



# Managing Challenging Behavior by Creating Supportive Environments



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Rebecca McFarland  
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent  
K-State Research and Extension – Franklin County  
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# Objectives

After participating in this workshop, participants will be able to:

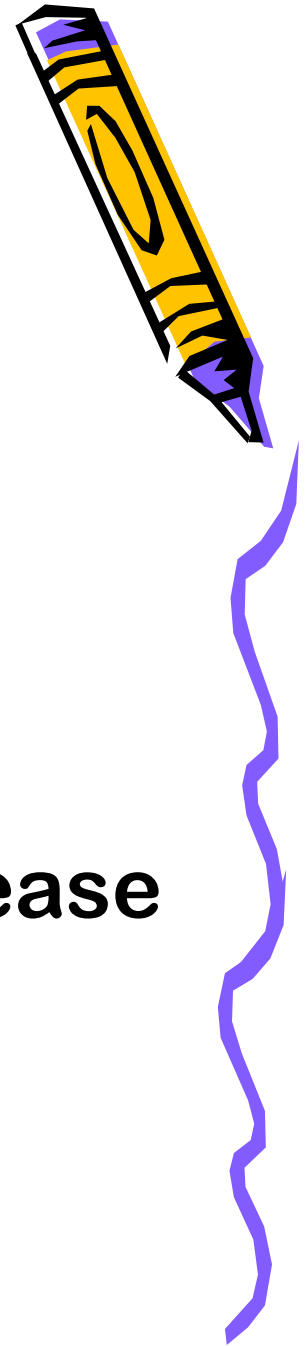
- describe the relationship between environmental variables, children's challenging behaviors and social emotional development.
- identify strategies that can be used to (1) design environments, schedules, and routines; (2) structure transitions; and (3) help children learn rules and routines.



**“An ounce of prevention  
is worth a pound of cure.”**

Benjamin Franklin

**The single best way to address  
challenging behavior in young  
children is to take steps to decrease  
the likelihood that it will occur.**



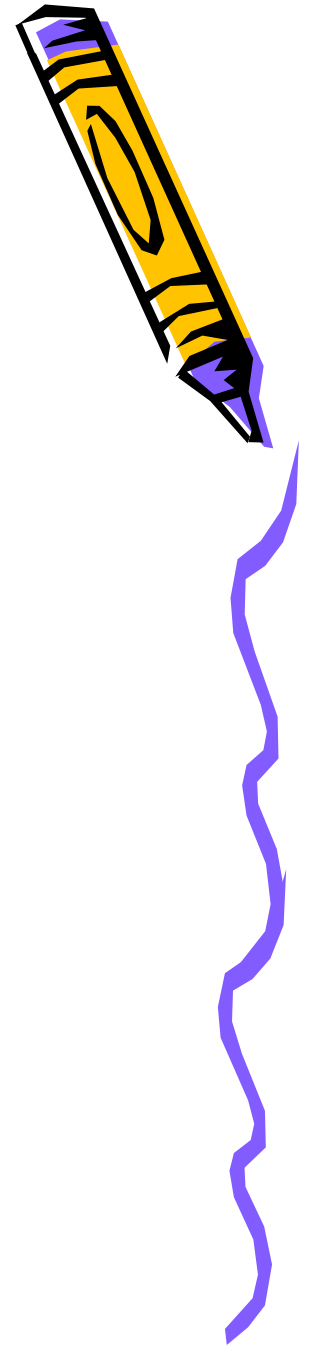
# Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behavior

1. Well-designed physical environments
2. Scheduling
3. Implementing rules, rituals and routines



# Well-Designed Physical Environments

1. Promote engagement.
2. Reduce the likelihood that challenging behavior will occur.



# Well-Designed Physical Environments: Traffic Patterns

1. Minimize large open spaces in which children can run.
2. Minimize obstacles and other hazards.
3. Consider the needs of children with physical or sensory disabilities or delays.

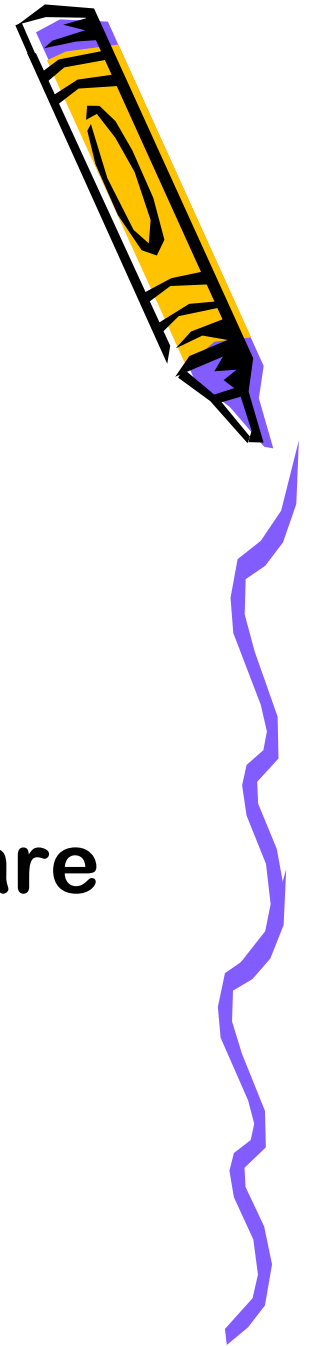






# Well-Designed Physical Environments: Learning Centers

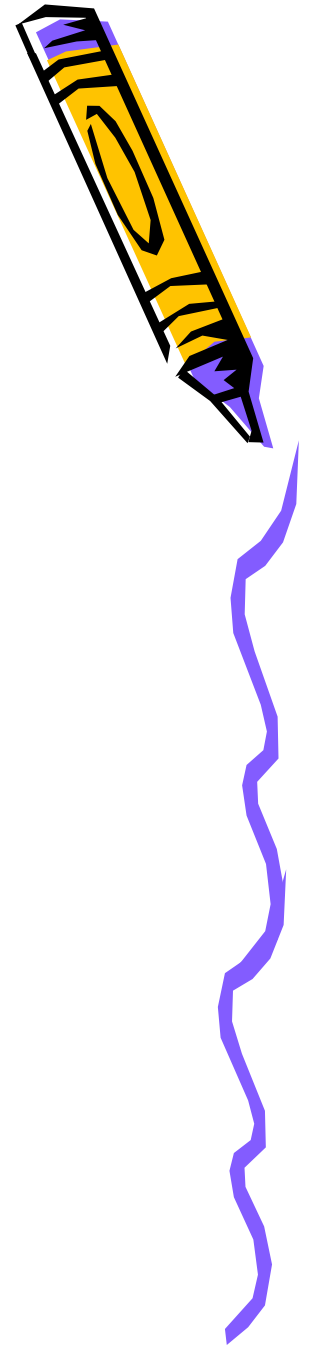
- Clear boundaries
- Visibility
- Visual prompts when centers are not an option
- Adequate number of centers





# Well-Designed Physical Environments: Learning Centers

- Size and location of centers
- Number of children in centers
- Organization of materials
- Preparation of centers



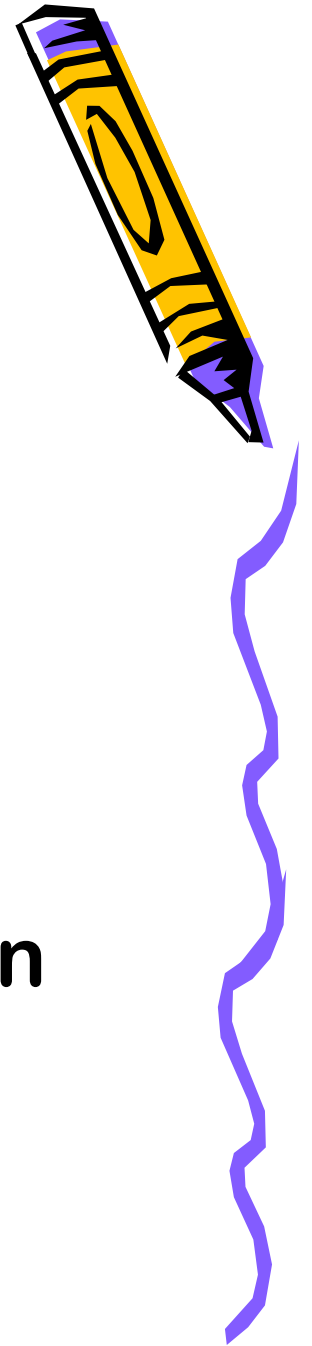
# Creating Meaningful and Engaging Learning Centers

- **Materials need to be meaningful and relevant to children's needs, interests, and lives.**
- **Centers need to be highly engaging and interesting – children's interest.**



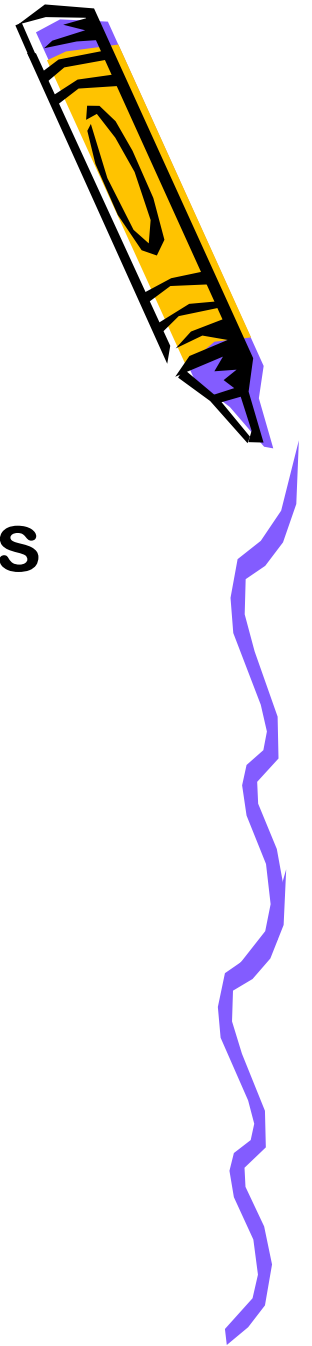
# Creating Meaningful and Engaging Learning Centers

- Provide a variety of materials in each center.
- Change the materials or themes in centers on a regular basis.



# Schedules, Routines and Transitions

- **Develop a schedule that promotes child engagement and success.**
  - **Balance activities:**
    - Active and quiet
    - Small group and large group
    - Teacher-directed and child-directed



# Schedules, Routines and Transitions

- Teach children the routine:
  - can't expect them to follow if we don't teach them.
  - provide some security.
  - especially important for children whose primary language differs.



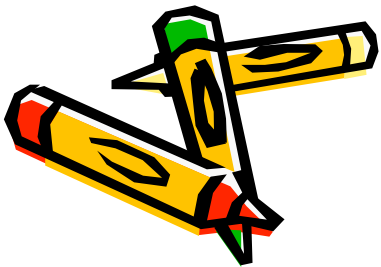
# Teaching Routines and Schedules

- During circle time using visual cues.
- Reinforce throughout the day.
- Provide individual instruction to children who need more assistance.
- Be consistent.
- Post it visually.



# Teaching Routines and Schedules

- When changes are necessary, prepare children for those changes:
  - announcements at circle time.
  - visual prompts on a posted scheduling.
  - reminding children often.











Greeting on  
Playground



Playground



Story



Small C

wash hands



dry hands



throw away





Mark

turn .

1.

Adam

computer



2.

Billy

3.

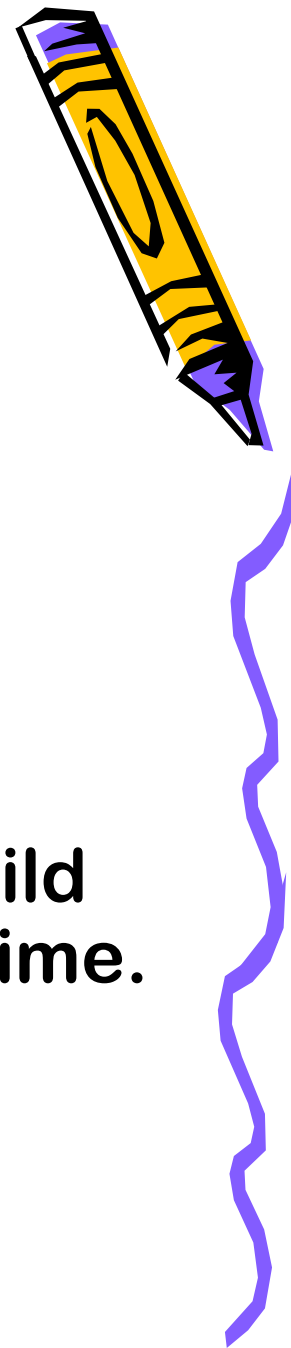
Jane

4.

All done

# Transitions

- Minimize the number of transitions.
- Minimal amount of time in transition.
- Give a warning.
- Minimize transitions in which every child has to do the same thing at the same time.
- Teach children expectations.



# Transitions

- Individualize the instruction and cues:
  - Important to provide visual cues and reminders for young children, particularly...
    - Children with special needs.
    - Children for whom English is second language.



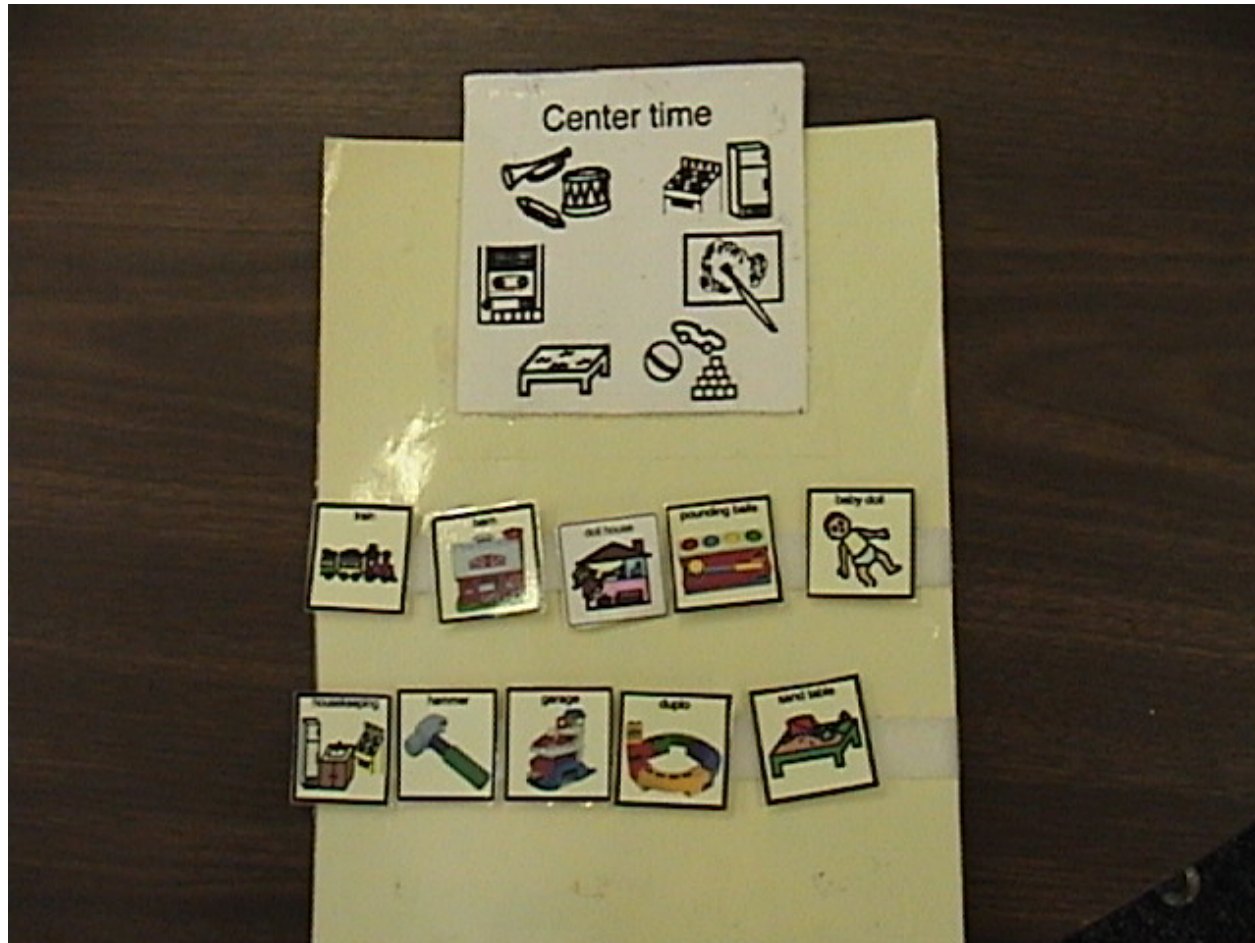


# Transition with Visual and Timer





# Transition with Visual Choice

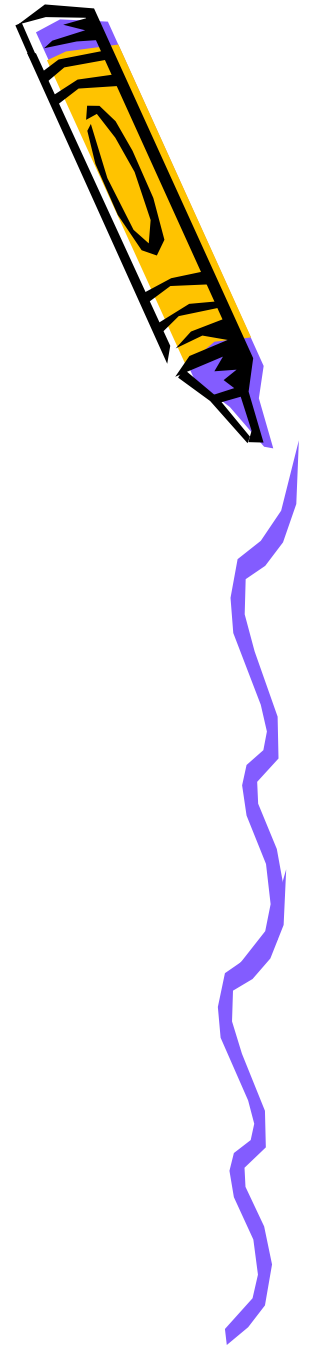


# Transition with Center Necklaces



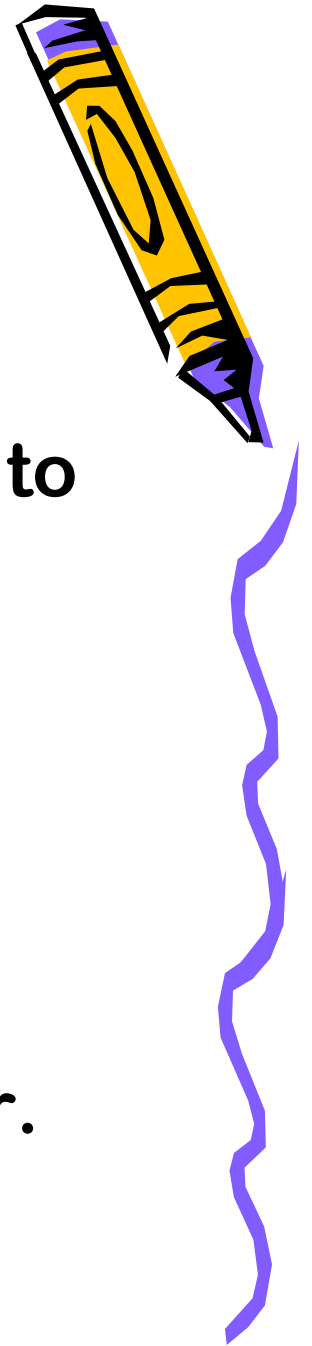
# Promote Engagement: Large Group Activities

- Consider the length.
- Have a purpose and be clear.
- Vary activities from day to day.
- Teach new concepts.



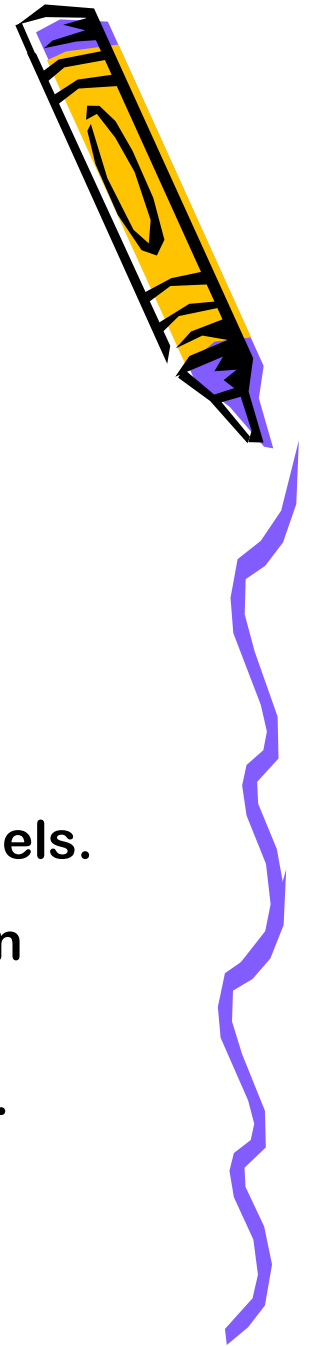
# Large Group Activities: Implementing the Activity

- Provide opportunities for all children to be actively involved.
- Assign jobs.
- Vary your speech and intonation.
- Have children help lead activities.
- Pay attention to appropriate behavior.



# Small Group Activities

- Small group activities offer:
  - Individualized attention.
  - Skill building.
- Planning and implementing:
  - Be clear about purpose or goal.
  - Use peers as models.
  - Ensure all children participate.
  - Provide feedback.



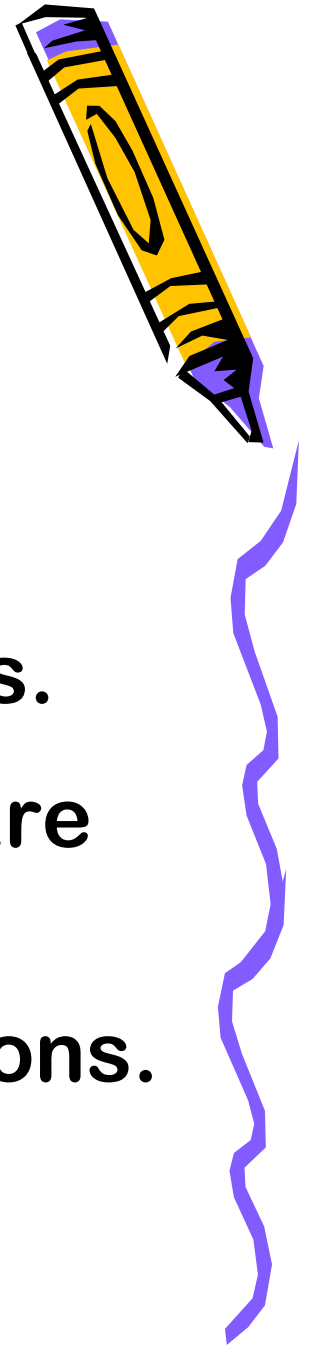
# Schedule/Routine/ Transition Activity

- Divide into groups(3-4) of people who currently work together.
- Write down a schedule from one of the participant' s classroom.
- Consider the things we have just talked about. What changes could you make in what you are currently doing that might increase engagement and prevent challenging behavior?
- Share your major changes with others at your table and brainstorm possible solutions.



# Giving Directions

- Make sure you have the child's attention.
- Minimize the number of directions.
- Individualize the way directions are given.
- Give clear direct, specific directions.





# Giving Directions

- Give directions that are positive.
- Give children the opportunity to respond to the direction.
- When appropriate, give the child choices and options for following directions.
- Follow through with positive acknowledgement of children's behavior.



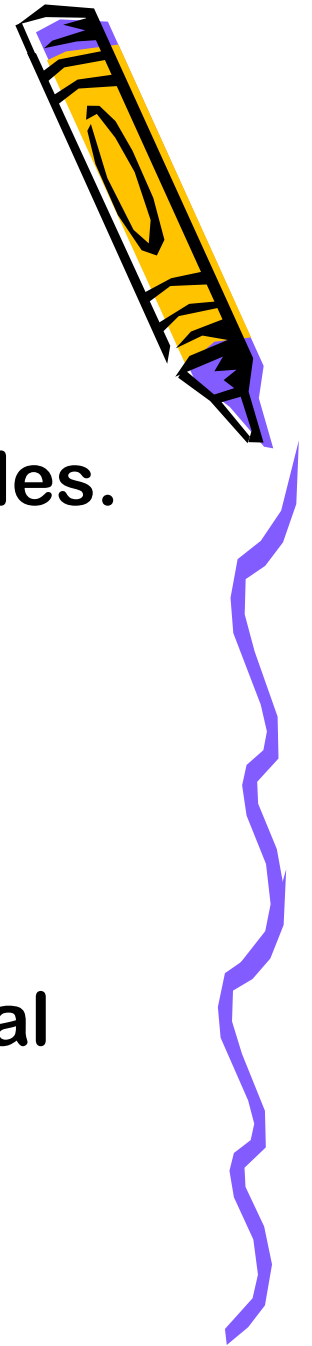
# General Guidelines about Rules

- Have a few simple classroom rules.
- Involve the children in developing the rules.
- Post the rules visually.
- Teach the rules.
- Reinforce the rules.



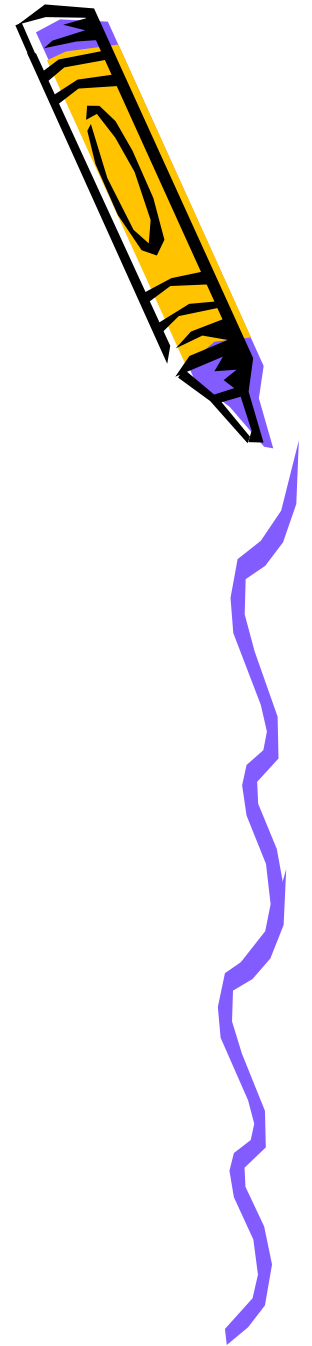
# Involving Children in Developing the Rules

- Allow children to help generate the rules.
- Name the rule and have a child demonstrate it.
- Name the rule and have the children identify visual.
- Engage children in preparing the visual prompts, such as posters or cards.



# Rules

- **Should address**
  - **My voice and my body.**
  - **Sound level?**
  - **Movement inside?**
  - **Interactions with materials?**
  - **Interactions with adults.**
  - **Interactions with peers.**



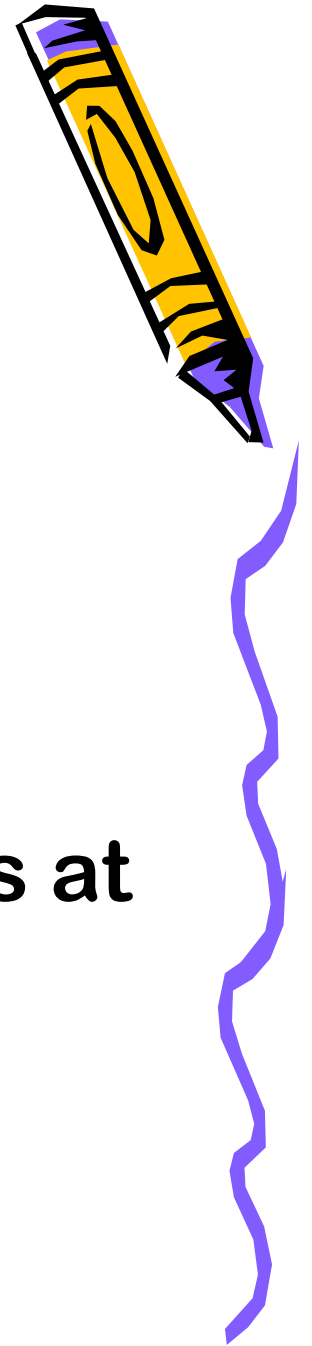
# Rules Activity

- Develop at least 3-5 rules you use or would use in a classroom.
- Discuss these rules with others at the table.
- Brainstorm fun and creative ways for teaching the rules.



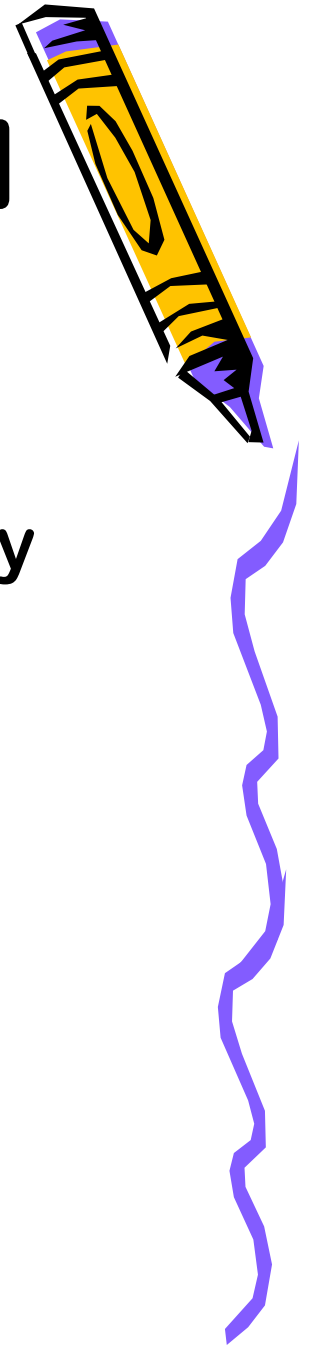
# Fun Ways to Reinforce Rules

- Rules Bingo
- Big Book of School Rules
- Home Rules – what are your rules at home?
- Play Rules Charades



# Ongoing Monitoring and Positive Attention

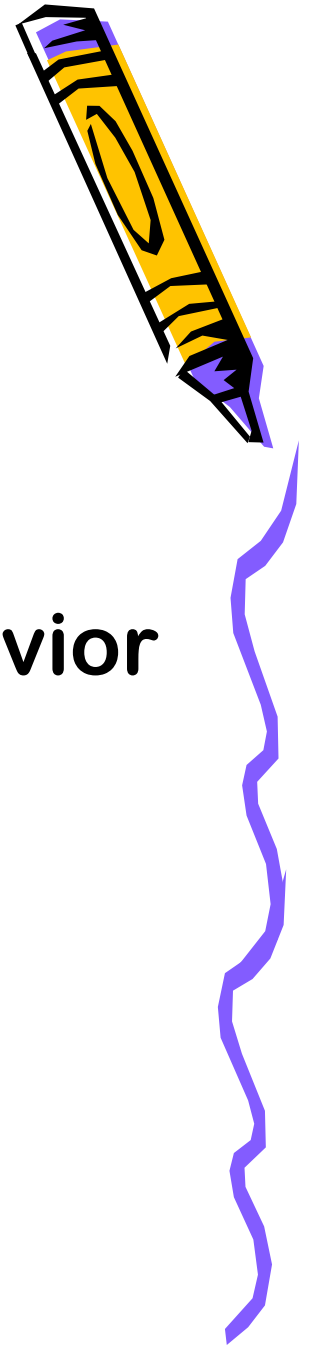
- Specifically acknowledge (or state) children's positive behavior when they are engaging in appropriate behavior.
- Monitor own behavior:
  - more time using positive descriptive language.
  - less time giving directions or correcting inappropriate behavior.





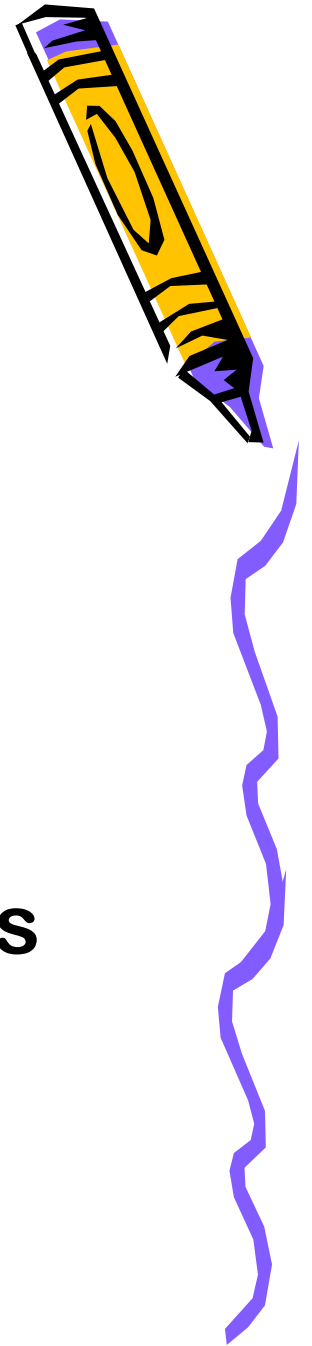
# Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement

- Contingent on appropriate behavior
- Descriptive
- Conveyed with enthusiasm
- Contingent on effort



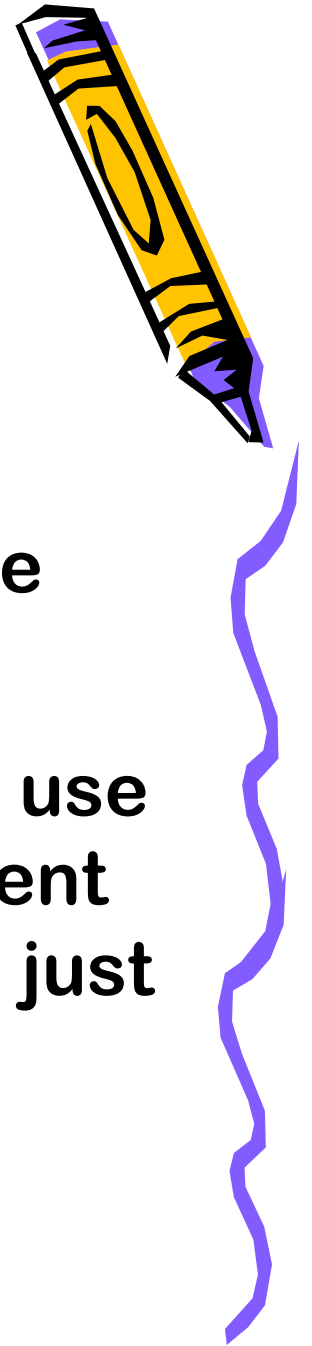
# Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement

- Use nonverbal forms of positive feedback and encouragement.
- Individualize use of positive feedback and encouragement.
- Encourage other adults and peers to use positive feedback and encouragement .



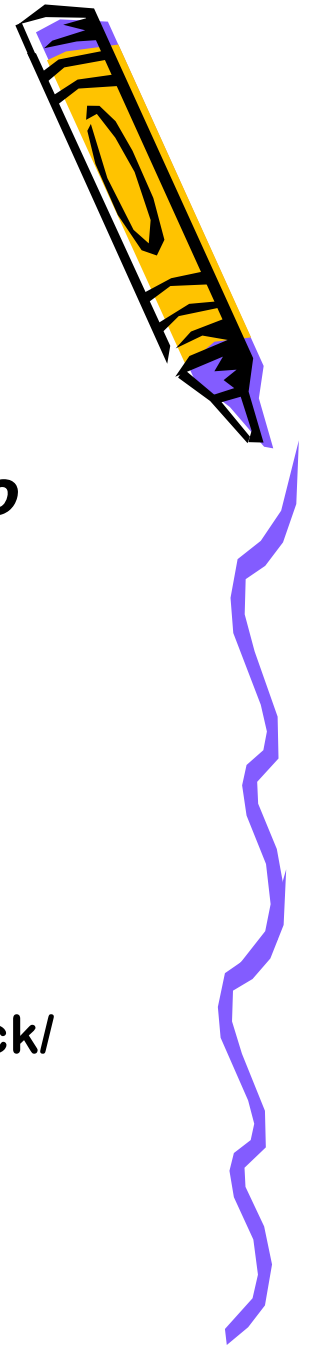
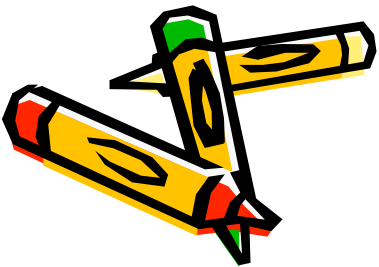
# Increasing Positive Behaviors Activity

- List 3-5 behaviors you would like to see increase in your setting.
- What changes might you make in your use of positive feedback and encouragement in order to increase the behaviors you just identified.



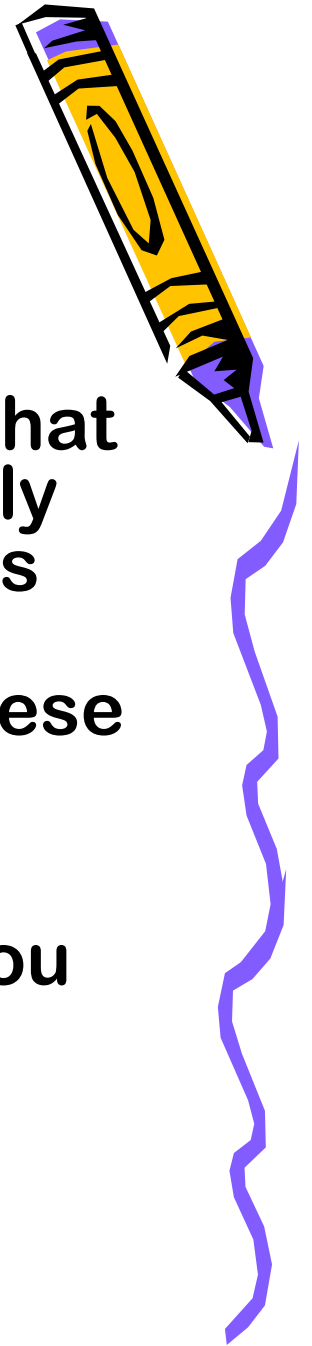
# Summary

- The single best way to address challenging behavior in young children is to ***take steps to decrease the likelihood that it will occur.***
- Focus on the strategies we discussed:
  - Look closely at the physical environment;
  - Consider the schedules/routines/transitions/rules within your setting; and
  - The use (forms and frequency) of positive feedback/encouragement.



# Action Planning

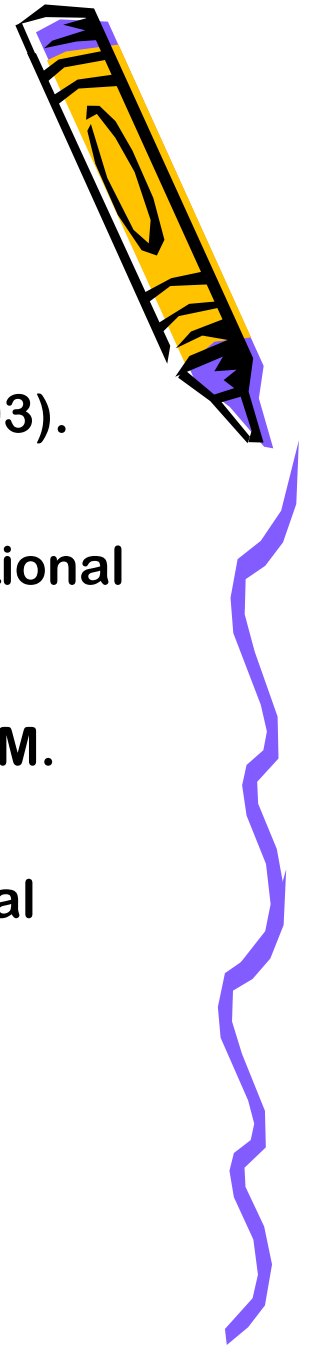
- Finish filling in the grid with ideas of what changes you want to make in your early childhood setting as a result of today's session, as well as methods for evaluating your progress in making these changes.
- Consider the resources or supports you might need to make these changes.



# References

Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M. L., & Strain, P. S. (2003). The teaching pyramid, a model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children [Electronic version]. *Young Child*, National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Hemmeter, M.L., Joseph, G., Ostrosky, M., & Santos, R. M. (2006). *Promoting Children's Success: Building Supportive Relationships and Creating Supportive Environments*. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Web site:  
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/modules.html>





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