

# Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors Succeed in the Classroom

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One of the reasons that a child might have difficulty playing or participating in play activities in the classroom is that one or more challenging behaviors interfere. For example, the child be easily frustrated and lash out at peers and materials. Or, the child refuses to try new activities, change activities, or follow directions.

A first step in helping this child is to ensure that prevention strategies are in play. These include: 1) Sharing control between children and adults, 2) Designing play areas and centers with boundaries that are easily viewed by the teacher and understood by the children, 3) Having materials that are organized and in good working order, 4) Having activities that provide many ways to respond, 5) Having a clear and consistent schedule, and 6) Supporting children's participation in play by being nearby and available. Many

children with challenging behaviors will benefit from clear directions and clear acknowledgment of their efforts. Visual assistance in the form of photos and picture symbols that help children understand the schedule and the expectations are also useful. Even when such prevention measures are in place, a child may need an individualized modification. To use the following chart, locate the troublesome behavior in the first column. Look across the row for examples of modifications that may be useful to address this behavior. Remember that some challenging behavior require a far more systematic analysis of the function of the behavior and development of an individualized plan.

Addressing Common Classroom Challenges

Problems	Environmental Arrangement	Simplify the Activity	Use Child Preferences	Adult Support	Peer Support	Special Equipment	Modify the Activity	Invisible Support
Child doesn't actively participate at large group times		x	x					
Child refuses to join large group time			x	x				
Child tantrums during large group time	x	x						
Child talks out of turn during large group time	x							

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Child is not willing to go to or participate in a certain learning center	x		x					
Child has difficulty making a transition from area or activity to the next	x		x					
Child is noncompliant when given a direction	x			x				
Child runs in the classroom	x							
Child mouths art materials	x			x	x		x	
Child grabs items from others	x							
Child hits others	x						x	
Child doesn't pay attention	x							x
Whining				x				
Talking back	x			x				
Self-stimulatory behavior			x	x				
Self-injurious behavior	x			x				
Biting others	x						x	x

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Child grabs things from others at small group	x							
Unstable when walking	x	x				x		
Difficulty descending stairs			x		x	x		
Child has difficulty remaining with the group		x	x		x			
Dawdling	x		x		x			
Child knows an answer or skill but does not demonstrate it			x	x				
Child won't participate in large group activities		x	x					
Child has difficulty separating from their parent	x							
Child won't remain seated on on the bus	x		x					x
Child won't keep their seat belt on on the bus	x		x		x			
Child screams on the bus	x							
Child screams in the classroom	x							
Child bullies others				x				

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Child doesn't maintain proximity to peers	x							
Peer rejected				x				x
Child falls out of chairs	x					x		
Child has difficulty sitting at circle	x					x		
Child bothers others at circle time			x					x
Difficulty beginning and ending projects	x	x	x					
Difficulty washing hands							x	
Child is not yet using verbal speech							x	
Runs out of classroom	x							
Eats with fingers						x		
Doesn't respond to transition cue	x							
Doesn't follow classroom routine	x			x				
Child gives up easily		x	x	x	x			

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Child uses toys inappropriately					x			
Child demonstrates low rates of engagement		x	x					
Child has significantly lower skills than rest of class		x						x
Child has difficulty lining up	x							
Child doesn't clean up	x	x	x					
Child is easily overstimulated	x	x						
Child throws up or gags easily and/or often		x						
Child won't come to small group			x					
Child mouths inappropriate objects	x				x			