

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING cont.

- Give children something engaging and *constructive* to do during *transitions* or when they must wait. For example, sing songs, draw a picture, play with a puzzle, or tell a story.
- Model techniques to help children learn to relax, stay calm and manage their anger and fears, such as breathing deeply, finding a comfortable spot to listen to music, and using words to express themselves.
- Understand that some children have a greater need for movement than others and make sure to provide opportunities for movement throughout the day. Allow children to move freely from one *interest area*/center to another. Consider allowing a child to stand, sit, or lay down in a comfortable position while you read a story to the group.
- *Reinforce* appropriate behaviors by providing positive feedback and linking to your shared expectations/rules (“Thank you for walking in the room and staying safe.”).
- Explain reasons for limits and provide alternatives (“We use gentle touch, so we do not hurt our friends. When you are mad, you can use words to talk to your friend about it or come to an adult for help.”).
- Use reminders and *logical consequences*. If a child throws sand let her know that if it happens again, she will need to leave the sand table and choose another activity. Then
- assure her that she will have other opportunities to return to
  - the sand table to “practice” good choices again.
- Encourage children to express their needs with words. *Model* appropriate language, such as, “May I please have that toy?”
- Involve children in creating a small number of shared expectations/rules/guidelines for the group.
- Consider teaching children a social *problem-solving* process: identifying the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, choosing a solution, trying it out, evaluating their success, and trying something else if not successful.
- Redirect children’s inappropriate behavior by offering choices (“It’s not okay to push our friend away from the playdough table, but you can play with the blocks or in the art area.”).
- Establish a transition routine (singing or playing a special song that provides cues to let everyone know they need to clean up or come to circle by the time the song ends).
- Encourage and acknowledge children when they use good manners, such as holding the door for a friend and saying “please” “thank you” and “excuse me.” Model an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude. Thank children for being kind and include them in writing thank-you notes to others.
- To promote self-regulation play games such as *Simon Says*. Sing *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*, and ask children to touch their heads when they say “toes” and toes when they say “head.” This promotes their brain’s ability to stop, think, and vary their responses.
- Use music, literature, puppets, and role-playing to help children recognize feelings of others.
- Encourage children to express different emotions in their pretend play. Model empathy and help children develop empathy toward others. Talk with them about how their actions impact others. Encourage them to notice and ask others how they are feeling.