

GUIDING PRACTICES in Early Childhood Discipline



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Preschool Pyramid Model (SEFEL) Leadership Teams, January 2018, Winston-Salem, NC

NC Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion - Special Stakeholder Group, May 2018, Chapel Hill, NC



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Teachers and young children deserve school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning. Creating a supportive school climate—and decreasing suspensions and expulsions—requires close attention to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all children. The purpose of this document is to provide strategies that schools can use to manage challenging behavior in young preschool children in lieu of suspensions and expulsions.

During the developmental process, young children acquire a set of skills associated with monitoring their own and others' emotions, and the ability to use emotions to guide their own thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Throughout this process, young children learn to identify and deal with strong emotions, like anger, to manage their emotions. These skills are related to many important outcomes. For example, research suggests that when children can manage their emotions effectively, they are better able to pay attention, are more engaged in the learning process, have more positive relationships, and are more empathic (Raver, Garner, & Smith-Donald, 2007; Eggum et al., 2011). As behavioral regulation is increased, positive academic outcomes are realized (Rivers et al., 2012).

Should preschool be the environment where we punish children for not having the skills necessary to succeed, or is it the place to teach those skills?

Understanding child development and how it relates to discipline and the intentional teaching of social-emotional skills helps teachers and administrators make better decisions as they guide young preschool children toward positive behavior choices. While some children engage in problem behavior that is typical of a particular stage of development, others exhibit problem behavior beyond what might be expected. The task of early childhood educators is to understand the difference between the two, and how best to address each scenario. What is developmentally normative, and how do teachers support a child's development to the next level of growth? What is not developmentally normative and needs differentiated instruction and monitoring to ensure success?

Despite the evidence that social-emotional health and development in young preschoolers provides the foundation to support other learning and growth, many teachers are not equipped to intentionally teach the skills associated with self-regulation, empathy, friendship, etc. Further, many school-based administrators do not have early childhood development backgrounds and thus, do not understand when a problem behavior may be developmentally normative. Collectively, this has resulted in preschoolers being expelled three times more than the K-12 population according to national data (Gilliam, 2005). Additionally, public school principals and teachers often do not view asking parents to pick up their child early from class due to behavioral reasons as a "suspension" since mandatory attendance at this age is not required. Nonetheless, state and federal programs do view such actions as a "suspension." The state, and local districts, will be held accountable for such actions starting in 2021-2022. Therefore, local districts will need to enroll their preschool population in the attendance data accountability system (PowerSchool), and report absences and their reasons in the immediate future. North Carolina is committed to supporting early childhood teachers, principals, and support staff so that they feel competent to manage children's normative and non-normative behavior in the classroom, thereby reducing the number of suspensions and expulsions that they will need to report in the future.

NC PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PROFILE



In the absence of universal preschool in North Carolina, school systems have identified the value of early childhood programs that promote school readiness by implementing over 2,000 classrooms statewide. The children enrolled in these classes are primarily considered to be “at-risk” or “disabled.” School systems have created programs that are a tapestry of the various available preschool programs using funds from the state preschool program (NC Pre-K), Title I, Head Start, Exceptional Children and the Developmental Day programs. With each program comes a different set of rules, regulations, requirements and standards. In the absence of a set of program standards from the Department of Public Instruction for all public school programs, each district must comply with the requirements and rules from the various programs; some of which are regulated by state agencies outside of the Department of Public Instruction. When classrooms receive funds from multiple funding streams, local program administrators must comply with the various program standards by meeting the highest standard in each area. For example, if a school system operates a class that receives Head Start funding and NC Pre-K funding, the highest standard for adult to child ratio must be met. While Head Start will allow a ratio of 1:10 (adult to child ratio) for 4-year-olds, the NC Pre-K program requires a 1:9 ratio. Thus, a classroom with these mixed funds must comply with the standard considered to be the “highest” of 1:9.

Preschool programs administered by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (Department of Health and Human Services) and operated by the public schools must comply with NC child care licensure regulations. This

includes the NC Pre-K and Developmental Day programs. In North Carolina, the child care licensure process binds the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) with childcare facility, safety and sanitation requirements. Over the past 10 years, public school programs have made significant fiscal investments to upgrade facilities to comply with facility, safety and sanitation licensure requirements to operate these programs. The NC QRIS is based on a 5-point scale with a 1-star rating identifying those meeting minimal requirements while a 5-star rating meets the highest standards. Nationally, the QRIS is seen as a measure of quality.

In NC, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Revised Edition) or ECERS-R is utilized to measure program quality. This instrument contains seven subscales including:

- 1) Space and Furnishings,
- 2) Personal Care Routines,
- 3) Language-Reasoning,
- 4) Activities,
- 5) Interaction,
- 6) Program Structure, and
- 7) Parents and Staff.

However, the ECERS-R does not measure evidence-based practices such as found in the Preschool Pyramid Model to promote social-emotional development. In May of 2017 there were over 2,000 classrooms operated by the NC public schools; 69% of which were deemed to be at the 4- and 5-star level designation by DCDEE. About 54% of public school preschool classrooms operate under NC Pre-K requirements as administered by the DCDEE. This constitutes about half of NC Pre-K classes that are delivered via a public-private system. Additionally, during the 2018-19 school year, 13 school systems were the grantees for local Head Start programs; with more school systems housing Head Start classes that have grantee agencies outside of the public schools (i.e., community action agencies). Therefore, administration of some public school classes must factor in federal Head Start Performance Standards as well. Title I preschools are also mandated to follow the education standards from the Head Start program. Program standards for classes funded only by Exceptional Children funds are only held to teacher-pupil ratio guidelines as set forth in the NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. To better understand the relationship between the various preschool programs and their child care licensure requirements, please see Appendix A.

THE NC PRESCHOOL PYRAMID MODEL

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) has prioritized the need to provide professional development and support for preschool teachers, coaches and administrators to promote positive social-emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors with the adoption of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003). Exploration began in 2008 and the subsequent development of the Targeted Preschool Pyramid Project ensued. This is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework early educators can use to promote young children’s emotional and social development and prevent and address challenging behavior. For more information on this model and how North Carolina has been implementing it, please refer to the document titled **Early Childhood Discipline Practices in North Carolina** (James, 2018).

The Preschool Pyramid (**shown in Figure 1**), as implemented in the NC Targeted Preschool Pyramid Project, aligns with NC Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NC MTSS) by providing a tiered intervention/instructional model to support positive behavior and social-emotional development in early learners. The Preschool Pyramid is made of three tiers of intervention practices: core universal promotion for all children, supplemental supports to address the intervention needs for children at risk of social emotional delays, and intensive interventions needed for children with persistent challenges. This framework also includes a problem-solving process when a child exhibits persistent challenging behavior that utilizes data to inform instruction. As **shown in Figure 2**, the remaining four critical elements of the NC MTSS (leadership, building the capacity/infrastructure for implementation, communication and collaboration, and data evaluation) are incorporated into the implementation model (see, Appendix B).

FIGURE 1
The NC Preschool Pyramid Model

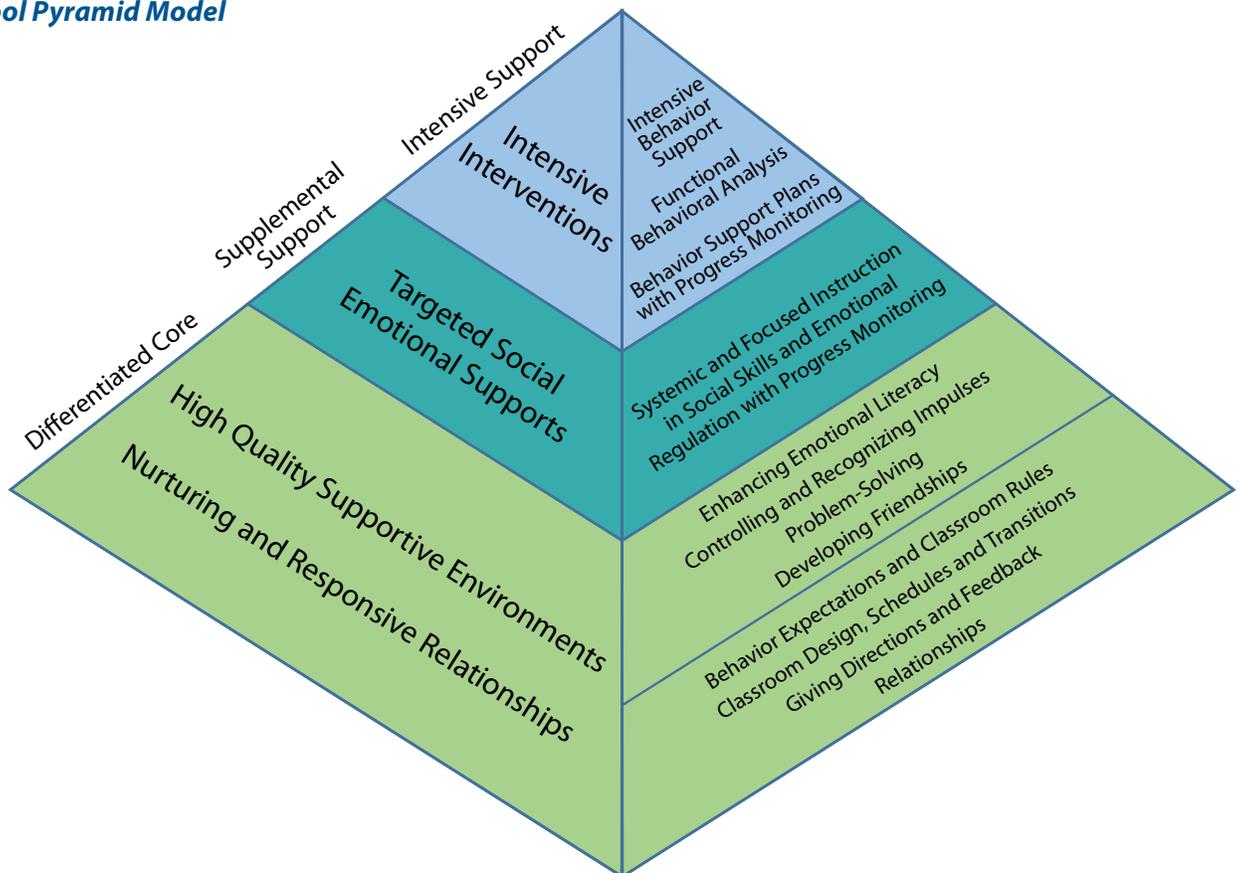
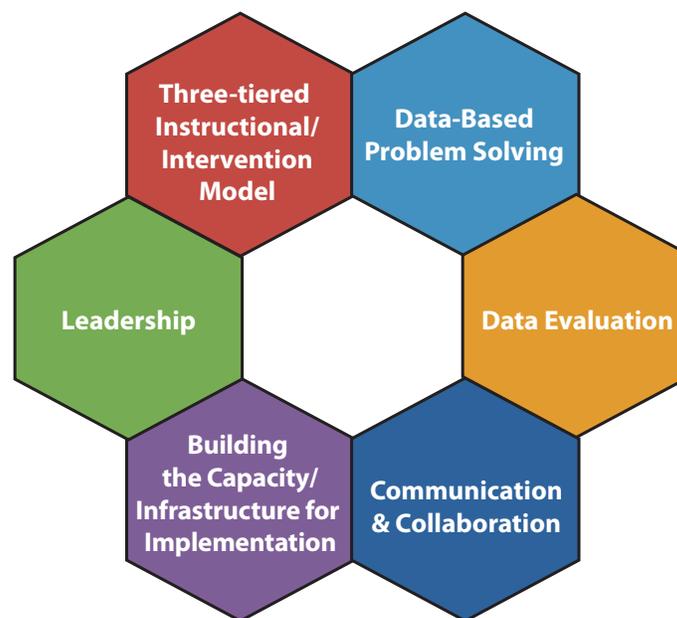


FIGURE 2
NC MTSS Critical Components



Below are some of the ways educators can access these materials to support professional learning on these topics.

The Office of Early Learning, in conjunction with the Early Learning Network at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill, developed professional development content based on information from the national Center for Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html).

This content has been adapted to align with the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development Standards and the NC Professional Teaching Standards, as well as the principles of adult learning adopted by the Early Learning Network (<https://ncln.fpg.unc.edu/pdprinciples>) based on job-embedded learning. Modules were developed in train-the-trainer format for Tiers I & II. In December of 2016 the Tier I modules were converted to online self-paced e-modules for individual users to consume (<http://modules.ncln.fpg.unc.edu/self-paced-modules>).

Development for Tier III training resources are currently underway. A new training resource for addressing dangerous behavior was released in the summer of 2018 (<http://modules.ncln.fpg.unc.edu/first-response-modules>). **First Response** is a set of intervention guidelines and strategies intended to maintain safety. Coupled with social-emotional teaching strategies from Tier I and II, **First Response** will help early childhood professionals address the most challenging behaviors that a child might present, including dangerous behavior, and work to reduce and eliminate these behaviors. **First Response** fits in as both a Targeted Social-Emotional Support (Tier II) and an Intensive Intervention (Tier III) in the NC Preschool Pyramid Model. The training was created with a range of materials from NC Pyramid Modules, NC Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and some materials from the **Safety-First** (2015) curriculum from the University of Oregon/Oregon Department of Education. Data from the NC Preschool Pyramid Model project for 2017-18 may be found in the document titled **Early Childhood Discipline Practices in North Carolina** (James, 2018).



SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Young children have a hard time understanding the reasons for being “suspended” or sent home for behavioral reasons. They often cannot make the connection between why they are being sent home and how to be more successful when they return to school, leaving them unable to improve their behavior upon their return.

Many times, exclusion from school results in children thinking that they are “bad” which leads to the development of a negative self-concept. Suspending young preschoolers from school can result in many things, putting a child’s social and academic future at risk. The strain on parents can be significant. They have to make alternative child care arrangements when their child is excluded from school, which can pose a financial challenge for low-income parents. Beyond the financial strain, parents often blame themselves for their child’s failure, without knowing how to change the behavior or solve the problem.

There is a current need for guidance from the Department of Public Instruction for local boards of education to establish developmentally appropriate practices and procedures on early childhood discipline that align with the early childhood regulatory requirements by the Division of Child Development and Early Education and federal policies from Head Start. As previously noted, implementation of public school preschool programs requires administrators to analyze the various program standards, policies, procedures and rules, and implement the highest standard of each program. The same is true in early childhood discipline. While Article 27 of public school law includes state statutes for discipline in public schools, separate state rules/regulations are in force for both licensed child care and the NC Pre-K, with additional federal requirements from Head Start. Chapter 9 of the Child Care

Rules SECTION .1800 Staff/Child Interactions and Behavior Management outlines acceptable and unacceptable management practices for young children. In addition, the DCDEE has established both a policy and a rule for NC Pre-K classes on suspension and expulsion; neither of which requires a reporting/accountability component. Reauthorization of the IDEA in 2017 mandates that suspensions and expulsions of children ages 3 through 5 years of age be reported to the federal government starting in 2022. Both the rules within the child care regulations and the NC Pre-K rule on suspension and expulsion (10A NCAC 09 .3017) do not currently align with public school law but are developmentally appropriate for young children. In both the policy and the rule, neither expulsion nor suspension are prohibited; however, problem-solving steps must be enacted prior to any changes made to a child’s placement due to behavioral concerns. Head Start has likewise developed similar policies and performance standards that prohibits expulsion and limits suspension such that they are “temporary” and can only be enacted after a team has implemented an action plan to address the behavior. Since the Head Start federal regulations prohibit expulsion, their policy provides a higher standard than the NC DCDEE policy and rules. Early childhood guiding practices on discipline for the public school should align with these policies, rules, and performance standards since they are developmentally appropriate for young children and since the public schools currently administer these programs or house them within public school facilities. To better understand the relationship between current public-school law on discipline (Article 27), Child Care (Chapter 9, Section .1800 of Child Care Rules), NC Pre-K rules, and Head Start Policy, please see Appendix C.

THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

Building upon an earlier cross sector early childhood stakeholder process in 2016, the Office of Early Learning undertook a public school preschool stakeholder process in 2017-18 to gain feedback on proposed recommendations around guiding practices for suspension and expulsion for preschool children. In January 2018, leaders from the targeted Preschool Pyramid Project (SEFEL) were queried about what local boards of education would need to develop/adopt early childhood policies/guiding practices around discipline and the challenges in reporting suspensions and expulsions for children ages 3-5. In addition, participants discussed the highly recommended practice of developing local plans for addressing challenging early childhood behaviors.

Participants were asked if such plans should be district-wide or school-based. Information about that session and the feedback gained may be found here: <https://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/node/3088>. A second stakeholder meeting was held in May, 2018 which included superintendents, principals, Exceptional Children’s, Title 1, and early childhood leaders from public school programs and representatives from the NC Pre-K and Head Start programs (<https://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/node/3350>) in which a bank of recommendations was presented, and stakeholders provided detailed feedback and recommendations for future use. The guiding practices presented in this document are a culmination of the review of the research, outcomes from the targeted Preschool Pyramid Project, and the stakeholder process.



ESTABLISHING COMMON LANGUAGE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DISCIPLINE

The establishment of common language fosters shared understanding. Each LEA should use common language related to discipline and exclusionary discipline practices in early childhood environments that may be different than common language used when discussing behavior and discipline in school-aged children.

At minimum, the common language should include the following terms and definitions:

- 1) Challenging Behavior** – any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults that interferes with children’s learning, development, and success at play; is harmful to the child, other children, or adults; puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. Challenging behavior is thus defined based on its effects. While some children’s challenging behaviors are developmentally normative and effectively addressed by implementation of differentiated instructional strategies and the use of appropriate guidance procedures, other children need the support of evidence-based practices to prevent and/or address challenging behaviors that are persistent or unresponsive to those approaches (Dunlap et al., 2006).
- 2) Dangerous Behavior** – any behavior that causes serious bodily injury to self and/or others (e.g. physical pain, physical injury, or tissue damage), or places the child or others at imminent risk of serious injury, which is likely to occur within 3 seconds (Safety First 4.0, 2015).
- 3) Developmentally Normative** – problem behavior that is typical of a particular stage of development as children build relationships with peers and adults and learn to navigate the classroom environment.
- 4) Expulsion** – according to G.S.115C-390.1(b)(5) the indefinite exclusion of a child from school enrollment for disciplinary purposes. Expulsion in early childhood programs includes telling the family that the class is not a “good fit” for their child and that they need to find another program or that the program can no longer “support” their child.
- 5) Exclusionary Discipline Practices** – any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from his or her educational setting.
- 6) Mechanical Restraint** – the use of any device or material attached or adjacent to a student’s body that restricts freedom of movement or normal access to any portion of the student’s body and that the student cannot easily remove.
- 7) Persistent** – continuing to exist or endure over a prolonged period.
- 8) Regular School Day** – the time typically allotted by program standards for children to be in the classroom; for preschool, this may vary according to the funding program requirement (i.e., 5 days a week for 6.5 hours a day for NC Pre-K and Title I or three days a week for 3.5 hours a day as determined by an IEP team).
- 9) Regulatory Authority** – governmental agent; in public schools, by statute, the superintendent and principal are agents of the local board of education. The principal is the regulatory authority of each school and is on-site daily. According to G.S.115C-288(e) the principal shall have authority to exercise discipline over the pupils of the school under policies adopted by the local board of education in accordance with G.S. 115C-390.1 (state policy and definitions).
- 10) Restraint** – the use of physical force to restrict the free movement of all or a portion of a child’s body.
- 11) Seclusion** – the confinement of a student alone in an enclosed space from which the student is: (a) Physically prevented from leaving by locking hardware or other means, (b) Not capable of leaving due to physical or intellectual incapacity.
- 12) Suspension** – temporary removal of a child from his/her assigned early childhood classroom/setting for disciplinary purposes.
 - a) In-School Suspension** – temporary removal of a child from his/her early childhood classroom for disciplinary purposes that results in the child remaining in the building and under the direct supervision of program personnel (i.e., physically in the same location as children and that the adult is able to see and hear the child at all times).
 - b) Out-of-School Suspension** – temporary removal of a child from his/her early childhood classroom for disciplinary purposes that results in the child being sent home or to a setting outside of the child’s normal early childhood environment. This includes the decision to reduce the length of a child’s regular school day, made outside of a Tier III intervention plan or IEP team decision.
- 13) Time-out** – a behavior management technique in which a child is separated from other students for a limited period of time in a monitored setting.

TRACKING ATTENDANCE AND SUSPENSION— ENROLLMENT OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN POWERSCHOOL

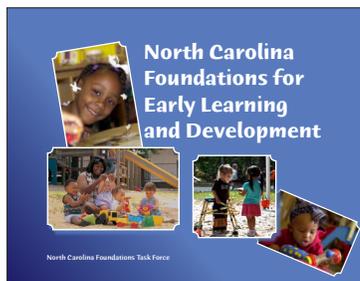


In order to meet the federal reporting requirements for suspension and expulsion (IDEA) and attendance (ESSA)

for preschool children ages 3 through 5 years of age, each LEA should enroll all preschool children attending a preschool program within the LEA into PowerSchool (<https://homebase.ncpublicschools.gov/applications/powerschool>) and track attendance and note reasons for suspensions/expulsions beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CORE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

When each school district begins the implementation of NC MTSS, one of the first steps is to evaluate the status of core instructional practices and the curriculum. Each LEA should ensure that all school personnel working in and/or having oversight of early childhood environments receive professional development related to evidence-based instructional practices for promoting social-emotional development and preventing challenging behavior.



The **Effective Teacher Practices Supporting the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development** is a series of training modules that promote the use of the revised **North Carolina**

Foundations for Early Learning and Development. In these modules, the Preschool Pyramid (Social Emotional

Foundations of Early Learning) strategies have been linked with the **North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development** as well as **NC Professional Teaching Standards**. The connection between the **NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development** and the **NC Standard Course of Study** for kindergarten (Common Core State Standards and NC Essential Standards) are emphasized in each module.

The Preschool Pyramid strategies are in a teaching pyramid framework with three tiers. Tier I consists of core universal practices that are needed to support ALL children and promote children’s healthy development. In alignment with NC MTSS at minimum, early childhood staff employed by the public schools shall complete training modules covering all core instructional practices for social-emotional development titled “Overview” (<http://modules.ncein.fpg.unc.edu/foundations/module-intro>) and “Tier I” modules (<http://modules.ncein.fpg.unc.edu/foundations/tier-i>) in the Preschool Pyramid Model training series.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN FOR RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTS USING PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAMS

In the absence of an organized response plan, teachers and administrators tend to respond to persistent challenging behavior from 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in ways that often are not systematic nor successful. In these cases, teachers report not feeling supported, not knowing how to get help, and feeling frustrated not only with the child but also with the lack of support (Quesenberry & Hemmeter, 2005). Administrators often report frustration because of the frequency with which they are called to “help out” in a classroom or to take a child

out of the classroom when things are “out of control” (Quesenberry & Hemmeter, 2005). Having a well-articulated plan for addressing challenging behavior will increase the likelihood that effective supports will be accessible to teachers as needed. In addition, local school administrators often do not have adequate early childhood training to help them discern when a problem behavior is developmentally normative or persistently challenging; nor, do they know appropriate early childhood instructional practices to



address such behaviors. Early childhood stakeholders from the NC Preschool Pyramid Project indicated the need for an early childhood response plan with identified early childhood staff resources to provide support to local school principals in the event of a child demonstrating a “persistent challenging behavior.”

The structure of preschool programs within local school districts vary according to the size of the district and their administration’s decision about where classes will be located and who will oversee their administration. A preschool program might have one or two classes embedded within an elementary school where the school-based problem-solving team does not have early childhood expertise to assist the preschool classes. In these cases, an early childhood problem-solving team is recommended, with an organized plan to respond to challenging behaviors, to support teachers and their administrators. In many districts, this would be a district-level team, but in other especially large districts, this may be a regional team with some key early childhood professionals. In some cases, school districts might have preschool centers, where a center-based team is comprised of early childhood experts to act on the problem-solving team.

School districts should have in place a written plan and set of procedures so that teaching staff and administrators will know what to do when challenging behaviors occur. Written plans should include the specific procedures to be implemented, including documentation that procedures have been followed, at each tier of the three-tiered framework. All teaching staff should review and understand the early childhood plan for addressing behaviors so that they will be aware of the process, recommended strategies, and plan for communicating a need for support.

Key Implementation Components:

A. A team-based process for addressing individual children with persistent challenging behavior should be developed. The team developing the plan should include district level early childhood representatives (i.e., Title I, NC Pre-K, Exceptional Children), and as appropriate, the NC Pre-K contractor or Head Start administrators, school principals and Exceptional Children’s Coordinators. Once the plan is developed, all site-based administrators and teachers should be trained in the process. Teachers should be able identify the steps for initiating the team-based process including fostering the participation of the family in the process.

- B. When children with disabilities who are enrolled in the program exhibit persistent challenging behaviors, special considerations must be enacted because procedural safeguards are in place. The team-based process should include special provisions for these instances.
- C. Staff with behavioral expertise are identified for coaching staff and families throughout the process of developing individualized intensive interventions for children in need of behavior support plans.
- D. Strategies for partnering with families when problem behavior concerns are identified. Teachers have strategies for initiating parent contact and partnering with the family to develop strategies to promote appropriate behavior.
- E. Strategies for responding to problem behavior in the classroom are developed. Staff implements a process for identifying and monitoring Pyramid Model (Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning) Tier II challenging behaviors and implement appropriate differentiated instruction. Teachers use evidence-based approaches to respond to problem behavior in a manner that is developmentally appropriate and teaches the child the expected behavior.
- F. A process for problem solving with other teachers around problem behavior is developed. Teachers can identify a process that may be used to gain support in developing ideas for addressing problem behavior within the classroom (e.g., peer-support, classroom mentor meeting, brainstorming session).
- G. A process for responding to crisis situations related to problem behavior is developed and written, and training on the process is provided to staff and administrators. Teachers can identify how to request assistance when needed. A plan for addressing the child’s individual behavior support needs is initiated following requests for crisis assistance.

A sample template for creating an early childhood plan for addressing challenging behaviors (i.e., ***Early Childhood Plan for Addressing Challenging Behaviors***) can be found in Appendix D.

EARLY CHILDHOOD BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENT PLANS



In alignment with NC MTSS, Local Education Agency early childhood problem-solving teams should support teachers and administrators in implementing individualized child engagement plans to address persistent challenging and/or dangerous behaviors that:

- A. Evaluates current teaching practices and identifies any new teaching strategies that should be implemented to prevent the challenging behavior and/or intentionally teach applicable self-regulatory behaviors.
- B. Analyze the child's challenging behavior to identify the antecedent, contextual events, and consequences of the persistent challenging behavior.
- C. Develops an action plan based on data and family input, to implement strategies to address the persistent challenging behavior in the classroom and assist the family to implement those strategies to meet the child's behavior needs at home and in the community.
- D. Progress monitor the action plan to determine the effectiveness of supplemental supports.
- E. If Tier II (supplemental supports) are not effective, then the team shall review data collected at the second tier, and other information as relevant, and conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment and implement a Behavior Improvement Plan with progress monitoring for Tier III (intensive) interventions.
- F. If the Tier III (intensive) action plan includes the reduction of the duration/frequency of the instructional day, the plan must include a clear timeline for restoring the instructional time to the original amount provided by the program.
- G. For challenging behavior that is persistently dangerous and is not responsive to intervention (e.g., individualized behavior intervention that is based on a functional behavior analysis) the education team must convene to consider alternative steps in the intervention plan, access mental health specialists, social workers, psychologists, or another appropriate placement.
- H. When a child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) exhibits persistent challenging behaviors, special considerations must be enacted due to procedural safeguards and due process rights ensured under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For children ages three through five with an IEP who exhibit persistent challenging behaviors, early childhood programs must communicate with the school district's special education program about the behavior as soon as the concern arises. Required documentation (e.g., number of times a child is sent home for behavioral concerns, Functional Behavioral Assessment, Behavior Improvement Plan) must be maintained as to the attempts to address the behaviors and alternate placement plans developed to ensure continuation of special education and related services.

A sample **Early Childhood Plan for Addressing Challenging Behaviors** can be found in Appendix D. This tool includes the Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report that outlines the steps in the process needed to address the challenging behavior. First, the **NC Preliminary Pyramid Assessment** tool is to assist administrators in identifying missing Tier I instructional practices that may need to be implemented while the child's behavior is being analyzed to identify:

- 1) when a challenging behavior is happening,
- 2) what exactly the behavior is,
- 3) what happens before, during and after the behavior occurs, and
- 4) the steps in developing a precision problem behavior statement.

This data will inform the development of planned modifications/individualized strategies so that progress may be monitored.

SEVERELY LIMIT THE USE OF EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTS

Sending a young child home (part-day; whole day, etc.) due to behavioral concerns is considered a suspension. Asking parents to stop bringing their child to a preschool class without a clear plan for an alternative placement is an expulsion. Both are true, even in the absence of mandatory attendance requirements for this age group in public schools. Educators fail to serve the best interest of both children and families unless a clear problem-solving process is implemented with family input and engagement and progress monitoring is used to show progress. Excluding children from preschool serves only to increase the risk of disengagement, which in turn leads to diminished educational opportunities. This is in alignment with NC Child Care Rules (10A NCAC 09 .3017) and federal Head Start policies (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90).

Suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

The reduction of a child's time in the program must only be considered in the context of the implementation of the Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Plan and must be temporary in nature with a clear plan to reinstate the original amount of time in the program.

Expulsion must not be used in early childhood environments; however, if, after a program has exhausted all options after implementing an individualized child behavioral engagement plan, the program, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, and the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program must work with the family and applicable entities to facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

Physical restraint does not include touching or holding a child without the use of force for the purpose of directing the child or assisting the child in completing a task or activity. When providing care and educational instruction to young children there is always some physical contact for guiding, directing, prompting, or preventing harm. It is normal and natural for an adult to guide or direct a child by gently laying a hand on the child's shoulder, back or arm, or clasping the child's hand. It is also normal and natural to briefly hold a child in order to calm or comfort the child. It may be necessary for an adult to hold a child on his or her lap to maintain the child's attention or to provide structure or security for some activities. An adult may use his/her body to block a child from exiting an area of safety or entering a dangerous area. These normal, typical activities that adults use to guide, direct, and protect children are not considered physical restraint. In alignment with NC Child Care regulations (10A NCAC 09 .1803), physical restraint shall not be used as a form of discipline, punishment or convenience of personnel of the public education program.



It must only be used for as long as the child's behavior poses a reasonable threat of imminent, serious bodily injury to the child or others.

In alignment with 10A NCAC 09 .1801, seclusion is not an appropriate course of action for use with young children. A young child should never be left alone in a room. Staff must know where each child is located and be aware of the children's activities at all times. If a child is not in need of physical restraint to prevent threat of imminent, serious bodily injury, the child could be removed or separated from the other children for a short time to provide the child with an opportunity to regain self-control in a setting from which the child is not physically prevented from leaving. The child being removed or separated from other children will always be accompanied by an adult.

TIME-OUT

Time-out is a behavior management technique in which a child is separated from other children for a limited period of time in a monitored setting. For young children, the length of time-out should be no more than five minutes. Time-outs are meant to de-escalate a volatile situation and help children regain control. Time-outs should be delivered by adults in a calm way to support a child as he/she calms down and regains control. Time-out should be used in the

context of a comprehensive approach to behavior support that is designed to teach, nurture, and encourage positive social behaviors. Time-out should be used when less intrusive discipline procedures have been tried and deemed unsuccessful and only in combination with positive procedures designed to teach new skills and prevent challenging behaviors from occurring.

DOCUMENTATION OF WRITTEN DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined. In accordance with child care licensure policy, each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must obtain written acknowledgment parents have received a copy when the child is enrolled (10A NCAC 09 .1804). Changes in discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect.

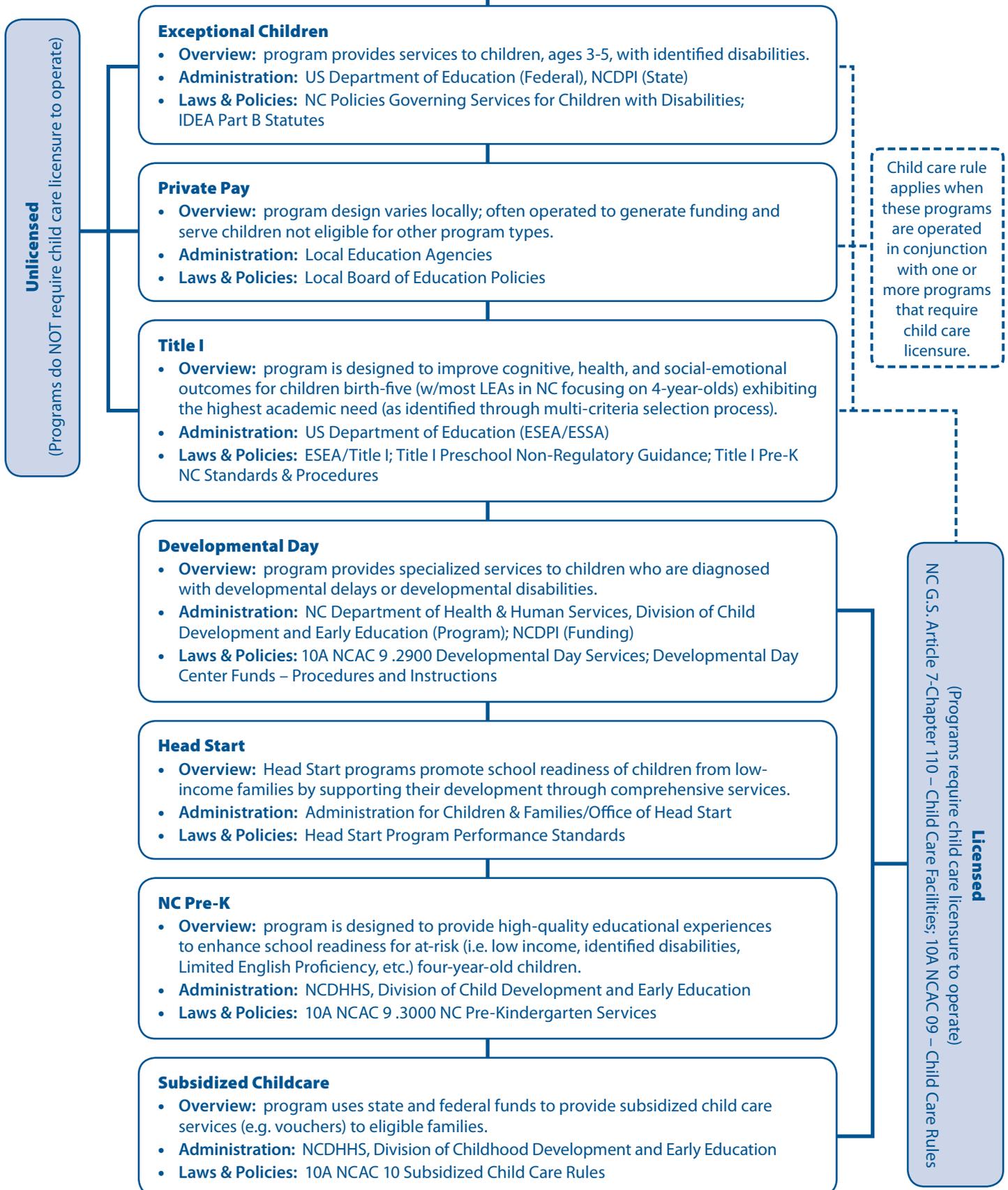




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PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS
NC G.S. – Chapter 115C – Elementary & Secondary Education





MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

NC Department of Public Instruction

North Carolina's MTSS Critical Components

Leadership

Leadership is key to successful implementation of any large-scale innovation. The building principal, assistant principal(s), and school leadership team are critical to implementing MTSS at the school level. They engage staff in ongoing professional development for implementing MTSS, plan strategically for MTSS implementation, and model a problem-solving process for school improvement. The school principal also supports the implementation of MTSS by communicating a vision and mission to school staff, providing resources for planning and implementing instruction and intervention, and ensuring that staff have the data needed for data-based problem solving.

Building the Capacity/Infrastructure for Implementation

School-wide capacity and infrastructure are required in order to implement and sustain MTSS. This capacity and infrastructure usually include ongoing professional development and coaching with an emphasis on data-based problem solving and multi-tiered instruction and intervention; scheduling that allows staff to plan and implement instruction and intervention; and processes and procedures for engaging in data-based problem solving.

Communication and Collaboration

Ongoing communication and collaboration are essential for successful implementation of MTSS. Many innovations fail due to a lack of consensus, lack of feedback to implementers to support continuous improvement, and not involving stakeholders in planning. In addition to including stakeholders in planning and providing continuous feedback, it is also important to build the infrastructure to communicate and work with families and other community partners. These practices increase the likelihood that innovative practices will be implemented and sustained.

Data-Based Problem Solving

The use of data-based problem solving to make education decisions is a critical element of MTSS implementation. This includes the use of data-based problem solving for student outcomes across content areas, grade levels, and tiers, as well as the use of problem-solving to address barriers to school-wide implementation of MTSS. While several models for data-based problem solving exist, the four-step problem solving approach includes: 1) defining the goals and objectives to be attained, 2) identifying possible reasons why the desired goals are not being attained, 3) developing a plan for implementing evidence-based strategies to attain goals, and 4) evaluating the effectiveness of the plan.

Three-Tiered Instructional/Intervention Model

The three-tiered instructional/intervention model is another critical element of MTSS implementation. In a typical system, Tier 1 includes the instruction all students get; Tier 2 includes supplemental instruction or intervention provided to students not meeting benchmarks; and Tier 3 includes intensive, small group or individual interventions for students showing significant barriers to learning the skills required for school success. It is important to consider both academic and social-emotional/behavioral instruction and interventions when examining this domain.

Data Evaluation

Given the importance of data-based problem solving within an MTSS model, the need for a data and evaluation system is clear. In order to do data-based problem solving, school staff need to understand and have access to data sources that address the purposes of assessment. Procedures and protocols for administering assessments and data use allow school staff to use student data to make educational decisions. In addition to student data, data on the fidelity of MTSS implementation allow school leadership to examine the current practices and make changes for improving MTSS implementation.

(North Carolina's critical components were adapted from collaboration with Florida's MTSS work.)

Comparison of Early Childhood Policies and Rules

Cells left blank indicate that the subject of the state statute is not directly addressed in the policy or rule.

§ 115C-390.1. STATE POLICY AND DEFINITIONS.	
NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)	<p>(a) For purposes of this Rule, “challenging behavior” shall mean any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults that interferes with children’s learning, development, and success at play, is harmful to the child, other children, or adults, that put a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.</p> <p>(b)(5) Unless the operator determines the child poses a risk of harm to himself or herself or others, and has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph, no child shall receive less than the 6.5-hour NC Pre-K day. Risk of harm to oneself or others includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects, pinching, pushing, and biting; B. destroying property; C. tantrum behaviors that might include behaviors such as kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet, or head banging; D. verbal aggression including yelling, threats, and screaming; E. persistent or prolonged crying that is loud or disruptive or crying that interferes with the child’s engagement in activities; and F. touching other children’s private areas, and removing clothing from themselves or others.
HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)	
CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)	

§ 115C-390.2. DISCIPLINE POLICIES.	
NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)	<p>(b) When a child demonstrates challenging behaviors that prevent his or her progress in any developmental domain as referenced in the “North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development” impeding the child’s access to and participation in the assigned NC Pre-K classroom learning activities, the following shall apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The Site Administrator shall notify the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the local school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children Program for assistance if a child’s cognitive, language and communication, emotional, social, health and physical needs exceed the program’s capacity to address as indicated by one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. developmental needs assessments; B. home visits; C. consultations with the family members; D. daily recorded classroom teacher observations; and E. modified instructional plans and differentiated lessons based on the child’s individual goals. (2) The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, Site Administrator, teacher, and family members in consultation with the school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children Program and other available community and state resources, such as Birth-through-Kindergarten licensed mentors, evaluators, Healthy Social Behavioral specialists, child care health consultants, mental health specialists, social workers, and other local child developmental experts, shall develop a coordinated support plan to support the NC Pre-K child’s placement and participation in the NC Pre-K Program. (3) The Division of Child Development and Early Education shall be notified when support plans recommended by the local school system’s Exceptional Children Program require an alternative placement and support services for a child.

<p>HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)</p>	<p>1302.17 (Suspension and Expulsion)</p> <p>(a) Limitations on suspension.</p> <p>(1) A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.</p> <p>(2) A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.</p> <p>(3) Before a program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, a program must engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.</p> <p>(4) If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, a program must help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:</p> <p>(i) Continuing to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;</p> <p>(ii) Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed;</p> <p>(iii) Providing services that include home visits; and,</p> <p>(iv) Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.</p>
<p>CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)</p>	<p>10A NCAC 09 .1804 (Discipline Policy)</p> <p>(a) The person who conducts the enrollment conference shall provide a written copy of and explain the center’s discipline policies to each child’s parents at the time of enrollment.</p> <p>(b) The child care center shall obtain from each parent, legal guardian, or full-time custodian a statement that attests that a copy of the centers written discipline policies was given to and discussed with him or her. That statement shall including the following:</p> <p>(1) The child’s name;</p> <p>(2) The date of enrollment;</p> <p>(3) If different, from the enrollment date the date the parent, legal guardian, or full-time custodian signed the statement.</p> <p>(c) The signed, dated statement must be in the child’s record and shall remain on file in the center as long as the child is enrolled. If a center changes its discipline policy at any time, it must give written notice of such a change to the child’s parent, guardian, or full-time custodian 14 days prior to the implementation of the new policy. The center shall obtain the parent’s signature on a statement that attests that a copy of the new policy was given to and discussed with him or her. This statement shall be kept in the child’s file as long as the child is enrolled.</p>

§ 115C-390.4. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

<p>NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)</p>	
<p>HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)</p>	<p>1302.90 (Personnel Policies)</p> <p>(c) <i>Standards of conduct.</i> (1) A program must ensure all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the program’s standards of conduct that: (Staff shall not)</p> <p>A. Use corporal punishment;</p>
<p>CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)</p>	<p>10A NCAC 09 .1803 (Prohibited Discipline)</p> <p>(a) No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment by the owner, operator, director, or staff of any child care center. For purposes of this Rule, “staff” shall mean any regular or substitute caregiver, any volunteer, and any auxiliary personnel, including cooks, secretaries, janitors, maids, or vehicle driver.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">§ 115C-390.5. SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION. § 115C-390.6. SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES. § 115C-390.7. LONG-TERM SUSPENSION. § 115C-390.8. LONG-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES.</p>	
NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)	<p>(b)(4) A site administrator shall not suspend or expel a child from a NC Pre-K Program until the site administrator has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph.</p> <p>(b)(5) Unless the operator determines the child poses a risk of harm to himself or herself or others, and has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph, no child shall receive less than the 6.5-hour NC Pre-K day. <i>Risk of harm to oneself or others defined in rule.</i></p>
HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)	<p>1302.17 (Suspension and Expulsion)</p> <p>(a) Limitations on suspension.</p> <p>(1) A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.</p> <p>(2) A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.</p>
CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)	

<p style="text-align: center;">§ 115C-390.9. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SERVICES.</p>	
NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)	<p>(b)(5) Unless the operator determines the child poses a risk of harm to himself or herself or others, and has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph, no child shall receive less than the 6.5-hour NC Pre-K day. <i>Risk of harm to oneself or others defined in rule.</i></p>
HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)	<p>1302.17 (Suspension and Expulsion)</p> <p>(b) Prohibition on expulsion.</p> <p>(3) If, after a program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a program, in consultation with the parents, the child’s teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child’s continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program must work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.</p>
CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)	

§ 115C-390.11. EXPULSION.

NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)	(b)(4) A site administrator shall not suspend or expel a child from a NC Pre-K Program until the site administrator has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph.
HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)	1302.17 (Suspension and Expulsion) (b) Prohibition on expulsion. (1) A program cannot expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior.
CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)	

§ 115C-391.1. PERMISSIBLE USE OF SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT.

NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)	
HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)	1302.90 (Personnel Policies) (c) <i>Standards of conduct.</i> (1) A program must ensure all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct that staff must not: B. Use isolation to discipline a child; C. Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth;
CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)	10A NCAC 09 .1803 (Prohibited Discipline) (a) No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment by the owner, operator, director, or staff of any child care center. For purposes of this Rule, "staff" shall mean any regular or substitute caregiver, any volunteer, and any auxiliary personnel, including cooks, secretaries, janitors, maids, or vehicle driver. The following shall apply at all child care centers: (2) No child shall be placed in a locked room, closet, or box, or be left alone in a room separated from staff; (10) No child shall be restrained as a form of discipline unless the child's safety or the safety of others is at risk. For purposes of this Rule, "restraining" shall mean that a caregiver physically holds a child in a manner that restricts the child's movement, for a minimum amount of time necessary to ensure a safe environment. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule, no child shall be restrained through the use of heavy objects, including a caregiver's body, or any device such as straps, blankets, car seats, or cribs.

§ 115C-397.1. MANAGEMENT AND PLACEMENT OF DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS.	
<p>NC PRE-K (10A NCAC 09 .3017)</p>	<p>(b) When a child demonstrates challenging behaviors that prevent his or her progress in any developmental domain as referenced in the “North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development” impeding the child’s access to and participation in the assigned NC Pre-K classroom learning activities, the following shall apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The Site Administrator shall notify the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the local school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children Program for assistance if a child’s cognitive, language and communication, emotional, social, health and physical needs exceed the program’s capacity to address as indicated by one or more of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. developmental needs assessments; B. home visits; C. consultations with the family members; D. daily recorded classroom teacher observations; and E. modified instructional plans and differentiated lessons based on the child’s individual goals. (2) The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, Site Administrator, teacher, and family members in consultation with the school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children Program and other available community and state resources, such as Birth-through-Kindergarten licensed mentors, evaluators, Healthy Social Behavioral specialists, child care health consultants, mental health specialists, social workers, and other local child developmental experts, shall develop a coordinated support plan to support the NC Pre-K child’s placement and participation in the NC Pre-K Program. (3) The Division of Child Development and Early Education shall be notified when support plans recommended by the local school system’s Exceptional Children Program require an alternative placement and support services for a child.
<p>HEAD START (45 CFR §1302.17 & 45 CFR §1302.90)</p>	<p>1302.17 (Suspension and Expulsion)</p> <p>(b) Prohibition on expulsion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Program cannot expel or unenroll because of child’s behavior, (2) When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, a program must explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems and facilitate the child’s safe participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. §705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child’s teacher, and: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) if a child has an IEP or IFSP, the program must consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services, or (ii) if the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the program must collaborate, parental consent, with the local agency for implementing IDEA to determine the child’s eligibility for services (3) After exploring all possible steps, and documented all steps,...the program must work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.
<p>CHILD CARE RULE (10A NCAC 09 .1803 & .1804)</p>	

Early Childhood Plan for Addressing Challenging Behaviors

Addressing challenging behaviors in preschool requires three tiers of prevention and intervention supports, as outlined in the Preschool Pyramid Model (PPM) in North Carolina:

- Tier I: Implementing universal practices/strategies (Core Supports)
- Tier II: Collecting data and implementing targeted strategies (Supplemental Supports)
- Tier III: Planning the Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Support Plan (Intensive Supports)

Implementing strategies and supports at each tier of the model with fidelity greatly decreases the occurrence of behavior that is out of control.

TIER I: IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL PRACTICES/STRATEGIES (CORE SUPPORTS). The first tier involves establishing universal practices to support and promote emotional and social development for all children. Practices include: promoting positive relationships, setting up supportive environments, and providing instruction on emotional literacy, regulating emotions, and problem solving.

TIER II: COLLECTING DATA AND IMPLEMENTING TARGETED STRATEGIES (SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORTS). The second tier involves targeted support for children with emotional and social developmental delays or other risk factors who need more practice and assistance in order to understand emotions and learn and apply social skills. At the second tier, teaching staff and families work together to gather data to describe children’s challenging behavior in order to identify specific skills and situations that require more attention and specific strategies to improve behavior.

TIER III: PLANNING THE FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN (INTENSIVE SUPPORTS). The third tier of supports are implemented when children continue to exhibit challenging behaviors after the first two tiers of practice have been implemented to fidelity. At the third tier, a ‘behavior support team’ assembles to conduct a ‘functional behavior assessment,’ including a review of the data collected at the second tier and other information that describes the antecedent, contextual events, and consequences of persistent challenging behavior. With this information, the team develops a ‘behavior support plan’ which includes specific strategies for replacing the challenging behavior, assuring that the challenging behavior is not inadvertently rewarded, and eliminating or decreasing triggers associated with the challenging behavior.

Preschool programs must have in place a written plan and set of procedures so that teaching staff and administrators will know what to do when challenging behaviors occur. Written plans should include the specific procedures to be implemented, including documentation that procedures have been followed, at each tier of the three-tiered framework. All teaching staff should review and understand the early childhood plan for addressing behaviors so that they will be aware of the process, recommended strategies, and plan for communicating a need for support.

The purpose of this document is to develop consistent practices and procedures when addressing challenging behaviors in the preschool setting. To successfully implement a plan for addressing challenging behaviors, teaching staff in preschool programs must be trained in Effective Teacher Practices Supporting the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Modules 3-11) and the preschool program must have an established early childhood behavior support team. The behavior support team is responsible for taking the lead in assuring that the early childhood plan for addressing challenging behaviors is implemented. A early childhood behavior support team should include a member or members who can provide initial consultation to a teacher once a persistent challenging behavior is identified and give guidance and support for conducting a functional behavior assessment if the need arises. All teaching staff should review and understand the early childhood plan for addressing challenging behaviors so that they will be aware of the process, recommended strategies, and plan for communicating a need for support. It is important to emphasize that throughout the process of addressing challenging behaviors, teaching staff and/or the behavior support team must be in close communication with the families involved so families are well informed and have the opportunity to offer their own information, strategies, and data to support the process.

Where can I access training information on Effective Teacher Practices Supporting the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development?

Trainers across the state of NC have attended train-the-trainer sessions where they received the materials and support needed to conduct trainings locally. The materials for trainers are posted here: <http://modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/foundations/module-intro>. Self-paced e-modules are also available for learners here: <http://modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/self-paced-modules>.

What is challenging behavior?

Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults that interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play; is harmful to the child, other children, or adults; that put a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. Challenging behavior is thus defined on the basis of its effects. While some children's challenging behaviors are developmentally or culturally normative and effectively addressed by adult vigilance and the use of appropriate guidance procedures, other children need more targeted evidence-based practices (Tier II) to prevent and/or address challenging behaviors that are persistent or unresponsive to universal evidence-based approaches (adapted from <http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/glossary.html>; Dunlap, Strain, Fox, et al., 2006).

Examples of persistent challenging behaviors for preschool children may include: (1) physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects forcefully, pinching, pushing, and biting; (2) climbing on things in the classroom that are not permitted; (3) destroying property, destroying what another child is working on regardless of the other child's response; (4) taking toys away from other children forcefully; (5) running that poses a safety risk for the child or others or elopement from the classroom; (6) tantrum behaviors that might include behaviors such as kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet, or head banging; (7) verbal aggression including yelling, threats, screaming at another person, calling children bad names, and saying bad words; (8) ordering an adult to do something (e.g., "leave me alone"); (9) persistent or prolonged crying that is loud or disruptive or ongoing crying that interferes with the child's engagement in activities; (10) inappropriate use of materials (e.g., jumping off chairs, slamming materials, throwing objects); (11) statements that are noncompliant (e.g., "I'm not going to do it") or clear and explicit verbal or physical refusal to follow directions; or (12) inappropriate touching, stripping, and other behaviors that are hurtful, disruptive, or dangerous to self or others (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014, p. 24).

For infants and toddlers, challenging behavior must be considered within the context of the relationship of the child to caregivers. Behavior that is challenging, for example, may manifest as attachment difficulties, sleeping and eating difficulties, excessive crying, and difficulty in soothing. Challenging behaviors may be defined as behaviors that interfere with the development and maintenance of reciprocal, positive, and nurturing relationships with the parent or caregiver (<http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/glossary.html>).

What is an early childhood behavior support team?

A behavior support team consists of people who are responsible for taking the lead in assuring that the early childhood plan for addressing challenging behaviors is implemented. Suggested members include preschool coordinators, Exceptional Children Program directors, childcare program directors, principals, professionals with behavior expertise, such as behavior specialists, psychologists, social workers, etc., resource professionals, teachers, and any other key stakeholders.

1. List the members of the early childhood behavior support team along with contact information:
2. Identify which of the behavior support team members will be involved directly with conducting Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) if the need arises at the third tier of support:
3. Indicate who the teaching staff should contact directly once he/she identifies a need for support with addressing challenging behaviors in the classroom:
4. Describe the process for offering initial support and communicating with the early childhood behavior support team once teaching staff identifies a need for support with addressing challenging behaviors in the classroom. Be sure to include any considerations that must be addressed if the child already has an IEP or existing behavior support plan:

TIER I: IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL PRACTICES/STRATEGIES (CORE SUPPORTS)

The best way to prevent serious and persistent challenging behaviors is to implement a tiered framework of prevention and intervention practices and strategies. In the Preschool Pyramid Model (PPM) in NC, this framework has three tiers. Implementing strategies at each tier of the model with fidelity greatly decreases the occurrence of out of control behavior. The first tier involves establishing universal practices to support and promote emotional and social development for all children, including promoting positive relationships, setting up supportive environments, and providing instruction on emotional literacy, regulating emotions, and problem solving. Once a teaching staff member identifies a need for support with responding to challenging behaviors, he/she will complete a self-assessment using the NC Preliminary Pyramid Assessment (PPA) checklist (See Attachment I: **NC Preliminary Pyramid Assessment**). Teaching staff will also consult with a supervisor, coach, or other identified member of the early childhood behavior support team. This support person will work with the teaching staff to develop a **precision statement** about the challenging behavior and schedule time to observe the classroom using the NC PPA checklist. After the observation, the support person will develop a plan for support that may include training, coaching support, consultation, or other strategies and will follow up to determine the effectiveness of the support. The support person will also view and discuss the **Classroom Behavior Record** and the **Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report** with the teaching staff. If the child has an IEP, the IEP team must be involved once challenging behaviors persist so they can follow established guidelines and procedural safeguards for reviewing and updating the IEP accordingly.

Where can I find more information on the tiered model and strategies to use for each tier?

More information on the preschool pyramid model for emotional and social development and suggested strategies and tools to be implemented at all tiers of the pyramid model can be found at the following links:

<http://modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/foundations/module-intro>

<http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu>

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>

What is a precision statement of challenging behavior?

In order to begin the process of addressing challenging behavior, the behavior needs to be clearly defined. The guidance for developing a precision statement for problem behavior can be used to clearly define and communicate the behavior. See Attachment II: ***Developing Precision Statement for Problem Behavior***.

What is the Classroom Behavior Record?

The classroom behavior record is used to record data for children who have been identified as needing Tier II interventions. It is a data collection tool that helps to measure the occurrence of challenging behaviors and also track progress once targeted strategies are implemented to address the behaviors. See Attachment III: ***Classroom Behavior Record***.

Why is the Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report reviewed at the beginning of the process?

Although it is rare for a child in a preschool program to be suspended, it is important to review the Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report form and note strategies implemented to address challenging behavior throughout the process. In the event that a child is suspended, the documentation of strategies used to prevent suspension will be recorded. See Attachment IV: ***Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report***.

1. Describe this process you use locally to determine the extent to which universal (Tier I) practices are being implemented. Identify who will work with teaching staff to discuss challenging behavior, conduct an observation, and make a plan for next steps:
2. Describe the support to be provided after the observation and the process for determining if challenging behaviors persist after supports and strategies have been implemented. Include any considerations that must be addressed if the child already has an IEP or existing behavior support plan:
3. Describe how updates and progress will be shared with the early childhood behavior support team:

TIER II: COLLECTING DATA AND IMPLEMENTING TARGETED STRATEGIES (SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORTS)

The second tier involves providing targeted support to children who need more practice and assistance with learning and applying emotional and social skills. The children who tend to need second tier supports usually have emotional and social developmental delays or are have other risk factors that lead to displaying challenging behavior. At the second tier, teaching staff and families work together to gather data on challenging behavior in order to identify specific skills and situations that require more attention and specific strategies to implement in order to improve behavior. Teaching staff will implement and assess effectiveness of strategies for improving challenging behavior for a period of at least six weeks. As part of data collection, teaching staff should continue to use the Classroom Behavior Record and Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report to document persisting behavior and strategies used to address behavior. If the child has an IEP, the IEP team must be involved so they can follow established guidelines and procedural safeguards for reviewing and updating the IEP accordingly.

What data needs to be collected at the second tier?

Observation data will need to be gathered to identify possible triggers for behavior and also identify skills needing more direct instruction, targeted support, and progress monitoring. The Classroom Behavior Record and Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report should also continue to be used to document behavior observed and strategies implemented and to note progress or changes over time. If a child has an IEP, the IEP team should be consulted to determine any other necessary data collection.

What are some ways in which families can be involved with data collection and implementing strategies to improve behavior?

Families can help with data collection by noting occurrences of challenging behavior and strategies implemented in the home and community settings and by tracking any progress or changes. Families can be valuable resources when developing strategies to address behavior by providing examples of what works in the home and community, including motivators and the child's preferences and strengths.

1. Describe the ways teaching staff will collect and record data as challenging behaviors persist even when the universal strategies have been implemented at tier one. Identify specific data collection tools/logs that you will use to record characteristics of challenging classroom behavior and track effectiveness of strategies. Describe how families will be involved. Include any considerations that must be addressed if the child already has an IEP or existing behavior support plan:
2. Describe how teaching staff will receive support as he/she collects data, identifies skills and situations requiring more attention and targeted instruction, and implements strategies:
3. Describe how updates and progress will be shared with the early childhood behavior support team and what role behavior support members will play at the second tier:

TIER III: PLANNING THE FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN (INTENSIVE SUPPORTS)

The third tier of supports are for children who display persistent challenging behaviors even after the first two tiers have been implemented to fidelity. At the third tier, the behavior support team assembles to plan a functional assessment of the behavior, which includes a review of the data collected at the second tier and other relevant information related to the antecedent, contextual events, and consequences of persistent challenging behavior. This information is used to develop a behavior support plan, which includes specific strategies for replacing the challenging behavior, assures challenging behavior is not inadvertently rewarded, and eliminates or decreases triggers associated with the challenging behavior. Community mental health resources available to the child and family should be explored and shared with the family. An individual or individuals with behavioral expertise should be identified for coaching staff and families throughout the process of developing individualized intensive interventions for children in need of behavior support plans. If the child has an IEP, the IEP team must be involved once challenging behaviors persist so they can follow established guidelines and procedural safeguards for reviewing and updating the IEP accordingly. As part of data collection, teaching staff should continue to use the Classroom Behavior Record and Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report to document persisting behavior and strategies used to address behavior.

How does data collected while implementing second tier supports inform planning for third tier supports?

All of the data collected at Tier II can be used to inform the Functional Behavior Assessment that occurs at Tier III. By collecting data throughout the process, the FBA can often be a more streamlined process since the data collected includes information on the challenging behavior and strategies that have been implemented up to that point.

1. Describe the process of assembling the behavior support team for the purpose of planning a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan. Describe how families will be involved. Include any considerations that must be addressed if the child already has an IEP or existing behavior support plan:
2. List existing mental health resources in the community and describe how those are shared with the family:
3. List individual(s) on the behavior support team with behavioral expertise who will coach staff and families through the process:

REFERENCES

- Dunlap, G., Strain, P. S., Fox, L., Carta, M. C., Conroy, M., Smith, B. J., ... Sowell, C. (2006). *Prevention and intervention with young children's challenging behavior: Perspectives regarding current knowledge*. Behavioral Disorders, 32(1), 29-35.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching pyramid observation tool (TPOT) for preschool classrooms manual research edition*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Attachment I

NC Preliminary Pyramid Assessment

This checklist can be used when working with a teacher who has a child with a challenging behavior in his/her class. This should be completed in conjunction with the following: 1) identifying when a challenging behavior is happening, 2) determining what exactly the behavior is, 3) identifying what happens before, during and after the behavior occurs, and 4) developing a precision problem behavior statement. Indicate **Yes** for each practice/strategy that is in place (or observed) and indicate **No** for each practice/strategy not yet in place (or not observed). Add additional comments or examples in the right hand column.

	Universal Teaching Practice/Strategy	Yes	No	Comments/Examples
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS	Greet the child			
	Communicate at eye level			
	Interact during routine activities			
	Respond positively during routines and activities			
	Show warmth and speak calmly to child			
	Provide positive attention throughout the day			
	Provide a comfortable, welcome and safe space for the child			
	Join in children's play to support interaction and expand ideas			
	Use alternative strategies when communicating			
	Review visual schedule with child			
	Structure routines from beginning to end			
	Explicitly teach sequence of transition			
	Prepare the child for transition			
	Ensure child is actively engaged in transition			
	Provide multiple opportunities to make meaningful choices			
	Structure large group activities so child is actively engaged			
Develop and post classroom expectations				

	Universal Teaching Practice/Strategy	Yes	No	Comments/Examples
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT	Arrange traffic patterns in classroom so there are no wide open spaces			
	Clearly define boundaries in learning centers			
	Arrange learning centers to allow room for multiple children			
	Provide a variety of materials in all learning centers			
	Assist child to select activity and engage in activity			
	Considers child's interests when deciding what to put in learning centers			
	Makes changes and additions to learning centers on a regular basis			
	Structure transitions so child does not have to spend excessive time waiting with nothing to do			
	Plan and conduct large group activities with specific goals in mind for the child			
	Provide opportunities for child to be actively involved in large group activities			
	Monitor child's behavior and modify plans when child loses interest in large group activities			
	Plan and conduct small group activities with specific goals in mind for the child			
	Use peers as models during small group activities			
	Make adaptations and modifications to ensure that the child can be involved in a meaningful way			
	Use a variety of ways to teach the expectations of specific activities so that the child can understand them			
	Use and model rules/directions, oral and written, that are positively phrased, telling children what "to do" rather than what "not to do"			

Universal Teaching Practice/Strategy		Yes	No	Comments/Examples
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES	Recognize and respond to child's ideas and efforts			
	Show empathy and acceptance of child's feelings			
	Provide child with opportunities to make choices			
	Allow child time to respond and/or complete task independently before offering assistance			
	Create opportunities for decision making, problem solving, and working together			
	Teach child strategies for self-regulating behaviors			
	Utilize peers as models of desirable social behavior			
	Encourage peer partners/buddies (i.e., hold hands during transitions, play partner, clean-up buddy, etc.)			
	Model phrases children can use to initiate and encourage interactions			
	Facilitate interactions by supporting and suggesting play ideas			
	Ensure that interactions are mostly child-directed not teacher-directed during free play			
	Teach appropriate social skills through lessons and role-playing opportunities			
	Incorporate cooperative games, lessons, stories, and activities that promote altruistic behavior			
	Structure activities to encourage and teach sharing			
	Structure activities to encourage and teach turn taking			
	Structure activities to encourage and teach requesting and distributing items			
	Structure activities to encourage and teach working cooperatively			
	Use photographs, pictures, and posters that portray people in various emotional states			

Universal Teaching Practice/Strategy		Yes	No	Comments/Examples
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES	Use validation, acknowledgment, mirroring back, labeling feelings, voice tones, or gestures to show an understanding of children’s feelings			
	Assist child in recognizing and understanding how a classmate might be feeling by pointing out facial expressions, voice tone, body language, or words			
	Use real-life situations to practice problem solving, beginning with defining the problem and emotions involved			
	Label own emotional states and provides an action statement (e.g., I am feeling frustrated so I better take some deep breaths and calm down)			
	Use opportunities to comment on occasions when children state they are feeling upset or angry but are remaining calm			
	Systematically teach the problem solving steps			
	“Problematize” situations throughout the day to allow child opportunities to generate solutions			
	Support child through the problem solving process during heated moments			
	Help child recognize cues of emotional escalation			
	Help child identify appropriate choices			
	Help child try solutions until the situation is appropriately resolved			
	Display photographs of child working out situations			
	Use photographs, pictures, and posters that portray people in various emotional states			

Attachment II

Description of a Persistent Challenging Behavior

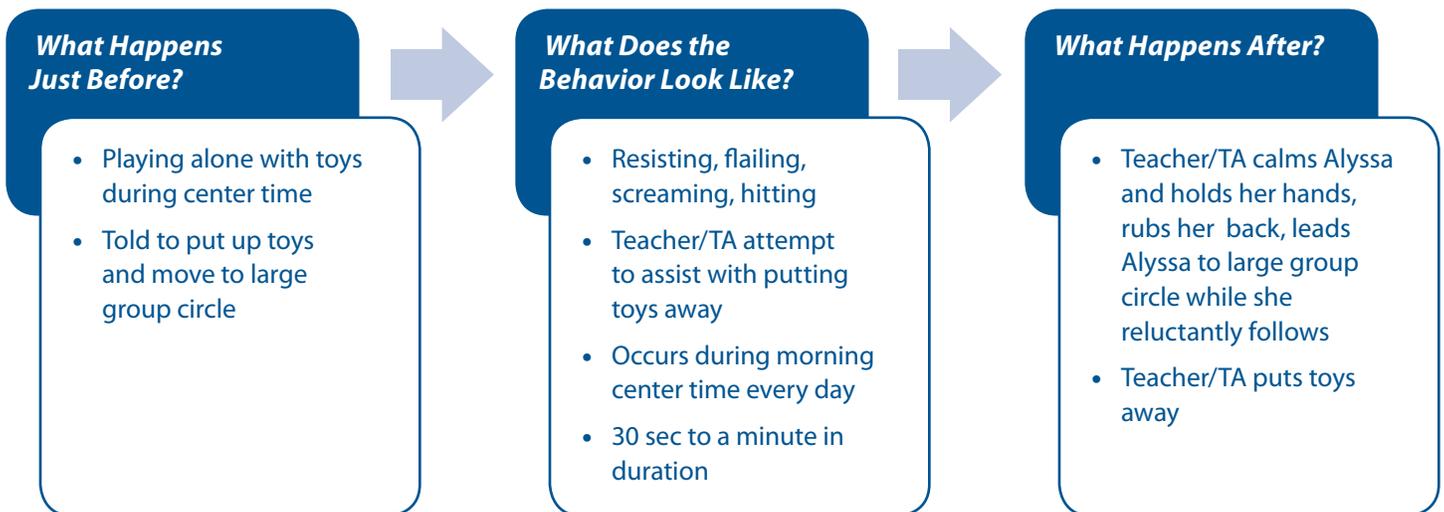
1. Describe the problem behavior and how often it is happening. What does the behavior look like? How often does the behavior occur throughout the day and week? How long does the problem behavior tend to last?	
2. Where is the problem behavior most likely to happen?	
3. Who is engaged in the behavior? Are there certain people who tend to almost always be involved before or during the behavior?	
4. When does the problem behavior most likely occur? Does it occur at a particular time of day or during a certain activity?	
5. What is happening just before the problem behavior occurs? What triggers the behavior?	
6. What happens as a result of the behavior? What do the adults do? What do the other children do? What are the consequences?	
7. Why is the problem behavior continuing? Is there something the child is able to avoid or obtain as a result of the behavior? What other lifestyle or setting changes tend to influence behavior? For example, does problem behavior occur more often when the child doesn't sleep well, uses a different form of transportation, takes medication, doesn't eat breakfast, doesn't get outdoor time when it's raining, has an unexpected change in a routine, arrives late or early, etc.?	

Think about the sequence of the behavior:



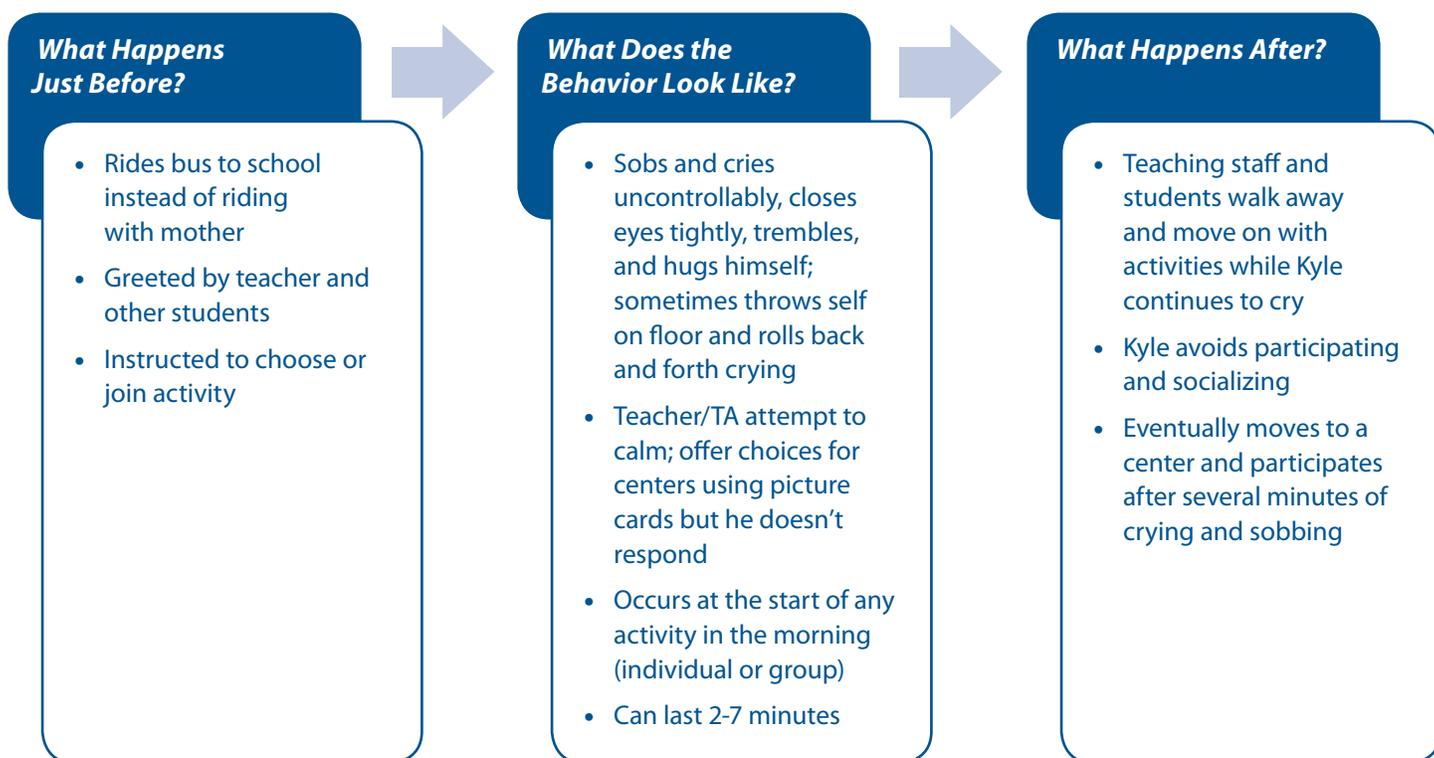
Write a precision problem behavior statement using the responses to questions 1-7 (see samples below):

Sample Precision Problem Behavior Statement A:



Precision Problem Behavior Statement A:

Every day, during morning center time, when it is time to put materials away and transition to large group instruction, Alyssa cries, holds her toys tightly and refuses to put them away repeatedly screaming, “No!”. When the teacher or teacher assistant assists Alyssa by leading her to the appropriate bin or shelf, Alyssa flails about, screams and hits the teacher or teacher assistant. The teacher/teacher assistant holds Alyssa’s hands still and talks calmly to her while rubbing her back for about 30-60 seconds and she stops flailing, hitting and screaming. The teacher/teacher assistant ends up removing the toys from her hands and putting them away and then holds Alyssa’s hand and she reluctantly allows teacher/teacher assistant to lead her to the group activity.

Sample Precision Problem Behavior Statement B:**Precision Problem Behavior Statement B:**

Whenever Kyle rides the bus instead of riding with his mother in the morning, he sobs and cries, closes his eyes tightly, and trembles and hugs himself as he walks in the classroom. Anytime he is approached or told to choose an activity or join circle time before lunch, he continues this behavior sometimes throwing himself on the floor and rolling back and forth while he cries. He doesn't respond to the teacher or teacher assistant when they attempt to calm him by hugging him and offering choices for activities using picture cards. His loud crying and sobbing can last from 2-7 minutes. The teaching staff and students eventually walk away and leave him wherever he is as he continues to cry and avoid social interaction and participation. Kyle eventually moves to a center and plays with toys after several minutes of crying and sobbing.

Classroom Behavior Record

Classroom teacher: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Write the child’s name in the left column who is demonstrating a persistent challenging behavior. Arrange the chart according to your classroom schedule. During each portion of the day, record instances of challenging behavior using the initial for that behavior in the box. Behavior categories are provided at the bottom of this form. Note additional instances of behavior.

	Arrival	Centers	Circle	Outside	Centers	Circle	Lunch	Nap	Snack	Centers	Dismissal
Child's Name											

Comments: (Substitutes, persistent absences, illness, family crisis, etc.)

- P** – Physical Aggression (hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, pushing, etc.)
- D** – Disruption (yelling, screaming, noise with materials, tantrums, prolonged loud crying)
- R** – Disrespect (taking someone else’s toy, teasing, cursing, not following directions, etc.)
- I** – Inappropriate use of materials (climbing on or jumping from furniture, destroying property or other children’s work)
- S** – Risking safety by running, sneaking away, or otherwise putting self in harm’s way
- E** – Exposing self or touching self or others inappropriately
- T** – Behavior occurred during transition into the activity such as TP meaning physical aggression happening during transition into the activity. For example, 1 TP, 2TD.

Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report

The early childhood behavior support team and teachers must complete this form to review what has been implemented and provide further guidance to support the child, family and teacher. The documentation will be shared with the Preschool Exceptional Children’s Program during consultation as needed. Attach the teacher’s planned modifications/individualized strategies and documented progress for the child. This form can be completed electronically.

Site: _____ Submission Date: _____

Child’s Name: _____ County: _____

Teacher’s Name: _____ Teacher’s Contact Information: _____

Program Coordinator/Director’s Name: _____

Program Coordinator/Director’s Contact Information: _____

Actions	Dates	Contacts/Results	Next Steps (Who, what, when)
Documentation of challenging behavior: when does it occur, what happens right before it occurs, what happens after, how often does it occur, and how long does it last.			
Designated observer conducts assessment of current classroom practices in preventing challenging behaviors and promoting social-emotional development & identifies area(s) of focus			
Documented teaching strategies implemented to maintain child’s participation in the preschool program (e.g., teacher’s planned modifications or individualized strategies and recorded progress for the child for at least 6 weeks)			
Documented communications with families about child’s behavioral concerns (face to face, phone calls, emails, texts etc. that are not routine and are specifically conducted to address topic of child’s behavioral concerns)			
Documented collaboration with specialists (e.g. local school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children’s Program, local Smart Start, Child Care Resources & Referral, Triple P, mental health consultant, behavior specialist, psychologist, or other professionals)			
Documented teacher’s professional development to support classroom practices (e.g., completed Foundations: Social-Emotional training, visited other classrooms, mentored by others, etc.)			
Outcomes of attempts made to maintain child’s participation in the preschool program (provision of additional staff, conducted a Functional Behavioral Assessment and implemented a Behavior Improvement Plan, referral to the Exceptional Children’s Program, etc.)			

Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement Report

This report is required for use with a child who demonstrates persistent challenging behaviors (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014, p.24) that prevent his/her progress in any developmental domain (see NC Early Learning and Development Progressions <http://earlylearningprogressions.fpg.unc.edu>) and impede the child's access to and participation in the preschool program. The intention of this report is to document family communications about the challenging behavior and behavioral regulation strategies implemented in the classroom, and to inform preschool administrators and other appropriate staff prior to changing a child's setting or suspending a child from the program.

Teachers and program coordinators/directors shall document and keep on file every effort made to support the child. They will work together with the family to develop a coordinated plan to support the child's placement in the preschool program. Every effort shall be made to maintain the child's enrollment and participation in the program.

What is challenging behavior? Any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults that interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play; is harmful to the child, other children, or adults; that put a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. Challenging behavior is thus defined on the basis of its effects. While some children's challenging behaviors are developmentally or culturally normative and effectively addressed by adult vigilance and the use of appropriate guidance procedures, other children need more targeted evidence-based practices (Tier II) to prevent and/or address challenging behaviors that are persistent or unresponsive to universal evidence-based approaches (<http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/glossary.html>).

Examples of persistent challenging behaviors for preschool children may include:

- (1) physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects forcefully, pinching, pushing, and biting;
- (2) climbing on things in the classroom that are not permitted;
- (3) destroying property, destroying what another child is working on regardless of the other child's response;
- (4) taking toys away from other children forcefully;
- (5) running that poses a safety risk for the child or others or elopement from the classroom;
- (6) tantrum behaviors that might include behaviors such as kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet, or head banging;
- (7) verbal aggression including yelling, threats, screaming at another person, calling children bad names, and saying bad words;
- (8) ordering an adult to do something (e.g., "leave me alone");
- (9) persistent or prolonged crying that is loud or disruptive or ongoing crying that interferes with the child's engagement in activities;
- (10) inappropriate use of materials (e.g., jumping off chairs, slamming materials, throwing objects);
- (11) statements that are noncompliant (e.g., "I'm not going to do it") or clear and explicit verbal or physical refusal to follow directions; or
- (12) inappropriate touching, stripping, and other behaviors that are hurtful, disruptive, or dangerous to self or others (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014, p. 24).



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