
	HEAD START and EARLY HEAD START STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES	
PROGRAM AREA: Education/ Child Development (including Disabilities and Mental Health)		
TITLE: Children with Challenging Behavior		
PREPARED BY: Head Start Behavior Health Specialist		2 Page(s)

Rationale:

Many pre-school children engage in challenging behaviors in class and at play during the course of their development. Most often this behavior is short-term and decreases with efficient class management, using developmentally appropriate strategies, and maximizing child engagement in the classroom. However, some children’s challenging behavior is ongoing and difficult. In addition, children who show social, emotional, and behavioral struggles are at risk for challenging behaviors.

A child who exhibits challenging behavior that is persistent and problematic is a sign of emotional distress. It may indicate a need for individualization and extra support. Challenging behaviors are defined as disruptive behaviors that interfere with a child’s learning, development, and successful play. It also includes aggressive unsafe behavior, which is harmful to the child, other children or staff, and the destruction of property.

For persistent disruptive behavior, a coordinated effort between center staff, specialists, license mental health consultant, parent(s) and any other relevant individual is required to ensure that interventions are effective and address the child’s individualized needs.

Procedures:

1. When a teacher identifies a challenging behavior, an immediate response strategy is required to teach, nurture, and encourage positive behavior.

a) Response strategies for disruptive behavior may include the following:

- Praise positive behavior (see Positive Descriptive Acknowledgment examples).
- Use others to model positive peer interaction.
- Prompt child to use his/her words - be sure to validate child’s feelings first.
- Offer child two (2) choices among activities.
- Use the “first and then” technique.
- Redirect or distract child to another activity.
- Interrupt behavior to model/practice for child positive ways to interact.
- Other strategies based on the Teaching Pyramid model.

b) Center staff working with the child are responsible for ongoing documentation of Challenging behavior in the Behavior Observation Report (refer to Behavior Observation Report SOP).

c) In a timely manner, SS will share Behavior Observation Report with parent, SS will ensure teacher discusses with parent behavior noted, and elicit parent ideas to help staff with classroom behavior. Discussion is documented in Family Contact Log of the child's file.

3. When disruptive behavior continues, these are the steps to follow:

If it is a teacher concern:

a) SS submits an Internal Referral for Follow-Up Services to Operations Manager via PROMIS after parent signs consent.

b) The Operations Manager who will assign an Education Specialist to conduct a classroom management observation and to develop a plan including new strategies for the Teacher. These strategies will be documented in the Classroom Management Plan form. A copy of this form will be submitted to the CFBHS.

- Disabilities staff will be included when children have an IFSP/IEP or a suspected disability has been identified through any of the observations. Then, an observation by Disabilities staff may have to be conducted. Disabilities staff will share their observations and will coordinate the Intervention Plan (when applicable) with the CFBHS.

If it is a parent concern:

a) SS submits an Internal Referral for Follow-Up Services to CFBS via PROMIS after parent signs consent. SS will include teacher's BORs and other pertinent information regarding the child's behavior in the classroom. CFBHS through SS, will request an individual meeting with parent to assess the family dynamics and their individualized needs. CFBHS and SS will engage the family and will offer parent any needed support and to initiate the process of a Service Coordination Plan (SCP).

b) A follow-up meeting with parent coordinated by SS will be establish. In this meeting, SS, center staff, parent, and CFBHS (aka Support Team), will finalized a Service Coordination Plan (refer to Service Coordination Plan SOP). The Service Coordination Plan (SCP) is signed and dated by all those present at the meeting. The original SCP is placed in Education/Early Childhood Development (Section V-A Social Emotional Development Support -green page) of the child's file, and copy given to the parent.