

Training Resource

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

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Barnardos' vision is an Ireland where childhood is valued and all children and young people are cherished equally.

Barnardos' mission is to challenge and support families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focusing specifically on children and young people whose well-being is under threat.

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INTRODUCTION

Barnardos' Training and Resource Service are delighted to provide this resource for trainers who work with those directly engaged in work with children and young people.

The purpose of this pack is to support and enrich work in supporting children's constructive interactions and positive behaviour. The topic has been researched and developed by Barnardos' Training and Resource Service in collaboration with a member of our Training Panel.

The content of this resource is drawn from evidence-based research and practice. Information includes theoretical background; session plans; an outline agenda; handout and worksheet samples; sample PowerPoint slides on CD; and a resource list.

The intention is to provide trainers with material that can be adapted and tailored to suit the needs of individual services with whom they may be working. The pack is based on the principles of adult learning, and provides variety and choice to ensure that the delivered training will make a real impact on the audience and on their work with children.

This training resource is intended to be used by those whose role is to support childcare service providers, such as the staff of City/County Childcare Committees, childcare development workers, childcare service managers, childcare trainers or others.

FORMAT

The pack provides all of the information and resources needed to provide a full day training workshop. It comprises a PowerPoint Presentation (on a CD) accompanied by comprehensive facilitator's/trainer's guidance and notes (in this book) as well as worksheets and resources.

The section on Facilitating the Training Workshop consists of general information, with examples of ice breakers and activities that can be used or adapted to suits the group's needs. Sample evaluation sheets and sign-in registers are included as well.

Section 3 contains notes with background theories and information on supporting children's positive behaviour; a suggested agenda for a full day session and also a suggested one for a half day session; some sample lesson/session plans that can be adapted by individual trainers; sample handouts with suggestions where they can be used; and worksheets. There are also lists of resources and organisations that may be of use.

FACILITATING THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

ADULT LEARNING

In order to provide effective learning, trainers need to take into account the principles of adult learning, recognising that adults have particular needs and expectations when they undertake a training course. Using these principles, trainers can design, plan and deliver material and programmes. They will move through a continuum of roles: from facilitator to instructor to mentor and coach. They must recognise that adults have varying learning styles and design their training accordingly. Adults will have concerns and anxieties and the trainer needs to be cognisant of these; they tend to have dominance for left or right brain thinking and the training needs to both use the strength of this and recognise its limitations.

The wealth of experience of adult learners, while not always formally acknowledged, is a rich resource for groups in a session to draw upon, and the trainer should be adept at enabling learners to share in the design of sessions.

Some examples of application of the principles of adult learning are as follows:

- **Collaboration:** Although trainers have the overall responsibility for leading a learning activity, adult learning is a co-operative enterprise that respects and draws upon the knowledge that each person brings to the learning setting. Some adults may be less comfortable than others regarding self directed learning and may need more encouragement and guidance in making contributions.
- **Different styles:** Use auditory, visual, tactile and participatory teaching methods. Skillful use of these, for example, backing up a handout with the use of graphics, speaking it perhaps using mnemonics or rhyming words, and using movement or physical activity will reinforce and embed the learning for all styles. Use colours, sound and props as much as possible. This will accelerate the learning process, and ensure good understanding and retention.
- **Adults tend to be problem focused in their learning:** Emphasise how learning can be applied in a practical setting. Use case studies, problem-solving groups, and participatory activities to enhance learning. Adults generally want to immediately apply new information or skills to current problems or situations.
- **Failure:** Recognise that adults may have a fear of failure or be self conscious. For example, they may have a concern about being the oldest member of the group; about not having formal qualifications; of being made to look foolish, or of perhaps not knowing so much about the topic as others.
- **Bring the design to fruition:** Ensure that the benefits of the good design you have put into the training plan is supported by the preparation of a good learning environment. You as the trainer need to be emphatic about the type of layout that you feel will best

benefit your group of learners. Ensure that their comfort and needs are considered thus ensuring minimum distraction. Careful use of breaks will enhance learning. Breaks need not be just official coffee, tea or smoke breaks, they can be built in judiciously to vary pace and embed the learning, for example using movement to do a quick evaluation. The resources in this pack include references on adult learning for further reading, and also include suggested icebreakers and activities that can be adapted and used throughout a session.

DEVELOPING LESSON PLANS

The lesson plan can be developed based on Gagne's 'Nine Events of Instruction'.

1. Gaining attention
2. Informing the learner of the objective
3. Stimulating recall of perquisite learning
4. Presenting new material
5. Providing learning guidance
6. Eliciting the performance
7. Providing feedback about correctness
8. Assessing performance
9. Enhancing retention and recall

According to Gagne's theory, one cannot adequately plan instruction without first identifying a measurable learning outcome (objective) and constructing a learning hierarchy for that outcome.

A central notion in Gagne's theory is that different kinds of learning outcomes have different internal and external conditions that support them.

The internal conditions are skills and capabilities that the learner has already mastered (these would have been identified by a learning hierarchy, sometimes called a task analysis).

The external conditions are the things that the trainer or teacher arranges during the training.

TRAINING CHECKLIST

NOTE: In advance, check for any special needs requirements, including literacy issues, in the group and allow for this in planning and design.

- Go through the programme plan, checking the timing.
- If co-training/facilitating, agree individual responsibilities for training.
- Use a sample timetable, decide when and where formal breaks will take place. This will differ for full day or a shorter session.

- If using the PowerPoint, you will need to have access to a laptop and data projector. Allow time to try out technology in advance including CD or memory stick. If you do encounter difficulties on the day, be prepared to talk through the programme with the participants, using prepared handouts. Have a flip chart available.
- Agree who is responsible for organising a venue, training equipment and catering if required. Take into account the size of the room and whether there is adequate heating and ventilation and disability access, which is essential.
- Request the layout of the room beforehand including tables, chairs, screen, sockets extension leads, flipcharts and stand etc. Check that you have access to venue well in advance of starting time. Check that it is suitable for small group work if necessary or that there is break out space available.
- Arrive at the venue least 30 minutes in advance of your starting time. Check the equipment again.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR DELIVERING TRAINING

1. Powerpoint equipment
2. Flip Chart and markers to take feed back
3. Special equipment or materials such as soft ball for group exercise, post-its
4. Prepared handouts and work sheets
5. Refreshments – water, tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits

SAMPLE HOUSEKEEPING/GROUND RULES

In order to maximise learning outcomes for the day in a safe environment, it is useful for the group to establish ground rules amongst themselves. Ground rules could include the following:

- **Confidentiality:** Personal details discussed in the room must stay in the room as this will help people to reflect freely on a very sensitive issue. **Confidentiality cannot be maintained if a child protection issue emerges through disclosure of child physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect.**
- **Respect one another and respect difference:** This includes difference of age, ethnicity, culture, gender, marital status or any other difference which may belong to the group.
- **Taking turns:** Each person will have opportunity to be heard, and the trainer will ensure that there will be an equitable balance of contributions.
- **Individual opinions:** Since this is a sensitive subject, people may have differing experiences and points of view. Individual opinions will be listened to respectfully even if they differ from yours.
- **Timekeeping:** Participants will respect time keeping, and return on time. The facilitator will also start and finish on time.

GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING POINTS

- **Mobile phone check:** Simon Says is fun way with large group to ensure phones are off. Give couple of simple Simon Says orders, then say 'Simon Says take out your phones and turn them off'. Or suggest that if a phone rings the owner will have to sing a song or say a poem!
- **Fire exits** to be identified.
- **Attendance sheets** will be circulated and completed.
- **Evaluation form** to be completed at the end of the training.

ICE BREAKERS OR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Short activities such as ice breakers can be used for various reasons, such as simply enabling a group to get to know each other or as something for individuals or groups to work on when they have completed a set task. Having the creative crossword (page 10) on the screen or flipchart will exercise brains and help people to be occupied without distracting others. Activities are also useful to get people moving and to reenergise them.

The choice of activity should be relevant to the topic and can be adapted if needs be, for example Going to Market (page 6) can be used both as an introductory activity and an evaluation tool at the end of a session.

Group members may already know each other, though they may not necessarily know each other very well or know names. Friends usually like to sit together initially but, to maximise their experience of the training, it may be worth considering moving people around after the first break.

Laying a room out in cabaret style is useful as it facilitates group work. Also, people can be asked to swop with another table at suitable intervals, thus ensuring a good mix throughout the day.

SUGGESTED ICE BREAKERS/ACTIVITIES

Stand Up, Shake Hands

Ask participants to make eye contact with someone they do not know – stand up, go and shake hands and introduce themselves. They then repeat this with other people in the room, getting to as many people as possible till you, the trainer, call an end.

Introduce my Neighbour

Ask members to speak to the person beside them, find out their name and a holiday they really enjoyed.

"My name is Mary and my favourite holiday was in Crete."

Next person says:

"This is Mary and her favourite holiday was in Crete. I am Helen and mine was in Connemara."

This continues until all the group have introduced themselves. Invite people then to introduce the person beside them to the group. Other variations could be:

- Favourite way to relax
- Something I'm proud of
- My hidden talent
- Previous training I had on this topic, for example domestic violence

Pass the Ball

Get everyone to stand up in a circle. Use a soft ball such as a juggling ball or small bean bag which cannot damage a person or property. Throw the ball to someone, saying their name if you know it, and asking them if not. The game is completed when everyone in the circle has had a turn. If you wish, use a second and possibly a third ball at the same time. This usually ensures a lot of reaction and is also terrific as an energiser during a long session.

Fruit Bowl

Get everyone to stand up, form a circle and remove one chair. Start at the left and name the first person apple, the second orange and the third banana. Repeat this until everyone is an apple, an orange or a banana. Then say all apples sit down, then all oranges and then bananas. One person will remain standing. The activity can continue and act as an energiser especially in the afternoon and is a useful way to get participants to move around.

Going to Market

Make small groups of three to four people. Person 1 says *"As I was going to market I met [Name person beside them] who wants to [name an ambition]."* Person 2 says *"I met [Person 1] who wants to... and [Person 2] who wants to..."* and so on. Try a variation where people can choose a totally new name and a wild ambition that they would never do. This can also be used as evaluation using a similar method but, instead of naming an ambition, each person says one thing they have learnt during the training workshop.

Creative Crossword (see pages 10 and 11)

This can be put on a flipchart or on PowerPoint as people arrive, put back up at break time and at end of lunch. It can also be used in a long session as a break either individually or as a team activity.

Two Truths and a Lie

This is useful as an introduction, particularly when people already know each other or as a short break between sessions. People pair up, then tell each other two truths and a lie. The other person can try to tease out the lie by questioning. This is good fun when feeding back to whole group. One variation is to have a person sit in the centre of the whole group in a circle, and the group votes as to which is lie.

Line Up Game

Give everyone a number. Ask them to arrange themselves in numerical order, communicating with each other without speaking or holding up fingers. They will make up their own sub-language or sign-language and it often is pretty amusing. For round two, have people arrange themselves in order of birth or in calendar months.

Question Ball

Before starting, prepare in advance a largish ball such as a blow up beach-ball or a bouncy ball and write questions on it using a marker pen, for example, what's your favourite colour, favourite food, favourite cartoon, etc? When you start the game, throw the ball to any person, when they catch it, wherever their right thumb is that is the question they have to say aloud and answer. The game can go on for a long time and be used a time filler or energiser.

Crash!

Everybody mingles, constantly moving until you, the trainer, shouts out a number. All players must then try to get into groups of that number, any group/s that don't succeed are out.

Celebrity ID Game

The Celebrity ID Game is a good way to get a large group to mingle and break the ice by interacting with lots of people rapidly. To set up, prepare several labels with famous celebrity or well-known names (e.g. Ben Stiller, Mickey Mouse, Bertie Ahern, etc.) Stick a label on each person's back. Then announce it is time for the game to begin. At this point everybody mingles and introduces themselves to one another, and then each person asks yes or no questions to gain clues about the name on their back. When a person correctly identifies the name, he or she should remove the label and continue to mingle until a preset amount of time has passed.



Evaluation Form for _____

1. What was your key learning from this training?

2. What worked well for you?

3. Did anything not work and if so why?

4. Would you like to change anything about this training?

5. How satisfied are you with this training? Please tick box

1 <u>Not at all</u> <u>satisfied</u>	2 <u>Fairly</u> <u>satisfied</u>	3 <u>Satisfied</u>	4 <u>Very</u> <u>satisfied</u>	5 <u>Completely</u> <u>satisfied</u>
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6. Any other comments?

Name [optional]: _____

Date: _____

WORKSHEET: CREATIVE CROSSWORD

For this crossword, think outside the box in giving answers.

Clues across:

1. Vegetable
2. Sheep
3. Lays eggs
4. Perceives
5. Often dropped, especially in English

Clues down:

1. Judy's colleague, not Richard!
2. A blow
3. Makes holes
4. A mixed drink, not always alcoholic

1	2	3	4
2			
3			
4			
5			

TRAINER RESOURCE: CREATIVE CROSSWORD

The answer to all the 'down' clues is PUNCH. This then gives the across answers which are phonetical, except for 5 across, Hs.

1 P	2 P	3 P	4 P
2 U	U	U	U
3 N	N	N	N
4 C	C	C	C
5 H	H	H	H

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING PACK

This pack aims to help you, as a trainer, to plan and design training for those working with children who may be presenting behaviours that challenge the adults working with them.

The pack will help you to understand the theories behind young children's social interactions and to develop training for staff that will enable them to handle the more challenging situations that may arise in their work with children. They should subsequently be able to provide children with the support that they need to learn how to handle their own reactions to situations and to become independent.

The material shows that staff working with children play a key role in the children's lives and indeed it is stated by Lobman (in Siolta Research Digest, Standard 5, 2007) that:

“Adults who are not responsive to children (who may locate themselves nearby but not engage in children's play) have a negative effect on children's early years' experiences; their social interactions and cognitive activities are less complex.”

Shifting our focus away from dealing with 'behaviour as problem' towards supporting children's social and emotional development will lead to better long-term outcomes for the children.

Participants on your training programme will gain an insight into some of the leading experts' stance on the development of social and behavioural skills in children, and into the more challenging behaviours. Participants will, through developing their observational and analytical skills, gain a deep understanding of the factors leading to children's mistakes in handling situations, and to develop suitable responses to support each child.

The materials in the pack are intended both as theoretical references and as practical handouts for the participants. They are structured in a framework of understanding how a child develops social skills; providing practical observational and analytical tools to enable the practitioner to gain deeper understanding of more challenging situations and possible responses to these situations.



TRAINER GUIDELINES

The training session is designed to be experiential, and to model appropriate responses in difficult situations, encouraging participants to draw from their own experiences and to be involved in developing responses that they will take away and implement.

Please note any specific equipment/materials required as outlined on the worksheets.

The PowerPoint that accompanies this pack is designed to be used at the trainer's discretion if required. It may be that some groups are too small or the space is limited, in which case a flipchart alone might be more appropriate.

If using the Powerpoint, the slides have trainer's notes on them that relate to the handouts. The slides are not intended to carry everything in the pack – rather to be used judiciously to support the delivery of the training appropriate to each group and each trainer. They have also been designed with different learning styles in mind, to assist in embedding the learning as effectively as possible.

Please familiarise yourself with the slides prior to use. It is possible to 'hide' any slides not required for that particular session – just go to 'slide show' on the toolbar, and check the 'hide slide' option. This can be unchecked at a later stage.



SUGGESTED TRAINING PLAN FOR FULL DAY SESSION

Time	Activity	Support Materials
10.00am	Welcome and introductions, ice breaker of choice	
10.20	<p>We Want to Learn Participants write individual points on post-its and stick them up on flipchart paper on the wall.</p> <p>NOTE: This will be revisited at the end of the day.</p>	
10.25	<p>Challenging Behaviour in Action You have a choice either to tell a story about children behaving badly, devised by you to suit the group OR to use a prepared activity.</p> <p>NOTE: Emphasise the key premise that children don't misbehave, they make mistakes. We need to let them know their mistakes are solvable and that we can help them to learn how to do this. Children CAN problem solve and through the session the group will learn how to support this.</p>	<p><i>Trainer Resource: Challenging Behaviour in Action (page 18)</i></p>
10.45	<p>Divide the group into pairs. Ask each pair to interview each other.</p> <p>Key learning point: Give brief input on how awareness of our own response to behavioural issues and conflict is vital. Our response has been shaped by our life experiences and in order to support children's development we need firstly to be aware of how we have learned to respond. Lead a brief discussion.</p>	<p><i>Worksheet: Reflecting on your Current Responses (page 22)</i></p> <p><i>Handout: Understanding Behaviour and the Role of the Childcare Practitioner (page 23)</i></p>
11.00	<p>What is Difficult Behaviour? Ask participants to brainstorm examples of children's difficult behaviour (fighting over toys, biting, screaming, not sharing, etc). Record on the flipchart. Return to this list later.</p> <p>How do you respond? Distribute Post-Its (several per person) and invite participants to write all their likely responses (one per Post-It). Emphasise there are NO wrong answers, no judging! Stick Post-Its on the flipchart sheet or on the wall to return to later in the morning.</p> <p>Input: Why young children behave the way they do.</p>	<p><i>Handout: Understanding Challenging Behaviour (page 26)</i></p> <p><i>Handout: Understanding Possible Sources of Conflict (page 29)</i></p>

11.30	BREAK	
11.45	<p>Adult Responses Lead a group activity on the different responses that adults can have to challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Give some input on the styles, shark (authoritarian), turtle (avoid), owl (mediator and neutral facilitator). Explain each approach briefly.</p>	<p><i>Handout: How Do You Respond?</i> (page 30)</p> <p><i>Trainer Resource: Adult Managing Styles in Action</i> (page 20)</p> <p><i>Trainer Resource: RED exercise</i> (page 21) [optional]</p>
12.10pm	<p>Return to list from How do You Respond? Divide into threes. Ask each group to read each response and categorise them as either shark, turtle or owl responses. Take feedback. Discuss any differing results. Depending on time choose 2–4 responses. Ask ‘What is a child learning in this situation?’ Lead discussion about being ‘good,’ punishment, guilt, blaming, fixing, compliancy, motivation, skills.</p> <p>NOTE: For children for whom conflicts are occurring outside the group, your centre may be the only place where it’s being acknowledged. Invite group to share examples. Discuss.</p>	
12.30	<p>Strategies for Staff Outline where and how situations arise for young children.</p>	<p><i>Handout: Strategies for Supporting Appropriate Behaviour</i> (page 31)</p>
13.00	LUNCH	
14.00	Energiser of choice	
14.05	<p>Modeling Good Conflict Resolution Lead discussion on the various steps. Emphasise that each needs to be taken slowly, and possibly revisited the first few times children use this approach and when feelings are running very high.</p>	<p><i>Handout: How to be an OWL</i> (page 33)</p>
14.15	<p>Practising Being an Owl To give participants a chance to further explore how to be an owl you can choose either to watch High/Scope’s DVD ‘Supporting Children in Resolving Conflicts’ or do a role play, using a sample situation from participants.</p>	

	<p>DVD: After watching the video, ask participants to work in threes and to discuss what owl-like qualities they noticed the adult using and what the children involved are learning in this situation. Invite them to discuss one positive thing they observed, one thing they have a unanswered question about and one thing they didn't like on the DVD.</p>	<p>Role Play: Give a simple scenario (possibly from list generated by group earlier) and invite people in groups of four: two children, one adult, one observer to act out the scene. Ask them to take turns trying out the six steps. Take feedback on how it worked for them.</p>	
14.40	<p>Prevention Strategies Invite the group, in pairs, to consider one of these prevention strategies and to suggest two reasons how it might be effective.</p> <p>Hold discussion on this, if there is time use checklists for staff to assess an example from their own workplace.</p>		<p><i>Handout: Planning and Preparation (page 34)</i></p> <p><i>Handout: Observation and Analysis Checklist (page 36)</i></p>
15.00	<p>Divide into groups of three. Return to list from What is Difficult Behaviour? Assign two or three to each small group. Each group to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the possible source of the conflict? • Is it preventable? • What does the OWL need to focus on? • Take feedback. Ask other groups for comments. 		
15.20	<p>Theory Recap on the theories behind understanding challenging behaviour discussed earlier in the day.</p>		<p><i>Handout: Understanding Behaviour and the Role of the Childcare Practitioner (page 23)</i></p> <p><i>Handout: Understanding Challenging Behaviour (page 26)</i></p>
15.25	<p>Implementing Plans Revisit earlier story or situation from first morning session. In groups of four, identify a strategy you might now consider using to respond to the situation (5 mins). Explain as it's so late in the day and you all need something lighthearted you will take only visual feedback. Use only visual clues (ie draw something!) (5 mins). Present responses to full group who have 10 seconds ONLY to guess what it is.</p>		

15.45	<p>Review 'We Want to Learn' from the start of the day. Get participants to take down all points that were covered. Review any remaining.</p> <p>In order that participants can leave behind conflictual issues, invite them to choose the prop/talking stick and when holding it say one positive aspect of today's session they'll be thinking about on their way out.</p>	
15.50	<p>Invite participants to complete an evaluation form. Assure them that their opinions matter and encourage them to suggest changes to the content or process.</p>	
16.00pm	CLOSE	

HALF DAY SESSION

If you only have half a day available for your training session you could include the following:

- Welcome and introductions, ice breaker
- Housekeeping and agreeing ground rules
- Story or enactment about challenging situations with children
- Reflecting on Current Responses worksheet
- What is difficult behaviour?
- Identifying what children learn – shark, turtle, owl
- Sources of conflict
- How to be an OWL
- Strategies for supporting positive behaviour
- Bringing it all back home – how do I apply the learning?
- Evaluation



TRAINER RESOURCES

The following resources can be used throughout the day.

TRAINER RESOURCE: CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN ACTION

(Group activity on Enactments of Various Behaviours)

Prepare a typical children's small group activity that would be familiar to the group of learners. Depending on what is convenient and what resources can be obtained, this could be an art activity such as a large collage or building a large object/tower (using blocks, lego, sticklebricks, similar). A game of Snap is also easy and convenient to prepare. If it is possible to work within a real life setting, then use the various work areas to carry out the exercise.

Explain to your group that they are going to work as children completing the activity or in the play areas. Have a set of small cards prepared with the different roles on them as listed below and give one to each person. Each person will have a particular behaviour to exhibit during the activity.

NOTE: It is useful to use duplicates of role no. 3.

You will act as group leader and try to get the activity completed while participants enact the role as per the card they have received.

When the allocated time is up, end the activity as in a real life situation, giving notice that there is a certain amount of time left and to tidy up/complete the activity.

Take feedback from the participants – first debriefing those who were invited to exhibit the more challenging behaviours; then from those affected by it most directly.

You should then lead discussion.



Examples of roles that can be used (*write out onto individual cards for each person*):

1. You are a 3 year old. You do not understand sharing, and group activities are very difficult for you.
2. You are a 3 year old at pre-school. The leader has invited you to take part in a small group activity. You are not happy, and become very disruptive, not sharing, interfering with other children's work and refusing to cooperate.
3. You are a happy, well-adjusted pre-schooler.
4. You are a child of 3½. You are very shy and withdrawn, and do not like group activities.
5. You are a 4 year old at pre-school. You have been there a long time and get very bored with all the activities. You tend to wander off and see what other groups are doing.
6. You are a 4 year old working in a group with the leader and other children. You get easily frustrated when things do not work out and have not yet learnt to have patience and keep trying. You hit others when you get angry.
7. You are a childcare assistant and you are helping the leader with a small group activity.



TRAINER RESOURCE: ADULT MANAGING STYLES IN ACTION

For use with group activity How Do You Respond? (see page 30)

Prepare a simple small-group activity for three small groups (see below for example).

Ask for three volunteers from the whole group. Take each one aside and explain the activity, and that each one of them will be modelling a particular style of leading the group.

1. **The Shark:** They will be strict with the group, control its actions, and push the group to complete the activity. This is an authoritarian style of leadership.
2. **The Turtle:** They will give minimal guidance to their group, let them get on with it and largely ignore any problems that emerge. This is a typically laissez faire management style.
3. **The Owl:** They will explain clearly what is required; act supportively and provide encouragement, especially with any problems or difficulties. This style is democratic and participative.

Divide the rest of the group into three, give them a work area and introduce them to their leader. Allow approximately 10 minutes for the activity, then debrief each group, asking for feedback on how they felt being led by that style, how it affected them and the work.

It is a good idea to start with the Shark group if you sense that there may be strong feelings resulting from the activity. However, sometimes the Turtle style can evoke equally strong feelings, especially frustration.

Sample Activity: Paper Palm Trees

This is an easy exercise that uses sheets of newspaper, a roll of sellotape and scissors. The groups will be making trees by rolling a few newspaper sheets into a loose tube shape, then making cuts halfway down around the sides, pulling out the inner 'leaves' and taping around the base so that the roll then resembles a palm tree.

It is a good idea for you to have practised this first so that you can fully explain the instructions.

TRAINER RESOURCE: 'RED' EXERCISE

This short exercise can be slotted in where required to illustrate the fact that using 'do' is the most effective way to communicate with children as opposed to using 'don't'.

Ask the group to close their eyes and visualise the colour red. They can think of everything possible in red. Allow a minute for this to happen. Then, ask them what colour is grass. The correct answer is difficult to get right away, as the colour red is dominant.

Repeat, this time asking them NOT to think of an elephant (or the sea). It is very difficult to think of anything else.

The point of this brief exercise is to emphasise that if we are constantly reinforcing the negative message, in other words telling them the very behaviour that we do NOT want to happen, then that is what will imprint in their brain.

For example, telling a child who is carrying a large heavy tumbler of water NOT to spill it, NOT to trip on the carpet, is not as effective as saying to the child you are carrying that really well, the table is nearby, you've done well to carry it safely.



WORKSHEET: REFLECTING ON YOUR CURRENT RESPONSES

Interview your partner using the following questions as a guide.

Share a recent story outlining a child's behaviour that is causing difficulty for you.
Give as much detail as possible.

1. If you were dealing with this right now what would you be thinking?
2. If you were dealing with this right now how would you be feeling?
3. If you were dealing with this right now how would you do?
4. Compare responses.

HANDOUT: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR AND THE ROLE OF THE CHILDCARE PRACTITIONER

For staff working with children, days that run smoothly from beginning to end, with everyone arriving on time; planned activities running smoothly; no arguments, rows or tantrums; break and lunch times going well and going home time happening without a hitch are few and far between.

The reality and liveliness of working with young children is that no two days are the same. Children, as they move along the path to independence and further transitions in their lives, will all at some point demonstrate a need for support and guidance in learning the skills that will enable them to grow and thrive as happy independent members of the wider community.

Many children will move along this path making only short or temporary mistakes in their behaviour. Some children will, due to various reasons such as either not knowing or understanding what is required, or through the impact of some external event in their lives, make bigger mistakes. Some of these mistakes, often referred to as challenging behaviour, will require a lot of support on the part of the adults to help the child to understand what is going amiss and to be able to interact effectively with others.

“The role of the practitioner in terms of ensuring constructive interactions with, and between, children is demanding: it is powerful, varied, essential and dynamic, and can be enhanced through reflection and self-challenge.” (Sjolta, 2007)

Sjolta's Standard 5 (2007) is entitled **Interactions** and reflects the fact that behaviour needs to be viewed as an interaction, either an effective or an ineffective one. Staff working with children can help them to develop the skills in their interactions to enable them to be effective.

Some of the ways in which staff can support children are through modelling the expected behaviour, observing and analysing the root causes of the behaviour that is causing difficulty, and identifying any sources of conflict.

Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1997) talks about the concept of social learning. This emphasises that young children learn about social behaviour by:

- Watching other people
- Imitating other people

He found that children tend to imitate people in their lives who they believe hold status, especially if those people are warm or powerful personalities. His BoBo doll research suggests that adults can be influential on a child's behaviour, for example people who work with young children can be seen as very important status figures in the child's social learning (for more details see <http://www.experiment-resources.com/bobo-doll-experiment.html>). This should lead those of us who work with children to think about our own behaviour and the effect we have on them.

The findings of the research were:

- If children are smacked by adults, they are likely to hit other children.
- If children are shouted at by adults, they are likely to shout at others.
- If children are given explanations, they will try to explain things too.
- If children are comforted when they fall (hurt etc) they will learn to do the same to others (empathise).

Vgotsky's (1978) social cognition learning model asserts that culture is the prime determinant of individual development. A good example is that of speech. Initially a child uses speech as a communication tool, but later can internalise it and use as inner speech, aiding internal processing and understanding.

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) put the child's development in the heart of a complex environmental system, consisting of family, the classroom, indirect environments such as parent's workplaces, society and the broader culture. Within this, the child's learning is affected by the interaction with all aspects of this environment, and is shaped by it. For example, their behaviour can be shaped by cultural aspects, such as attitudes to women, and use of physical force.

Another aspect of gaining an insight into children's behaviour is to understand the differences in the way they think as opposed to adults.

Concrete Thinking

Young children will need to keep sight of disputed objects to help them problem solve, as abstract reasoning or ability to use ideas and symbols as examples has not developed.

Egocentricity

There needs to be opportunity for children to gradually learn about others' feelings and develop empathy (which starts to show towards end of second year)

Limited Verbal Skills

Allow adequate time for understanding what the child is trying to convey.

Physical Expression

Young children feel (and act!) with their bodies and gradually learn to use words instead of actions.

Striving for Independence

Natural wish provides strong motivation for children to want to do things by and for themselves – allowing space, time and opportunity will encourage and support this.

Single Channel Attention

'One thing at a time only' thinking up to approximately the age of seven means that a child is not ignoring you but is just concentrating on whatever is their current focus. Adults can balance more than one thing at a time in their attention span.

Understanding some of these basic points will help staff to support children on an everyday basis. However, when young children present mistaken behaviour that challenges the adults who work with them, oftentimes our response is one of frustration. But, by shifting our focus away from dealing with 'behaviour as problem' towards supporting children's social and emotional development, including offering children interpersonal skill and mediation strategies, we can really influence their present and future well-being, confidence and sense of self.

And so, it is vitally important that we create learning environments that give children endless opportunities to use their initiative; to play alone and with others; and to find out about life and social interactions through direct experiences whilst being supported by adults. These adults using their observations will support the development of effective interactions by the child. In turn, this will enable children to practice their positive social interactions over and over, embedding their positive responses to the challenges that face them in all aspects of their lives.



HANDOUT: UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour that presents as challenging is often a visible symptom that is communicating some sort of message to the adult from the child, usually unconsciously. It is behaviour that does not fit with what the adult expects or needs from the child in that situation.

The child may be achieving any of the following by behaviour that is undesirable to the adult:

- Getting attention – this is normal, young children have a strong need for physical attention such as smile or a hug. Attention preferences vary from child to child and within children over time or depending on what else is going on for them.
- Avoiding some other situation.
- Distancing themselves from a painful situation, such as separation or bereavement.
- Being so used to a heightened situation such as conflicted family background that they can seek to raise the tempo so that it feels 'normal' or what they are used to at home.
- Seeking control, where they may not have it in other areas of their life.
- Achieving revenge for a perceived injustice.
- Expressing their feelings, such as frustration or helplessness, through actions.

Challenging behaviour need not always be seen as negative, as it can present opportunities for practitioners to support the child through an important phase in their learning. Developmental psychologists have long stressed the importance of conflict and challenges for creating new cognitive structures and skills, such as:

1. **Siraj-Blatchford et al** (in French, 2008) in their 'Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years' research report tell us that through engaging with conflict resolution strategies, children's cognitive and social development is enhanced.
2. **Hohmann et al** (1995) confirm that when children are encouraged to solve problems (rather than having them solved for them, being punished for them or avoiding them) they are learning to deal reflectively and creatively with unanticipated situations. Through these experiences they come to see themselves as capable problem solvers and this consequently leads to self-reliance, independence and confidence in approaching problems.

3. **Gartell and King** (in French, 2008), in 'The Power of Guidance: Teaching Socio-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Classrooms' suggest that through the development of positive relationships and problem-solving skills, young children begin to understand how to respect the needs and rights of others while meeting their own needs. They also learn that, more often than not, there is more than one 'right' side to an argument, something that many of us adults are still struggling to come to terms with! Gartell and King speak of the importance of being aware of and sensitive to other people's feelings. They also discuss 'win/win' situations in which problems are solved in ways that satisfy both parties.
4. **Betsy Evans** (2002), in her excellently titled *You Can't Come to my Birthday Party*, reaffirms the notion of there being many possible solutions to most problems. She further states that when adults facilitate problem solving, young children learn to collaborate and to discuss details of problems (number; space; time), thus confirming the idea of problem solving being both a social and a cognitive development enhancer.
5. **Johnson, Johnson et al** (in Evans, 2002) tell us that studies show that when students are taught negotiation and mediation skills they use these skills, 'at school as well as at home, where the majority of conflicts take place'.
6. In *Young Children* (1984), **Constance Kamii** discusses the inadvisability of using reward and punishment with young children and highlights the importance of exchanging viewpoints with children, letting them make decisions, and the importance of beginning training for autonomy in the early years. "If we want children to become able to act with personal conviction about what is right...we must reduce our adult power and avoid the use of rewards and punishment as much as possible."
7. **Betsy Evans** (2002) asserts that adults using a directive approach use punishment (physical or verbal), threats, blame or accusations without giving children the opportunity to resolve their own feelings resulting in children who are 'other' directed rather than self-motivated.
8. **Kenneth Rubin and Barbara Everett** (in Hohmann, 2008) contest that egalitarian relationships give children the opportunities to assert themselves, to present their own views of the world and to argue freely with peers concerning difficult social-cognitive viewpoints. Such conflicts and interactions may ultimately help children to understand that others may have different thoughts, feelings and perspectives than their own.
9. **The REDI Project** (2004) shows that adults who encourage children to identify problems and to try out solutions on their own are helping them to develop a range of cognitive, social and physical skills. An adult who doesn't let children struggle at all or who intervenes too quickly robs them of the chance to see themselves as competent

and independent people. On the other hand, waiting too long or never offering help can result in children becoming anxious or discouraged.

10. **Rina Das and Thomas Berndt** (in Hohmann, 2008) found that young children (4–6 year olds) seek playmates based on positive social criteria, including:

- Lack of aggressive behaviour (*She/He's never mean to me*)
- Similarity (*We both like dinosaurs*)
- Sociability (*He/She plays with me*)
- Perceptions of being liked by peer (*She/He likes me*)
- Prior association (*I have known her/him since I started pre-school*)



HANDOUT: UNDERSTANDING POSSIBLE SOURCES OF CONFLICT

One frequent source of challenging situations is when conflict occurs between children. Children may not yet have learned how to handle a situation that becomes complex, or their verbal skills may not yet be sufficient to allow them to express the problem and their frustration verbally.

Sources of Conflict – Occuring Within the Group

Objects: *'It's Mine! I want it!'*

Children in conflict because they both want to use a particular object at the same time.

Space: *'Hey, shove over! Get off me!'*

Children in conflict because they both want to use the same space at the same time.

Privilege: *'He always gets to go first? It's not fair!'*

A conflict occurs because children want a certain privilege, e.g. be first to do something, to be the one to perform a favoured task or role, to continue an activity when it's time to move on to another activity.

Social Issues: *'You smell! You can't come to my birthday party.'*

A conflict occurs as a result of a social need or interaction, for example two children excluding a third child from play or a child misunderstanding something another child has said or done.

Sources of Conflict – Originating Outside of the Group

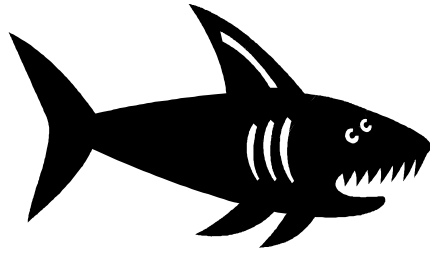
Conflicts sometimes occur as a result of unresolved experiences a child has before their pre-school session. Fallout from these unresolved situations may result in a child expressing anger, anxiety or sadness that is not related to any specific incident, or is easily triggered by a pre-school incident.

- Unresolved conflict from home (not getting what they wanted for breakfast and this escalating into a much bigger conflict with a parent).
- Siblings fighting on the way (but left unresolved).
- Misunderstanding causing anxiety (mis-heard - imagines something much worse, e.g. Dad going away for a week, thinks he's leaving).
- Witnessing something violent or awful (domestic violence).
- Impending worrying event (parents' separation).

NOTE: For children for whom conflicts are occurring outside the group, your centre may be the only place where this is being acknowledged.

HANDOUT: HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

Are you the Shark...



..... who jumps right in and solves children's problems for them and says, 'We'll do it my way, or no way'?

This is an **Authoritarian** style of managing.

Or are you the Turtle...



...who avoids or ignores the problem and says, 'Conflict? What conflict'?

This can be seen as a **laissez faire** style of managing.

Or are you the Owl...



...who acknowledges the problem and engages with children in problem solving?

This is a **democratic** way of working.

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HANDOUT: STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

General

- High quality accurate observations of child and sharing of information between staff is crucial.
- See the behaviour as a skill not learnt as yet by the child; or a need that the child has that adults in their life have not yet met.
- Really listen to child – go to them, give focused attention.
- Support growth of independence in child.

Specific Strategies

- **Choices:** Give a choice of two things children who never do what they are asked; they are unable when young to hold a **third opposing thought** and will focus on the either/or.
- **Language** used by adult: Use 'do' instead of 'don't' to modify behaviour (see the 'RED' exercise on page 23).
- **Positive reinforcement** such as a hug, smiles or spending time with children or near them watching and listening. This increases positive behaviour; it is immediate in small children but takes a bit more time as children grow older. It needs to be consistent and has to be specific. Over time, remember to do it at intervals for intermittent reinforcement.
- **Use peers** for positive reinforcement, for example if a child is not joining a group say something like 'that's great, most of you are sitting in the circle' and then invite the one who is not sitting.
- Extinction of behaviour by **planned ignoring:** This needs to be discussed with other staff; be consistent and reviewed for effect.
- **Model appropriate behaviour** with children, with the other staff members, with parents and with the other children.
- **Support children** when getting into difficulties: Intervene in advance of possible difficulty, such as noticing the early stages of tussles over equipment, or a child using/doing something that may be hard for them. They might need some quiet observation and readiness on part of adult to step in and support/help.

- **Encourage natural consequences** where possible to allow children to develop their own sense of responsibility.
- **Encourage children's problem solving.**
- **Look for children involved in problem situations.**
- **Allow children to deal with problems and conflicting viewpoints.**
- **Practice restraint** – avoid interfering prematurely!
- **Sit down with children.** This gives children more time to work things out on their own.
- **Give children time to use their own problem solving skills.** Wait until children ask for assistance, or until they have made an attempt at a solution and seem to be about to abandon the effort.
- **Refer one child to another.** Wherever possible, refer children to other children who have the skills to help them.
- **Listen to conflicting view points.** Rather than keeping children from arguing, encourage children to elaborate on their views.
- **Interact with rather than manage children.** Adults who manage (pass out instructions and warnings) rather than interact (play and converse as partners) prevent children from confronting and working with child-sized problems.
- **Assist matter of factly with unresolved conflicts.** When intervention is necessary, adults should be patient, respectful and non-judgemental.



HANDOUT: HOW TO BE AN OWL



High/Scope's Six Steps for Resolving Conflict

- Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
- Acknowledge children's feelings.
- Gather information.
- Restate the problem.
- Ask for ideas for solutions, choose one together.
- Be prepared to give follow-up support.

Revisit the previous step if children seem blocked on moving forward.

This is a mediated approach that uses effective mediation tools in a child-centred manner, which have excellent long-term benefits and effects as the children are supported in developing their own problem solving skills.

HANDOUT: PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Group Dynamics

Manage/change as appropriate. For example, mix ages sometimes if possible.

Environment

Make sure the environment is stress free, well-planned and meets the needs of the children. Make sure children can reach things. Make good use of space and clear areas for children to play for example on floor without being in the way of others.

Noise Levels

For some children, high noise levels can be very stressful. Use mix of soft furnishing, mats, separation of areas with panels, shelving to reduce excess noise.

Routine

Give children enough information re. changes and adequate advance notice of transitions. Some children need time to finish off work and switch from one activity to another. Flexibility and being child-centred is valuable.

Equipment

Have age/stage appropriate equipment available. Reduce/change equipment and introduce new equipment/activities from time to time.

Communicating with Children

SOUL: Silence; Observation; Understanding; Listening

- Eye contact is useful – with awareness that in some cultures this is not of benefit.
- Get down to the child's level.
- Use a calm measured voice and tone.
- Check that the child understands you.
- Children have what is called 'single channel attention' up to about the age of 7 or 8. This means that if they are concentrating on something that they may not hear or be aware of anything else. They are **not** just ignoring the adult.

Supporting Children in Handling Difficult Situations

- Give child emotional support – stay calm; be close; help them express feelings in words; try to recognise what might be behind the situation.
- Develop solutions with the child when they have calmed somewhat – give suggestions, ask for ideas, discuss and choose.
- If there is a conflict with another child: stop any dangerous behaviour; acknowledge feelings of each child; allow each child to tell story; acknowledge feelings of each again; when calm enough, develop solutions with each child giving ideas; agree on solution.

These steps may need to be repeated. Check back that everything is ok; if necessary, check back later on that solution has worked to ensure no residual resentment on part of either child.



HANDOUT: OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

Remember to ask yourself, *'Who is challenged by this behaviour?'*

We need to be aware of our own responses to children's social conflicts and we need to understand that children communicate very physically so oftentimes their 'challenging behaviour' is sending an important message from the child to the adult, often unconsciously. Using observations can enable us to receive and understand the message.

There are situations that are immediate, such as a conflict or row over something in particular, and there can be situations where 'undesirable behaviour' is not a one-off event. For both, we need to gather information through careful observation. Part of this observation needs to identify what the child in question is achieving through behaving in this way. Using a checklist can assist with observation.

- Is the child behaving appropriately for their age/stage of development?
- What exactly is the child doing – describe/observation?
- How long has this/it/these been going on?
- When did it start or become noticeable?
- How often does it occur?
- Is there a pattern?
- Is there a theme?
- Does it happen anywhere else?
- Does it represent a change in behaviour?
- Has anything happened which might explain the child's behaviour?
- Is there any harm in what the child is doing?
- Is the child suffering?
- Does it restrict the child socially?
- Does it interfere with the child's development?
- What effect if any does it have on others?
- Have other staff observed this?
- Anything in the child's observation records to indicate any issues of concern?
- What does the child say about it?
- What can I/we change to help the child?
- Any other questions/observations?

Sometimes a more in-depth analysis is required, examining all aspects that may impact upon the child or, if there is challenging behaviour from more than one child, then to examine the setting and environment for possible causes and changes that might alleviate the situation.

Childcare Setting

- Environment
- Transition times
- Routines – flexible/rigid

Adults/Staff in Charge

- Style in parenting or leading
- Tolerance levels
- Staffing pressures
- Training levels
- Consistency
- Expectations
- Agreed boundaries
- Have not really heard or understood the child



Child and Family Centred Factors

Physical

- Tiredness
- Allergies
- Puberty
- Health issues such as illness
- Inadequate diet, hunger

Developmental

- Expressing themselves inappropriately such as by temper tantrums
- Developmental delay
- Perceptual difficulties in processing information
- Language delay
- Frustration – needs more stimulation (gifted child)
- Not ready for this particular activity

Emotional

- Home events: new sibling; separation and loss in family; other traumatic event
- Temperament of child – for example, may prefer small groups to large ones

Social

- Child unused to other children
- Unfamiliar with setting
- Child doesn't know the way things are done, limits, boundaries



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Sources of Further Information

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Contact details for City/County
Childcare Committees can be
found on
[http://www.pobal.ie/childcare/
Pages/165.aspxm](http://www.pobal.ie/childcare/Pages/165.aspxm),