Addressing Problem Behavior: Prevention is the KEY!

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TASN Behavior Specialist
Kansas MTSS Core Team Member
Presenter Information

- First and foremost I’m a parent of two great kids!
- Degrees in Applied Behavior Science (formerly Human Development and Family Life) and Special Education from University of Kansas (Rock Chalk!)
- TASN Behavior Specialist/Kansas MTSS Core team
Presentation Objectives

- Review the basic concepts of behavior principles
- Learn how to determine the meaning of your child’s behavior
- Discuss strategies to prevent problem behavior
- Get started on a plan to carry out at home
- Learn about helpful resources
## Take Away Messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What confirms what I already knew</th>
<th>What did I learn</th>
<th>What do I want to know more about</th>
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## About my kiddo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths - What does my child do well?</th>
<th>Challenges - What struggles does my child have?</th>
<th>Interests - What things does my child like?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Accomplishments - What has my child done well?</th>
<th>Fears - What worries me if my child’s behaviors don’t improve?</th>
<th>Hopes &amp; Dreams - what do I want for my child? What does my child want?</th>
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Definition of DISCIPLINE -

Moving From
Reactive
Punishing/Punitive
Reprimands
Loss of Privileges

Moving Towards
Proactive
Preventative
Teaching and Rewarding
Intervening Early
A New Way of Thinking of Behavior Problems

If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach
If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach
If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach
If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach
If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we... teach??? punish???

Punish?

Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?

John Herner, Counterpoint (1998, p. 2)
All behaviors, no matter how strange or maladaptive, serve a purpose.
Two Approaches to Challenging Behavior

1. The *child* is the problem and needs to be dealt with using punishment and discipline.

2. The child is *using the behavior to have a need met* and needs to manage negative behaviors and learn desired behaviors.
Disadvantages of Using PUNISHMENT to Manage Behaviors

• Punishment reinforces the person giving the punishment and may inadvertently reward the behavior.

• Punishment may lead to control battles and escalate behavior.

• Punishment may cause emotional or aggressive behavior in the person being punished. Pain and humiliation typically escalate behavior.

• Punishment might result in the person avoiding the punishing environment or the person who is punishing. For example, a child who is punished by one parent may avoid that parent or not exhibit the behavior while with that parent but does with the other parent.

• Punishment models negative behavior and sets a poor example and creates a negative example.

• Punishment is short term solution that has no effect on increasing appropriate behaviors in the long term. It does not teach an alternative behavior.

Just think, if you were criticized or punished everyday at work how you might feel about that environment!
The easiest way to change a behavior…is to point out what someone is doing right!
Routines

1. Write down as many routines as you can think of. Getting ready for school, after school, homework, bath/bed time etc.

2. Circle the ones that are the most stressful.
The Acting Out Cycle

- Calm
- Agitation
- Trigger
- Acceleration
- Peak
- De-escalation
- Recovery

Colvin & Sugai, 1989
Function-based Thinking: Behavior is Communicative

- Attention
  - From Adults
  - From Peers

- Tangible
  - Toy, food, other desired object

- Sensory
  - Flapping, Rocking, Spinning, Tapping, etc.

- Escape, Avoid or Delay
  - Person, Place, Demand, Unpleasant situation
“The best time to intervene on problem behavior is when the behavior is not occurring” (Carr et al., 2002, p.9)
### Determining the Meaning of the Behavior

**Describe the Problem Behavior:**

In which daily routine(s) does it occur:

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<th>What Happened Before?</th>
<th>What Happened After? How did it end?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I told or asked my child to do something</td>
<td>I gave my child attention</td>
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<td>My child was playing alone</td>
<td>I ignored my child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changed or ended my child's activity</td>
<td>I gave my child an object/activity/food</td>
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<tr>
<td>My child moved from one activity to another</td>
<td>I helped my child</td>
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<td>I removed an object from my child</td>
<td>I withdrew my request or demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>I told my child “No” “Don’t” “Stop”</td>
<td>I used time-out</td>
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<tr>
<td>____________</td>
<td>Other ____________</td>
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What do you think they were trying to tell you?

What would you do differently next time?
Think of the last time you observed a problem behavior...
Complete the table with the antecedent, behavior, and consequence.

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<th>Antecedent/Trigger</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
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Tips to Prevent Problem Behavior

• Teach Expectations
  • Reinforce behaviors you want to see
  • Pre-teach before difficult routines

• Engaging and Predictable Routine/Structure

• Avoid saying “No” or “DON’T”

• Give Transition Warnings

• First/Then

• Choices

• Role play during “down times”

“For a child to learn something new you need to repeat it on average eight times.”
-H. Wong & R. Wong, 2005
Why give Choices?

- Create situations in which people are forced to think.
- Choices provide opportunities for people to make mistakes and learn from the consequences.
- **Choices help us avoid getting into control battles with others.**
- Choices provide opportunities for others to hear that we trust their thinking abilities:
  - Builds self-confidence
  - Build relationships
Example choice scripts

• A. You’re welcome to ___________ or ________________.
• B. Feel free to _______________ or _________________.
• C. Would you rather ________________ or ________________?
• What would be best for you _________________ or _____________?
### Family Planning Sheet

What __________________________ does during __________________________:

(child's name) (routine)

Why I think he/she does it:

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<th>What can I do to prevent the problem behavior?</th>
<th>What can I do if the problem behavior occurs?</th>
<th>What new skills should I teach?</th>
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Key Messages

• Prevention is key
• All behaviors serve a purpose
• Punishment only addresses the symptoms
• Teach and reinforce the behaviors you want to see
• Intervene EARLY during the escalation cycle
• Have a plan!
“Our first instinct is to punish misbehavior. And if a kid can’t do something, all the punishment in the world is not going to empower him to be able to do it.”

- Dr. Edwin Ellis
Resources

• TACSEI Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention
  www.challengingbehavior.org/

• Office of Special Education Program’s Technical Assistance Program on Positive Behavior
  Intervention and Support (PBIS) www.pbis.org

• Kansas Department of Education’s Technical Assistance System Network (TASN)
  www.ksdetasn.org

• KPIRC  www.kpirc.org

• Families Together, Inc. www.familiestogetherinc.org

• Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/
Contact Information

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