

# Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre

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## Ways to Prevent Challenging Behaviour

When children's needs are not met their behaviour can escalate.

### Acknowledging Feelings in the Early Childhood Setting

Children's behaviour is less likely to escalate:

- a) When children learn to notice and acknowledge their feelings
- b) When caring and helpful adults support and facilitate interactions between them.

### Environment

- Create "Quiet Place" in the room where children can go when they need a break from the group.
- This could be set up within an existing centre such as reading centre and may include pillows, blankets and stuffed animals.
- Encourage children to go to the centre when they need a break or some space (adults take breaks too).
- Let the parents know about this new emphasis
- The goal is to encourage children to take the break they need before a tantrum or outburst occurs.

### Encourage the Use of Feelings

- Use stories, poems and songs that talk about feelings. Invite children to identify the feelings of particular characters in poems or stories.
- Give the children names for emotions. Start with basic feelings like mad, sad, happy, frustrated; then proud, lonely, scared; then contented, cheerful, pleased, excited, concerns, annoyed, upset.
- At Circle Time, invite children to share their own experiences with feelings.

### Acknowledge Your Own Feelings in Safe and Helpful Ways

- Model feeling statements to the children. For example, "I am tired and sad right now. I think I need a break/snack/silly song."
- Make the connection between events and feelings.
- Help children to explore where a feeling may have come from.
- Be supportive: this will encourage feeling exploration.

### Be Ready

- Be ready for those times when the child wants you to listen or share a conversation.
- (When possible) put aside what you are doing and give your full attention to the child.

### Partner with the Parents

- Send a note home to the parents sharing with them what you are trying to do.
- List several activities that you are trying to do with the children (in a newsletter or on a bulletin board).
- Invite the parents to partner with you by:
  - Trying some of the things at home that you are doing in the daycare. E.g. using the same words
  - Giving ideas to you re: suggestion books, poems, songs, etc.
  - Coming to the centre. Consider having a day when the parents are invited to come to the daycare for circle and snack. Review some of the poems and songs and have a sharing time followed by snack.