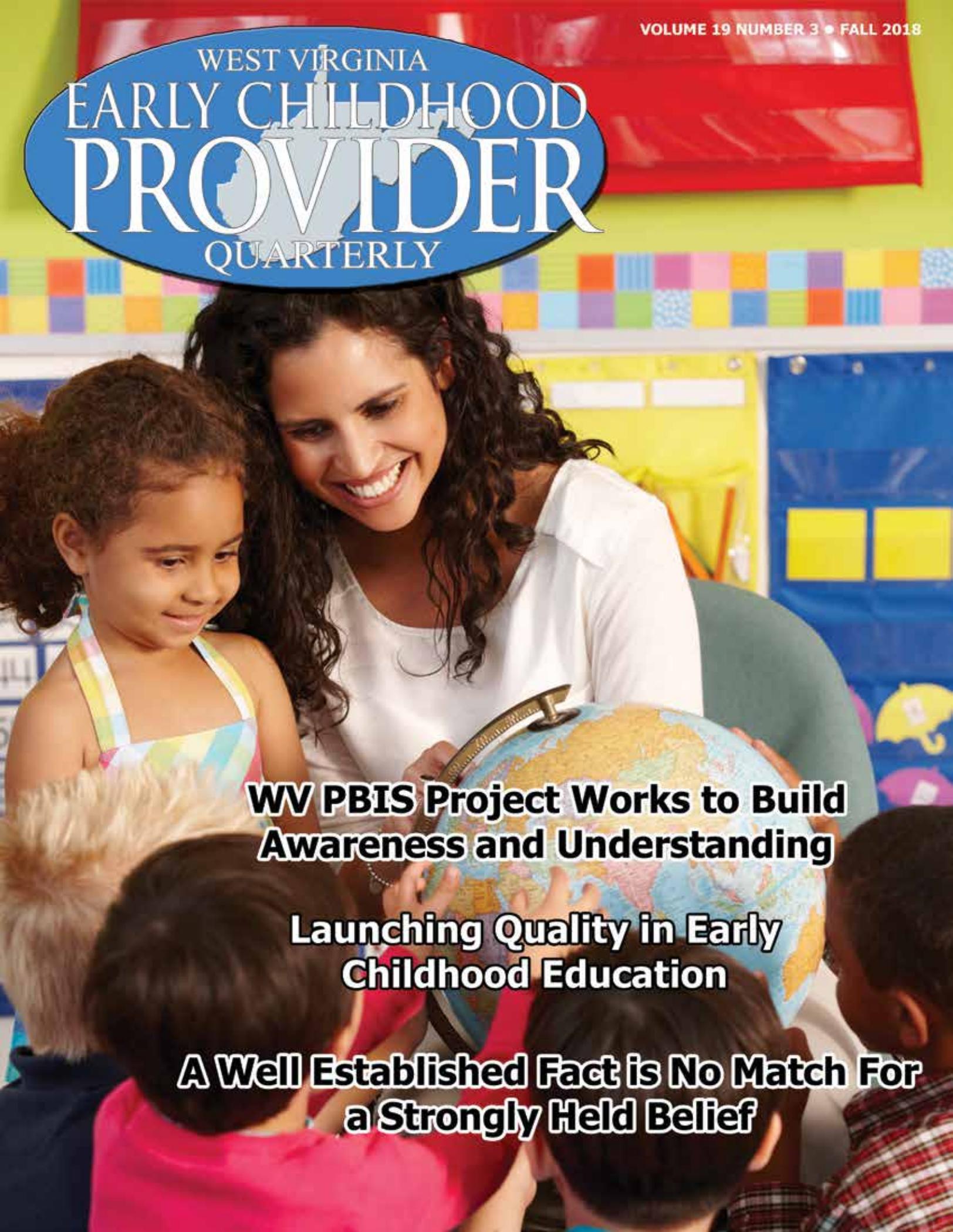


WEST VIRGINIA  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
**PROVIDER**  
QUARTERLY



**WV PBIS Project Works to Build  
Awareness and Understanding**

**Launching Quality in Early  
Childhood Education**

**A Well Established Fact is No Match For  
a Strongly Held Belief**

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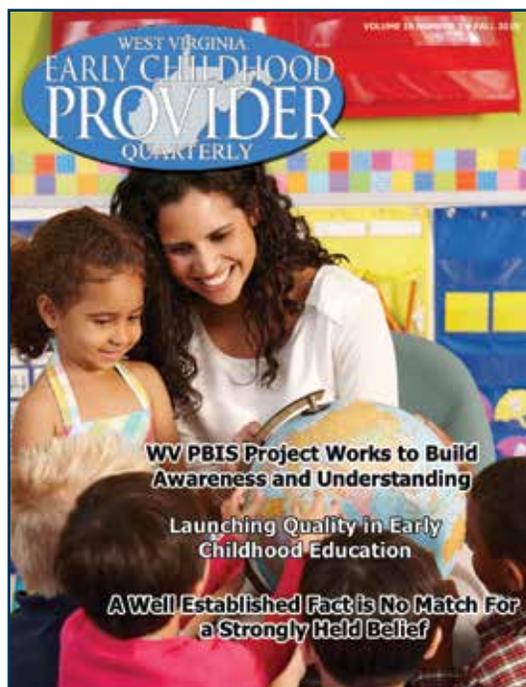
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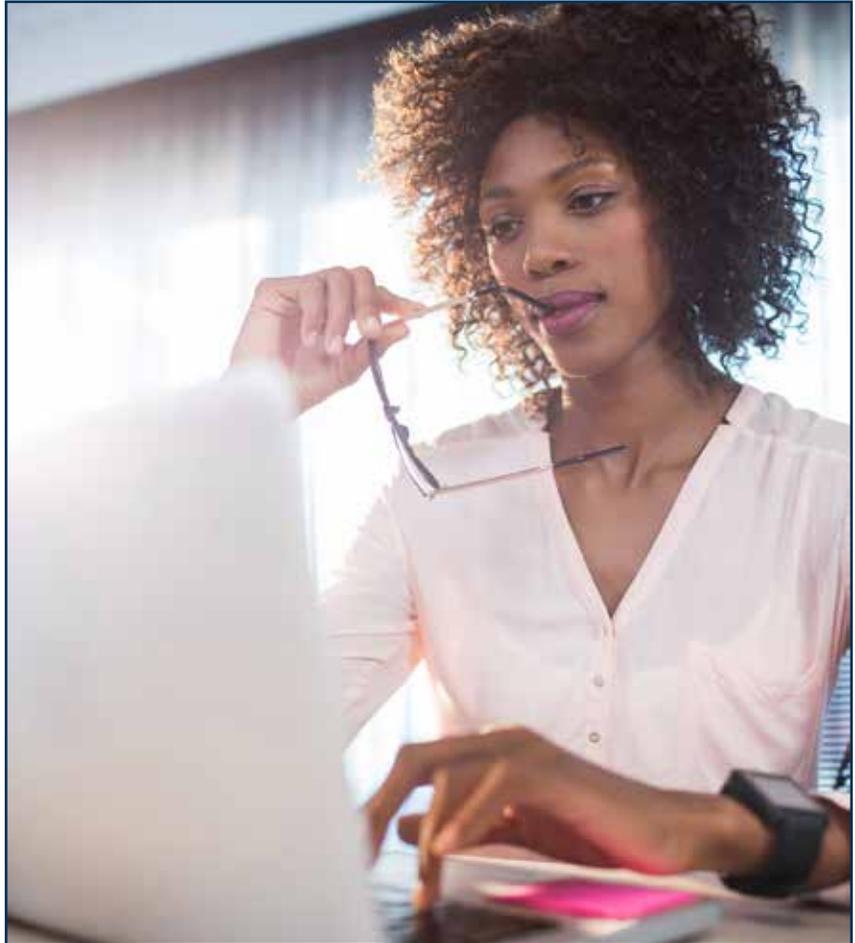
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# A Well Established Fact is No Match For a Strongly Held Belief

Submitted by Saun Floyd, Early Care and Education Consultant

The earth is unquestionably round. Some believe it is flat. Man has verifiably been to the moon. Some believe it is an elaborate hoax. It is a fact that “colds” come from viruses, yet many believe in keeping children inside (with the viruses) when the temperature is down to avoid them “catching” a cold (colds catch us). Many young children believe a fairy takes their teeth and a heavy-set, white-bearded, red-clad man comes to every house in the world on one night. These are but a few beliefs stubbornly held, despite the evidence proving them wrong. Fortunately, a child’s belief in a tooth fairy wanes with cognitive development. Challenging an adult’s beliefs, whether based on facts or myths, may actually strengthen them. Our beliefs define us. Changing them changes us.

Dogs can sense a human’s emotional state. In fact, some have the emotional intelligence of a toddler and can be empathetic. Most dog owners can recall a time (while upset with their pet) when their dog’s demeanor suggested, “oops, yep, I did that.” Dogs are keenly attuned to human emotion; however, that does not give them human reasoning or intelligence, but we do! My father believed our dog was shy because she lowered her head when approached. In fact, she really loved having her back rubbed. Her head? Eh, not so much. There was no convincing dad. He believed, beyond any shadow of doubt, she was sweet and shy. It was a hurtless belief, not worth a debate, so I agreed...that she was sweet. Very sweet.



In a former life as a therapist, I was once told in a hushed voice, by a very dear lady, that her dog had said “mom.” She believed it strongly, passionately, and would not be convinced otherwise! Facts be damned! Her dog loved her, understood her, and had finally...spoken to her (my concerns were passed along). We consistently ascribe or project onto animals human thoughts, reasoning, feelings, and beliefs which animals do not, and cannot, possess. It is a fairly harmless practice, until sometime just before the dog starts talking. It is not so harmless when it applies to children. Unless, of course, the beliefs align with facts.

**“Adults interpret the actions, words, and expressions of children through the distorting filter of their own beliefs.”**

Bruce Perry (et al.) observes this fact in a research paper now often referred to as “States Become Traits.” We all possess this “belief filter”, and everyone’s filter is different. As a matter of fact, multiple studies have confirmed one of the difficulties in child-rearing, and child development and education, has to do with caregiver beliefs. There is neither the time or space to address the myriad beliefs that affect adult/child interactions, but beliefs, much more than facts, directly impact our emotions and

behavior. What is critical to understand is that young children are building their own belief systems based upon their experiences with the environment, other children, and the adults they interact with. When those interactions are not appropriate, a lot of things can go awry. A steady dose of inappropriate activities and adult expectations will, over time, foster a child's false belief that he or she is less than, not good enough, not smart enough. Allow a couple examples and then a true story; a fact, if you will.

**Relevance dictates attention.** That is just how the brain works. If an activity or topic is not relevant, the brain finds it antagonizing and will seek and welcome distractions. It's a brain thing. Let's imagine a three-year-old boy in circle-time. The topic/subject makes no sense to the child, days of the week, for example. This is developmentally irrelevant to the child. It could just as well be an algebra class. Other things in the room however, including his peers, are relevant. He begins to fidget, touch his friends, reach for interesting toys. Circle-time drones on for thirty minutes until he is "in trouble," expressing "challenging behavior" according to some adult's belief system. However, this is an adult "behavior problem," not a child's. The fact is, the circle-time activity is inappropriate for children three years of age. In addition, thirty minutes could possibly (meaning not likely) be an acceptable time for a great circle-time, but it is most assuredly way, way too long for a bad one.

Now consider when beliefs are aligned with facts. An infant is crying in the crib. Some would say/believe, "Let them cry it out," "They need to get over it," or "He'll learn." These are beliefs with no factual basis. But the informed caregiver knows what a neglected infant is experiencing and "learning."

Over time, the infant or child is learning "This is not a safe place. I am on my own. I cannot depend on the grownups". The fact-based caregiver will attend to the baby, comfort him, talk gently, interact, and meet his needs. This caregiver believes, based upon facts, by being warm and responsive to the infant's needs, the child will be less distressed in the future, more comfortable in the belief he is cared for, and have a budding concept of competence; he can make things happen!

Years ago, I received a referral regarding a thirty-month-old boy. This was a child bigger and stronger than his mates. He bit (usually on the face), hit, pulled hair, tackled.... He cursed his teacher daily. Parents of children who he had injured demanded he be kicked out and threatened removal of their children if he was not. The center director resisted, believing this was the boy's chance to learn new ways of being. The teacher, although emotionally overwhelmed at times, believed the child needed to be there and that she could handle it. His behavior intensified when planned strategies were employed but over time, he began to understand the expectations, his behavior became more acceptable, and his friends became more likely to interact with him. He smiled and laughed more. The last I saw him at the center, he stopped his tricycle and said, "Excuse me" to a girl in his path. Before he would have ridden into or over her. What had happened? An informed director and her staff knew what was appropriate and believed they could do it. Without facts to back them up, they might just as well have believed he was a "future criminal" and the outcome would have been sadly different. Now, the rest of the story.

Around three years later, I received a referral from an after school program. When I en-

tered the room, there he was. But he was not the reason for the referral. How far he had come! As the program coordinator described her concerns, I could not help watching him. He was sitting at a table, sorting through felt alphabet characters for the letters to spell his name. He was just some five-year-old boy, sitting in an after school program, waiting to be picked up by his mom. He was like that because a director, a teacher, and some others believed he could learn new things and they could support that learning. These were not special people with special powers (although they are special in my eyes). They believed he was worth it, and those beliefs were based on facts!

**"Whether you believe you can  
or can't, you are correct."**



# WV PBIS Project Works to Build Awareness and Understanding

Submitted by Amy Carlson, WV ECPBIS Coordinator

What is that famous saying? “It’s a tough job, but somebody has to do it?” Some may argue that popular saying can be applied in a variety of contexts. People may even say that it holds true in the field of education. Education, specifically teaching, is an incredibly rewarding and unique profession that is vital to our success as a society; however, with all of the rewards one gets from teaching, and there are many, there are also challenges. “Tough job,” you better believe it.

One factor that can make teaching a “tough” job is dealing with challenging behavior. Early childhood teachers identify challenging behaviors as one of the most difficult aspects of their jobs. It is reflected by the fact that program directors and school administrators report that they feel ill-equipped to address many of the challenging behaviors exhibited in classrooms today. Teachers are faced with the task of effectively dealing with difficult behaviors that sometime require intensive intervention. With so many of our students needing more and more of our attention, it is no wonder teachers are reporting that they need help effectively addressing challenging behavior. The good news is there is something that can help. Something that focuses on shifting the way we have traditionally viewed behavior.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a multi-tiered system of supports and framework that focuses on preventing challenging behavior. The PBIS framework gives teachers evidence-based, concrete strategies for promoting healthy social-emotional development. PBIS is a way

for schools and classrooms to encourage good behavior while promoting social-emotional development. That is the main purpose of early childhood PBIS, promotion of social-emotional development.

In PBIS, we believe that children who exhibit persistent challenging behaviors display a skill deficit. In other words, they lack the skills to act appropriately within certain contexts or situations. Therefore, PBIS focuses on teaching appropriate and/or desired behaviors. With PBIS, kids learn about appropriate behavior. PBIS views teaching social-emotional skills as vital as teaching academics.

Another shift in our thinking toward behavior is how we react to challenging behavior. PBIS focuses on teaching and prevention, not punishment. That focus may be a shift for some educators. Many of us, myself included, often blur the lines between discipline and punishment. Equating discipline with punishment is a common misconception. We often think of these two terms as synonymous, when in reality, they are very different. Discipline is defined as the act of training people to obey a set of rules. Training, or teaching, is how PBIS deals with behavior management. PBIS puts the emphasis on teaching students’ classroom rules and expectations. Discipline models, encourages, guides, and leads students in developing appropriate skills.

On the opposite side of the classroom management continuum is punishment. Punishment by definition means the infliction of a penalty as retribution for an offense.

Nowhere is teaching or training mentioned in that definition. If you believe behavior problems occur because children lack the necessary skills to act appropriately, as PBIS believes, then punishment is not an appropriate response to challenging behavior. In fact, punishment alone will not change behavior. If we want to teach our students to be problems solvers, then we must focus on solutions, not retribution. The famous parenting author, L.R. Knost, has said that, "Discipline is helping a child solve a problem. Punishment is making a child suffer for having a problem."

In April 2016, the West Virginia Department of Education renewed its commitment to supporting Early Childhood PBIS. The West Virginia Early Childhood PBIS project (ECPBIS) has worked to build capacity

across the state by increasing awareness and understanding of how PBIS can be applied in early childhood programs and classrooms across the state. Thus far, the West Virginia ECPBIS project has trained over 800 teachers, classroom aides, related service staff, and administrators on ECPBIS principles and strategies. In addition, we have supported those individuals who have attended our academy trainings through technical assistance as needed. In June 2018, ECPBIS became part of the newly formed WV Behavior/Mental Health Technical Assistance Center at the WV Autism Training Center at Marshall University. With the creation of this center we will be able to support more classrooms across our great state.

For more information about ECPBIS or the Behavior/Mental Health Technical As-

sistance Center please contact me at amy.carlson@marshall.edu. Teaching is a tough job. But, here in West Virginia we have people like you ready to take on the task. And now, I am pleased to announce that we at the Technical Assistance Center are here to help however we can.

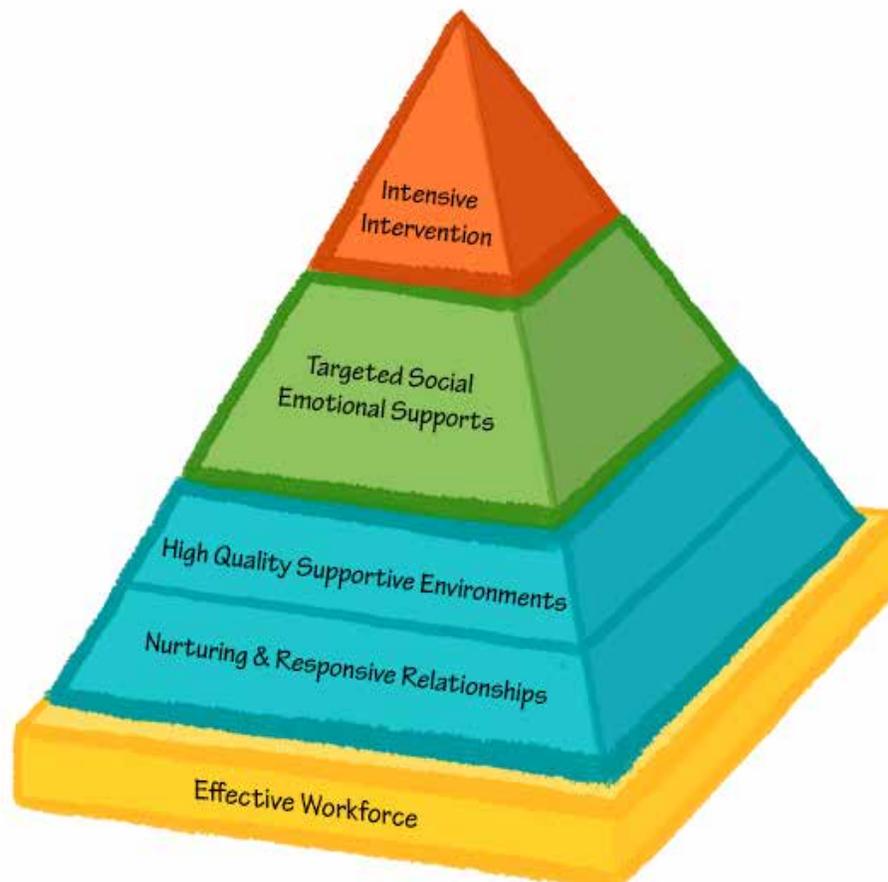
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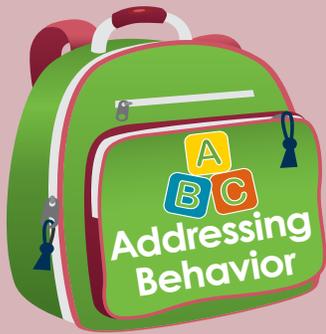
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WV ECPBIS Coordinator

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# Backpack Connection Series

## About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

## The Pyramid Model



The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

## More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).



National Center for  
Pyramid Model  
INNOVATIONS

[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

# How to Give Clear Directions

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

"Why do I have to repeat myself time and again?" "Why won't she listen to me?" Listening and following directions are important skills young children must learn. There are many reasons why children do not follow directions.

- **The child does not hear the direction.** Parents often give directions from a distance or in passing. "Lauren, get your shoes on." Did your child actually hear what you said? Just as adults often don't hear what their partner has said to them because they are focused on reading, email or talking on the phone, children too often don't hear what a parent has said because they are focused on a task such as building a tower or drawing a picture.
- **The parent gives too many directions at one time.** When you give your child too many directions at one time, it reduces the chance that she will follow the directions and increases the chance that she will be confused. "Lauren, please go upstairs, brush your teeth and pick up your blocks while I finish the dishes." This multi-step direction is too long and complicated for your child to easily understand. Instead, try giving one direction at a time.
- **The child doesn't understand the direction or the direction is too vague.** Directions such as "Settle down," "stop," or "be nice" might be too vague and difficult for your child to understand. If she is throwing toys out of the bathtub and you simply say, "Lauren," you have not actually told her what you want her to do. If you say, "stop it," it may temporarily stop the behavior, but she still may not know what you want her to do. If what you mean is, "Lauren, toys stay in the tub," then you need to explicitly tell her so.
- **The direction does not tell the child what to do.** Parents often tell children what not to do, rather than what they should do. It is important to state directions positively in order to teach your child the expectation. Instead of saying, "Stop running!", state the direction positively by saying, "Use walking feet."
- **The direction sounds like a suggestion or question.** Daily conversation is filled with questions, suggestions and directions. When you say, "Will you put your shoes away?" you are not giving your child a direction—you are asking her a question. When you give your child a direction that needs to be followed, it is essential that you tell your child what to do rather than ask. For example, "Lauren, put your shoes by the door."

## Try This at Home

- It is important to follow through when you give your child a direction. A technique you can use to make sure you do follow through when your child has difficulty complying, or following directions is Do-WAWP.
  - » Do—State the "do" direction.
  - » W—Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
  - » A—Ask the child to restate the direction.
  - » W—Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
  - » P—Provide encouragement or help (helping will ensure success).

- **Make sure that you have your child's attention.** Eye contact is a great indicator! When you state the "do" direction you



are teaching your child the desired behavior. For instance, "Lauren, go brush your teeth." When you count to five, you are giving her the opportunity to hear and process the direction. Parents often repeat the same direction over and over in that five second period. When you repeat the same direction to your child time and again, it teaches her that she does not have to follow the direction the first time. Instead, state the direction once and then have your child restate the direction back to you. This way you can confirm that she heard you and understood what you were saying. Finally, offering help may simply mean that you take her hand and lead her to the bathroom. Don't forget to encourage your child by saying something like, "Wow, Lauren, what great listening ears! Thank you for brushing your teeth."

## Practice at School

In addition to verbal instructions, teachers use many methods to give directions and help children understand expectations. These methods may include using symbols or pictures, sign language or gestures, songs, puppets, instruments, sand timers, or other tools. The more opportunities children are given to see or hear the instructions, the more likely they are to complete the task. For example, when teachers need to tell the class that it is time to go inside from the playground, in addition to words they may use a sound (e.g., ring a bell) to alert the children about this event. Children know that the sound means that it is time to line up at the door, even if they do not hear the verbal instructions. When teachers pair words with other signals, they help children to confidently and successfully participate in activities.

## The Bottom Line

Listening and following directions are skills that children learn through their daily interactions. When children do not follow directions, for any reason, it can be extremely frustrating for parents. You can increase the chances that your child will listen and successfully follow your directions when you make sure that your direction is clearly stated and you follow through.

An important consideration for parents when teaching their child to follow directions is to "pick your battles". You want to avoid insisting that your child follow directions that are not important or can escalate to a major struggle when the direction is not critical. Pick a few, very important directions that you will follow-through with your child.



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# Launching Quality in Early Childhood Education

Submitted by Micha Webb, Zion Child Development Center



Zion Child Development Center is committed to increasing the quality of child care in West Virginia. Zion's commitment escalated two years ago when applying to be a pilot program for Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health). Project LAUNCH "promotes the wellness of young children ages birth to 8 by addressing the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of their development." West Virginia's Project LAUNCH is piloted on Charleston's West Side and seeks to "improve coordination across child-serving systems, build infrastructure, and increase access to high-quality prevention and wellness promotion services for children and their families." Zion was ultimately selected for the program, and the benefits to the community and children are already tangible.

Zion is striving to change the culture of its program through implementation of the Pyramid Model, a process that takes approximately five to seven years to reach fidelity. The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development by providing Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (ECPBIS). This early childhood strategy was implemented at Zion to improve family, staff, and child outcomes related to challenging behaviors and social emotional development. Teachers are trained on strategies to help children learn positive deposits, friendship skills, understanding emotions, empathy, and problem solving, just to name a few.

While encompassing all the quality measures put in place through the Pyramid Model, Zion has also increased quality in a variety of ways since its implementation of Project LAUNCH within its program: 1) though already in line for Tier II approval when the program was initiated, Zion has increased its quality rating even more on the WV Quality Rating System; 2) implemented Strengthening Families protective factors; 3) facilitates Triple P Positive Parenting Program for their families; 4) became a Keys 4 Healthy Kids Program; and 5) created a natural outdoor learning environment to connect children to nature through their play in all developmental areas.



## Current Partnerships

Zion houses six classrooms ranging from three months old to twelve years old. Zion currently employs nineteen teachers and staff, all who are learning and implementing the Pyramid Model. Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers, Inc., (Playmates CDC) is partnering with Zion Child Development Center to teach, coach, and implement the Pyramid Model in all site classrooms by providing two staff who are West Virginia State Trainers for Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (ECPBIS).

Project LAUNCH has opened a number of doors for Zion leadership to positively affect the community:

- Zion Child Development Center now sends a member of their administration team to monthly West Virginia Pyramid Model State Leadership Team meetings in Charleston.
- Zion Child Development Center partners with the Help Me Grow program. Help Me Grow is a free referral service that helps connect children and their families with essential developmental resources. They serve children ages birth to five years old with the goal of identifying at-risk children and linking them with the appropriate services needed.
- The team also participated in Children's Day at the Legislature. Children made cards and valentines for legislators to raise awareness advocating against child care cuts.

Currently, Project LAUNCH and Zion Child Development Center partner with Strengthening Families, Family and Community Engagement Framework, Triple P– Positive Parenting Program, and Parents as Teachers. Zion and Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers work together to refer children and families to additional resources, such as West Virginia Birth to Three and Connect Child Care Resource and Referral.

Zion Child Development Center will continue to collaborate with the West Virginia Home Visitation Program (WVHVP), the Project LAUNCH Local Young Child Wellness Council, existing community organizations, health care professionals, state agencies and, the general public to ensure effective implementation of the Pyramid Model.

Building upon community partnerships, Zion and Playmates combined with center families and community agencies, such as Keys 4 Healthy Kids, to host a press conference at Zion in partnership with the Our Children, Our Future Campaign. Zion and Playmates encouraged families to take part in the event to discuss how cuts to child care assistance would affect the quality of care their children currently receive. Guests included West Virginia Senator Ed Gaunch, Jeanette Barker, and Mara Boggs (a representative from U.S. Senator Manchin's office). Invited guests included U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (and her staff) and West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Cabinet Secretary Bill Crouch (and his staff). On the following page, photos taken during the event in which parents and families collaborated to speak are included.

## Our Children Our Future Campaign



## Implementation Process

Zion Child Development Center, in partnership with Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers, Inc., have completed the following:

- Formed a leadership team
- Completed leadership trainings
- Completed Pyramid Model Trainings
- Trained on Infant/Toddler and Preschool Environmental Rating Scales
- Created center wide expectations
- Participated in weekly coaching calls
- Completed two site visits per month on program wide implementation
- Conducted pre- and post assessments utilizing TPITOS and TPOTS and assessed with the ECERS-R
- Planned and hosted a Family Kick-off event

During implementation, trainers from Playmates presented one training module per month and followed up with site visits to aid in classroom implementation. The site visits allowed for observation of teachers and children, provided time for problem solving and feedback on Pyramid Model practices, helped set up the learning environments, and provided material lists to the leadership team for the environments. Playmates CDC trainers also meet with Zion’s administration team to discuss classroom progress, staff buy-in, Pyramid Model implementation, and getting families engaged in classrooms and center practices. Zion staff is now also trained on both the ITTERS and ECERS tools. Classroom assessments will be taken to collect baseline data and begin an annual process of classroom environmental evaluations to better serve children and families, train and strengthen staff, and provide data driven training decisions.

### Center Expectations

	Outside	Transitions	Classroom
<b>Be Safe</b> <i>Keep self and others out of danger</i>	 Nice Hands and Feet	 Use Walking Feet	 Feet on the Floor
<b>Be Responsible</b> <i>Take care of self, others and our center</i>	 Use Materials Appropriately	 Stay With Your Teacher	 Take Care of Our Things
<b>Be Respectful</b> <i>Treat yourself and others with kind hands and words</i>	 Wait and Take Turns	 Eyes on Teacher and Listening Ears Open	 Use Kind Words and Actions
<b>Be Prepared</b> <i>Have your belongings, materials and yourself ready</i>	 Dress Appropriately	 Check Cubby Before Leaving	 To Be A Friend

### Data Utilized for Evidence-Based Practices

The program offers Zion a wide-range of tools to measure progress and provide evidence that the program is working.

The Early Childhood Program Wide Benchmarks of Quality checklist is designed to help programs evaluate their progress toward program wide implementation. It is completed by Zion Child Development Center’s Leadership Team in seven critical feature areas of implementation. Program leadership utilizes this checklist for a baseline and ongoing guidance during implementation to facilitate progress and fidelity. The seven critical elements in the

assessment include: establishing a leadership team; staff buy-in; family engagement; program wide expectations; professional development and staff support planning; procedures for responding to challenging behavior; and monitoring implementation outcomes.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) contains eight questionnaires which are completed by caregivers/teachers to identify the social and emotional competence of young children ages 3 to 60 months. The item content of the questionnaires addresses seven behavioral areas: self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people. The ASQ:SE is completed on each child in each participating classroom at the beginning and end of the project.

For each ASQ:SE questionnaire there are specific cutoff scores that are age determined. These cutoff scores are empirically derived scores that indicate the point at which a child's performance requires further evaluations and assessments. If a child scores at or above the given cutoff score, the child shows a potential risk in his specific social and emotional development. If the child has a lower score than the cutoff score, the child is competent in his social emotional development.

The Pyramid Infant/Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) is a tool used to measure implementation of the Pyramid Model practices in infant and toddler classrooms. It focuses on the observation of adult behaviors and environmental arrangements specific to supporting the social emotional development of infants and toddlers. The TPITOS is scored based on an observation of at least two hours with at least three children present. Zion will participate with Playmates Child Care to conduct TPITOS Assessment scores at the end of every year, measuring across four dimensions: Environment and Interactions, Play, Quality of Routines, and Transitions. These four dimensions are then measured across four points of the daily schedule: Free Play, Feeding and Mealtimes, Physical Care Routines, and Structured Group Activity.

The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) assesses the implementation of the Pyramid Model in preschool classrooms. The TPOT is scored based on an observation of at least two hours and an interview with the teacher following the observation. Observations should be conducted during structured large group and unstructured child directed time and will also be measured yearly.

Behavior Incident Reports (BIR) are recorded by teachers when a child exerts challenging behavior. A summary is provided of the total monthly frequency of behavior incidents across all demonstration site classrooms and children to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Pyramid Model. These reports are further broken down to take a closer look at the data on frequency of incidents by child, teacher, activity, type of behavior, and strategies commonly used in response to behavioral challenges. This data is used as decision making tools to determine what factors related to incidents of challenging behavior and to ensure that supports are provided to teachers and children.

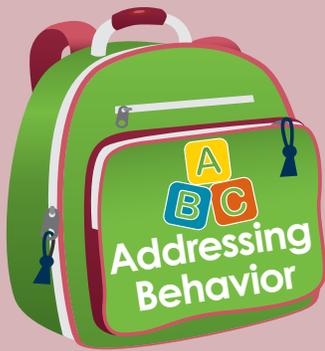
Coaching logs will allow the team to view data on coaching supports that are provided to classroom teachers.

Zion is also utilizing The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R),

The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), and The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS). These scales are designed to assess environments for children ranging from birth to twelve years of age. Each one of the scales has items to evaluate: Physical Environment; Basic Care; Curriculum; Interaction; Schedule and Program Structure; and Parent and Staff Education. The scales are suitable for use in evaluating inclusive and culturally diverse programs. The scales have proven reliability and validity.

These scales define environment in a broad sense and guide the observer to assess the arrangement of space both indoors and outdoors, the materials and activities offered to the children, the supervision and interactions (including language) that occur in the classroom, and the schedule of the day, including routines and activities. The support offered to parents and staff is also included. These scales are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care group. Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children; staff, parents, and other adults; the children themselves; and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions.

If it seems that this is a monumental undertaking, it is! But the children of the West Side are worth it. The CEO and co-director of Zion Child Development Center has nothing but positive things to say about the program and her staff. “Project LAUNCH has provided us with an amazing opportunity to affect our community and our children. We have seen tremendous growth in our staff’s abilities, the progress of our children, and our ability to affect our community. To be able to identify a child’s need and then help that child and his or her family meet that need, through available programs or on-site one-on-one help, is worth every second of hard work we put into this program. To be able to measure this progress is icing on the cake. We have an amazing staff that understands that these children are our future and they are willing to put in the time for training, even when it might not be convenient. Project LAUNCH has made a huge impact in our ability to do our jobs.”



## Backpack Connection Series

### About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

### The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

### More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).



National Center for  
Pyramid Model  
INNOVATIONS

[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

# How to Understand the Meaning of Your Child's Challenging Behavior

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

As a parent or caregiver, you may see your child behave in a way that doesn't make sense and ask yourself, "Why does she keep doing that?" It can be very frustrating, especially when it seems like it should be easy for your child to figure out on her own a more appropriate way to behave. In moments like this, it is important to remember that children continue to use a behavior because it works! Your child's behavior is a powerful communication tool that she uses to tell you what she needs or wants. Sometimes, when a child does not know the appropriate way (such as words, sign language or pointing to pictures) to express her needs or wants she may use challenging behavior (such as hitting, screaming or spitting) to communicate. Challenging behavior gives children the ability to send a message in a fast and powerful way. Children will use challenging behavior to communicate until they learn new, more appropriate ways to express their wants and needs. To change the behavior, it is important for you to first discover what is causing the behavior. If you know why your child is choosing a behavior, you can then teach her to communicate her wants and needs in a new way that everyone feels good about.

Children use challenging behavior to either:

- 1) get something, such as attention, a toy or a nap, or,
- 2) get out of doing something, such as going to bed, eating a new food or getting buckled in the car seat.

The first step you must take to help your child learn a new behavior is to determine if she wants something or wants to avoid doing something.

### Try This at Home

- **Observe.** Pay careful attention to what is happening when your child displays challenging behavior. Keep a chart to see repeated patterns in behavior. What happens before the behavior starts? What happens after?
- **Track.** Keep track of when the behavior occurs. Do you always see the behaviors just before nap time? Perhaps your child is tired and you can change your routine to include errands in the morning and quiet, at-home activities before nap time.
- **List.** Brainstorm ideas about what your child is trying to get, or avoid doing, by using challenging behavior. The more you watch your child, the more you will be able to narrow your list down to a few possible reasons why the behavior is occurring.
- **Teach.** Once you have an understanding of why your child chooses to use a challenging behavior, you can teach him a new way to behave in that situation. Pick a time outside of the situation when you can:

- » **Role play:** Use puppets, trains, dolls or other toys to act out the new skill with your child. For example, you can make the doll say, "I really want to play outside. I want to open the door and run, but Mommy says I need to wait for her. I won't scream. I will say 'Hurry up Mommy. I am ready to play.'"



- » **Read books:** Children often tell you how they are feeling when they are trying to guess how others are feeling. Ask your child questions about a character in a book as a way to start to talk about your child's own behavior. For example, "That little girl doesn't want to go to bed. I wonder why?"
- » **Talk about the situation ahead of time:** Sometimes, children simply want to know about what is planned ahead of time or to be included in the planning. Parent schedules are busy and you often need to get things done quickly. However, quick transitions can feel overwhelming to young children. If you take a few minutes to include your child in the plan, you will likely see a dramatic decrease in challenging behavior. For example, you could say, "We are going to get in the car and go to the store when you finish this puzzle. Would you like to pick a special toy to bring with you to the grocery store?"

### Practice at School

Teachers are detectives too! When a child uses challenging behavior at school, teachers watch to see what caused the behavior and then teach the child a new way to communicate. For example, Ethan is playing with cars alone when Jacob tries to grab a car from him. Ethan hits Jacob and grabs his toy back. Jacob cries. Ethan was frustrated that a friend was taking a toy from him before he was done and used hitting as a way to tell Jacob that he wanted his toy back. The teacher might say to Ethan, "You looked frustrated when Jacob took your toy. Next time, you can use your words and tell him 'It's busy. I'm still using this toy.'" Teachers can also use puppets to reinforce the skill of saying "it's busy" during circle time or during other activities throughout the day.

### The Bottom Line

It can be fun and rewarding to figure out what your child is thinking and why! The more familiar you are with how your child reacts to everyday situations, the easier it is for you to teach him appropriate ways to deal with challenges like frustration, stress and fatigue. Children who learn how to manage these situations feel more confident and are less likely to use challenging behavior to communicate their needs.



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# Utilizing Behavioral Consultants For Support

Submitted by Saun Floyd, Early Care and Education Consultant,  
and Connect Child Care Resource and Referral

Do you care for a child with challenging behaviors? You may need the support of a Behavioral Consultant.

Every child has his or her own unique personality and can make us laugh, cry, puff with pride, or make us blush. Children, like adults, learn to cope in various situations. On occasion, a child might not cope appropriately in a given situation. As a caregiver, your heart goes out to this child but you just don't know how to respond. You need help. A Behavioral Consultant is there to provide you with the assistance and support you need, at no cost to you.

What is a Behavioral Consultant? The Behavioral Consultant is a person with experience in behavior guidance and child development. The Behavioral Consultant is available to consult with:

- Family Child Care Providers
- Family Child Care Facilities
- Child Care Centers

- Pre-K and Head Start
- After school Programs
- Parents

The consultants can help with ideas on activities, suggestions, and resources on many different subject areas. These subject areas include:

- Child development
- Developmental disabilities and delays
- Special education
- Developmentally appropriate practices
- Environment
- Positive discipline
- Behavior guidance
- How a Behavioral Consultant can help

The Behavioral Consultant provides services free of charge. Assistance can be offered to you using phone conversations, sending informational packets to you based on requested subject areas, or visiting your location to discuss your needs and observe the

child of concern. Contact the consultant as soon as you become aware of a concern. No issue is too minor. Teaching children appropriate behavior is a team effort between parents and child care providers. A Behavioral Consultant adds another important link to the team.

West Virginia's six Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) are contact points for referral. WV R&R agencies provide access to a variety of professional development and technical assistance opportunities. Two Behavioral Consultants are on staff at each of the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Behavioral Consultants utilize developmentally appropriate positive child guidance methods that include prevention, promotion, and intervention strategies in addressing social emotional development and behavior concerns. Please contact your regional R&R for assistance.

1. **Child Care Resource Center**, contact: Cathy Knox, Supervisor. Cathy.J.Knox@wv.gov  
Phone: 1-304-232-1603      Toll Free: 1-800-585-1603
2. **Choices**, contact: Theresa Wascom, Supervisor. Theresa.L.Wascom@wv.gov  
Phone: 1-304-485-2668      Toll Free: 1-866-966-2668
3. **Connect**, contact: Cate Phillips, Supervisor. Cate.A.Phillips@wv.gov  
Phone: 1-304-414-4488      Toll Free: 1-88-595-8290
4. **Link**, contact: Lela Pemberton, Supervisor. Lela.M.Pemberton@wv.gov  
Phone: 1-304-523-9540      Toll Free: 1-800-894-9540
5. **MountainHeart North**, contact: Shannon Nichols, Supervisor. Shannon.M.Nichols@wv.gov  
Phone: 1-304-269-5332      Toll Free: 1-866-232-9227
6. **MountainHeart South**, contact: Joanne McCallister, Supervisor. Joanne.C.McCallister@wv.gov  
Phone: 1-303-253-7654      Toll Free: 1-888-799-9217

### **Training and Technical Assistance resources are also available on line. Some are listed below:**

- Americans with Disabilities Act: <https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm>
- Birth to Three: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23/referral.asp>
- Bruce Perry: <http://childtrauma.org/>
- Bruce Perry: <http://www.childtraumaacademy.com/>
- CASEL: <https://casel.org/>
- Conscious Discipline: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/>
- Devereux Center for Resilient Children: <https://www.centerforresilientchildren.org/>
- EASEL Lab: <https://easel.gse.harvard.edu/>
- Harvard Center for the Developing Child: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>
- <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/national-scientific-council-on-the-developing-child/>
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
- NAEYC DAP: <http://www.naeyc.org/DAP>
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations: <http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/>
- Peabody/IRIS: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>  
and <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/iris-resource-locator/>
- PBIS: <https://www.pbis.org/>
- Project Implicit: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/aboutus.html>



# Pathway to Earnings

## Increase your Earnings

Available to child care providers and directors working in a licensed child care center, licensed child care facility, or registered family child care home.



WV Elements of Family Child Care Series ....	\$75
Mind in the Making .....	\$100
WVIT I .....	\$100
WVIT II .....	\$250
CDA .....	\$500
ACDS Dept. of Labor Certificate .....	\$500
AA or AAS in ECE* Degree .....	\$1000
BA or BS or Regents in ECE* .....	\$1500
MA or MS in ECE* Degree .....	\$1750
Ph. D. or Ed. D. in ECE* Degree .....	\$2000

**\* See reverse for details**

Phone: 304-522-7827  
 Email: [scholarship@rvcds.org](mailto:scholarship@rvcds.org)  
[www.wvstars.org](http://www.wvstars.org)

# Do you know a child who is not \*moving \*hearing \*seeing \* learning or \*talking like others their age?

By 3 months,  
Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

By 6 months,  
Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

By 9 months,  
Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

By 12 months,  
Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

By 18 months,  
Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

By 24 months,  
Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

**Every child deserves a great start.**

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

To learn more about the  
WV Birth to Three services  
in your area, please call:

**1-866-321-4728**

Or visit [www.wvdhhr.org/birth23](http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23)



WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

## Are your children eligible for health insurance through WVCHIP?

The West Virginia Children's Health Insurance Program (WVCHIP) is a low-cost health care plan for children and teenagers of working families covering important services such as check-ups, vision, dental, immunizations, hospital visits, prescription drugs and more.

Qualifying income is based on your Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) shown on line #37 on the 1040 Income Tax Form.



Family Size	Maximum Yearly Income
2	\$49,380
3	\$62,340
4	\$75,300
5	\$88,260

Copayments are required for some non-preventive services.  
Premiums are required for members with higher incomes.

There is no fee to apply:  
[www.wvinroads.org](http://www.wvinroads.org)

Learn more: [chip.wv.gov](http://chip.wv.gov)



**For more information about  
WV CHIP, visit  
[www.chip.wv.gov](http://www.chip.wv.gov)**



# Pathway Advancement Scholarship

**Earn Your Degree**  
*Increase your earnings*

**Earn your Associate or Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.** This is a scholarship opportunity available to child care providers and directors working in a licensed child care center, licensed child care facility, or registered family child care home.



**Tuition: Pays 100%  
tuition for up to 2  
classes per semester**

**Stipend: \$200 for  
education related  
expenses**

**Bonus: \$300 one-time  
bonus upon  
completion of degree**

WV STARS Pathway Advancement Scholarship  
Phone: 304-522-7827 • Email: [scholarship@rvcds.org](mailto:scholarship@rvcds.org)  
**[www.wvstars.org](http://www.wvstars.org)**



# ACDS

## New Curriculum

The new curriculum for ACDS is complete. The new curriculum introduces child development from birth to age 12. The curriculum incorporates the WV Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers, Preschool, and School Age. WVIT I graduates may enter ACDS in 2nd semester. ACDS graduates that have obtained their Department of Labor Certificates may also be eligible to receive the WV STARS Pathway to Earnings payment.

For information about the ACDS program, including how to register for classes please visit the ACDS website, [www.wvacds.org](http://www.wvacds.org), or contact the ACDS office.

### ACDS Staff

*Jennifer Conkle*—ACDS Statewide Coordinator

*Tara Kitts*—ACDS Specialist

Phone: 304-523-0433

Email: [wvacds@rvcds.org](mailto:wvacds@rvcds.org)

Fax: 304-697-6613



### Topics of Study:

- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Relationships
- Child Guidance
- Community Resources
- Exceptionalities and Disabilities
- Professionalism
- Observation and Assessment
- Brain Development
- Language and Literacy Development
- Culture and Diversity
- Creative Expression
- Family Interactions and Relationships
- STEM

Did you know that ACDS students can receive up to 800 hours credit toward on-the-job training hours for work experience prior to entering ACDS? For more information visit the ACDS website, [www.wvacds.org](http://www.wvacds.org), or contact the ACDS office.



This program is being presented with financial assistance as a grant from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and is administered by West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a program of River Valley Child Development Services.



*Step Into  
My World*  
2019 Celebrating Connections

*Don't miss the 2019 Celebrating  
Connections Conference*

*April 10-12, 2019  
Charleston, WV*

**For more information, visit  
[www.facebook.com/CelebratingConnectionsConference/](http://www.facebook.com/CelebratingConnectionsConference/)**



## Concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

**Help Me Grow**, a free developmental referral service, provides vital support for children from birth to age five including:

- Information and community resources to aid development
- Free developmental screening questionnaire
- Coordination with your child's doctor

Talk to a care coordinator and schedule a developmental screening for your child today.

**Help Me Grow: 1-800-642-8522**  
**[www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow)**



**Help Me Grow**  
West Virginia



# Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 15, Issue 3, Fall 2018

## Supporting challenging behaviors

As parents and caregivers, it can be difficult to experience challenging behaviors with children. Behaviors can sometimes feel overwhelming, and often parents are unsure of how to respond. It is important for parents to keep in mind that

all behavior is communicating a message.

The good news is that parents and caregivers can learn to understand and interpret the meaning behind these behaviors. Once adults have this understanding, they can begin

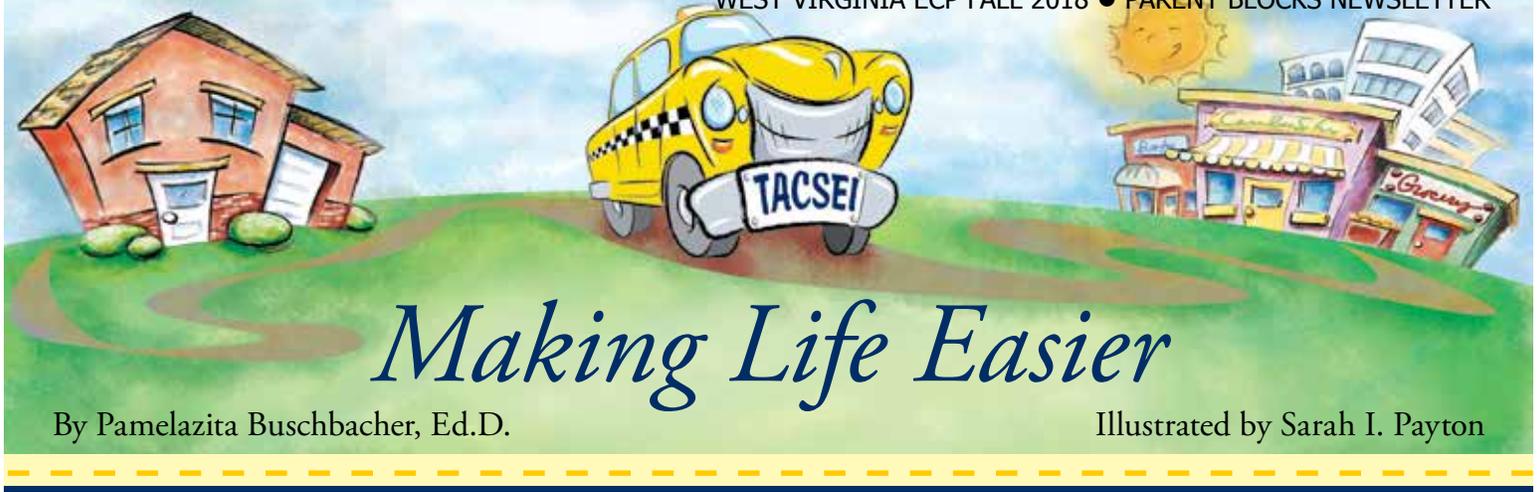
to support the child.

Punishing the child for exhibiting behaviors will never end the behavior. "Yelling at or punishing a child for a behavior may stop the behavior for the moment, but it does not give the child support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations. When adults use punishment, they are sending the message that anger is a good way to solve problems. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life." (PBS Parents, [http://www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities/challenging\\_behavior2.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities/challenging_behavior2.html))

Holidays can be a challenging time for children and adults! The following pages share some helpful tips.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; West Virginia Department of Education/Office of Special Education; and West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

Permission to photocopy



## Making Life Easier

By Pamelazita Buschbacher, Ed.D.

Illustrated by Sarah I. Payton

### Holidays: Strategies for Success

While the holiday season is filled with enjoyable activities, events and traditions, it can also be a hectic and stressful time. Travel, shopping, loud music, bright lights, unfamiliar food, and busy schedules can turn typical routines upside down! The disruption to routine can be particularly difficult for children who depend on routine and predictability to engage in appropriate behavior.

The following tips will help ensure that the holiday season is enjoyable for you and your child.



**Tip:** Prepare your child for changes.

Talk to your child about changes to the schedule and environment. Look at pictures from previous holidays and talk about what happened during those events. Also talk about this year's special programs and about behavior expectations, e.g., "we will sit and listen quietly during the presentation...when the program is over, we will go to the lobby and have some cookies and punch." Discuss upcoming trips several days before the departure date. Let your child know when you will be leaving, where you will be going, and what you will do while away. Repeat these conversations several times before traveling.

## **Tip:** Involve your child in preparations and minimize surprises.

If you are going to decorate the house or bake special goodies, involve your child and make the tasks fun! It could be upsetting for your child to come home from school to find the home looking very different with unfamiliar items and things out of place. Take decorations out gradually and allow your child to explore them so that she has time to adjust to the changes.



## **Tip:** Pace your holiday activities.

Busy holiday calendars can leave adults and children worn out and stressed. When possible, balance times of high activity with calm, relaxed times. Try to spread activities out over the holiday season.

- ★ **Keep aspects of your typical routine whenever possible.** Consistency and familiarity can help build coping skills for the unfamiliar. As much as possible, preserve bedtimes and other routines. Allow for a leisurely bath, story, song or cuddle. Eat meals together.

- ★ **Plan for a regular 'Quiet Time'.** Try to build in time each day to provide your child with activities that she finds soothing or relaxing.
- ★ **Don't shop 'til you drop.** If your holiday season involves lots of shopping or errands, think carefully about how to involve your child. Stores will look and feel different this time of year as they are often extremely crowded and noisy. Children may become frightened or overwhelmed. Consider making trips brief, shopping at less crowded times, or leaving your child with another caregiver. If you have errands to run, limit the number of places you visit and let your child know that the errands will end at a fun place for her (e.g., a park, playground, ice cream store, etc.).

## **Tip:** Give clear directions.

Give your child a positive direction that assumes she will cooperate. For example, instead of saying "Amy, do you want to get on the plane?" it is better to say, "Oh look, it's time to walk onto the plane. 1-2-3-4-5, Let's go." Remind her of expectations. For example, you might say, "Remember, walking feet on the plane." It is also helpful to show your child the behavior using pictures or by modeling it yourself.

- ★ **Use Positive Words.** Clearly and simply state what you expect your child to do instead of what not to do. Encourage your child in a way that lets her know that she is exhibiting the desired behavior.
- ★ **Give warnings that change is coming.** Most young children need help transitioning from one activity to another, especially if they are engaged in an activity that they enjoy. Let your child know in advance that a change is coming. Give a few staggered warnings letting her know how much time is left in the current activity as well as what is coming up next. Help your child through the transition by talking to her or singing a song such as "The Clean-Up Song" or adapting a familiar song to the task.



- ★ **Use ‘Wait Time’.** A wait time of about 4 to 20 seconds is often all that is needed for a child to process and respond to a request.
- ★ **Provide choices, whenever possible.** Providing limited choices (two or three) for a child in a difficult situation can be a powerful strategy in preventing challenging behavior and redirecting a child to more acceptable behavior and cooperation. Choices help give children a sense of control over their surroundings and activities while still doing what needs to be done! Be sure that ALL the choices you offer are helping reach that goal! For example, if it is time to get dressed ask your child if she wants to get dressed by herself or with your help.
- ★ **Provide frequent and specific praise.** Let your child know when she is being cooperative and helpful by praising her specifically for what she is doing. For example, you might give your child a high five for sitting quietly in the car or you might say, “Thank you for holding my hand in the parking lot.”
- ★ **Empathize with your child’s feelings.** If your child cries, hits, bites, screams or hides, provide an emotional label for how she might be feeling and reassure her. Avoid punishment (e.g. “If you don’t sit still, I am going to spank you.”) and negative, and usually, untrue comments “Big girls don’t cry” or “There is nothing to be afraid of.” Let your child cry and comfort her by hugging, patting and/or using a soothing touch.

## *Tip:* Prepare family and friends.

**Inform family and friends of helpful strategies.** Talk to your family and friends about strategies that might help ensure your child’s success before spending time together. Consider specific aspects or situations that might have a negative impact on your child’s behavior (e.g., sensory issues, difficulty waiting, food allergies or sensitivities, etc.) and share strategies that have worked for you. Be sure to focus on your child’s strengths and strategies for success.



## *Tip:* Pack for success!

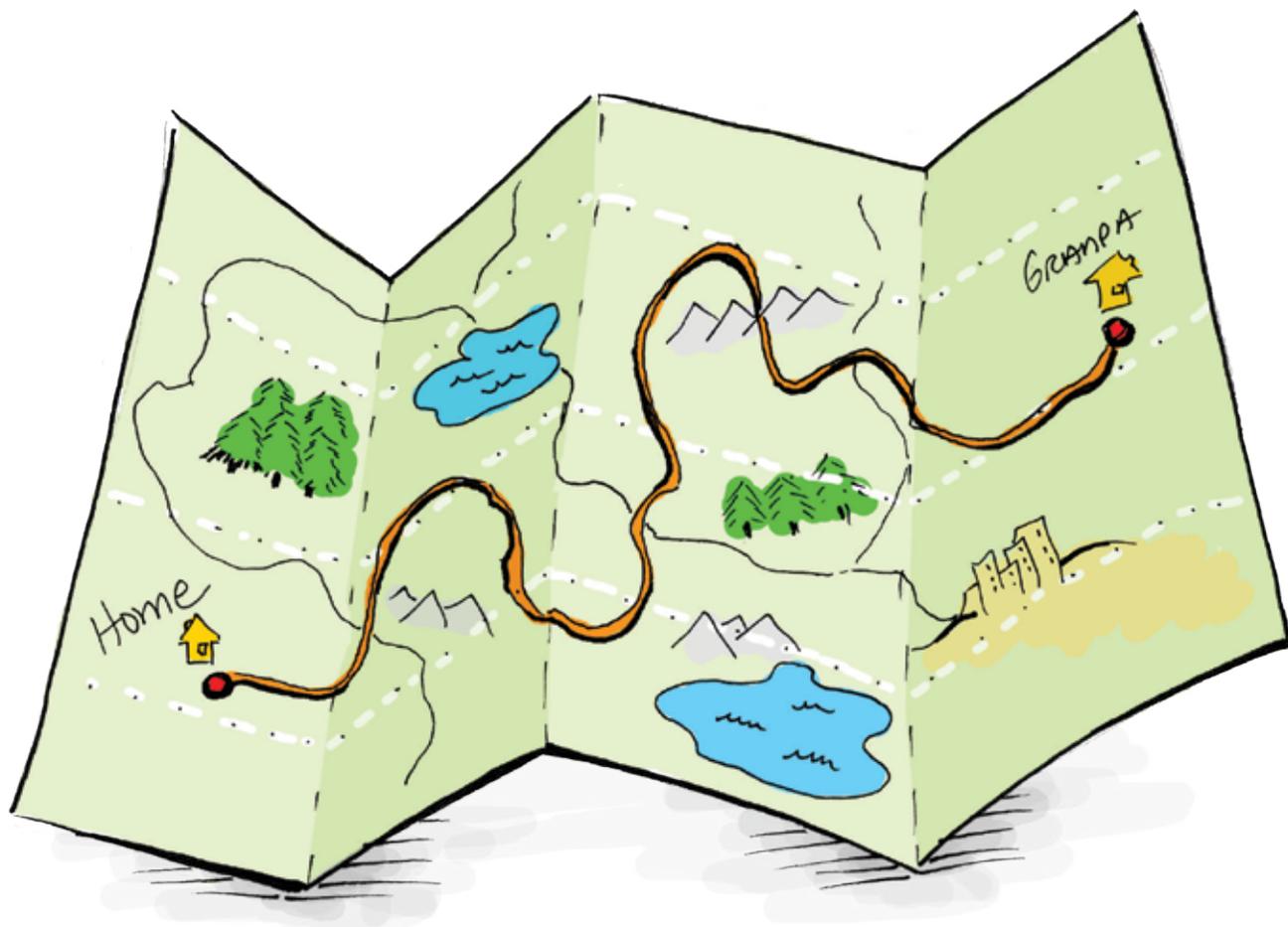


When your holiday plans include time away from home, bring familiar items, activities and foods with you. Pack activity bags that include favorite books, toys, and games. If possible, have your child help pack the bags so she can choose a few of the items herself. You might say, “Brianna, do you want to take Mickey Mouse or blankie in your bag?” This gives her a feeling of control and supports her growing sense of confidence and sense of competency.

For many families the holidays are a time of feasting and enjoying all kinds of yummy treats. Be attentive to diet changes and how they may affect your child. Chocolate, caffeine, sugar, and dairy products may have an impact on your child’s digestion, well-being, and behavior. If your child follows a particular diet, be sure to bring items with you that might not be available where you are going. Pack nutritious food and drink options to balance out sweet, holiday treats.

## *Tip:* Pre-travel planning.

- ★ **Reassure your child.** Let your child know that you will be with her and that she can take along a favorite toy or blanket. For example you might say, “Daddy will be with you” or “You can hold blankie on the plane.”
- ★ **Rest stops aren’t just for resting.** Familiarize yourself with your travel route as well as with parks and rest areas along the way. These offer great opportunities for children to run, jump, play with a ball, blow bubbles, and stretch. Many family-friendly restaurants and airports have play spaces also. A good rule is to take a ten minute break every two hours.



★ **Create a personal picture story about the trip.**

Create a small book with photos of the airport and plane or of the bus depot, bus, car or train. As you read the book with your child, let her know what will happen and how you expect her to behave. Read this to your child several times before the trip. Also, make sure to bring it along as a reminder. When children understand what is going to happen, they are less anxious which can increase cooperation and reduce challenging behavior.

**Tip:** Celebrate the successes along the way.

In closing, please remember that the team of professionals that support you and your child will have additional

specific ideas about how to help your child. Don't forget to ask them! Your child's speech and language therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, teacher, or other professional should be able to help you think about the best way to support your child over the holiday season. They are usually more than willing to help you make any needed specific supports (for example, a Travel Book, a Waiting Bag, a personal picture story, etc.). If your child is having persistent challenging behavior, you should ask the professionals who work with you to help develop a behavior support plan that will provide more specific strategies to prevent challenging behavior and help your child develop new social and communication skills.

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children

[www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)



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