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Your IU8 Preschool Newsletter



Behavior: What is normal? What is not?

All children, like adults have their "moments" ! All children of various ages will at one time or another break the rules or "test the boundaries"! This is a normal part of development where children learn who they are and what the "world" expects of them.

The question that is often asked is, is what my child doing normal developmental behavior or not. Throughout this newsletter we will look at the developmental pathway for behavior according to a child's age and then what are behavioral warning signs that may indicate something more might be going on. In addition, we will look at strategies that can be used to address typical challenging behavior and what to do if your child shows signs of behaviors that may need further evaluation.

Typical Behavior Development

At around 2 years of age children begin to develop a sense of what is right and what is wrong. At age 2 children also begin to understand emotions and feelings. This maybe referred to as moral development. Children learn these skills through life experiences, observing those adults and peers in their life or thru examples from a segment of a TV show or movie. Parents often have an idea of what they want their child to perceive as right or wrong and what values they feel are important for their child to learn.

Children at age 2 through preschool age are motivated by the threat of consequences. This simply means that a child may feel more worried about what is going to happen than how a person feels. This is okay early on as empathy typically develops through ages 4-5 as noted in the verywellfamily.com article. With adult guidance children will learn how to be empathetic.

The following are "moral " choices your preschooler may need to make throughout their typical day;

- Do I share my toy with a friend if I do not want to?
- Do I hit the person who won't play with me?
- Should I take the toy because I want it now?
- Do I push my way in line because I don't want to wait my turn?

More than likely a child will cross the line of the moral code often, Each time a child steps out of line there is an opportunity for them to learn. It is important to always follow through with consistent discipline combined with positive proactive strategies to ensure constant growth in understanding right from wrong, as well as, how behavior choices make people feel.

When your preschooler says "no" it is not always defiant behavior, but rather seeking to expand their own independence. Preschoolers will at one moment declare themselves a "big kid" then at other times declare they are "babies" and need help with the simplest of tasks. Preschoolers will at times will have impulse control loss and along with emotional overload leading to a tantrum. As the child grows and gains experience in regulating their emotions and impulses the tantrums should become shorter and look much different than in the toddler years. Preschoolers may also show some aggressive behavior which will begin to lessen as they begin to use their words in place of

Strategies to Continue Positive

Behavior Development

The most the vital part of positive behavior development for your child are the examples they take in from you and others in their lives. Children may not appear to be paying attention, but they see and hear most all of what you do. In addition, how you react to your child's behavior will also dictate future behavioral development.

Instill Guilt, Not Shame

It may be odd to hear that *Guilt* should be used rather than *Shame*.. What is the difference between them. First let's define guilt as HEALTHY GUILT. Healthy guilt is about recognizing the mistake not being the mistake. Carol Anderson, D.Min., ACSW, LMSW, is a licensed clinical social worker with over 25 years of experience in the fields of mental health, addictions, and co-occurring disorders , shares in an article published in March, 2018, that guilt is a feeling we have when we have hurt someone, done something we should not have (ie. cheating or stealing). Guilt allows us to feel *regret and remorse*. Learning guilt in early childhood helps us to learn how to acknowledge our errors and what we have done to others. Guilt helps us clearly understand what we have done wrong.

Shame on the other hand, does not allow one to see the bad thing done or the pain caused to someone else rather it creates a feeling of being the bad thing. Shame causes a child to focus on themselves and not others. Shame can cause a feeling of worthlessness, being a bad person, inadequate or flawed. This is certainly not a way we want children to grow up and perceive themselves as being. Rather we want our children to believe they are good people who made a mistake and recognizes that is something that they do not want to repeat.

Using guilt over shame insures you are correcting your child for the bad choice, NOT for being a bad person. When doing so it is important to take a second and think about how and what you say to them.

"You're a bad girl" creates shame.

"I'm disappointed you made a bad choice" offers guilt, thus causing the child to focus on the action.

It is also important to recognize a child's feelings;

"Stop it there is nothing to be upset about" dismisses the child's feelings/emotions and creates shame, "It is ok that you are mad (sad, excited so on), but it is never ok to hurt your friends (name calling, hitting)" Again, this has a child look at the actions and recognize right from wrong.

It is also important to talk to your child and ask them what was the bad choice, so they clearly understand what was wrong. Then ask or talk about what the right thing to do would be.

**Don't Forget
To check the
Backpack Daily!
Listen to your local
news or radio
station for snow
delays or closures !!**



Accountability is Essential to Positive Behavior

Development

As it has been previously stated it is important to let your child know it is OK to make mistakes. Talk with your child about why the behavior was wrong "Hitting people hurts their body and feelings, so we never hit people". Then offer a consequence such as a time out or taking away a favorite toy for the afternoon. Talk to your child about what it means to say that they are sorry. Let them know that saying sorry means they know they hurt someone and it helps the person they hurt feel better. Be sure to role model apologies. The more a child experiences and sees the act of apologizing the more they come to understand the purpose and act of apologizing.

Modeling Behavior

Children are like sponges, they absorb everything they see and experience and this includes parental behavior. When you use good manners, good coping skills and appropriate speaking skills, children will emulate these. The following are a few examples:

- **Point out sharing behaviors:** Preschoolers when asked to share often feel like they are the only ones being requested to do so. When there are examples they see everyone shares: "Look Daddy shared his drink with Mommy. Daddy was good at sharing" or "Mikey I like how well you shared your cookie with your sister!"
- **Model calm down strategies:** Teach children how to self regulate when they are upset or frustrated by your example helps them to see how to work through tough situations. "Mommy is really frustrated with this tablet not working. Would you help Mommy take 10 big deep breaths to calm down?"
- **Model how to say what your feelings are:** If you are really frustrated with your situation you may want to say "you are driving me crazy" instead express your feelings "Mommy is really frustrated." If you notice your child is upset, you may want to help them express themselves by saying "It looks like you might be sad" ; "Are you sad?" If you are wrong allow your child to correct you and describe what they are feeling. Once the feeling has been determined encourage your child to try something to feel better., moving onto a coping skill.

Behavior Related to Attention Seeking

When a child is well behaved we tend to leave them alone. But, when a child misbehaves we direct our attention to them. Toddlers will equate getting attention from parents with negative behavior. This could then cause an increase in negative behavior. The best way to achieve good behavior is to make an effort to stop and provide attention and recognition of the good behavior. "Mommy loves the way you are playing nicely with your toys while she is getting supper ready. May I sit and play too while I am waiting for the oven timer to ring?" Another important piece to ensuring good behavior is providing positive and loving attention throughout the day. Life is busy, but when mom and dad come home from work take at least 5 minutes of focused attention with your child(ren) playing and talking to them about their day and yours. Be sure to recognize the good things in their day. "Daddy really likes how nice you were to share the doll house with your friends at daycare." "Mommy loves how you are sharing your trucks with me!", "you are doing a wonderful job sitting while you color". In addition, research also shows having loving physical contact with your child also reinforces good behavior. This could be a pat on the head, rub hand on the back or shoulder. The website healthychild.org, by the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 50-100 of these touches throughout the day. If you are engaging in positive touch and interactions with good behaviors, planned ignoring during non dangerous bad behavior can be done. It is important though once the good behavior happens to recognize it. "I like that you are quiet, you are ready to play." The attention given to children during speaking should always use "I". Using the "I" allows your child to instantly know the affect their behavior had on you. This brings the recognition of healthy guilt. When the "you" statements are used "You make me angry", this may cause shame or a battle between the parent and child.

Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums are something that every parent has had to experience with their child. Rather than think of temper tantrums as a disaster think of it as an opportunity for learning.

- **Why do kids have tantrums:** A temper tantrum can range anywhere from whining, crying, screaming to something more physical such as hitting kicking or biting. Tantrums are a normal part of development. Tantrums are a way for a child to express themselves when they do not have the words or the skills yet for self regulation. Children may have a tantrum when they are hungry, tired, frustrated when they can't get something they want, or trying to demand some independence and control over their environment. Tantrums can also be a result of a child's inappropriate expectations.
- **Avoiding Temper Tantrums:** The most important thing you can do to avoid future tantrums is to identify what are triggers that cause your child to have a tantrum. So **know your child's limits**; if he is tired it might not be a good idea to squeeze in one more errand. Give plenty of **positive attention**; as previously noted when you see your child doing something good immediately recognize this by praising your child while emphasizing what they are doing well. Reward your child for the good behavior; verbally or with a reward system as described in the last section of this newsletter. Offer your child some **independent moments**. Offer minor choices to your child. This gives them a sense of independence and control. This can be as simple as allowing them to choose between apple juice or milk or brushing their teeth before or after their bath or which color pants they would like to wear. Keep it simple and don't offer more than 2 choices. **Distract and redirect** your child from something forbidden or frustrating. Young children tend to have short attention spans so take advantage of this by changing to a new activity or new environment. If your grocery shopping and your child demands candy as you pass through the aisle go to a new aisle and have them help you find the item on the list or if using a coupon show them the picture of the item and have them hold it and help you find it on the shelf.
- **Dealing with the temper tantrum:** Remember to keep your cool when dealing with a child's tantrum. Allowing your child to see your frustrated reaction to the tantrum only accelerates it and takes away an opportunity to teach your child how to regulate and calm down. Take a quick look at what is causing the tantrum and know what is the cause. If your child is simply melting down because they are tired, hungry or thirsty this can be a quick fix. Ask your child if they are hungry, for example and if they say something different than you suggested acknowledge that. For example, the child says no I am thirsty then offer a choice to help alleviate the tantrum such as would you like water or milk. If the tantrum occurs after your child is told to do something they do not want to do it is best to ignore it. Wait until your child calms down and repeat the requests and have them follow through. When a tantrum occurs because they are trying to get your attention it is best to ignore it. When a child has a tantrum because they were told "no" remain calm and ignore it. Do not provide a bunch of explanations as to why you said no keep it simple. It is important to not give in and give your child what they want anyway. This does nothing but teach your child that the bigger the tantrum the more likely they will get what they want. It is essential that if your child's tantrum is an issue of safety to himself or others you should take them to a quiet and safe environment to calm down. Calmly help them express their feelings, help them calm down by asking them to take deep breathes with you. Sometimes it is best to give them some space to self calm by remaining with them or offer a time out space that is safe.
- Remember that after your child is calm give them a hug and reassure them they are loved and let them know you like that they have calmed down.

Call your doctor: * If you feel anger or out of control when responding to tantrums * If you keep giving in * If you have bad feelings between you and your child or towards your child * If you have question about what you or your child is doing * If tantrums become more frequent, intense or last longer * If your child will not cooperate, argues or is very disagreeable at an increasing rate

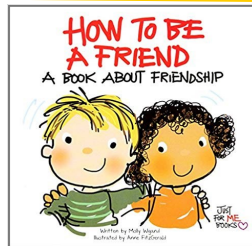
Your doctor will check to make sure there is no underlying issue that maybe causing the tantrums such as; hearing or vision problems, illness, speech delays or developmental delays.

As a child matures and develops skills with communication, gaining self control, learning to cooperate and develop coping skills the tantrums will begin to decrease.

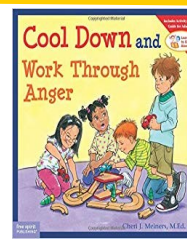
Spring into Reading Fun!



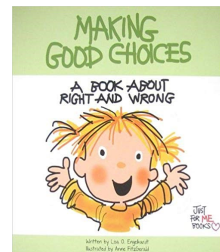
Early literacy skills are essential to a pre-school aged child. What better way to develop this skill than reading to your child! The single best measure of primary reading success in kindergarten and primary grade levels is how much a child was read to before entering school. Reading to your child at least 15 minutes a day makes for future reading success. When it is just to cold and wet outside this spring reading together is a great option. Whether a book has words or just pictures a great story can be told. Having your child guess what will happen next helps develop higher level thinking and reasoning skills. In addition, reading to your child helps promote speech and **language** development. Try subbing your child's name for the lead character in the story to make it more personalized. Utilize your local library and remember your local discount stores offer great selections at very low costs! The following selections offer children examples of appropriate behaviors.



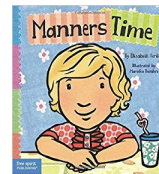
By Molly Wigand
This is a book that introduces children how to make friends. It teaches children how to be a good friend and teaches what friendship is.



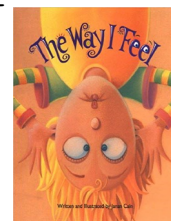
By Cheri Meiners, M. Ed.
It's never too early for children to learn to recognize feelings of anger, express them, and build skills for coping with anger in helpful, appropriate ways. Children learn that it is okay to feel angry—but not okay to hurt anyone with actions or words



By Lisa O. Engelhardt
This selection helps children learn from their everyday choices and experiences to give them the skills and perspectives necessary to become compassionate, caring, and responsible adults.



By : Elizabeth Verdick
This book teaches children that there are polite words to use when you greet someone, ask for something and even to say NO.



By Jana Cain
This book uses strong, colorful, and expressive images which go along with simple verses to help children connect the word and the emotion. Your child will learn useful words, and you will have many chances to open conversations about what's going on in her/his life.

For additional selections on book ideas that cover every emotion and behavior check out Pinterest; Preschool Book Selections for behavior and emotions.

Healthier Recipes;

Nutrition goes hand in hand with cognitive development, physical development as well as mood and behavior. A child's diet should consist of healthy foods that include a daily balance of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and fat-free and low-fat dairy products and limit intake of saturated fats, trans fatty acids, cholesterol, sodium, added sugars and refined grains.

** if your child has dietary restrictions you may not want to try the recipes as written **



Cinnamon Vanilla Protein Bites

This recipe offers a fun and easy breakfast option that can be made ahead of time and kept in an air tight container in the frig or freezer.

What you need: 3/4 cups of oats
1/4 cup of vanilla protein powder
1/2 cup oat flour
1 Tablespoon of cinnamon
1/3 cup of your favorite nut butter (peanut butter, almond butter etc.)
1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
1/3 cup of maple syrup or honey

HOW TO MAKE: In a blender grind up the oats, add your nut butter, vanilla extract, vanilla protein and cinnamon mix together. Add your honey or maple syrup and mix. Place in a bowl and have your child help you roll into small balls and sprinkle cinnamon on them. Refrigerate for 2 hours and enjoy!!



Parmesan Carrot Fries These are a fun and tasty alternative to tradition French Fries.

What you need: 2 Carrots peeled and sliced into French Fry like strips, 1 Tablespoon of Olive Oil, 1/4 cup of parmesan cheese, 1 tablespoon of garlic powder, 1 teaspoon of pepper, 1/2 teaspoon of salt (1/4 cup of fresh parsley to top after baking)

HOW TO MAKE: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix all ingredients with carrots in a bowl Spread on a baking sheet and place in preheated oven for 15- 20 minutes or until they reach your desired crispiness. . Optional dipping sauce; 2 Tablespoons of plain Greek yogurt, 1/2teaspoon of garlic salt, 1tablespoon of lemon juice, and 1 teaspoon of pepper. Mix all ingredients and serve as a dipping sauce.

Banana Peanut butter Oat Cookies These cookies are a perfect answer to what to do with over ripe bananas. They offer a good source of protein and fiber with no added sugar.



What you need: 2 very ripe bananas 1/4cup of crunchy peanut butter 3/4 cup of 1 minute oatmeal 1/3 cup of chocolate chips (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl mash up peeled bananas until only small lumps remain. Your preschooler can help with this. Add peanut butter, oats and chocolate chips and mix until combined. Use a spoon to scoop and drop onto parchment paper. Use the back of the spoon to somewhat flatten. Parent place in the oven and bake for 15-17 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to completely cool. Store in a freezer bag or air tight container. Enjoy as a snack or an on the go breakfast!



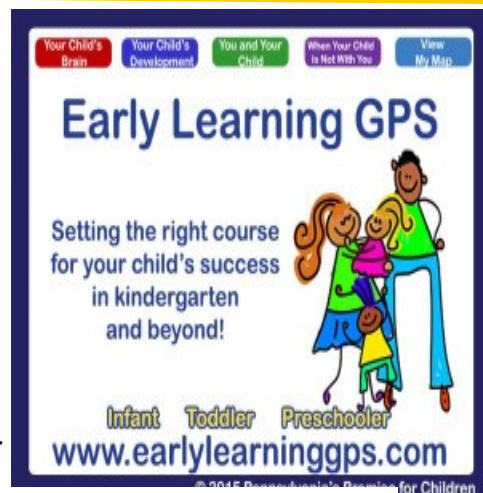
EARLY LEARNING GPS : What is it? It is an online question quiz that helps families learn the most important things they need to know and can do to help their young child grow. It is designed to create an engaging learning experience, but it is NOT a test. Families choose answers that best fit their situation for customized tips and resources.

Where do I find it? The Early Learning GPS can be found at www.earlylearninggps.com

What topics are covered? The program is customized for your child and family, however, there are a variety of topics addressed from birth to kindergarten:

- Why the First Five Years; Brain Development, School Success, Saving for Future
- Help your child grow; Child Development, Fun Activities, Challenging Behavior, Kindergarten readiness, Family Voice Blog
- Choose a Quality Program; How PA ranks preschools/daycares, Head Start, Pre K Counts, Early Intervention
- Making Ends Meet; Child care assistance, Community Supports, Food Programs

The Link can be found by going to the WWW.IU08.org click on the tab SPECIAL EDUCATION....click on Preschool Early Intervention...click on RESOURCES.



Making Family and Community CONNECTIONS

PARENT TO PARENT OF PENNSYLVANIA: links parents and family members of children with disabilities or special needs on a one-to-one basis according to conditions or concerns. Parent to Parent offers a connection to local support and mentor groups for family members of children and adults with: physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, special health care needs, behavioral/mental health needs, foster care or adoption and educational issues. **If interested see attached application.**

WHAT IS LICC?



LICC stands for Local Interagency Coordinating Council. It was established to provide information and trainings to families in the local community. It also provides child find activities to help locate children that need services. Each county has its own LICC. Some counties meet monthly while others may meet quarterly. Preschool Early Intervention Programs, Department of Health and Head Start are part of these teams. Teams also may include parents, daycare providers, private preschool providers, and other agencies in the community that provide services to young children. The purpose is to get agencies and parents to discuss how everyone can work together to help all children in our communities. Each LICC has an agreement to outline how they will help families transition between programs, find children that need services and attend trainings. The agreement also provides information on how and where services are provided to children and their families. If you are interested in becoming a member of your county's LICC, please contact your service coordinator to get more information



AUTISM

- Autism Speaks; Blair County 943-9002
- ABOARD's Autism Connection of PA Bedford County; 766-2478
- Cambria County Autism Speaks; 322-1862
- Somerset Family, Social & Play Group 444-0620
- Central PA Autism Society on Facebook

DOWN'S SYNDROME

Support groups connections throughout Pennsylvania go to;

www.globaldownsyndrome.org

SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND FAMILIES ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

* The following site offers a list of support groups from A-Z;

<http://www.childrensdisabilities.info/peclists.html>

- The following site offers an on line magazine full of information regarding special needs, support groups, equipment exchange sites and more

WWW.complexchild.com

M.O.R.G.A.N PROJECT:

The M.O.R.G.A.N. Project stands for Making Opportunities Reality Granting Assistance Nationwide. This group, established by parents Robert and Kristen Malfara, supports families in their journey of raising a special needs child, be that child biological, adopted or within the foster care system. In addition to having a large library of resources and information on their website, the group also assists families with travel expenses for medical treatments and gifts of medical equipment that aren't covered by insurance, such as wheelchairs. It works to create a group of parents who are supportive of each other in difficult times.

YOU TUBE

- **Fathering Autism;** Offers an inside look at a family's struggles and triumphs through daily life.
- **Our Special Life:** This series looks into individual families and each unique life within, whether it is Down Syndrome, Food Allergies and more.

Challenging Behaviors: Many times there are behaviors that children have and families experience that are a little more challenging than the typical development. Sometimes children have behaviors that are a bit more extreme than typical. When your child exhibits any of the following behavior extremes or you are unsure of what to do in terms of your child's behavior contact your child's physician or your local behavioral agency.

The following are only some behaviors that may need a closer look to determine causes, strategies and preventive approaches;

- Anger that seems to dominate daily life
- Resentment
- Argumentative over any request or rule
- Throwing temper tantrums over even the smallest thing
- Deliberately saying hurtful things
- Physically aggressive to self or others



There are a variety of things that could cause a child to behave in the ways mention above such as; lack of sleep, not having proper nutrition, a chaotic home environment, or abuse. Other causes maybe medical such as; ADHD, mood disorder, anxiety or another diagnosis. To get the answers to what the cause is it is best to meet with medical facilities that specialize in behaviors. Medications may be recommended, but that is not always the answer. There are behavior modification therapies that can also help. To see what would work best for your child talk to pediatrician and mental healthcare professionals.

The following are some strategies that can be used to help reshape the behaviors that may appear to be more challenging than typical.

The first step are to set up daily house rules. This allows your child to know what the general daily expectations are in the home. Always keep it short and simple language, as well as, making these achievable goals. This would be determined by you, but include as those listed below



Keep the list around the house for view and review. You may keep on the wall in your child's bedroom, on the refrigerator and in play/TV area. If your child is not able to read the words they can be accompanied by a picture of your child doing the required rules. Please see the App section of this newsletter for an easy way to develop and share these expectations with the IF/Then App.

REINFORCEMENT: Reinforcement is a great tool in dealing with extreme behaviors. The question then is the choice to use negative or positive reinforcement. There maybe times where a negative reinforcement maybe appropriate, but research has shown positive reinforcement provides greater motivation and success with children. Something as simple as a sticker chart rewarding good behaviors instantly recognizes good behavior and in turn the child is more likely to repeat the same desired behavior. As stated in an earlier part of this newsletter recognizing good behavior and providing attention to it allows your child to develop a sense of pride and attention the desired behavior to continue. **The positive attention must come quick and often.** If you see your child sharing a toy acknowledge it immediately "I like how you shared that toy!" "I love how your are waiting your turn, mommy is proud of you!"

CONSEQUENCES: Most of us know that consequences can teach responsibility, accountability and problem solving, Consequences are something that we experience from infancy from a baby putting a too small object in their mouth, a parent takes it away or if a toddler goes outside without their shoes on their feet may get cold. Consequences happen for a variety of reasons. Consequences are not always for doing something "bad". A child getting to go out for an ice cream because they did well on their report card is an example of a good consequence. Consequences are the result of the choices we make in our day. It is our job as adults to teach children from yearly on that the choices they make will result in certain consequences. By doing so we are teaching them how to think first and make a good choice to curb the misbehavior and bad choices.

Natural Consequences: these occur as a direct result of a child's behavior or action without the interference of an adult. For example, a child is having an over night with grandma and they want to take some toys with them in their backpack. The child cannot decide what should stay so they pack it all making the backpack to full to close and to heavy to lift. After the child is unable to close or move the backpack a parent can suggest leaving some toys at home. The child will then see they can close the backpack and be able to carry it. A child should NEVER be allowed to deal with Natural Consequences that could cause harm. For exam a child that will not brush his/her teeth will end up with cavities. A parent MUST step in and protect the child from anything that could cause harm.

Logical Consequences: these require involvement from someone else like a parent, teacher or care giver and are designed to help children replace undesired behaviors with appropriate behaviors. A logical consequence has to directly reflect the action/behavior of the child. For example;

*Not cleaning up toys when asked; toys are put away and not allowed out for the rest of the day

*Throwing the ball in the house; ball is put away and not to be used for the day

*Watching TV when told to turn it off; lose TV privileges for the day

Logical consequences are designed to send a message that the chosen behavior is the problem not the child. It is also important to ask yourself a few questions before coming up with the Logical Consequence;

*What rule was broken?

*Is it clear to my child what the rule is and what I expect of them?

*Is the rule expectation age and developmentally appropriate?

*What will help solve the problem/behavior issue?

Remember to always use a calm and clear voice when speaking with your child. This will ensure your child hears what you are saying about the behavior and not focus on your feelings if you are loud and angry.



OTHER BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

Besides recognizing good behaviors and having reward systems there are several other options to help when behaviors occur or may occur.

CALM DOWN CORNER. Designating a space that your child can go when they are feeling overwhelmed and take a break can be very helpful. This could be a corner in the home or classroom that has a soft bean bag chair and some books, a small tent made from a sheet with some pillows and a blanket or their bed. When you see that your child is getting frustrated or overwhelmed offer them a chance to take a break and go to their quiet space. Be sure to help them recognize their feelings by saying “I see you are getting frustrated would you like to take a break?” or “Are you feeling sad, (any feeling)?” and if you guessed incorrectly let your child explain or correct you as this shows they are becoming in-tune with their emotions. There are a variety of items that can be apart of a calm down corner such as; a favorite stuffed animal to hug or hold, a squishy ball to squeeze, art supplies to draw, visual stimulations like a snow globe or calm down jars, fidgets like a puzzle or pop-its, a visual chart to point out the emotion your child is feeling or even a breathing ball. The items included in the calm down corner can be changed out or added to at any time. When creating the calm down corner it is important to explain the purpose of the space and demonstrate how to use the space and items in it. The corner is not a time-out or a punishment, rather it is a space for a child to decompress and allow you to monitor them. This should be a place where the child can breathe deep and let their emotions settle before they become too big to handle. The corner should be free from other distractions and if located in a classroom be a space free from peers interfering. Be sure though the space does not become a place to use to avoid doing classroom tasks or chores at home. If this seems to be the case explain the use of the calm down corner.



PROVIDING OPTIONS is another means of helping your child with their behaviors. Often times kids will act out because they do not have a sense of control and offering options allows them to feel like they have control. The key is to provide only 2–3 options that are creating an opportunity for the desired results or behaviors. When a child gets to choose the preferred option, they feel they made the decision and are much more willing to participate. This may look like; you want your child to have some quiet time before bed, “Before bedtime would you like to sit with mommy and read a book or would you like to brush your teeth first?” Getting your child dressed and ready to head out the door in the morning may be a challenge. The night before pick out 2 outfits and have your child choose the one they will wear to school the next day.

By providing your child with the ability to choose you are building a sense of respect, building a rapport of cooperation, developing problem solving skills and capitalizing on a child's normal sense of power and control. Children thrive on structure and predictability, however, they also need a chance to demonstrate their independence and sense of self. When you give your child choices be sure to only give as many as they can handle. Always start with 2 options to choose from. Once they have mastered their ability to handle that offer a third choice. In order for this to be successful tool it must be used consistently. If you give your child choices on brushing their teeth first or read a story before bed do this always. Using here and there will create confusion and or frustration and ultimately push back and uncooperative behavior. Another example would be giving your child a choice for breakfast; “do you want cereal or peanut butter toast?” then the next day just give them cereal your child may then protest and refuse to have breakfast. Remember the choices you offer are the things you as the parent want to see happen and be accomplished. You want your child to have a healthy breakfast then provide 2 or 3 options that are healthy and you know your child will eat.

AVOID POWER STRUGGLES this can be one of the more challenging skills for adults. Having a child with constant extreme behaviors can be tiring and hard. Remaining calm and keeping it to the point is essential to avoid arguing with your child. Recognize the problem behavior, explain the logical consequence and remove yourself from the situation.

Engage in Positive Interactions children who have difficult behaviors spend a lot of their day receiving negative feedback. Hearing all the things that you have done wrong, even though it is driven by a child's behavior, can lead to impacting a child's view on their self worth. No matter how disruptive and misbehaved your child can be find ways to connect in a positive way. Be sure to offer praise whenever possible no matter how small the moment may be. Before the day ends be sure to highlight the good things that they did during the day. Be sure that you recognize the ideal behavior as soon as it happens and give your child feedback with a high five or “Mommy is so happy to see you share your toy so nicely” or “I love how you said please when you asked for a drink!” Then at the end of the day remind your child of the ideal moments and great things they did that day!

VIDEO SUGGESTION: YOU TUBE: TED TALK Molly Wright: Every Child Can thrive by five

GIVE WARNINGS BEFORE TRANSITIONS is a simple way to provide your child with what is coming. Often times children with behavior issues do not do well when things in their world suddenly change. If your child is allowed to use the iPad for 45 minutes then helping them prepare and understand time will help avoid the outburst when that 45 minutes is suddenly over. Using a visual such as an egg timer or the stop watch on the cell phone will help them. In addition, giving them warnings as the time passed “in 15 minutes you will be finished with the iPad”, “you have 5 more minutes to play on the iPad” or “you will be going to grandma’s house today to play while daddy takes the car to get fixed and when the car is ready I will come and get you”. Using a daily picture schedule helps a child know what is coming. If a change is going to occur they will be able to see what is going to happen when. Children thrive on boundaries and consistency in their everyday lives.

Make Sleep a Priority as sleep plays such a vital role in physical, cognitive and emotional development. Lack of restful sleep will increase the symptoms of extreme behaviors causing the person to become unable to focus, anxious, irritable and everything feels like an uphill battle. Quality sleep is essential for the entire family. Sleep is often not something we think about in terms of importance. However, it is as important as food, drink and safety for our children. Sleep can effect development in many areas as well as behavior and learning. The amount of sleep is as important as the quality of sleep, In order for there to be a good understanding of sleep we must understand how sleep impacts physical growth, brain development, overall development, behavior in terms of being stressed or relaxed, drowsy or alert, temperament, social skills and learning abilities.

Marc Weissbluth, MD, in his book, *Healthy Sleep Habits Happy Child* states;

"Sleep is the power source that keeps your mind alert and calm. Every night and at every nap, sleep recharges the brain's battery. Sleeping well increases brainpower just as weight lifting builds stronger muscles, because sleeping well increases your attention span and allows you to be physically relaxed and mentally alert at the same time. Then you are at your personal best."

In order for you to help your child achieve healthy sleep we will look at what that means. Healthy sleep requires;

- A sufficient amount of sleep
- Uninterrupted (good quality) sleep
- The proper number of age-appropriate naps

A sleep schedule that is in sync with the child's natural biological rhythms (internal clock or circadian rhythm; sleeping when it is night and awake during the day)

If these are not achieved over time a child will be effected by sleep deprivation. But first, lets look at what needs to be done to achieve healthy sleep.

LENGTH OF SLEEP: Children need a sufficient amount of sleep to grow, develop and function at their best. The following is a recommendation of total number of hours of sleep including night time and daytime naps by the National Sleep Foundation.

- **Newborns (0-3 months):** Sleep range narrowed to 14-17 hours each day (includes 4+ NAPS per day)
- **Infants (4-11 months):** Sleep range widened two hours to 12-15 hours (includes 2—4 NAPS per day)
- **Toddlers (1-2 years):** Sleep range widened by one hour to 11-14 hours (include 1 –2 NAPS per day)
- **Preschoolers (3-5):** Sleep range widened by one hour to 10-13 hours

Quality of Sleep: This would be uninterrupted sleep that allows your child to go through all the stages of sleep. Quality is as important as quantity as it plays an essential role in the development of the nervous system. What are the stages of night time sleep? There are 5 stages that our brain guides our body through as we sleep so we can recharge our batteries.

1st Stage is when we are in the drowsy state. In this stage you can be easily awoken by a touch or a noise

2nd Stage is when you begin to reach a bit of a deeper sleep. Your brain tells your body to relax the muscles, slows your heart rate and breathing

3rd Stage is when you are in a deeper state of sleep. Often referred to as slow wave sleep. Your brain has your blood pressure lowered and your body is no longer sensitive to temperature. You will not notice if the temperature drops or rises. This is the state of sleep, sleep walking or talking will most often occur.

4th Stage is the deepest state of sleep also called slow wave sleep. In this state it is very difficult to wake someone and if you do they may be a bit dazed and confused for a period of time. This stage may also lend to sleep walking or talking.

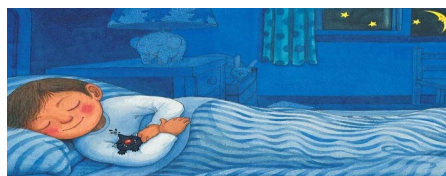
REM Rapid Eye Movement. This is the stage that the eyes move rapidly back and forth unlike the rest of the muscles in the body. This is when dreams occur. Your heart beat will be faster and breathing irregular.

The average person is asleep they will repeat stages 2, 3, 4 and REM every 90 minutes or so.

Everyone dreams, but whether you remember them or not depends on if you awake during REM. What is the purpose of getting to the dream state? Scientist believe that dreams are your brains way of making sense of the day by organizing emotions. Memories, sorting out the “junk” and keeping the important stuff.

In addition, the National Institutes of Health states that during a sleep study of mice it was discovered that the brain during the deep sleep stages is able to flush toxins that accumulate during waking hours. In this study it was learned that the brain has a channel that carries cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the blood vessels in the brain and it removes a protein called Beta-amyloid that is linked to Alzheimer.

This gives new understanding as to how sleep health is important component in preventing disease. Healthy Sleep is also important in the brains ability in storing memories. Lack of quality and quantity of sleep is shown to cause impairment of; reasoning, problem solving and attention to detail.



FAMILY RIGHTS

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

The Procedural Safeguards Notice provides detailed information on your special education rights such as:

- Confidentiality
- Parent consent
- Prior written notice
- Procedures for filing a complaint
- Mediation Procedures
- Due process hearing procedures
- Resources

This document is very helpful in explaining your family's rights in detail. This document is about your rights and responsibilities.

Questions or concerns about Early Intervention services should first be addressed with your teacher/therapist, supervisor, program director, and then to the state.



Satellite Office Sites and Phone Numbers

Office hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Altoona Office..... 814-940-0223

Duncansville Office.....814-695-5645

Ebensburg Office 814-472-7690

Richland Office.....814-262-7392

Somerset Office.....814-445-9734



COUNTY TO COUNTY ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS

BEDFORD COUNTY: Dec 16th 1pm-3pm Santa Claus and Treats at the Saxton VFW Post 4129 Dec 16th Pancakes and Pajamas Breakfast with Santa 930am Lake Raystown Resort and Conference Center Dec 16th 5:15pm 3rd Annual Country Christmas Light Show, Southern Cove Power Reunion New Enterprise Now thru Dec 30th Holiday Nights of Lights Friday thru Sunday at the Bedford County Fairground 6pm-9pm. Jan 20th Downtown Bedford Incorporated annual Chili and Soup Cook Off 11 -2 snow make up day March 2nd Feb dates to come Chocolate Walk downtown Bedford watch for details on facebook

BLAIR COUNTY: Dec 9th Milk & Cookies with Santa Free picture at the 31:25 Boutique Greenwood Dec 14th 6pm Drive thru Live Nativity Highland Park Altoona Dec 14th 5-7pm Holiday Kids Craft Night at Arts Altoona Center Dec 16th at Lowes from 10am—1pm Kids DIY-U Workshop: Holiday Delivery Truck Dec 16th noon Swim with Santa at Blair Regional YMCA Swim with Santa then the family can head over the Christmas workshop for cocoa and crafts Dec 15th 6:30pm Family Christmas Movie Night at the Well 605 Burns Ave Altoona Pizza, popcorn coca and cookies. Dec 17th Five Little Monkeys at the Mishler Theater Altoona Family Series 3pm. Dec 17th CLC Church presents Free City-Wide Christmas Dinner 6pm Dec 17th Live Children's Nativity 4pm -6pm 793 Monastery Rd Hollidaysburg Dec 22nd Parents Night Out 5pm-9pm First Methodist Church Williamsburg Small donation drop off the kids and enjoy the evening. The kids will celebrate Jesus' birthday with games, pizza movie cake and more. Jan 6th Altoona Reptile Expo at Altoona Gran Hotel 9am- 3pm Jan 6th Clothing give away at Geeseytown Lutheran Church 9am- noon Jan 20th Black Beard the Pirate Family Theater at the Mishler Altoona PM 3pm Jan 20th Kids DIY-U Workshop: My First Tool Box Lowes 10am Feb 18th Grand Princess Ball Altoona 1pm at the Altoona Grand Hotel See FB for more info.

CAMBRIA COUNTY: Dec 10th 9am Winter Craft & Vendor Show and Basket Auction Hope Fire Company of Northern Cambria Dec 14th at 10am Prince Gallitzin State Park Park Office Natural Ornaments and Old Fashion Toys Dec 16th Lunch with Santa, Grinch, Cindy Lou Who Cover Hill Vol. Fire Co. Johnstown noon Dec 16th Kids DIY-U Workshop: Holiday Delivery Truck 10am 630 Solomon Run Rd Johnstown Lowes Dec 16th 9am Queen of Peace Church Patton Christmas Bake Sale Dec 17th 9am North Pole Breakfast with Santa TAP814 Johnstown Dec 17th Community Movie Night and Santa 5:30pm 2301 Sunshine Ave Johnstown Dec 17th 1pm Holiday Story Time Ebensburg Cambria Public Library Dec 17th Cookies with Santa Hastings Firemen's Club noon- 2pm Dec 20th Galleria Christmas Market 9am Johnstown PA Dec 23rd noon -3pm Santa Claus is Coming CACCC-Holly Bazaar Community Arts Center of Cambria County Jan 1st 10am First Day Hike meet at Pickerel Pond Prince Gallitzin State Park Feb 10th Winter Blast Prince Gallitzin Marina 10am-2pm free activities for the whole family! Feb 10th Winter Blast 5k Walk/Run 10am Prince Gallitzin State Park Main Marina Pavilion Pets Welcome!

SOMERSET COUNTY: Dec 14th at 2pm Christmas in the Woods at Windber Woods Dec 15th 5pm Parents Night Out 601 Georgiam Pl Somerset Twp See Laurel Arts FB page for more information Jan 12th -15th 10am Winter Market Place Fire and Ice Festival 109 West Main St Somerset March 30-31 and April 3-7 Maple Festival Meyersdale, PA Fairgrounds go to <http://www.pamaplefestival.com> for details April 13 Easter Egg Hunt at the Georgian Place sponsored by Jaycees see Facebook page for information and rain dates.

Remember to check out your local State Parks for Fun Family Events at : www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks iceboating, skiing, sledding, ice fishing and much more ... Click on a state park near you and go to calendar and see all the fun offerings you can do with your family!



Smart911 provides the 9-1-1 callers and emergency responders with the exact information you need them to know when responding to your emergency. With Smart911, you can add key information about members of your household that would help anyone you care for in the event of an emergency, whether the call is from the home or any mobile phone. The following is information you can provide and enter when you register:

PEOPLE: Names, physical descriptions, and photos will help responders act quickly if a child goes missing, or help identify individuals in an emergency.

PHONES: mobile phones don't provide an address for the caller. By adding all phones for your household, 9-1-1 will have a better idea where you are when you need help.

ANIMALS: Keep all members of your household safe by including pets, livestock, or service animals that responders need to be aware of.

MEDICAL INFORMATION Such as:

1. MEDICAL CONDITIONS: If a family member has epilepsy, diabetes, asthma or some other condition responders will know how to effectively treat the person

2. ALLERGIES: Alerting the 9-1-1 responder to serve allergies like a bee sting. Food or latex could save a life

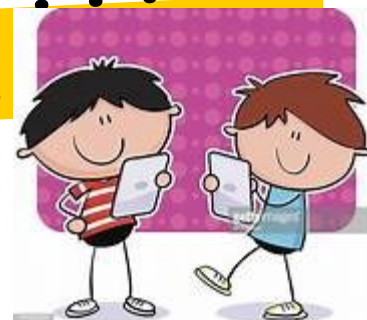
3. DISABILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: Alerting responders to special equipment or approaches needed to work with someone will better help the responder work with the individual. This may include information about a wheelchair or how to interact with someone with Autism.

4. MEDICATIONS: Knowing what medications an individual is using allows the responders to assess correctly or avoid dangerous medication interactions during treatment.

TO REGISTER GO TO : safety.smart911.com



Technology



IPod and iPad Fun and Learning

With new technology comes new learning opportunities for preschoolers and beyond. The iPhone and iPad offer children another opportunity to explore everything they see through direct interaction. Children are able to explore and use a large variety of applications to help them learn everything from their colors, letters, numbers and more. Many applications are also designed for the specific learning needs of children. Applications typically cost about \$.99, however, there are hundreds of free downloads to choose from. Listed below are a variety of applications that would be appropriate for preschool aged children between the ages of 3 and 5. All applications can be found on iTunes or in the App Store.

Even though technology is a fabulous tool for learning it should be a secondary means. The first approach to teaching children is direct contact. by reading to children, talking with children and interactive play are the best means of educating.



This app is \$14.99. First-Then Visual Schedule is an affordable user-friendly mobile application designed for caregivers to provide positive behavior support through the use of "visual schedules". First-Then was designed for individuals with communication needs, developmental delays, autism spectrum disorders or anyone who would benefit from a structured environment.

The app has a lot of features that will be beneficial to a child that needs a high level of structure. The app can be set for daily routines, events, specific steps to an activity and activity that requires transition.

The app will allow you to :

- customize sounds and pictures
- Check list feature
- Viewing screen options: full, split and list
- Print copies of schedules
- File sharing

Check the apps website for a variety of available apps
<https://www.goodkarmaapplications.com/first-then-visual-schedule.html>

FTVS HD: First Then Visual Schedule
First Then Visual Schedule
Visual Schedule Planner
Scene Speak
 First Then - Android

FREE APPS!

Model Me Going Places: is a great visual teaching tool for helping your child learn to navigate challenging locations in the community. Each location contains a photo slideshow of children modeling appropriate behavior. Easy to use tap forward through the slide show and has audio (English) presentation.
 LOCATIONS:- Hairdresser -Mall -Doctor -Playground - Grocery Store - Restaurant

Autism Emotions: Uses a slideshow with a audio or music to describe and demonstrate emotions.



This app provides you with American sign language step by step demonstrations from the basics of the alphabet, numbers and word categories to tutorials. The app also provides interactive memory games and Deaf Voice which allows you an inside look at individual personal experiences.



ABBY -BASIC SKILLS PRESCHOOL; Counting, letters, shapes, and patterns offers an increase of skill level for each area of learning. This app also offers a full version for purchase with 16 additional games and activities.



Meet Tiny, the lovable mealtime friend who encourages young children to try new foods! This app's playful approach can even turn picky-eating struggles or other types of feeding difficulties into a fun game, as a picture of your child's own food gets uploaded into Tiny's plate for her to "eat" - kids want to eat foods as they see Tiny enjoying the very same things!



BREATH THINK DO WITH SESAME: This app is designed for preschoolers to help them distress with an adorable monster from Sesame Street.



Meditations for Kids; meditation exercises guide kids to move, stretch, or make noises. Others simply take kids on a journey in their minds. They cover different topics such as being brave in the dark, coping with stress, or learning how to reduce fidgeting. Each recording lasts roughly five minutes

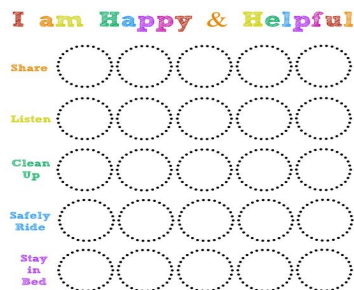
Reward System

Another means of recognizing positive behavior is by setting up a reward system. A reward system can be associated with any behavior such as potty training to controlling a child's temper. Reward systems tend to catch the interest of the child thus reinforces good behavior. In order for a Reward System to work the objective must be clear and consistent.

1. Begin with setting the objective; let's use sitting down at the dinner table to eat a meal, as an example. Talk to your preschooler about what you would like them to strive for. "I would like to see you sit down in your chair at the table and eat your dinner with Mommy and Daddy."
2. Explain what this behavior looks like, Sitting in the chair at the table, using utensils to eat, eat your meal and use a nice inside voice, (As the child masters the small steps it can be expanded with more detail like using please and thank you/no thank you and so on)
3. Create the reward system. For example, if your child likes stickers you can make a chart that clearly marks each time the child is successful or drop a marble in a "good job jar". Decide with your child how things will be measured. Decide on the end reward with your child so they stay motivated. Keep it simple, like an extra hour of tablet time, or a trip to get an ice cream or going to pick out a new book at the library. Decide with your child if this is measured weekly or monthly or if they hit a certain level in their "good job jar".
4. Focus on one or two behaviors at a time. Having more than this can overwhelm some children and make them feel as they do not have some control and as a result they may shut down. Once a behavior is achieved on a consistent basis create a new objective.
5. ALWAYS BE CONSISTENT AND IMMEDIATE in your positive response. Preschoolers have no real sense of time, so by offering the sticker or marble right away acknowledges the good behavior and will encourage your child to do it again!

STICKER CHARTS

This is the simplest reward system to begin with. Preschoolers are often easily motivated by stickers. Using a blank piece of paper or poster board write your child's name and objective (desired behavior) on it. Allow your preschooler to help decorate it as this will give them a sense of ownership for the chart. Decide with your preschooler where it should be hung. Preschoolers enjoy displaying their achievements! Take your child to pick out stickers that will be used on the chart. Stickers can be found at dollar stores, department stores (Walmart) and card stores. The stickers are to only be used for the chart. Remember when your child displays the desired behavior immediately offer them a sticker to put on their chart. The sooner you recognize the behavior with verbal praise accompanied by the sticker the more likely the child will make the connection and repeat the desired behavior. The following are examples of very simple charts to more complex. For more ideas check out Pinterest!



Not all children are motivated by stickers. Some children maybe more focused on an end reward. For example, if your child enjoys playing on the tablet or watching a certain TV show you may use a reward jar. The jar may have various levels of achievement that may encourage your child to display desired behaviors. Remember to only focus on one or two behaviors at a time. Be Consistent!! It is essential that you clearly explain what you want to see in terms of the desired behaviors. Be clear in explaining how the reward jar works!! The following are some examples of a reward jar and more ideas can be found on Pinterest and other web outlets.



The jar can have the child's name on the lid or a photo of the child attached to it. If you are doing this with multiple children in the home it will make jar identification easier.

You can use anything to fill the jar, however, something with more volume to it will fill the jar faster. This is important for a preschooler as it will allow for a quicker result. Pom poms would be a good option as would fuzzy balls. Both can be found at a dollar store or craft store.

Label the jar with a level of success as seen or label it with reward options. For example the first line may read 10 extra minutes of tablet time. Next line might say pick 2 bed time stories. Next line might say go to the library. These can vary according to the interests and motivators for your child. You may also include removing a pom pom if your child does not follow the desired behavior. For example, if the child does

not share a toy and has a temper tantrum a fuzzy will be removed. The idea is to see how high up the jar you can go each day. Once the jar is full you can choose to empty it and start again or move to a new objective. If you are choosing to give the jar another go with the current levels be sure to review the rewards with your child and see if they may want to change them. This is a good idea to keep them motivated. The following are some examples of rewards to earn.

Reward Coupons for Kids

This coupon is good for: A sleepover party for up to 3 friends!	This coupon is good for: Staying up 30 minutes past bedtime
This coupon is good for: Dinner of your choice	This coupon is good for: Movie night! You pick the flick
This coupon is good for: One hour of time alone with mom or dad	This coupon is good for: Getting out of one chore
This coupon is good for: Building a blanket fort	This coupon is good for: Making a batch of your favorite cookies together
This coupon is good for: A cup of hot cocoa	This coupon is good for: Game Night! You choose the game
This coupon is good for: One extra bedtime story	This coupon is good for: Pajama Day!

Tips for success: 1. Have your child participate in the decisions and creation of the reward system, this creates a personal ownership of it. 2. Be CONSISTENT! 3. Be Positive! 4. Be quick to recognize and acknowledge the desired behavior! 5. Once your child has mastered the behavior move on to something new.