

Five Critical Classroom Practices for Promoting Positive Behavior and Nurturing Social and Emotional Development

1. **Positive climate** – A 5:1 ratio of positive attention to negative attention is based on research that has shown that children are more successful when children experience more positive interactions with adults than experience negative attention for challenging behavior. Positive interactions may include smiles, greetings, positive time spent together, positive descriptive feedback, acknowledgement and encouragement. Positively worded redirection is not the same as positive attention. When considering the ratio, keep in mind the use of negative statements as well as positively worded redirections, commands, and calling out a name to stop a negative behavior (such as Billy! Slow down! Billy!).
2. **Predictable, consistent, comprehensible routines** – Maintaining an environment where children can predict what happens next is a highly effective strategy for addressing challenging behavior. A predictable schedule must be predictable to the children who follow the schedule - not only to the adults who create and implement the schedule. Pictures, drawings and stories can be used to help teach children what happens and what happens next.
3. **Routines within routines within routines** – For many children it is not enough to simply predict the order of major events/activities in the classroom. There also needs to be predictability and consistency built into each routine. Children are more likely to be successful when they know what to do and what to expect.
4. **Explicitly teach behavioral expectations** – Many aspects of appropriate classroom behavior are new to children. For example, the expectations for cleaning up toys; resting; getting dressed to go outside; moving as a group down a hallway; and/or eating at a table may look different at home. Photographs, drawings, stories, role play and practice can be used to teach and remind children of expected classroom behavior.
5. **Explicitly teach social and emotional skills** – Many children come into our classrooms without having mastered the skills to greet other children, express interest in playing together, express desire to play alone, problem solve over use of space or materials, manage complex strong feelings and respond appropriately to the feelings of others. There are many opportunities to teach, coach and scaffold the development of specific social and emotional skills throughout the daily routine.

Adapted from Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children (PTR-YC)
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