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| IRIS Center logo. | **Outline** |
| **Early Childhood Behavior Management**:  Developing and Teaching Rules | |

Module Home

* Module Description: This module, a DEC-recommended resource, includes information on how to create developmentally appropriate behavior rules for early childhood classrooms so that they link to a given school's behavior expectations. The importance of communication with families about rules and expected behaviors is also stressed (est. completion time: 2 hours).

Challenge

* Video: Mrs. Rodriguez loves teaching preschool at Morningside Elementary School and takes great pride in her classroom.

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| NOTES |  |

Initial Thoughts

* Do you think Mrs. Rodriguez’s current behavior management system is working? Explain.
* How can teachers help young children learn expected behaviors?
* How can teachers encourage and reinforce expected behaviors?

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Perspectives & Resources

* Module Objectives
* Describe the importance of establishing classroom rules for young children that align with the behavior expectations of the school
* Understand the guidelines for effectively developing and displaying rules for early childhood environments
* Identify different strategies for teaching and reinforcing rules for young children
* Describe the importance of communicating with families about rules and expected behaviors

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* Page 1: Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children
* Early childhood teachers identify children’s challenging behavior as one of the most difficult aspects of their jobs.
* Audio: Listen as Mary Louise Hemmeter talks about what teachers can do to prevent challenging behaviors in young children.
* Research Shows

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* Page 2: Understanding Behavior Expectations and Rules
* For most young children—that is, those ages three to five—school is a complex and novel setting.
* Behavior Expectations
  + Sample Behavior Expectations
* Rules
  + Behavior Expectation/Classroom Rules/Playground Rules/Hallway Rules [table]
  + Audio: Amanda Peirick discusses the difference between behavior expectations and classroom rules.
  + Audio: Mary Louise Hemmeter discusses the difference between behavior expectations and classroom rules, then explains how establishing behavior expectations and rules can help prevent problem behaviors before they happen.
  + For Your Information
  + Revisit Mrs. Rodriquez’s Classroom

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* Page 3: Developing and Displaying Rules
* Once a teacher has identified the school’s behavior expectations, she can begin to develop rules for her classroom and other school settings (e.g., playground, cafeteria, bathroom).
* Developing Rules
  + Be positively stated
  + Be few in number
  + Be simple and specific
    - Link: developmentally appropriate [definition]
  + Be measurable and observable
    - Below are several strategies for involving children in developing and introducing the rules, ranging from the most to least amount of active involvement. [bullet points]
    - For Your Information
    - Link: General Classroom Rules [drop-down menu]
    - Link: Story Time/Library [drop-down menu]
    - Link: Music and Movement [drop-down menu]
    - Link: Outside Playground [drop-down menu]
    - Link: Art Center [drop-down menu]
    - Activity
      * Links: Yes/No [drop-down menu]
      * Links: Click here to see how we rewrote the rule and then compare your answer [drop-down menu]
  + Displaying Rules
    - Be posted at children’s eye level
    - Include a visual to illustrate each rule
      * Link: View for examples of visual supports based on the needs and abilities of children. [drop-down menu]
    - Did You Know?
    - Audio: Listen as Amanda Peirick discusses developing and displaying classroom rules.
    - Revisit Mrs. Rodriguez’s Classroom

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| NOTES |  |

* Page 4: Teaching Classroom Rules
* Developing and displaying rules is an important first step for helping children understand what is expected of them in the classroom.
* Link: intentionally and systematically teach [definition]
* Clearly Defining the Rules
* Involving Children
  + Link: Click here for an example of a classroom rules book. [drop-down menu]
* Reviewing and Checking Often
  + Link: scripted stories [definition]
  + Link: Click this link for an example of a scripted story for Bennett, who has trouble following directions. [drop-down menu]
  + Audio: In the first video below, the teacher involves children in reviewing the rules and in demonstrating examples and non-examples.
  + Audio: In the second, the teacher uses a large-group activity to evaluate children’s understanding of the rules.
* Providing Individualized Support
  + In addition to the more-universal strategies for teaching rules (described above), teachers might need to provide some children with more individualized instruction and support, such as… [bullet points]
    - Link: Click for an example of additional visuals created for a child who has difficulty using gentle touches. [drop-down menu]
  + For Your Information
  + Audio: Amanda Peirick offers more information on systematically teaching rules.
  + Audio: Amanda Peirick offers more information on visual supports.
  + Audio: Mary Louise Hemmeter offers more information on systematically teaching rules.
  + Audio: Mary Louise Hemmeter offers more information on scripted stories.
  + Revisit Mrs. Rodriguez’s Classroom
    - Link: think-pair-share [definition]

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* Page 5: Providing Rule Reminders
* Children must be able to apply the rules in the context of the classroom activities and routines.
* Connect children’s behavior to the rules
  + Provide precorrections
    - Link: Click for examples of precorrections for both a group of children and for an individual child. [drop-down menu]
  + Reference the rules

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* Page 6: Providing Positive Feedback
* In addition to reminders, teachers should provide positive feedback—verbal or non-verbal (e.g., smile, thumbs-up) affirmations—to children when they follow the rules.
* Feedback should be… [bullet points]
* Examples
* Non-examples
* Did You Know?
* Research Shows
* Teachers can acknowledge individual or group progress and success in following classroom rules by… [bullet points]
* Revisit Mrs. Rodriguez’s Classroom
* For Your Information
  + Link: self-management strategy [definition]

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* Page 7: Using Classroom Reinforcement Systems
* In addition to rule reminders and positive feedback, some teachers use a more structured approach to motivate and acknowledge children for following the rules.
* For Your Information
  + Link: Click to view several reasons why this is not appropriate in early childhood classrooms. [drop-down menu]
* Tips for Teachers
  + These include… [bullet points]
  + Audio: Mary Louise Hemmeter discusses classroom reward systems.
  + For Your Information
    - Link: Positive Behavioral Interventions and supports (PBIS) [definition]
    - Link: National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations [website]
    - Audio: Mary Louise Hemmeter describes the Pyramid Model.
  + Revisit Mrs. Rodriguez’s Classroom
  + For Your Information
    - Link: Recommended Practices: Addressing Persistent Challenging Behaviors [PDF]

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* Page 8: Sharing Rules with Families
* Once teachers have established classroom rules, they should communicate those rules to the families.
* Link: Click here to view an example of such a letter [drop-down menu]
* By communicating and informing families of the rules, teachers can… [bullet points]
* Research Shows
* Audio: Mary Louise Hemmeter talks about the importance of communicating with families of young children about behavior expectations and classroom rules.
* For Your Information
* Revisit Mrs. Rodriguez’s Classroom

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| NOTES |  |

* Page 9: References & Additional Resources
* Suggested module citation
* References
* Additional Resources
* Page 10: Credits
* Content Experts
* Module Developers
* Content Expert Reviewers
* Media Production Team

Wrap Up

* Summary of the module
* Revisit your Initial Thoughts responses

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Assessment

* Take some time now to answer the following questions.

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