

Working Out the Wiggles!



Ideas and Strategies to Manage Classroom
Behavior and Increase Focus/Attention

Presented By:

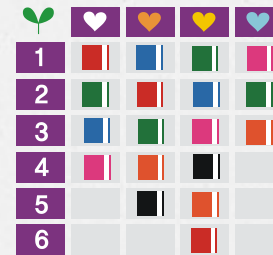
Marla Weingart, Certificated Teacher

Irvine Unified School District

Transitional Kindergarten Teacher and Mentor

Presentation Schedule

- o CHIME: What a chime can do for your classroom.
- o Share the book: Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids By: Carol McCloud. Discuss Bucket Filling and how to teach this philosophy to young children.
- o Discuss Classroom Management and Flexible Seating
 - o Daily Schedule
 - o Transition Warnings and Cues
 - o Room Arrangement
 - o Management System
 - o Classroom Rules
 - o Meditation Strategies
- o Discuss Strategies to Help Re-Focus Challenging Behaviors
- o How to speak to Parents of Children with Challenging Behaviors
- o Resources
- o Questions????



The Bucket Philosophy

- o Share: Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids By: Carol McCloud
- o How do you feel when your bucket is empty? Full?
- o Are you a bucket filler in your classroom?
- o How can you promote this philosophy between the students in your class?



Daily Schedule



- o Even though the children in your class may be too young to tell time, they still need to have a schedule for their day.
- o Having a daily schedule helps children feel safe and secure. They know the order of their day and they know what they can expect next.
- o A Picture Schedule is a great tool for young children and/or children with special needs to help visualize what comes next.

Transition Warnings



- o Children need warnings before transitioning from one activity to another. Giving the children time warnings (such as: 5 minutes until clean up time, 2 minutes until clean up time, etc.) helps them prepare to finish what they are doing/playing.
- o Giving children transition warnings helps to minimize the amount of challenging behavior you have when changing activities.
- o Wiggly children do great with jobs such as pushing in chairs and ringing a clean up bell.

Room Arrangement



- o Room arrangement plays a direct role in how children behave and move around the classroom.
- o The more defined each area is, the better for the children. They need to be able to see boundaries.
- o When arranging a classroom, consider pathways, noise for each center, and how many children you want to be able to play in each center.
- o Keep louder areas (such as dramatic play and blocks) near each other and place quieter areas such as library, computer and writing center in a different part of the room.



Management System



- o Every classroom should have some type of management system.
- o A management system can be name strips, dye cuts, pictures, popsicle sticks, etc.
- o Each center/area in the classroom should have a pre-determined number of children that can play there.
- o Have a designated place for the children to place their symbols that shows which center they are playing in. This will help minimize chaos in the classroom.



Classroom Rules

- o When creating rules for your classroom, try to avoid words such as “No” or “Never”. Instead use positive language. An example is:
 - o “Always use walking feet indoors” instead of, “No Running!”
- o Allow children to be a part of the rule making process so that they feel ownership of the rules. They are more likely to follow rules that they helped create.

Strategies to Re-Focus Challenging Behavior



- o The first step in working with children with challenging behaviors is Prevention. Our goal is to prevent challenging behaviors first and only manage them if we have to. By looking at how we manage our classrooms (schedule, room arrangement, management systems, etc.), we can help set our children up for success.
- o We can use intentional teaching methods to discuss challenging behaviors with our students in large and small group times. Through stories, puppets, finger-plays, etc. we can model ways to deal with feelings in an appropriate way. Also, use challenges that come up in your class as “teachable moments”.



- o Incorporate Social/Emotional Children's books into your everyday library and curriculum. The more you read and share stories about recognizing feelings and how to deal with them, the more familiar your students will be with how to solve problems.



- o Have some stuffed animals/cuddly toys available for children who need a little extra affection. This is especially helpful at drop off times and can really enhance your library area (the children love to "read" to the toys).



- o Keep some small sensory items, such as beanie babies, bean bags or koosh balls, in a basket near your circle time area. These are great when you have a wiggly or inattentive child during group times. Allow the child to hold the item. The rule is that it must be held with 2 hands and stay between the child's lap and chin. They can roll it, shake it, wiggle it, etc. Their busy, yet quiet, hands will help them focus and will keep the rest of their body calm.

Work Out the WIGGLES!

- o When you have children who are not able to focus, then you need to give them an opportunity to MOVE. Some great ways to work out the wiggles are:
 - o Freeze Dance
 - o Simon Says/Follow the Leader
 - o Go Noodle Games (www.gonoodle.com)
 - o Rocking Chairs
 - o Standing instead of sitting
 - o Flexible Seating
 - o Pillows, beanbags, cube chairs

Meditation Strategies

- o Sometimes, movement activities can add to the chaos. Sometimes, we just need to calm down. Some calm down strategies are:
 - o Turn off the lights (if you are allowed, to)
 - o Have everyone sit calmly in their own spot
 - o Ring a chime. Have the students take a deep breath and hold it while the chime rings. Have them breathe out when the chime stops.
 - o Have the students stand. Ring the chime and have them hold their breath while the chime rings. Have them breathe out and quietly sit down when it stops. This allows them to focus on the chime.
 - o Butterfly Breathing (arms moving like wings with each breath)
 - o Blowing out the Birthday candle breathing
 - o Pretending to smell a flower
 - o Raising our arms up like the sun or moon with each inhale and bringing them down on the exhale
 - o Pretending to melt like an ice cream cone on a hot day.

Use REDIRECTION to help re-direct children in a positive way.

- o Little Johnny is at the block center. Instead of building with the blocks, Johnny is throwing them. It is time to re-direct.
- 1. Say, “ Johnny, blocks are for building with. When you throw a block, you could hurt somebody. If he continues...
- 2. Say, “ Johnny, blocks are for building with. Let me show you how to build.” Then sit on the floor and show Johnny how to use the blocks correctly. If he continues...
- 3. Say, “Johnny, I can see that you are having a difficult time building with the blocks. Let’s build together. I don’t want anyone to get hit by a block. That would hurt.” Then sit with him and join him in block play. If he continues...
- 4. Say, “Johnny, you are showing me that you are not able to follow our block rules right now. Blocks are for building, not for throwing. I am afraid you may accidentally hurt someone. I need you to choose a different center to play in. When you are ready to come back to the block center and build with the blocks correctly, you are welcome to come back.”

Little Johnny may go to the library center for a few minutes and then head straight back for those building blocks. When he gets back, remind him that blocks are for building. You can even have Johnny tell and show you how to use the blocks. If he goes back to block throwing, this whole process begins again.



Teacher/Student Relationships

- o An important factor in dealing with challenging behaviors in your classroom is understanding your role as the teacher. Children need to feel safe and loved by the caregivers in their lives. While dealing with challenging behaviors can be frustrating, we need to remember to express love and affection, even towards our most challenging students. Sometimes a little positive attention and a hug can turn behavior right around.



- o The more positive the teacher/child relationship is, the easier it will be to work through the challenging behaviors.
- o Know your limits. When you get frustrated, take a break. Remember that a child with challenging behavior is not trying to purposely upset you.

Behavior is Communication

- o Remember that behavior is a way for children to communicate. Sometimes a child just needs to be given the words to express feelings or an appropriate behavior to replace the challenging one.
- o Children have a reason why they act out. They would do better if they could. That is why your role is so vital. You can help them learn a better way to express themselves.

How to talk to Parents of Children with Challenging Behaviors

- o A parent who has a child that is exhibiting challenging behaviors understands that they are going to have difficult days. When talking with these parents, remember a few key things...
- o You don't have to tell them every detail of their child's day. Ask yourself, "Is it important that they know this?" Sometimes telling the parents is more about releasing our own stress and feelings about the day, rather than helping the child/family improve.
- o Remember that the parent has his/her own stress just knowing that their child can be challenging. If there is an issue that you **MUST** tell them, make sure you also tell them something positive about the child.
- o Treat parent discussions like a sandwich. Start off with a positive and end with a positive. Sandwich the negative incident that you had to work through in the middle.

RESOURCES

- o The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) This website offers developmentally appropriate tools and techniques for promoting positive social skills in young children. They can be found at: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>
- o Think:Kids – Rethinking Challenging Kids – This website has training blogs and videos and includes separate links for Educators and Parents. They can be found at: <http://www.thinkkids.org/>
- o Book Resources for teaching mindfulness to children:
<https://www.readbrightly.com/mindfulness-meditation-books-for-kids/>