

Workshop 1-6:  
Helping Parents Understand Children's Behavior

## PowerPoint



**Understanding the Meaning of  
Children's Challenging Behaviors**

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HOME VISITING CONFERENCE  
NOVEMBER 10, 2011  
KELLY COBLE, LCSW-C  
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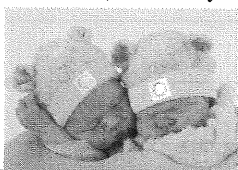
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**Home Visiting**

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- All parents need support during their child's first years
- Especially parents who face challenges in accessing center-based resources for early care and education, health and mental health, and family support services.




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**Family Driven Care**

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- Family-driven means families have a primary decision making role in the care of their own children, including
  - Choosing culturally and linguistically competent supports, services, and providers;
  - Setting goals;
  - Designing, implementing and evaluating programs;
  - Monitoring outcomes; and
  - Partnering in funding decisions.

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

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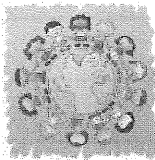
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**Expand access to high quality HV programs that have a proven track record**

- Healthy Families America
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- The Parent-Child Home Program
- Parents as Teachers



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**Ensure Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Home Visiting Services**

- Sixty percent of infants and toddlers with immigrant parents (1.3 million) live in low income families.
- Documents should be translated and accessible to families, and home visitors should be trained on the language and cultural needs of enrolled families and be able to work effectively across cultures.

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**Positive Outcomes**

- Reduction of child abuse and neglect.
- Parents more likely to read aloud, tell stories, say nursery rhymes, and sing
- Parents created more developmentally stimulating environments
- More responsive interactions with their children
- More knowledge about child development

DiLauro, 2009. Zero to Three.

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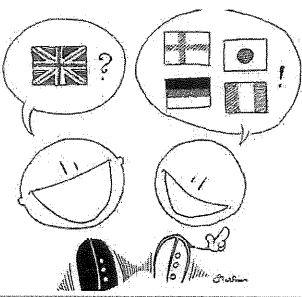
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*What language was that?*

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*Our role is often to be the interpreter for both the child and the caregiver.*

*We interpret:*

- Language...
- Actions...
- Behaviors...
- Intentions...
- Meaning...

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*An understanding of normal development is key to helping parents understand what is behind their child's behaviors.*

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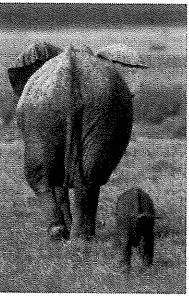
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*How do kids develop? Context is Key!*

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- Young children develop in relationships.
- Young children use relationships with caregivers to
  - Regulate physiological response
  - Form internal working models of relationships
  - Provide secure base for exploration and learning
  - Model accepted behaviors



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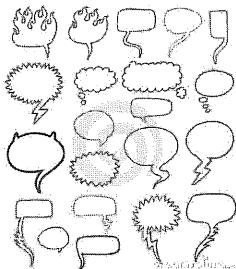
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*Working with Children and Parents:  
Considerations/Ideas*

- Children's behavior has meaning.
- Translating children's emotional/behavioral communications for parents. Helping them wonder: "I wonder why he is doing that?"
- Parent and child's needs and agendas may be in conflict with one another.
- Young children need adults to provide emotional buffering and to help them "understand" the events around them.



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*Observing Different Behaviors*

- Track both caregiver's and child's behavior closely.
- Observe their interactions and their impact on one another.
- Observe who moves the interaction forward.
- Observe who holds the responsibility for recovery from distress in the dyad.



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*Defining Challenging Behavior*

- Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults.
- Behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance by caregivers and other adults.
- What comes to mind?



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*Some Basic Assumptions About Behaviors*



- Challenging behavior always has a message.
  - × I am bored, I am sad, you hurt my feelings, I need some attention, I want to play too, etc.
- Children often use challenging behavior when they don't have the social or communication skills they need to engage in more appropriate interactions.
- Behavior that persists over time is usually working for the child.



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*Reasons for Challenging Behavior:*



- Developmental surge
- Sleep disruptions/problems
- Medical conditions
- Biological differences
- Social emotional environment
- Family/caregiver stress
- Discontinuity between home and current care setting
- Children this age are still developing skills communicating and interacting with others
- A combination of more than one above...



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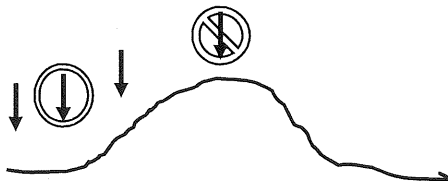
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*Helping Parents Identify Teachable Moments*



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### Effective Commands

- Direct: telling not asking
- Positive: what to do, not what not to do
- Single: one at a time
- Specific: not vague

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### Effective Commands

- Age appropriate
- Given in a normal tone of voice
- Used only when really necessary

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### 12 Principles of Understanding the Meaning of Children's Behaviors:

1. Young children cry and cling in order to communicate an immediate need for parental proximity and care.
2. Separation distress is an expression of the child's fear of losing the parent.
3. Children want to please their parents, fear their disapproval, and respond well to praise.
4. Young children are afraid of being hurt and of losing parts of their bodies.
5. Young children feel responsible and blame themselves when the parent is upset or angry for whatever reason.
6. Children imitate their parents because they want to be like them.



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*12 Principles of Understanding the  
Meaning of Children's Behaviors:*



7. Young children say no to establish autonomy, not to be disrespectful.
8. Young children harbor the conviction that parents know everything and are always right.
9. Young children need clear and consistent limits to their dangerous or culturally inappropriate behaviors in order to feel safe and protected.
10. Memory starts at birth. Babies and young children remember experiences before they can speak about them.
11. Young children need their parents' help in learning to express strong emotions without hurting themselves or others.
12. Conflict between parent and child is inevitable, can be repaired, and serve a valuable developmental function when handled lovingly.



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References



- DiLauro, E., *Reaching Families Where They Live: Supporting Parents and Child Development Through Home Visiting. ZERO TO THREE Policy Network, February 2009.*
- Korfmacher, J., Green, B., Staerkel, F., Peterson, C., Cook, G., Roggman, L., Paldowski, R.A., Schiffman, R., *Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Home Visiting, Child Care Youth Forum, 2008.*
- LeCroy, C.W., Whitaker, K., *Improving the quality of home visitation: An exploratory study of difficult situations, Child Abuse and Neglect 29 (2005) 1003-1013.*
- Lieberman, A. & Van Horn, P. (2005). *Don't hit my mommy: A manual for child-parent psychotherapy with young witnesses of family violence. Zero to Three.*

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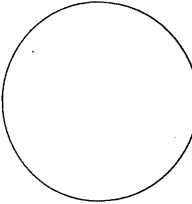
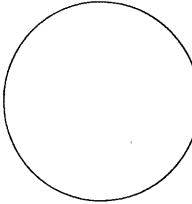
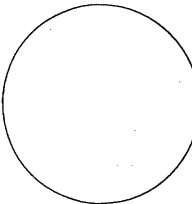
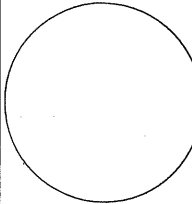
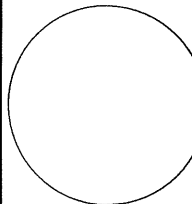
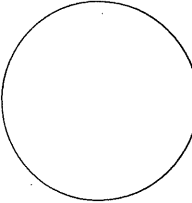
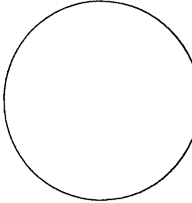
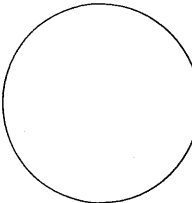
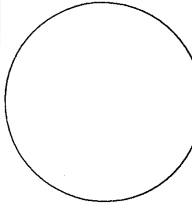
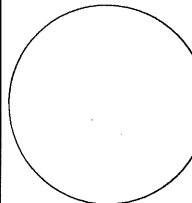
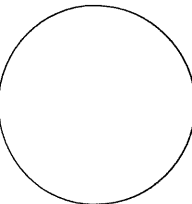
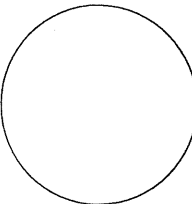
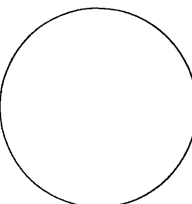
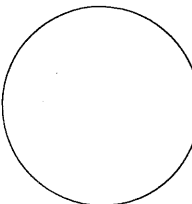
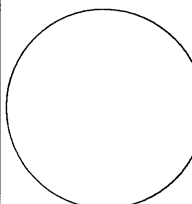
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Workshop 1-6:  
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Handout #1

# Hot Button Activity

<p>On each circle going across, write down the behaviors that push your buttons.</p>					
<p>On each circle going across, write down your feelings when faced with these behaviors.</p>					
<p>On each circle going across, write down the impact your feelings have on your relationship with the children who exhibit these behaviors.</p>					

DEAR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Today at the Home Visiting Consortium Conference, the most significant ideas that I've learned/thought/heard while at this workshop are:

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As a result of these ideas, I intend to do the following things within the next week:

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By doing these things, I will achieve the following results:

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Best wishes and good luck!