



## Tip Sheets

### How to Prevent Disenrollment in Child Care

Early care and education professionals are responsible for providing consistent quality care to young children. Children look to adults to help them navigate through the uncertainties of life, by providing them with nurturing care and support.



However, there are times our tools as caregivers are taxed working with a young child who pushes all our buttons. It may be a child who behaves

aggressively with peers or is defiant with adults. This tipsheet is designed to give you strategies to prevent disenrollment of a child with challenging behaviors.

#### **The Impact of Disenrollment on Children**

Children who are disenrolled from early care and education settings...

- are much more likely to be ill-prepared for kindergarten
- are likely to be among those most at risk for school failure
- may develop low self-esteem
- may become labeled as “bad”, “naughty”, etc.
- are more likely to experience peer rejection
- experience multiple losses (friends/peers, caregiver, etc.)
- lack the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging
- learn that their worth is based on what they do rather than who they are

#### **Proactive Steps to Prevent Expulsion**

##### **1. Provide clear expectations and behavior guidelines in your parent handbook**

- Develop a clear plan for steps that will be taken when extreme challenges occur.
- Provide these guidelines to all parents upon enrollment.
- Make it a policy to refrain from disenrolling children and spell out the ways you as a provider will seek support. Also make it clear how you expect parents to seek assistance and answers through Early Childhood Screening or a Mental Health Referral.

##### **2. Connect with local supports that provide you with tools**

- Find other providers in your area to meet with regularly or to connect with on the phone. Build a positive support network in your area.
- Enroll in training, especially those that focus on guidance strategies, mental health, social-emotional development.
- Know the contact information of school districts and local hospitals and assessment/evaluation providers in the community.

##### **3. Observe and Document**

- As soon as a child is enrolled begin to make notes about the day to day behaviors you observe.
- Keep a running record of things the child engages in when calm, peers the child has positive interactions with, and information the parent shares about the child’s sleep and routine at home.

#### 4. Stay connected with parents

- If you have concerns about a child's development or about a pattern of challenging behavior it is critical to talk with parents daily.
- Build a relationship of trust by listening to their concerns and by providing tips for home, primarily to help them get through the tough times and assure them that they are not alone. Building a relationship of trust with the child and the parent is critical when working with children who exhibit challenges.

#### 5. Develop a plan with staff and parents for interventions

- When there are recurring challenges it is vital to develop a written plan. This plan creates consistency and follow through while bridging home and child care.
- Meet with all of the caregivers in a child's life and discuss responses to behavior. This will allow for greater success when trying to change the pattern of the behavior.

#### Final Thoughts

You may implement the strategies above and still find that a child continues to exhibit challenging behaviors in your setting. Weeks pass and you are still concerned about what is occurring with the child. You have exhausted all of the tools that you have while staying in close contact with the parents. You know confidently that you have provided consistent intervention and sought outside support. At this point it may be time to talk with parents about an alternative placement. This option should be thought of as a last resort and only if it puts the child's best interest at the center of the decision. Compassionately discussing options with a family will help them be better informed about what type of setting may be better suited the child and his/her needs.

It could be helpful, with written parental permission, for you to talk with the next provider about what **has** worked in order to help them begin to build a foundation for success for the child. When the child moves to a new setting with different children, routine, physical space and provider style, challenging behaviors may diminish. The ideal situation is one that creates an environment of support and understanding with both provider and parents focusing on a common goal--the healthy development of the child.

Additional Resources for Challenging Behaviors:

<http://www.inclusivechildcare.org/SelfStudy/infomod/beam.htm> Bridging Education and Mental Health Info Module  
<http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/> Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children  
<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/publications/tipsheets/default.html> Preschool Tip Sheets

**For more information on children and challenging behavior, visit [www.inclusivechildcare.org](http://www.inclusivechildcare.org).**

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