

The Importance of Teaching Social Skills in ECE Classrooms

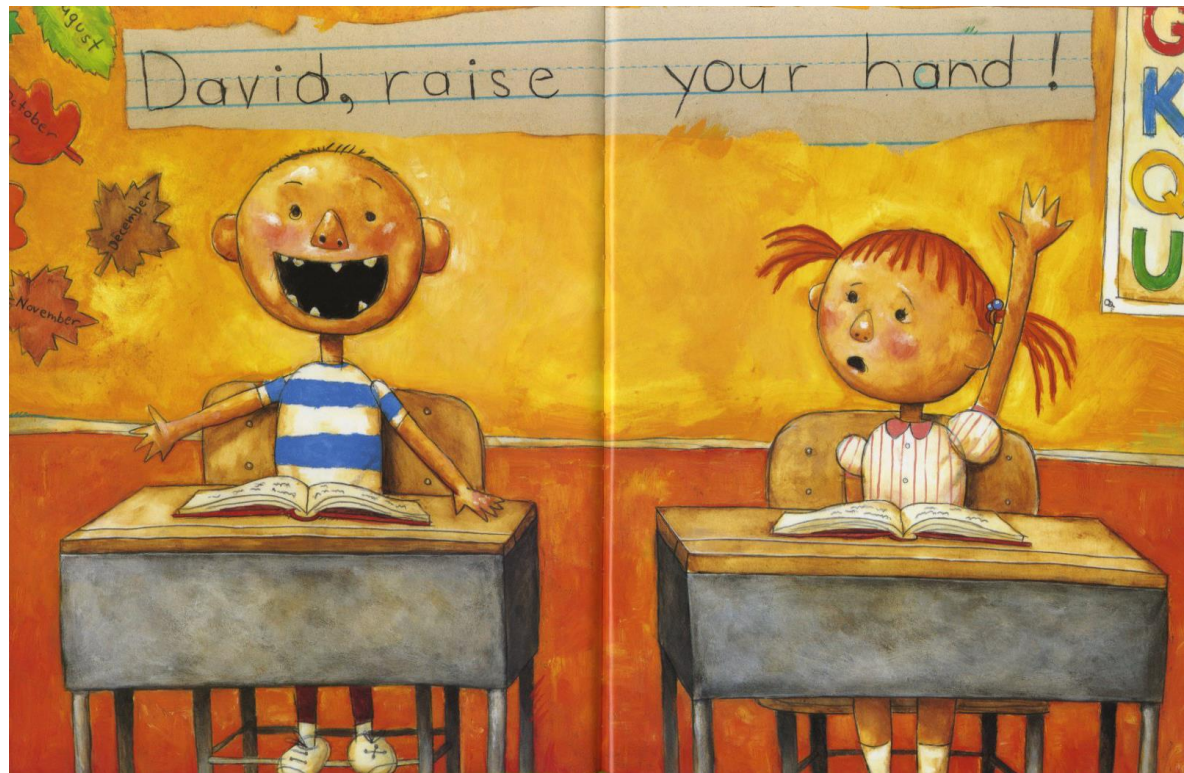
**SUPER SATURDAY
ECE**

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Let's Talk About Behaviors



Challenging Behaviors

All behavior is communicative. Challenging behaviors are a cultural dialect and indicate that a student's needs are not being met. Do they have the skills to meet that demand?

Therefore, these behaviors are to be replaced with more socially appropriate means of communicating and are not to simply be punished or extinguished.

Keep in mind the child's personality/temperament vs behavior.



Functions of Behavior

To **GET** Something:

- obtain a tangible (food, object, activity)
- attention
- sensory

To get **OUT** of Something:

- escape or avoid a:
 - task
 - demand
 - person
 - sensory



Rethinking the Functions of Behavior

What is **Happening** (React)

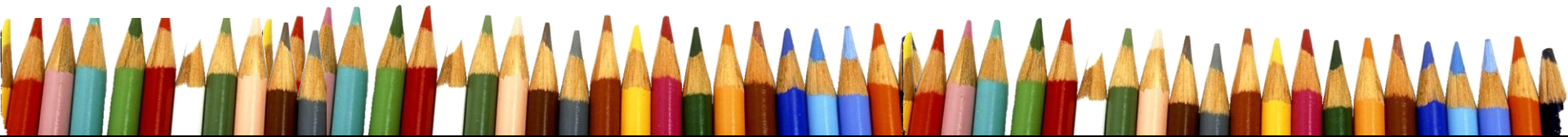


Why is it happening (Think)



Influences on Children's Behavior

- Medical, Physical and Sensory Needs
- Developmental Stage
- Individual Differences and Temperament
- Classroom and Home Environment
- Family Culture
- Learning New Behaviors
- Significant Emotional Needs



What are Social Skills

WHAT?

Recognizes that we share the world

Does **NOT** necessarily equate to a 'fun' situation

Good.....

Poor.....



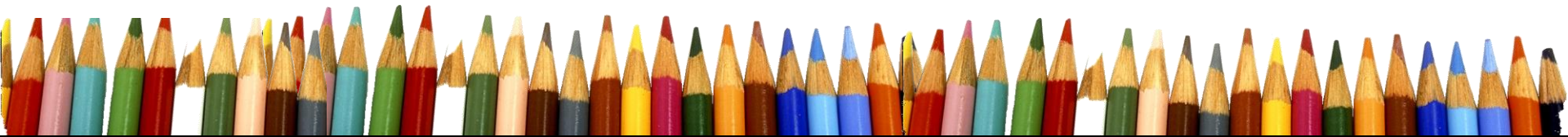
‘Good’ Social Skills

Knowing when to adapt our behavior according to the social norms of the environment



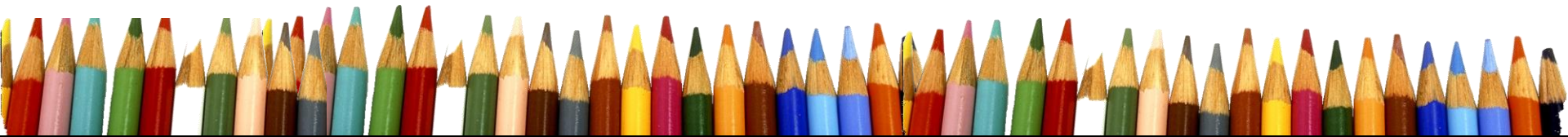
‘Poor’ Social Skills

The inability to adapt effectively to an environment or the social norm



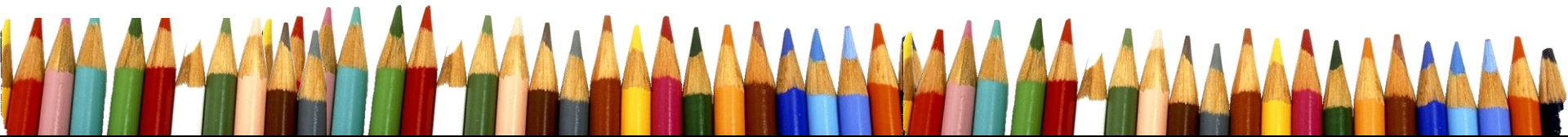
Good Social Skills in a Classroom

- Having a calm body
- Learning together
- Sharing the classroom space
- Using our words
- Listening to others



Why Should we Focus on Social Skills?

- Keep us connected
- Help us share space effectively
- Understand that others also have thoughts and feelings
- Help us work collaboratively



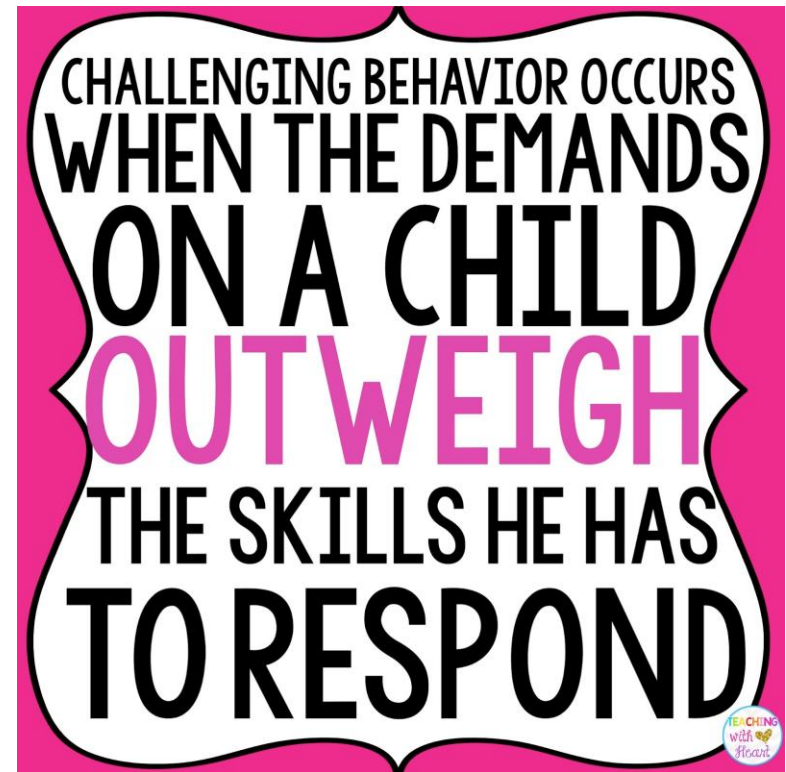
Collaborative Problem Solving

- Shift our mindset about social skills from **What** happened to **Why** is it happening
- Look at challenging social behaviors as a “developmental delay”
- Challenging behaviors and awkward social moments occur because of a lack of skill.

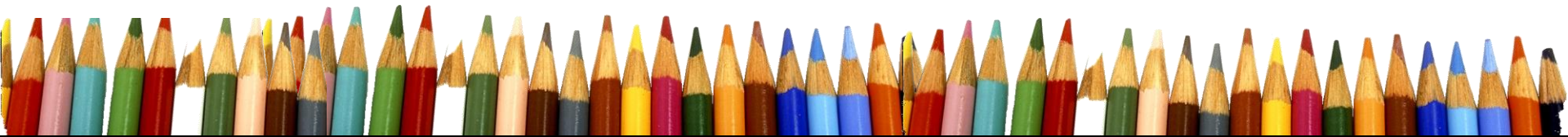


Lagging Skills

- Language Processing Skills
- Emotional Regulation Skills
- Executive Functioning Skills
- Cognitive Flexibility Skills
- Social Thinking Skills
- Sensory Integration Skills



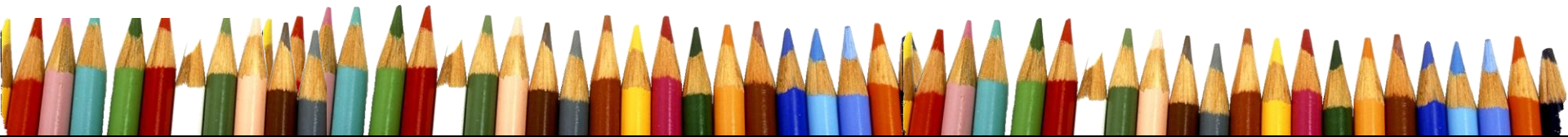
Why is This Happening?



Examples of a Lagging Skill in a Toddler

Possible Lagging Skills:

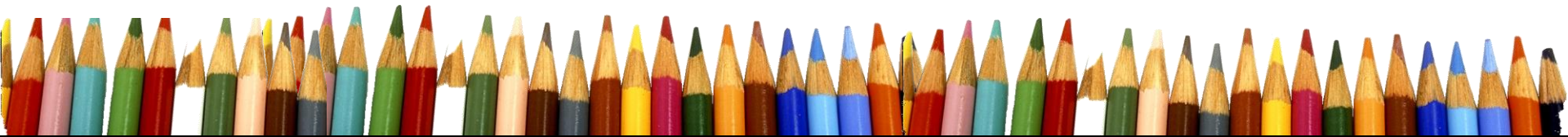
- In toddlers we often see biting.
- **WHY?** Language skills and emotional regulation skills are lagging
- **What do we do?** We teach them to use their words and learn how to self regulate their emotions.



Examples of a Lagging Skills in Older Children

Possible lagging skills:

- Language processing (not able to express himself)
- Emotional Regulation (not able to stay calm in frustration)
- Cognitive flexibility (trouble working together collaboratively)
- Social Thinking (perspective taking. Being aware of others in the environment.



Our Job

These Skills
Should be *Taught*
and **NOT**
Rewarded or
Punished



Why are These Skills Important in ECE

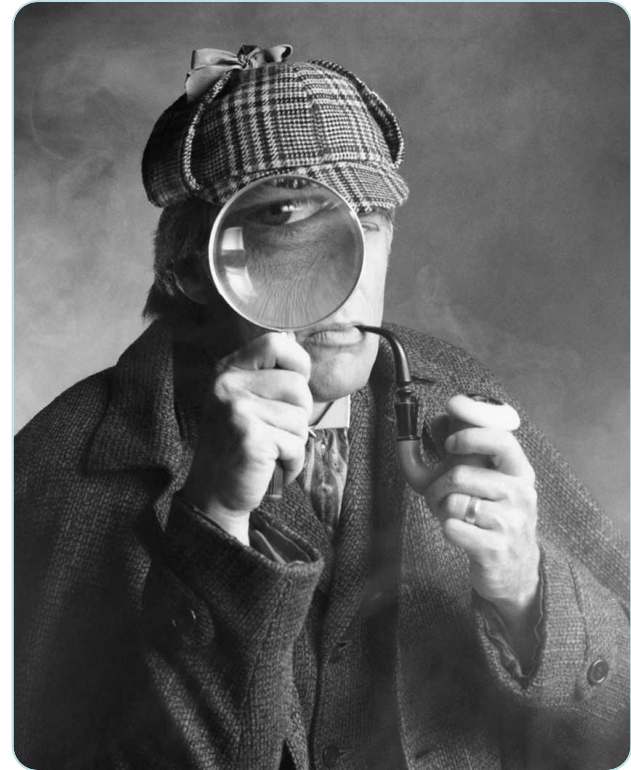
The Big Picture

- We're preparing children for the demands of Kindergarten
- Common Core
- 21st Century Teaching
- Project Based Learning



Gathering Information: What Teachers Should Know About Their Students and the Classroom

- Student's strength
- Student's interest (motivation)
- IEP or PBS in place
- Lagging skills (individual and as a group)
- Classroom goals and expectations
- Environment



Creating Opportunities

What is in our bag of tricks?

- Early Childhood Education
- Knowledge of child development
- Developmentally appropriate activities
- Effectively managing a classroom



Supporting and Guiding Social Learning

- Language Processing
- Turn Taking
- Losing to a peer
- Executive Functioning



What Skills Are They Working On?



- Social Thinking
- Language Process
- Cognitive Flexibility
- Sharing Work Space
- Emotional Regulation



What Is the Take Away?

Children Do Well if They Can...

- Understand that challenging behaviors and social issues are not intentional, they are skills that have yet to be developed.
- By focusing on skills, we are creating a starting point on what needs be worked on
- When we focus on the lagging skills as the reason for the challenging behavior, our emotional reactions are decreased
- Use reflective listening and thinking skills. It will help you to tune into the social needs of your students.



Tools We Use

- Visuals
- Group Rules (children help create)
- Schedule
- Voice Modulation Chart
- 1 – 5 Self Regulation
- First/Then (for motivation/planning/changes)
- Make a Plan (Frontloading)
- Transitional Warnings
- Pinterest Behavioral Management Plans



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