn will include them in that chat box. So, at the end of the webinar, if you want to go to one of the sites we'll be sharing today, you can do so with just one quick click.

Sher'ee: I like it.

Vanessa: Yep; so there it is. Hope everybody had time to write it down. Five, four, three, two, one.

Sher'ee: They're going to get the PowerPoint, Vanessa.

Vanessa: There you go.

Sher'ee: Okay, alright, let me talk about this. I love this website. It's called TACSEI, or challengingbehaviors.org. And some of you out there may be familiar with this website. It's a Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention. And again, this website is posted for you to write down now, but remember, you'll also get a PowerPoint; so, you can have it then as well. This next slide talks about some examples of a resource, and this is on recommended practices for preventing challenging behavior in young children. There are many more articles, handouts, and even recorded webinars that you can find here.

Vanessa: I'm going to probably say this way too many times, but explore these websites. They are fantastic. And here's one example of a tool you might want to use next week in your classroom as you observe your teachers. And it's an inventory of practices for promising social and emotional competence. It is a long title, but very practical. We talked about membership specifically a little earlier, and one of the examples they have in this inventory just around membership is: Does the teacher greet children when they arrive, calling them by name.

Sher'ee: That's important.

Vanessa: It's important it seems so very simple. And what I ask people to do out there in webinar land is to think about the time you walked into a room and people didn't acknowledge you. How did that make you feel? And when we think about this happening on arrival, what does that do for the child, and how does it set that child up for the rest of their day? Saying hello and, "I'm so glad to see you." If they were missing the day before, "I missed you!"

Sher'ee: Yes, to acknowledge that. It's so important.

Vanessa: It makes them feel so good to be missed. Okay, we're going to move on. Going to go on a little bit higher up the pyramid, and we're going to stay in the foundation of the house. Shift a little bit in the house to well-organized classrooms, but shift up in the pyramid to high-quality supportive environments. And we're going to look specifically at transitions, because I have found, as a teacher and as an Education Manager that this is where challenging behavior seems to bubble up, especially when those transitions are long. If kids aren't quite clear that they know what to do during those transitions, if the transitions are boring, that can certainly leave space for challenging behaviors. So, one of the first things that we can think about is trying to determine: Do we need this transition? Is the transition too long? Are we creating wait time for kids that's unnecessary?

Sher'ee: Good question.

Vanessa: And we kind of mentioned this already, but do the children know what to do during the transition? And I think about those kids that are with us at the beginning of the year, and teachers are really good about being intentional about teaching, you know, how do we line up, one behind another; we have our little space bubbles. There are all those different ways and strategies we teach kids how to line up. But does that still happen for the kid that comes in November? Does it happen for the kiddo that comes in January? Because they won't necessarily know what to do next.

And kids are good with reminders, you know? And if it gets to the point where they can remind each other -- that's perfect, that's what you want. But build in time to really reinforce the expectation of what you want during those transitions. And then finally, make it visual. Daily schedules are fantastic, even during transitions, so, kids know what's happening next. Why are we doing this? Why are we washing our hands? Oh, yeah, that's right, lunch is next. Okay, all those things make a difference.

Sher'ee: Yes. This daily schedule worked really well with my son when he was in preschool and daycare. My daughter, the vocal one, didn't need it. But my son definitely took advantage of it, so very important.

Vanessa: Again, we have some questions for teachers to consider. We may want to eliminate some unnecessary transitions and definitely want to decrease wait time. So, one of the first questions is, is the transition necessary? You know, I had a teacher who had about five transitions from the time the child got off the bus until they all sat down for breakfast. There were five things they had to do within that

time, whether it was washing hands or everybody taking out their journal and then writing for a little while, getting back up again, going to circ-- I mean, it was literally five transitions within a half an hour.

Sher'ee: That's a lot for that age group.

Vanessa: Yeah, and she felt like she was herding cats, literally. It was like, come on! And she whittled it down to two, and it made so much sense. You know, the kids, after she changed things, the kids arrived and everybody went to journal time. And it was just journal time on a big mat, and everybody sat together; she could sit with the kids on her lap. And they would be, you know, just sharing what they did the night before. Much more relaxed. Much more relaxed. It just made sense. So, she eliminated at least three or four of those transitions.

Sher'ee: Nice example. So, the next question, is the "whole group" transition necessary? Or can children transition in small groups or individually, as they wash their hands or go to the bathroom?

Vanessa: You know, and do you always need the whole group together to start an activity? I mean, or can kids, when they arrive at circle, be able to do something while they're waiting, for example?

Sher'ee: And do teachers always need to facilitate the activities? Plan activities that children can get started on their own, for example, is another way to get around everyone starting at the same time. And children can choose books to read or write in journals, as you said, Vanessa, or by themselves while they wait for other children to join circle.

Vanessa: Still more resources. More and more and more. Actually, not more and more. Maybe just two more. So, Sher'ee will talk about our favorite one.

Sher'ee: Okay. Oh, this is my favorite one.

Vanessa: And we don't just say that because we work for NCQTL.

Sher'ee: No, we actually enjoy this one. This is called our in-service suites. For those of you who have been on some of the other webinars with us, you've heard about them. The question you may be asking

is how do I take these ideas back to my teachers? So, this is our favorite resource to answer that question. And each of which can be presented in about an hour or less. They have been designed to require very little preparation by you, the facilitator. They include presenter notes that help guide you through each slide and each learning activity. There are handouts ready to be printed and shared, and there's even tools for you to use when you observe in the classroom or meet with your teachers to provide that ongoing feedback and support to your team that we've been discussing earlier.

To keep proactive focus, we will look at the foundation of the house in-service suites, and specifically the well-organized classrooms that you talked about, Vanessa. In this area, we have nine training modules, beginning with "Behavioral Expectations." There's "Classroom Rules, Designing Early Childhood Environments," "Redirecting Behavior," "Schedules and Routines," "Selecting Classroom Materials," "Teacher-to-Teacher Talk," "Transitions in the Classroom," and "Zoning."

Vanessa: That is an amazing list.

Sher'ee: Good list.

Vanessa: And they're all really well done; so, they're worth looking at each individually. And so Sher'ee did mention that there are tools for you specifically as supervisors to use while meeting with your teachers or you're in the classroom observing. And I kind of just took one really quickly so we could take a peek at it. And this one is on Zoning. And this is really to be used while you're observing in the classroom, and it includes some questions to guide your observation, and here's one example. Is the classroom organized in a way that helps children understand the expectations in various learning centers? Next over on this tool is examples, which are fantastic.

So, you can really kind of get a sense of what you're looking for. And so the examples here are the teacher has explained or modeled how to interact with the materials. Or the physical boundaries between play areas are clear. And then finally, on this tool is a space for you to write your own observations. And what I like about this tool in particular with the questions to kind of guide your thinking, really keep you focused is one thing I like. But I also like the examples. Because, then when you're debriefing and talking with your teacher, you can talk about what you saw the questions that were guiding what you were looking at in the room and then also examples of what it can look like in the room. It just really helps enrich the conversation that you'll have.

Sher'ee: So, next we would like to remind you to call your ECE Specialist, who can help you with the in-service suites. If you are interested in looking at any of these modules, your ECE Specialist can help you connect with that. And I know they're ready and waiting. Our goal is to have these also available online. So, right now we are proud to say that we have eight total suites available online, and two within the area of well-organized classrooms. And that includes the Teacher-to-Teacher Talk and Zoning, as Vanessa was discussing.

Vanessa: And it's important to note, too, that things change almost daily on ECLKC, or "e-click," depending on where you're from and how you pronounce it. And so it's worth it to go back and revisit the site again and again. I do remember that the group of us were all working on a webinar together and we clicked on e-click and were like: "Oh, my gosh there are two more there!" We were so excited. So, you know, things are coming up slowly, but they are going to be all there for you hopefully soon. So, check again and again. But again, your ECE Specialist has them all.

Sher'ee: Yes.

Vanessa: So, you know, we've been using the pyramid model throughout our presentation today, and CSEFEL really is the birthplace of that model. And so we want to be sure you have this website as well. It has fantastic, fantastic resources. And we could spend literally weeks going through the resources that are available through CSEFEL. And what I wanted to note for you all is that people are probably most familiar with their work in birth to three, but they have some wonderful resources for preschool as well. And here's just one example. You know, they've got this training module -- it's actually one of several modules that are all around preschoolers. You know, and this one, great title, "Individualized Intensive Interventions: Determining the Meaning of Challenging Behaviors." And that's really where we tried to start our presentation today, is getting to that unmet need beneath the behavior. And then this takes it in more detail and then gives more strategies to really support teachers in the classroom and ultimately support the kiddos in the classroom. And this is one PowerPoint presentation of many. And there are handouts and video clips, presenter's notes. I mean it's --

Sher'ee: It makes it easy.

Vanessa: Makes it easy; it makes it accessible. And it's all available online.

Sher'ee: So, we are near the end of our webinar, and we do have some closing messages that we'd like to share with you. The first and the most important thing that we can do is to build positive relationships with every child and family. Focus on prevention and teaching appropriate skills.

Vanessa: Promoting social emotional development is not easy, and there are no quick fixes to challenging behaviors. You know, we're investing in kids for the long term, and we're going to have to take our time with this. And they deserve our time.

Sher'ee: Mm-hmm. And it requires a comprehensive approach that includes building relationships, evaluating our own classrooms, behaviors, and our own teaching.

Vanessa: And for those that have been with us from the beginning, you know that our tradition is to share a quote to end our time together. And we do appreciate your time. We know how busy you all are. And our quote today is: "A teacher affects eternity; she can never tell where her influence stops." I think this is an important one to hold onto, especially when we're thinking about kids with challenging behaviors.

Sher'ee: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Vanessa: So, thank you, everyone, for your participation. We have our contact information up if you have other questions that didn't quite make it onto our webinar during our time today. Feel free to reach out to either of us.

Sher'ee: At any time.

Vanessa: At any time, yes. Thank you, Sher'ee.

Sher'ee: And thank you for sharing your time with us today on this Friday afternoon. We really appreciate it, and we appreciate your input and your -- sharing your ideas and thoughts with us. Thank you. Have a great weekend.

Vanessa: Have a great weekend. It's raining in Seattle. Hopefully you have better weather wherever you guys are. But yes, have a wonderful and restful weekend.