

Talking with Families about Challenging Behaviors: Do's and Don'ts



Do individualize your approach when communicating with families.

Do share the strengths of the child with the family.

Do explain to the family that you want to work with them to help their child develop appropriate behavior and social skills.

Do let the family know you are feeling concerned and want to do all you can to help their child feel safe, happy, and successful in your setting.

Do tell the family about what has been observed in the classroom and has led to the conversation.

Do ask the family if they have experienced similar situations and are concerned.

Do offer to work with the family in the development of a behavior support plan that can be used at home **AND** in the classroom.

Do emphasize that your focus will be to help the child develop the skills needed to be successful in the classroom **AND** at home. There is a need for teaching and supporting.

Do stress that if you can work together, you are more likely to be successful in helping the child learn new skills. You value their contribution because they know their child best and can give clear ideas about what works for their child.



Do not assume all families communicate the same way.

Do not initiate the conversation by listing the child's challenging behavior.

Do not begin the discussion by indicating that the child's behavior is not tolerable.

Do not indicate that the child must be punished or "dealt with" by the family.

Do not ask the family if something has happened at home to cause the behavior.

Do not indicate that the parent should take action to resolve the problem at home.

Do not develop a plan without inviting family participation.

Do not let the parent believe that the child needs more discipline.

Do not minimize the importance of positive behavior support and helping the family understand the value of working together on the child's skill development.

