

## Objective 1 Regulates own emotions and behaviors

### Strategies

- Stay nearby when babies are lying or sitting close to each other. Gently separate them if they touch each other too roughly, showing them how to be gentle.
- Use clear, simple language to communicate which behaviors are acceptable, e.g., say, "Pat Tamika's arm gently."
- Establish and practice consistent routines.
- Only put acceptable play materials within reach. This will limit the number of times you have to say *no*.
- Acknowledge when children show self-discipline, e.g., say, "You wanted to grab Tommy's car, but you waited until he was finished playing with it."
- Use simple, clear language and facial expressions to communicate acceptable behaviors.
- Create clear boundaries to help children learn to control themselves. Use visual aids, such as carpet squares or floor tape, to mark boundaries with preschool children.
- State rules positively rather than negatively. Tell children what behavior is expected, e.g., say, "Walk when you are inside," instead of saying, "Don't run."
- Give children alternative ways to express their anger, e.g., tell the child, "If you feel angry, tell us. Say, 'I'm angry!' That way we can help you."
- Set clear, reasonable, age-appropriate expectations that children can understand. When children do not behave in acceptable ways, assess whether the adult expectation is appropriate in the given situation. Respond by consistently structuring consequences that are related to the behavior, e.g., have the child help clean up dumped paint instead of using time-out.
- Model taking deep breaths, counting to five, or doing relaxation exercises when situations are stressful. With toddlers, talk about how you are taking deep breaths to help you relax. With older children, engage them in doing relaxation exercises with you.
- Explain the reasons for rules, and help children understand why particular behaviors are not acceptable, e.g., "Be kind to others. Hitting hurts people's bodies." Or, "Only three children may play at the sand table. When there are too many children, some can't reach the toys."
- Use gestures and other visual cues while telling children the rule or limit.
- Respond positively and firmly when a child's behavior is challenging. To help a child change his or her behavior, observe systematically, talk with others who know the child, develop a plan of action, and implement and evaluate the plan.
- Provide opportunities for children age 2 and older to help create the rules for their classroom.
- Ask families about the self-care activities in which the child participates at home.
- Describe what you are doing during caregiving routines, so children can learn the sequence of actions to care for themselves.
- Serve food that children can feed to themselves. Be prepared for messes.
- Use picture cues so non-verbal children or children with certain disabilities can communicate their needs through photos such as, "Hello," "I'm thirsty," or "I'm sleepy." Children point to the pictures until they learn the words in English or until they can do the activities for themselves.
- Talk with children about their feelings during routine activities. For example, you might say, "I know you're unhappy having your diaper changed now, but soon I'll be done and you can play. Here's a ball to hold."
- Provide opportunities for preschool and older children to engage in extended make-believe play in which they can act out strong emotions.
- Provide picture and word cues to assist toddlers and older children as they participate in self-care tasks, e.g., use a recipe for making a snack or post cue cards with the steps of feeding the class pet.

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### Strategies, *continued*

- Model using self-talk with older children to help them verbalize their thoughts and guide their own behavior. For example, tell them "Say to yourself, 'Stop. Calm down. I'm getting mad, but I don't need to hit anyone'."
- Discuss photos of people showing various emotions. Encourage older preschool and kindergarten children to create stories about the source of the person's feelings. Guide them to come up with appropriate ways the person might respond to the situation.
- Provide child-sized cleaning materials such as sponges, mops, brooms, and dust pans so children can assist with meaningful classroom cleaning.
- Include clothing of various sizes so children can practice dressing themselves. Slightly larger-sized clothes and those with large fasteners are easier for young children and children with certain disabilities to manipulate.
- Display posters made by kindergarten children that depict things they do to take responsibility for their own well-being. Posters might focus on healthy eating habits, exercise, or personal hygiene. Create individual calendars and have each child record their healthy behaviors during the week. Review at the end of the week and determine which habits need more attention.
- Allow plenty of time to let children take responsibility for self-care routines.
- Provide a variety of self-care materials for children to explore, e.g., dolls to dress and undress, shoes to lace and tie, dress-up clothes with fasteners of varying difficulty.
- Provide only as much help as necessary for children to accomplish tasks, e.g., put socks on the child's toes and then encourage him or her to pull them up the rest of the way.
- When appropriate, encourage families to involve their children in simple household tasks, as appropriate, e.g., hanging clothes, pouring beverages, and setting the table.