Parent Workshop: How to Handle Challenging Behaviors.

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts in Education,

Educational Psychology

By

Magali Gisele Williams

May 2014
The graduate project of Magali Gisele Williams is approved:

____________________________________   __________________
Sloane Lefkowitz Burt, M.A.               Date

____________________________________   __________________
Carrie Rothstein-Fisch, Ph.D.             Date

____________________________________   __________________
Joannie Busillo-Aguayo, Ed.D., Chair      Date
DEDICATION

The pages, the paragraphs, and the words in this thesis wouldn’t be seen here without the support and encouragement I received throughout the process of developing and implementing this thesis project and along my entire career as a graduate student. My heart–felt appreciation and love for the people listed below cannot be measured. They have gotten me where I am today, and all this would have not been possible without their support, encouragement, and motivation.

First, to my husband, Kevin, I am so thankful for everything you have done for me during this process. First, for taking the load off my finances by paying my way through Graduate school and paying my B.A. loans. You have been my source of mental, physical, and financial support throughout this entire process. Thank you for pushing me to finish when I was feeling defeated. Thank you for giving me time alone so I could write, as well as the occasional glass, or two, of wine when I was stressed out and needed to relax and escape from the “thesis writing world.” You are my rock, the reason why I am where I am today, and I could not thank you enough.

Second, to my parents: Mom, this is emotional for me so I will keep it short. You have taught me to never let anyone tell me that I CAN’T accomplish something. Thank you for believing in me when others doubted me, even when I doubted myself. Thank you for taking the boys when I need time alone to either write, or have a night away. You have always selflessly given to me time and time again, whatever I needed, even when I didn’t know I needed it myself. Dad, I thank you for being there for me, for bragging to your friends on all that I have accomplished, and for being proud of me. Thank you for helping me with the boys, providing them with toys, helping with tuition, or just being
there for them and for me. Dennis, thank you for always being the first one to congratulate me when I thrived; you were my inspiration to surpass in my academic endeavors, personal life, and professional life. Every time I did well on a paper I looked forward in sharing it with you. I would also like to thank you for taking the boys in when I needed to work on my thesis or other school work, for believing in me and encouraging me to reach for the stars and not just the sky. My sisters, again getting emotional so will keep it short. Thank you girls (all 3 of you) for always believing in me and telling me and the world how proud you are of my accomplishments, you have been the reason why I insisted in graduating with honors. I knew you were watching me and that if I could do it as a single mother, and later on a mother of two boys, then you could do it too! To my Buitos, me emociono cuando pienso el sacrificio que ustedes hicieron cada semana. Levantarse a la madrugada para venir a cuidar al bebe para que yo pudiera ir a trabajar en my tesis. Yo se que el sacrificio que hicieron, lo hicieron con amor, pero es un sacrificio que yo nunca me voy a olvidar. Gracias por estar siempre a mi lado, por creer en mi, y apoyarme en todo lo que hice y voy a hacer. Los quiero mucho, y el sacrificio que ustedes hicieron es algo que mis bisnietos van a escuchar de mis lavios!

Thirdly, to my dazzling professor and mentor, Joannie Busillo-Aguayo, my thesis would be a crumbled paper on the floor if it was not for you. I would not be where I am today, my thesis would not be what it is today without you. Your wisdom, guidance, and amazing knowledge in all aspects of life still amaze me every day. You have been an amazing role model for me as a professional, a scholar, a mother, and an educator in the field of child development. I truly enjoyed taking all your classes. I have never learned so much about early childhood development, their families, and best practices in my careers.
as a student, as much as I did with you. During our journey in completing my thesis I have learned a great deal from you as well. Thank you for being such an incredible role model for me as a professional, a scholar, and an early childhood educator. Your generosity, wiliness to help others even when you were not at your best and your shared wisdom has been greatly noted. Thank you for believing in me, for pushing me to thrive and for teaching me to create high expectations for myself and my thesis.

Last, but definitely not least, my two amazing, incredible, most adorable mama’s boys. I want you to know that you both are my inspiration for finishing school, to show you that the impossible is possible and that no one should ever tell you otherwise. Nathan, we have been through ups and downs on our journey as mother and son. You have taught me a great deal on how to be a great mother, because of you my thesis topic came to life. I want to thank you for making me a better mother and for teaching me that punishment is not the best way to parent, that instead gentle, but firm, expectations are essential and that I need to be aware of developmentally appropriate expectations. I love you, never forget that. Calvin, you are my little miracle and ray of sunshine and I thank you for being the cutest and easiest baby. You sure made it easy to get work done, well not all the time, but your charismatic silliness made me smile every time I wanted to cry instead.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am forever in debt for the outstanding formatting, excellent layout, grammatical excellence, and the depth of this thesis to Sloane Lefkowitz Burt. Without your long hours, crazy nights of editing, and support my thesis would not be complete. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the hard work you have put in to assure me that my thesis would be of pristine condition when I finished it. Thank you for putting up with my midnight questions, even when they were already asked! I admire your dedication to your students as well as your amazing little children at home. Thank you for teaching me to love what I do and do what I love.

I would not have been accepted into the master’s program without Carrie Rothstein-Fisch. There are not enough words in the dictionary to express how grateful I am to you. I owe you everything I am, and will be. Thank you for believing in me and for accepting me into the program, for fighting for me and with me during the process. Thank you for being there for me when I needed you the most, and for quickly replying to my emails when I knew you had another million to reply to.

Saving my number two for last, my partner in crime, the reason I survived graduate school, Ashlei Snead. I believe you are the person that kept me sane throughout this whole process. You are the one that I looked forward to seeing in class. Thank you for supporting me in every step of the way, for answering my questions, my late night text and emails. Most of all thank you for being a great friend. I have never, and will never, have a friend like you. You are my second pea in my pod, my number 2 partner 😊, two kids, two degrees, two years to finish, 2 teenage mommies, here is to many more 2’s!
TABLE OF CONTENTS

SIGNATURE PAGE ................................................................. ii

DEDICATION ............................................................................ iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................... vi

ABSTRACT ............................................................................. x

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction .................................................. 1
  Statement of the Problem ..................................................... 3
  Purpose of the Study ............................................................ 4
  Significance of the Study ...................................................... 5
  Terminology ........................................................................ 7

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review ......................................... 10
  Introduction ......................................................................... 10
  Social-Emotional Development: A Pathway to Social Competence .... 11
  Methodology ....................................................................... 112
  Findings ............................................................................. 145
  Mother-Child Interactions as Indicators of Social-Emotional Development .... 167
  Methodology ....................................................................... 178
  Findings ............................................................................. 189
  Parent Training Programs Effectiveness ..................................... 20
  Methodology ....................................................................... 201
  Findings ............................................................................. 223
  Prevention before Intervention .............................................. 245
  Context and Hypothesis ....................................................... 25
Methodology ........................................................................................................... 28
Findings ..................................................................................................................... 30
Adult Learning Theory ............................................................................................. 301
Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning ................. 334
Infant Toddler Modules ............................................................................................ 345
Preschool Modules .................................................................................................. 345
Infant/Toddler Parent Modules .............................................................................. 356
Pre-k Parent Modules: Thesis Element ................................................................... 367

CHAPTER THREE: Development of Project ......................................................... 40
Purpose of the Sessions ............................................................................................ 40
Creation of the Sessions .......................................................................................... 41
Evaluation of the Sessions ....................................................................................... 434
Intended Audience .................................................................................................... 434
Personal Qualifications ............................................................................................ 445
Researcher’s Qualifications ..................................................................................... 445
Evaluator’s Qualifications ......................................................................................... 456
Project Outline .......................................................................................................... 478

CHAPTER FOUR: Conclusion .................................................................................... 50
Summary .................................................................................................................... 50
Results of Evaluations ............................................................................................. 50
Demographic Information ......................................................................................... 51
Evaluation of Workshop Topics .............................................................................. 52
Evaluator’s Recommendations ............................................................................... 61
ABSTRACT

Parent Workshop: How to Handle Challenging Behaviors.

By

Magali Gisele Williams

Master of Arts in Education,

Educational Psychology

Young children acquire their social-emotional skills through observation, play, and most of all through interactions with adults (Denham, Renwick & Holt 1991). The Center for the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) has created training sessions for teachers, educators, and parents of young children. Each training session touches on social-emotional foundations according to developmentally appropriate expectations. This thesis project adapts existing materials from CSEFEL to create a unique series of brief, topic focused workshops for parents to promote the social-emotional development of their young children, as well as how to handle challenging behaviors when they arise. Both parents and professionals were asked to evaluate the materials that were developed for the workshop and findings will be used to improve the materials prior to implementation of the workshop sessions.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

"Children love and want to be loved and they very much prefer the joy of accomplishment to the triumph of hateful failure. Do not mistake a child for his symptom."

(Erikson, “Child and Society,” 1950)

The relationship between healthy emotional and social development in young children is recognized as forming the foundation for all future growth and development (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991). For example, children who have acquired the foundations of emotional skills, such as self-regulation, motivation, empathy, emotion regulation, as well as positive representation of self, are more likely to develop the type of social skills necessary for developing positive peer interactions (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991). However, children who have not developed the foundations of emotional skills may lack the ability to manage their feelings and impulses, leading to challenging behaviors such as aggression, tantrums, noncompliance, and poor social and peer relationships (Merrell, 1996).

Long before children ever reach school age they are building emotional and social competencies associated with success in school and with family and friends within their home environments (Diener & Mangelsdorf, 1999). So, how do children acquire the crucial emotional skills necessary to develop positive peer interactions? A rich body of literature (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008) points to the role of parents as their child’s first teacher, and thus they play a central role in their child's emotional and social development (Conner & Fraser, 2011). Children whose primary caregivers provide warm,
responsive, attuned caregiving are more likely to have healthy emotional development and positive social interactions with family, teachers, and peers (Denham, et al., 1991).

Parents often are not aware of the powerful role they play in their children’s emotional and social development, and may believe that it is something that develops on its own with minimal parent involvement. Yet, research shows that parents play a crucial, pivotal role in children’s emotional and social development (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 200). As such, it is imperative that they have the knowledge and tools needed to engage in supportive parenting practices.

Erik Erikson introduced the world to psychosocial developmental stages; he believed that every person had to go through a series of conflicts that are of social nature and they must be resolved in order for the young person to move onto the next stage of development. The second stage in Eriksons’ (1959) theory of psychosocial development is *Autonomy Vs. Shame*, the child in this stage is of one year and a half when it starts, and three years old when he/she should be ready to move on to the third stage. The basic virtue, or lesson, that the child must learn in the second stage is *will*. During *Autonomy vs. Shame* the children are becoming more independent, have developed a strong opinion of what toy, where, and when they want to play, and have discovered that they have many abilities and skills. Erikson stated that parents of children in stage two must be able to allow their children to express their independence, allow them to explore while not doing everything for them, and most importantly not disparage the children when they fail while during a task.

McLeod (2008) describes the balance needed in order for the child to succeed; that parents should aim to foster “self-control without loss of self-esteem” (McLeod,
Children gain increasing autonomy as they grow from infants to preschoolers and thus the desire to pursue their agenda likewise increases, often leading to conflicts between parents and children (McLeod, 2008). When this occurs, parents and caregivers often grasp for answers in how to manage challenging behaviors.

**Statement of the Problem**

According to the US Census Bureau News (2013), in 2012 there were an estimated 5 million stay-at-home mothers and 176,000 stay-at-home-fathers. Aside from the parents caring for their children, grandparents and relatives played a fundamental role in childcare. In 2011, 49% of the population of children from 0-4 years old were being cared for by a parent or a relative; a mere 24% of the child population were in a center-based program (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2012). With almost half of the population being cared for by their parents or relatives it could be stated that the need for them to understand their children’s social-emotional development is crucial. Where does a parent or a caregiver turn to get such information? How do they become experts in their child’s healthy developmental milestones and competence?

Just looking at the vast number of books on parenting demonstrates the hunger that parents have for finding the right information that will help them raise their children and manage their behavior. Sometimes too much information or information that is too complex can be just as inaccessible to parents as information that is scant or too simplistic. Aside from books, workshops are often utilized to share information with parents; however, workshops focused on promoting positive parenting practices are often difficult for parents to access due to the length of sessions, the duration of the workshop over time, lack of childcare, or the time in which the workshop is offered. Furthermore,
according to Knowles (1970) adults learn differently than children and instruction needs to be adapted to the learning style and needs of adults. Therefore, one of the purposes of this workshop is to format sessions so they are adapted for parents who desire short informational topics that are geared to the needs of parents at a time in their child’s development when a specific topic is most needed.

An intervention, as defined by the Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders, is any outside process that has the effect of modifying an individual’s behavior, cognition, or emotional state. According to Weisner (2005), families are more likely to maintain interventions if they fit their family’s values and beliefs and are easily integrated into their daily routines. Therefore, unless the content of parenting education programs fit their needs, or if programs do not fit into the family’s daily routines, it is highly unlikely that parents will participate in such programs. Given the many potential barriers that may interfere with parent’s desire or ability to learn positive parenting strategies, the question that arises is “How can parent education training be provided in a manner that fits their needs?”

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this project is to design and develop three 15-minute parent information modules emphasizing positive, preventive parenting that focuses on the social-emotional development of young children. These modules are designed to be discussed within the context of a parent-child group over a period of three weeks. Although there is an infinite amount of information that can be shared with families over time, this project will focus on helping parents to understand: (a) the importance of healthy emotional and social development in young children; (b) their role in promoting
healthy emotional and social development in their children; and (c) specific strategies that parents can use with their children. Once the modules are completed, the researcher will seek professional and parent input on the content and formatting of the training modules and will make suggested modifications prior to implementing with families. The implementation and evaluation of the modules is beyond the scope of this project and will be explored at a later time.

The intended audience includes individuals who are parents, parents who are also teachers, and educators in the field of child development. The sessions could take place within the context of an early learning center in which there is a place that offers privacy with a sense of welcoming atmosphere. Since the session would entail conversations about children’s behaviors that are not commonly accepted and frequently labeled “bad” behavior, it is recommend that children old enough to understand complex language not be present during the sessions. However, I understand that parents often must bring their children; therefore accommodations could be made for older children to be cared for in a separate room by a caretaker, while younger children could remain with their parents.

Materials for the sessions would be designed and developed for each session’s content and would include a combination of visual aids, worksheets, paper work, and homework assignment print outs. Prior to beginning the workshop, parents will be provided with a Pre-Test Survey to capture information about their children and areas of need/concern.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this thesis project is to provide parents with meaningful social-emotional development training that pertains to their preschool age children. Research has shown that there are many interventions available after the child has shown
behavior problems, however, not many focus on the prevention aspect (Conner & Fraser, 2011). Therefore, this thesis project focuses on the idea of prevention before intervention, giving parents the right tool to foster their children’s social-emotional development and need for independence, even when there is no reason to be initially concerned. There are a vast number of mommy groups, parenting classes, daddy and me groups, and much more focusing on the child interacting with other children and the parent fostering their social interactions, however, the thesis project’s 15-minute parenting lessons would give the parents the right tool to help their children develop their social-emotional development skills that they in turn will be able to use during those play groups.

**Terminology**

The following terms are defined to provide a basis of understanding for this thesis.

*Academic Skills:* Language, arts, and math (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

*Aggression:* Fights, destroys, bullies, kicks, blames, inconsiderate, does not share (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991).

*Andragogy:* is “the art and science of helping adults learn, in contrast to pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles, 1970, p.43)

*Community Risk:* poverty, social isolations, weak physical infrastructure, and crime (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

*Dyadic Interactions:* Pertaining to a mother-child dyad, working together, playing together, and facilitating the child’s needs without hindering them (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991).

*Emotion as Regulated:* Refers to changes in the activated emotion, including emotion valance, intensity, or time course (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004).
**Emotion as Regulating:** Refers to changes that appear to result from the activate emotion (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004).

**Emotion Regulation:** “Emotion regulations consists of the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions…to accomplish one’s goals” (Denham et al., 1991, p.40).

**Emotion Regulation:** “Refers to changes associated with activated emotions. Emotion regulation is not defined by which emotions are activated by the systematic changes associated with activated emotions” (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004, p.320).

**Emotional Communication:** Active listening, helping children identify and appropriately express emotions (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008).

**Emotional Competencies:** “The ability to reflect self-efficacy in dealing with emotion eliciting social transactions”’ (Stefan & Miclea, 2009, p.1105)

**Emotions:** “Neo-Darwinian influence, viewing emotions as biologically prepared capabilities that evolve and endured in humans because of their extraordinary value for survival. Emotions are a kind of radar and rapid response system, constructing and carrying meaning across the flow of experience. Emotions are the tools by which we appraise experience and prepare to act on situations” (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004, p.319).

**Intervention:** Any outside process that has the effect of modifying an individual’s behavior, cognition, or emotional state (Encyclopedia of Mental Disorder, 2014)

**Negative Affect:** Anger, discounting, dislike, hostility, and rejection (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991).
Non-Academic Skills: Social Problem solving and emotional regulation (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

Parent Training Program: An intervention in which parents actively acquire parenting skills and may or may not have included other educational methods (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008).

Social Competence: the capacity to implement prosocial behavioral routines (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

Social Competencies: “a person’s capacity of being able to exhibit socially acceptable behaviours, which have positive consequences and allow that person to reach their goals” (Stefan & Miclea, 2009, p.1106)

Task-Orientation: ability to support the child and to create appropriate structure and limits (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991).

Bridge to the Next Chapter

The second chapter reviews the literature regarding social-emotional development in children; how parents, especially their mother or main care-takers play essential role; and how prevention before intervention is ideal. The development of the parent training workshop outlines, as well as the integration of adult learning theory in the design of the workshops will be discussed. Finally, the implementation of surveys to gather feedback on the workshop outlines from parents and child development experts will be presented in Chapter Three. Subsequently, Chapter Four discusses the results of the surveys, limitations of the project, as well as implications for future research.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Healthy social-emotional development is essential for all children. However, this aspect of development does not evolve on its own; it has to be nurtured by the adults in a young child’s life (Cassidy, 1994). A large body of research shows that children who attain healthy emotional competence are more likely to also develop positive social skills that enable them to do well in school and to establish positive social interactions with others (Denham et al., 2003).

The goal of this literature review is to shed light on how parents and teachers influence healthy social and emotional development in children, and to identify strategies that promote optimal emotional and social competence. Studies that examine the relationship between social and emotional development as well as how these relate to children’s healthy growth and development throughout the life span will be reviewed. The first study examines the connection between emotional competence and social competence through the eyes of teachers, parents, and peers. Next, the role of mothers’ interactions in promoting emotional competence development of young children is analyzed. Third, research looking at the effectiveness of parent training workshops and how children benefit from their parent’s participation is investigated. This is followed by a study, which describes how effective it is to prevent a behavior rather than having an intervention after a challenging behavior appears. A brief overview of adult learning theory will be discussed to explain the reasoning for how the workshop is structured and delivered. Chapter Two will conclude with an introduction to Center on the Social and
Emotional Foundations for Early Learning that contains training modules for teachers, educators and parents in regards to children’s social emotional competence skill attainment.

**Social-Emotional Development: A Pathway to Social Competence**

Emotional competence (expression of emotions, emotion knowledge, and emotion regulation) is an essential component of an individual’s life. It develops throughout life with the most crucial development occurring during the early preschool years. In a study by Denham et al. (2003), it was stated that emotional competence promotes the ability to form positive relationships and interactions with others. The study also stated that:

Social-emotional indicators including positive interactions with teachers, positive representation of self-derived from attachment relationships; emotion knowledge, emotion regulatory abilities, social skills, and nonrejected peer status, often uniquely predict academic success when other pertinent variables, even earlier academic success, are already taken into account. (Denham et al., 2003, p. 239)

Furthermore, according to Denham et al. (2003), aspects of emotional competence are intertwined with social competence in preschool children and in order to understand how all of these elements work together, they investigated three aspects they identified as necessary for emotional competence and social competence to grow. The first aspect discussed in the study is *emotional expressiveness* that includes positive and negative affect, with the later providing a negative experience in the formation of relationships amongst peers. The second component of emotional competence stated in the study is *emotion knowledge*, which refers to children’s ability to read their peer’s facial
expressions for emotional cues that enable them to respond in socially desirable ways, thus helping them to be more likeable by their peers. The last aspect of emotion competence discussed in the study was emotion regulation, which becomes “both necessary, because of the increasing complexity of children’s emotionality and the demands of their social world, and possible, because of their increased comprehension and control of their emotionality” (Denham et al., 2003, p. 240). Young children are developing their emotion regulation and often need assistance from their caregivers to guide them through their emotions. As children become able to manage their own behaviors autonomously, teachers can guide them if needed. However, even when children are able to manage their emotions and behavior, there will still be times when young child lack emotional regulation resulting in outbursts of tantrums and distress, which in turn could affect their social interactions and relationships with their peers.

Denham et al. (2003) sought to discover the link between emotional competence and social competence by analyzing patterns of emotional expressiveness, emotion knowledge and emotion regulation of each child who participated in their study. Additionally, the study looked at how teachers, parents and peers rated each child in likability, oppositionality, isolation and sensitive cooperation from preschool age to kindergarten age.

Methodology

Subjects. The study consisted of 143 children of preschool age (3-4 years old), who were predominantly Caucasian ethnicity (74%) and of middle class socio-economic status. There were 75 boys and 68 girls ranging in age from 32 months to 59 months, with a median age of 46 months. The majority of children (88%) lived in a two-parent
home with mothers having a college degree (Denham et al., 2003). A second phase of the study was conducted when the children were in kindergarten; however, out of the original 143, only 104 were reached.

**Procedures and instruments.** Participants were recruited in three parts. First, graduate research assistants and their advisors introduced themselves to directors and teachers and explained the goal of the study as well as the roles the researcher and the team would be playing in the classroom where the study was conducted (Denham et al., 2003). Second, letters were sent home to each child enrolled in the center within the specified age range (32-59 months) explaining the research study and encouraging them to participate. Lastly, the researchers were involved during parent meetings and school open houses so they could have a personable connection and increase research efforts.

Questionnaires were given to parents to fill out at home and to teachers to fill out at preschool/daycare. Researchers also observed and interviewed children. During preschool hours the researchers were looking at the child’s “expression of emotion and reactions to peer emotions” (Denham et al., 2003, p. 242). Emotional competence was examined when children were 3 to 4 years old; social competence was examined at both the 3 to 4 years old and 5 to 6 years old.

The study examined how children express their emotions during free play as well as how they react to their peers’ emotions during free play. Over the course of six weeks, each participating child in the study was observed as the focal point for 5-minute trials for 12 sessions. The study also included 12 sessions of 5-minute trials with a specified child labeled as the “target,” meaning that his/her reactions were being examined in
regards to how they reacted to their peers’ emotions (Denham et al., 2003). In total each child was observed for 24 sessions of 5-minute trials.

**Observations.** The observations were split into two sessions. In the first 5 minutes the focal child was observed for reactions such as “happy, sad, angry, afraid, tender, hurt, other and neutral emotional display” (Denham et al., 2003, p. 243). During the second 5-minute interval a child that was approximately 3ft from the focal child become the focal child and the focal child became the one being observed for emotional reactions. Denham et al. (2003) state that “target reactions that denoted dysregulated coping included: opposite affect match (e.g., happy when focal is sad), matching negative affect, displaying hurt feelings, and antisocial (e.g., volitionally exacerbating focal child’s problems” (p. 243). The children were assessed individually in their understanding of emotions by using puppets that had interchangeable happy, sad, angry, and afraid facial expressions. After the puppeteer enacted a story with the puppet using facial and vocal expressions, the children were asked to put a “face” on the puppet that fit the situation. During this activity the researchers were able to establish if the children were capable of labeling others feelings. In the second scenario the mothers informed the researchers how their child would feel (emotionally) in 12 situations, the researchers then used that information to determine the opposite emotional expression on the puppet; thus, the puppet had the opposite emotion as the study child.

**Measures of social competence.** Social competence was measured using two different methods. The first method used the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Short Form (SCBE), which is a 30-item questionnaire that the teachers/daycare providers used to rate the children’s social competence in the classroom. In order for the teachers to
complete the questionnaire they must have known the children for at least two months prior to filling out the forms. The questionnaire explored how children are able to control their affect within different social behaviors using a 6-point scale (Denham et al., 2003).

The second method was using a peer-rated scale; all children even those that were not used in the study as subjects were used for this part of the study. Each child was taken out of the classroom and was given a set of photographs of their peers. The researchers first made sure each child new the names of the children in the photographs, then they asked the child to place each photograph in its corresponding box, like-a-lot, kinda like and do-not-like (the researchers first demonstrated how to do so by using plastic dolls and using facial and vocal expressions as they placed them in each box) (Denham et al., 2003). This task was changed when the children entered kindergarten due to their cognitive skills emergent development; instead of photographs each child was given a 1x5” card with names of their classmates (one name per card), they then had to place the cards in a 1- to 5- point graphic; with 5 being a “smiley face.”

Findings

An analysis method, latent variable partial least evaluated squares (LVPLS), was utilized since it allows relations among the chosen variables to be analyzed for any relationships. For the LVPLS to work, researchers had to pick latent variables, those were: emotional expressiveness, emotion knowledge, emotion regulation, sex + emotionality, sex + emotion knowledge, sex + emotion regulation, emotional expressiveness + emotion regulation, age + emotion regulation, age + emotion knowledge, and age 3-4 years old social competence as well as kindergarten social (Denham et al., 2003).
Overall, twenty-four out of twenty-nine of the variables showed significant relationships; of the five remaining variables, three showed a slight degree of significance and two were eliminated due to low results. Ultimately, “Emotional expressiveness was related to emotion knowledge and emotion regulation. Every predictor was related to social competence at one age (If not both), except for Age x Emotion Knowledge” (Denham et al., 2003, p. 247). It was also discovered through a “Jackknife resampling procedure” that emotion regulation predicted social competence at the ages of 3 to 4, as well the prediction of kindergarten social competence related to emotional expressiveness, emotion knowledge, Age x emotion regulation at age 3 to 4 within social competence. Finally, emotional expressiveness was a predictor for emotion knowledge and emotion regulation. It was also discovered that children with positive ratings by their peers had more knowledge in regards to emotion and were able to regulate them better than children with negative ratings.

Overall, the study concluded that emotional competence attained from age 3 to 4 became stable and continued to mature during kindergarten. Denham et al. (2003) stated, “Furthermore, the enduring patterns of clear emotional well-being signaled by a happy child are likely to make a positive impression on a preschool teacher, and happier playmates probably don’t ‘make waves’ in the sometimes-choppy sea of preschool interactions; they are just easier for the other children to like” (p. 251). The results of this study suggest that children with strong social and emotional competence are more likeable and therefore easier to get along with, thus helping their journey through preschool to be smooth sailing.
Mother-Child Interactions as Indicators of Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional relationships in infants are affected by forming meaningful relationships with important caregivers in their lives. The early relationships infants form in turn affect their relationships with peers during their preschool years (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991). The relationships that children form with the parents can take two paths: the first path is that of a supportive relationship; the second path is one that is not supportive and, therefore, jeopardizes children’s social-emotional development competence. Denham, Renwick, and Holt (1991) stated that everyday interactions between a mothers and child provides a rich context for exploring that given relationship: “these transactions often tax the behavioral and adaptive capacities of both dyad members, requiring them to balance the following: (a) task-oriented demands; (b) the child’s autonomy demands and dependency needs, and the mother’s response to them; and (c) modulation of the transaction’s affective content” (pp. 242-243).

Therefore, Denham et al. (1991) hypothesized that if a mother is not able to provide limits so the child can remain on task, cannot support them as well as assure them they can master the task at hand, and are not able to stay calm and positive during interactions then the child would have poor social-emotional outcomes during the preschool years and beyond. Denham et al. (1991) noted the if a child has an internal battle between him/herself and the mother pertaining to obedience and independence, the child will distance him/herself from the mother during the preschool years. With that in mind, the study further hypothesized “the child’s more optimal management of dyadic interactions, indexed by compliance with directions, persistence, affection and lack of
dependence or avoidance, is expected to predict social-emotional strengths during peer interaction in the preschool” (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991, p. 243).

Methodology

Subjects. The study consisted of 48 preschoolers, 23 boys and 25 girls, ages ranging from 33 to 56 months, along with their mothers. The children came from five laboratory preschool classroom in a university located in the suburbs of a major city. The socioeconomic status of the families was stated as middle to upper-middle class and the mother’s education was indicated to be from high school to postgraduate degrees (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991).

Procedures and instruments. The dyadic interactions (mother-child) were videotaped during their four “challenging play/teaching task” (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991, p. 243). The first problem was to copy block structures that were presented on a card with play blocks. The second task consisted of filling in the missing pieces on a patterned foam board. The third setting involved the children tracing on an etch-a-sketch staying inside the path that was already drawn for them. The last task consisted of the children naming things that contained wheels. The mothers were instructed to help the child in any way they could, without doing the task for them. The mother-child dyads worked for a total of 15-30 minutes on each task.

The study attained variables that were rated on a seven-point scale. The variables were based on descriptions of interactions: for the mothers the researchers looked at how they were supportive, limited setting, autonomy, negative affect, instructions, and confidence; for the child they noted persistence, enthusiasm, affection, negative affect, experience, compliance, reliance, and avoidance (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991). The
description of interactions scale also looked for overall criterion variables: friendliness, assertiveness, aggression, and sadness.

In addition, each child’s teacher completed the Baumrind Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (BPB) consisting of 72 cards showing child social behaviors, the teacher had to sort out the cards into nine piles showing how well each card described the child. The teachers also completed the Behar Problem Behavior Questionnaire (PBQ), a measure with 30 questions which looks at the frequency of behavior problems in the child pertaining to aggressiveness and sadness. Denham, Renwick, and Holt (1991) chose to use BPB in order to analyze social competence in the children; PBQ was used to characterize externalizing and internalizing dimensions of social incompetence.

Findings

The study discovered that boys experienced more allowance of autonomy when compared to the girls, making the boys less reliant on their mothers during the tasks. However, when the teachers rated the children it showed that boys demonstrated less positive social behavior than girls (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991). Assertiveness was associated with mother’s positive emotions as well as allowance autonomy; child positive emotions also correlated with assertiveness. The mother’s easiness and attitude towards the session as well as allowance of autonomy seemed to play a role on girl’s positive social behavior, but not on boys. Overall, when the mother reacted positively to her child during their interaction, it represented assertiveness from the children during their time in a preschool classroom; in turn, if the mother had a negative reaction during the mother-child interactions, the children had lower assertiveness during preschool.
Based on the results, Denham, Renwick, and Holt (1991) confirmed that children’s emotional expressions are dependent on mother’s emotional expressions. Also, as hypothesized by Denham, Renwick, and Holt (1991) predictors of social-emotional competence in preschoolers are dependent on mothers’ task orientation, positive emotion, and allowance of autonomy. Maternal scaffolding can also influence social-emotional competence as well as cognitive development in children during maternal task orientation (Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991). When the mother was not supportive or did not allow for autonomy, the preschooler would show sadness and show rejection through paintings. The findings indicate that the social-emotional competence of preschool age children is reliant on the way their mothers interact with them during their dyadic interactions as well as during peer relations.

**Parent Training Programs Effectiveness**

When a young child starts showing oppositional, aggressive, impulsive, and inattentive behaviors that are persistent long-term studies have shown that those behaviors could be reflected during their adolescent years (Kaminski et al. 2008). However, it should be noted that most adolescents show these behaviors as a phase and outgrow their destructive behaviors when their teen years come to an end; however, some do not and is predicted to turn into criminality and violent behaviors (Kaminski et al. 2008). Colossal amount of research has noted that behavioral issues in young children could be modified more easily if intervention started at a young age, because the habit is not form and is easily amended. Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle (2008) noted that in the late 1960s there was a change on how adults managed children’s problematic behaviors. Instead of therapy, institutionalization, or any other form of intervention that
changed the child’s behavior from therapy for children, to actually focusing on the parent’s behavior. This move was made in part due to experts realizing parents could act as agents of change to child’s behavior as well as understanding of the parental role on child’s behaviors. Parent programs have many different components such as different content, meaning what is the program teaching the parent; delivery settings, such as clinically based, community based, or individual; delivery techniques, assigning homework, discussions, role playing; as well as types of families served, this includes children with behavior problems, low-income, teen parents, as well as first time parents (Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle, 2008).

The purpose of the study was to focus on parent training programs rather than changing parental well-being drawing upon substantial research that showed how parenting practices effected early child behavior problems (Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle, 2008). Parent training programs were first meant to help the parent deal with behavioral problems, over the years they have developed into something more. Programs now include outcomes to show a child’s cognitive development, anxiety, and physical health, prevention of abuse/maltreatment, and much more. Researchers, especially Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle (2008), have been asking the same question. What ingredients in parent training programs is the source of behavior change?

**Methodology**

**Procedures and instruments.** Using meta-analytic techniques this study sought to determine which program components are dependably related with more effective outcomes of parent training program that target prevention/remediation of early childhood behavior problems (Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle, 2008). The study
hypothesized that active parental involvement would have higher program effects when compared to less parental involvement programs. Lastly, the study focused on three frequent assumptions of parent training programs and generates a hypothesis for the study based on each assumption. First, program effects would not show a strong correlation with program content specifically when focused on child development knowledge. Second, programs that contained manual or a curriculum would have a large effect when compared to those programs without them. The last prediction was based on extra services within parent training programs; the study predicted there would be a low effect in a program if they included additional services.

In order to find studies with their complex requirements, researchers use PsycInfo and Medline using four components for their search. Program descriptors, program targets, evaluation descriptors, and program outcomes. With those keywords, 8,277 studies surfaced, 93 of them being literature reviews and meta-analyses. Further analysis of the studies had to be conducted in order to have a feasible number of studies. In order to do so Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle (2008) focused on those that contained participants from age 0-7 years old, those studies that contained no special-needs children or those that had gone through a traumatic experience or health issues (in order to have a broad population base), and those that were administered in English and where published as an article, book, or book chapter. With all those components in place the number of studies was deduced to 77.

Each study was looked at and analyzed in terms of program intent, prevention or treatment of behavior, which caregiver participated, and child’s gender and age. Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle (2008) then focused on the components of the training
program, those variables were: child development knowledge and care, positive interactions with child, responsiveness, sensitivity, and nurturing; emotional communication, disciplinary communication, discipline and behavior management, promoting children’s social skills or prosocial behavior, and promoting children’s cognitive or academic skills. Lastly, the study looked at how the program delivered their training. Variables for program delivery were curriculum or manual, modeling, homework, rehearsal, role playing or practice; separate child instruction, and ancillary services. Even though the studies’ main focuses were parenting and child behaviors, parenting outcomes were also included in the analysis. The reasoning behind including parenting outcomes was because it often reflects upon parenting behaviors, such as self-efficacy, attitudes and values.

**Findings**

Using analogues to one-way ANOVAs as well as macros for SPSS, the overall study effect size with all four independent variables showed a significant difference. Those studies that randomly assigned participants to condition showed strength when compared to those that did not. When the program was a parent training alone rather than a package of training/interventions, it showed a large effective size. Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle (2008) stated the next step in identifying program components associated with better outcomes was to conduct a set of multiple linear regressions to determine the robustness of the ANOVA results while controlling for indicators of methodological rigor.

Results for parenting behaviors and skills showed to be more prominent on effect size when it pertained to seven components. From those components, emotional
communication, consistent responding, and practicing with their own child predicted larger program effects. However, problem solving, promoting social skills and cognitive/academic skills, as well as ancillary services showed to have a smaller effect on programs. When child externalizing behaviors was analyzed using one way ANOVAs it was concluded that six components were predictors of large program effect. Those predictors were: positive interactions with child; positive responsiveness, sensitivity, and nurturing; time out; problem solving; modeling; and practicing with own child (Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle, 2008). However, emotional communication, promoting social skills, curriculum or manual and ancillary services showed a low effect on programs.

In conclusion, the study showed that programs of this manner are able to change parent behaviors and preventing early child behavior problems. It was noted that programs that provided parent training in emotional communication showed a large positive difference between those that did not during the posttest. Going back to the assumptions and what Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle (2008) hypothesized, the first hypothesis was found to be correct; child development teaching to parents was not related to effect size. However, child development knowledge could be imbedded into the lesson and not necessarily an actual curriculum of child development. The second assumption, “more is better” was also correct, proving parents with ancillary services made the program score low when compared to those that did not provide other services. Lastly, the third and final assumption on using a curriculum or manual was not related to effect size. The findings of the present study showed what Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle
(2008) stated as research suggesting that the quality of the parent-child relationship has a
great deal of influence on a child’s behavior or misbehavior.

**Prevention before Intervention**

Social-emotional skills are acquired beginning in early childhood and play an
important role throughout a lifetime. The importance of early intervention in relation to
the development of social-emotional skills can be seen in many studies, including the
Perry Preschool Project, which in part focusing on strengthening social-emotional
nonacademic competencies (Conner & Fraser, 2011). Nonacademic skills pertain to
social competence, self-regulation, social problem solving, and emotional-regulation
(Conner & Fraser, 2011). Social competence has both cognitive and behavioral features
that allow children to engage in activities and work while cooperating with their peers,
adults, or both, regulate arousal, process social information, and remained focused in a
high stimuli environment. The skills that are needed to solve social problems can be said
that are related to the child development outcomes; Conner and Fraser (2011) stated that
from a Social-Information Processing (SIP) perspective, this skill is often defined as
selecting, interpreting, and acting on cues from among the numerous cues in the social
environment.

**Context and Hypothesis**

**Social-Information Processing.** Social-Information Processing (SIP) consists of
six steps in order for children to work through the current social problem they have and
respond in a developmentally appropriate manner in response to the social cues. The first
steps consist of the child encoding the social cues. Children must be able to encode both
verbal and physical cues, as well as being able to differentiate between subtle and
sequencing in cues. Secondly, cue appraisal that involves children’s interpreting what the cues mean. Cue appraisal relies on the children’s ability to draw on their past social interactions, relationships, or similar situations in order to be able to interpret the cue more easily. If the child is not able to properly interpret the intentions of others, inappropriate behavior would occur, which could also present itself as aggression or conduct problems in children (Conner & Fraser, 2011). The third step in SIP is setting pro-social goals, which must be derived from the prior step, interpretation. This step is also reliant on life experience, which in turn persuades the child’s decisions and actions, in the child this step could also be guided by their materialistic desires or wanting of social status. Conner and Fraser (2011) stated that in order for the child to develop prosocial goals, the child must learn to appreciate cooperation in interpersonal relationships.

Searching for a response to the cues is the fourth step in SIP, which needs to be consistent with the goals conveyed in the earlier steps. Again, this step depends on previous experience, as well as the ability to produce new ones. If a child has a well-rounded exposure to a diversity of responses, he/she would be able to produce a larger number of responses. On the other hand, studies have shown that a child with conduct problems would have fewer responses at hand (Conner & Fraser, 2011). Conner and Fraser (2011) concluded, “from an intervention perspective, research on response generation suggests that a program designed to promote nonacademic skills might help children identify and describe a large number of potential responses to alternative social situations” (Conner & Fraser, 2011, p. 700). The next step is making a decision; here the child would decide the benefit each response has as well as assessing which response fits
best in that situation. The decision is reliant on the child’s ability to see the benefit and risk of each, which is based on age and cognitive development. Lastly, the child would put forth their response. The older and further cognitive and social-emotional development would result on the child being able to re-encode cues, make new interpretations, set new goals, produce alternative solutions as well as changing the solutions to fit the social situation (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

**Preschool social competence strengthening programs.** Several preschool social competence strengthening programs were utilized in this study, all focusing on preschool age children. *Incredible Years* was created about 30 years ago, which is the most well-researched preschool intervention (Conner & Fraser, 2011). It consists of teacher, child and parent program that fostered social-emotional competence as well as preventing behavioral problems. *Al’s Pals* is based on a risk and protection framework, which focuses on teacher training and parent education. It was discovered that *Al’s Pals* has a positive effect on social-emotional competence and with coping skills in children. *Second Step* is a universal-prevention program; the curriculum is fully articulated and provides social-emotional skills training to children in preschool through middle-school. This program comprises of teaching empathy, social problem-solving skills, and impulse control (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

*Tools of the Mind* is a play-based intervention that focuses on self-regulation in an educational setting. This program is based on Vygotsky’s scaffolding concept. *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)* is based on the ABCD (Affective-Behavioral-Cognitive-Dynamic) model. This model has been effective in regular and special education classrooms (Conner & Fraser, 2011). Lastly, *I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)* is a
school based intervention which teaches children to generate solutions to perplexing situations. ICPS consist of having the child focus on the consequence of the behavior, and not the choice that got them there.

**Hypothesis.** Conner and Fraser (2011) first hypothesized that when compared to the control group the intervention group of parents would achieve superior improvements on parenting measures like parenting skills, communication, bonding, and supervision as well as developmental components. Second, the study hypothesized when children in the intervention group were compared to those in the control group they show greater improvements in social competence, positive peer relations, school performance, and behavior.

**Methodology**

Four preschools that had registered as members of a preschool alliance in a Southern urban area were invited to take part in the study. The preschools were part-day centers located in high-risk neighborhoods, which Conner and Fraser (2011) stated as poverty, social isolation, weak physical infrastructure, and crime. Each preschool used High-Scope curriculum in the classrooms and offered many different types of services to the families.

**Subjects.** The study invited and informed 104 3-to-4 year-old children and their primary caregivers about the study. Seventy-seven percent of the 104 children were of African American decent, the rest were a mixture of ethnicities. A total of 67 children and their families completed the pretest (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

**Procedures and Instruments.** In order for the study to assess family and child levels (described below) they conducted parent-reports and child assessments; however,
since children are not able to self-report the play based Berkeley Puppet Interview (BPI) was used (Conner & Fraser, 2011). BPI was used on seven domains, academic competence, achievement motivation, social competence, peer acceptance, depression-anxiety, and aggression-hostility. Additionally, the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) was used in order to evaluate family functioning and child behavior deviations, being used both at pre and post-intervention components. NCFAS also has seven domains in family function and three for child behavior. For family functions the domains were social support, family characteristics, family interaction, child well-being, program participation, and community connections. The domains for child behavior that the study was interested in were school performance, child relationship with caregivers, and child relationship with peers. The measure uses a 6-point rating scale, which range from serious problems (-3) to clear strength (+2) as well as a baseline/adequate score (0) (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

**Intervention.** The intervention was adapted to fit preschool aged children by a social work graduate student; it was then reviewed by early childhood experts and educators to ascertain that the changes were developmentally appropriate for 3 year old children. *Strong Families* was the educational intervention for the families, which provided caregivers with information in regards to discipline techniques, normative child development, parent-child bonding, and the making choices program (Conner & Fraser, 2011). The family intervention provided information pertaining to nutrition, health, jobs skills and any other basic need as well. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to see if there was a difference between BPI and NCFAS measures.
**Strong Families.** Strong Families was designed to (a) promote positive parent-child interaction and child discipline, (b) disrupt coercive family processes, and (c) connect families to resources in the community (Conner & Fraser, 2011). The objectives were to benefit the children when it came to strengthening SIP skills, developing their emotional-regulation, provide prosocial peer involvement as well as increasing peer acceptance. In short, the program, when used correctly and effectively, would reduce aggressive behavior while strengthening the child’s social-emotional skills as well as the parenting skills of the caregivers. Parents attended weekly sessions that were led by a family counselor and a trained person from the community. Each session was 45 minutes long with homework being assigned each session. Lastly, the curriculum was adapted to fit the cultural idioms and experiences of the subjects involved in the study.

**Making Choices.** The Making Choices program was the child component of the study that was structured around the steps of SIP. This aspect was divided into lessons corresponding to skill-related goals and where delivered during small group activity with four children in each group. Each group of children met two times a week for a total of 14 weeks, each meeting was 20 minutes long. If a concept that was presented during the study was not familiar to the children, that concept would be presented to them during their preschool time so they would have a full understanding when doing the intervention; cultural differences was also taken into account and study curriculum was adjusted to reflect the adaptation (Conner & Fraser, 2011).

**Findings**

When NCFAS measures were analyzed it revealed a great difference between the groups, with higher growth in the intervention group. The parents in the intervention
group showed growth on their bonding, supervision, and communication with their child and developmental expectations. With posttest analysis the control group of parents were found to be above the clinical threshold on all items; on the other hand, the intervention group improved on their parenting skills (Conner & Fraser, 2011). In the making choices intervention, the children in the intervention group showed a reduction in aggressive behavior whereas the children in the control group showed an increase. NCFAS showed children in the intervention group improved on their relationships with their caregivers, behavior, and relationship with peers, and school performance.

The most improvement was seen between the child-parent relationships when looked at from the child’s measures. The same was discovered as the parent intervention, those children in the control group scored above the clinical threshold for all items. Conner and Fraser (2011) concluded that Making Choices and Strong Families interventions promoted the academic and nonacademic skills that recent research suggests influence distal behavioral outcomes. Lastly, the study’s data proposes that when social skills intervention for children is joined with parenting education the result is the promotion of social and academic development of the child.

**Adult Learning Theory**

Teaching adults to understand developmentally appropriate practices is the facilitator’s role, and what is expected of the facilitator. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009) states that a teacher (facilitator for the purpose of this thesis) that have studied child development as well as knowledge of effective teaching strategies are more likely to understand what is and what is not good practice for young children. It is the adult (teacher, parent, educator) who is constantly in the
presence of children, learning their temperament, interest, capabilities, and learning styles 
that help them understand and conclude what are the best ways to teach children 
individually and in a group setting (NAEYC 2009). During a parenting training sessions, 
it is the facilitator that is intuitive to the student’s needs that ensure success in the 
sessions.

Facilitators have an extensive range of skills and strategies; they know when to 
use which skills, and how to effectively promote learning and development to its full 
potential for that moment in time. The ability to adapt curriculum, activities, and 
materials are among the skills a facilitator uses to warrant complete participation from the 
students (NAEYC, 2009).

**Teaching a parent.** Parents and teachers are an essential component of this thesis 
project. Knowles (1970) stated during the 1920’s that education began to be more 
organized and teachers of adults were facing problems with the pedagogical model. 
“Pedagogy was premised on a conception of the purpose of education, namely the 
transmittal of knowledge and skills that had stood the test of time, that adults learners 
seemed to sense was insufficient” (Knowles, 1970, p.40).

In the *Journal of Adult Education* published by the American Association of 
Adult Education, as stated by Knowles (1970), there were a series of articles by teachers 
of adult’s learners between 1920 and 1948. The articles included strategies that moved 
away from the pedagogical model, instead they non-academic standards such as quizzes; 
in which the authors expressed guilt in using those assessments. Knowles (1970) figured 
that the guilt was consequential from the lack of theory to support those new ways.
As time went by new information with regard to adult learning started to surface in related fields. Those included disciplines such as clinical psychology, developmental psychology—life-span development, gerontology, sociology, and anthropology, both North America and Europe (Knowles, 1970). With this new research-based knowledge an intelligible theory for adult learning was born, one that supported the intuitions of the earlier teachers and theorist (1970).

**Andragogy at a glance.** Deriving from the Greek word *aner* (with the stem andr), “Andragogy” means “man, not boy” or adult (Knowles, 1970). Andragogy, described by Knowles (1970), is “the art and science of helping adults learn, in contrast to pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children” (p.43). Certain concepts of Andragogy must be in place in order for adult learners to fully benefit from the learning. Parents as adult learners are expertise of their children’s, Knowles (1970) said that due to that experience, they have a deep investment in its value, in turn the facilitator can use that investment and emphasize on techniques that foster that source of experience.

Knowles (1970) highlights that timing and relevance is essential when learning in andragogy; an example would be of a new teacher, orientation would not discuss the history of the school, but rather how the duties of the teacher are as well as policy and procedure (Knowles, 1970). Adults engage in learning in response to pressure from their current situation (Knowles, 1970). “Education is a process of improving their ability in what they face now” (Knowles, 1970, p.53); with all these concepts being integrated in this project to ascertain complete success.
Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (Center on the Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning, 2014) was created to strengthen the capacity of social emotional development as well as school readiness in children enrolled in Head Start and childcare programs. CSEFEL is located at the Vanderbilt University under the direction of Dr. Mary Louise Hemmeter, the Center is also in collaboration with University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of South Florida, Georgetown University, University of Colorado at Denver, and Zero to Three. CSEFEL is a national resource funded by the office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country. CSEFEL provides services for children age’s birth-to-five years old, and offers extensive training materials, videos, and print resources available to educators, parents, and teachers to implement the CSEFEL model on their own (Center on the Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning, 2014).

CSEFEL offers multiple training modules that pertain to children from birth to five years of age as well as modules that help parents learn about and assist their children’s social emotional competence development. All modules were developed using feedback from program administrators, Technical Assistants providers (T/TA), early educators, and family members during focus groups. The input given pertained to what information would be most useful to them when it came to the social-emotional needs of their children.
Infant To Toddler Modules

Module one is an introductory lesson for the audience, containing definitions they would see throughout the infant toddler modules; cultural perspective, beliefs, and values. The second module consists of identifying the role of the environment in promoting social emotional development, identifying and implementing strategies to promote social emotional skills, and supporting the family. Module three introduces the participants to what are challenging behaviors, relationship-based approach to challenging and how to develop an individual support plan (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning). The last module, module four, focuses on the administration role as well as strategies to have successful evidence base practices.

Preschool Modules

These modules pertained to children ages three to five years old. The first module introduces participants to strategies for promoting children’s success: Building Relationships and Creating Supportive Environment (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2014). The first module also touches on transitions, adult-child communication, positive attention and much more. Module two goes into more depth on strategies in teaching social-emotional competence skills to children. Module three (a) introduces the participants to “Individualized Intensive Interventions: Determining the Meaning of Challenging Behaviors” (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2014). Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is also introduced during module 3, which is an approach for changing a child’s behavior. PBS is based on humanistic values and helps the parent/teacher teach the child a new skill to replace the challenging behavior (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for
Early Learning, 2014). Lastly, the module focuses on the steps of PBS; step one: establishing a collaborative team and identifying; step 2: gathering information (functional assessment), step 3: developing hypotheses, step 4: designing behavior support plan, and step 5: implementing, monitoring, evaluating outcomes, and refining plan in natural environment. Module 3 (b) is a continuation of module 3 (a), and the purpose of this module is to instill how to develop a behavior support plan, as well as how to monitor outcomes and what to do in case a behavior returns. The last module, module four, consists of a recap of all modules in the preschool age component as well as resources for leadership strategies.

**Infant/Toddler Parent Modules**

This particular module is an introduction for parents on the *Parent Interaction with Infants* (PIWI) model and the philosophy behind it. The creators of PIWI emphasize that the model is *not* a curriculum; instead it is a philosophy about families, children and fostering the relationships. Within the PIWI model the parents are taught to place importance on the Dyadic Relationship (caregiver-child), Developmental Knowledge (of the infant), and Triadic Relationships (a facilitator assisting the dyadic caregiver-child relationship). PIWI has three key outcomes: Competence, Confidence, and Mutual Enjoyment (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2014). Some of the tools parents walk away with after the infant/toddler parent training module are: scaffolding, match and follow (wait, watch, and then join child), establishing reciprocal roles (turn taking), how to maintain a child’s interest and attention, affirmation and acknowledgement of parenting competence, as well as information on developmental milestones.
Pre-k Parent Modules: Thesis Element

These modules focus on the parent, training the parent to be an advocate, a mentor, and most of all being able to foster their children’s social-emotional development in a positive manner. Module one, *Making a Connection*, is an introduction to the parenting modules, introductions of presenter and of those attending the workshop, and discussing the importance of positive relationship building. The first module also introduces the parent to the “power” of using positive comments and encouraging the children (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2014).

Module two, *Making it Happen*, consist of discussing ideas of how children can develop friendship skills, the use of play as a powerful parenting practice, and linking comments, encouragement play to children’s behaviors (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2014).

In module three, *Why do children do what they do?* parents go into more depth on the meaning behind the children’s behaviors. The module also looks into time-outs and common mistakes made when using time-outs; making expectations clear as well as helping the parents figure out a better, more positive way of saying certain phrases. Module three also teaches the parents how to create house rules and designing a presentation of rules that would work for the children.

Module four, *Teach Me What to Do!* touches on emotional literacy, introducing the parents to emotional expression vocabulary and facial recognition through pictures and usage of mirrors to see their expressions. Further into the module the parents are taught how to help their children in recognizing and controlling their anger; some tools given were: the use of children’s books such as “Glad Monster, Sad Monster”, “Hands
Are Not For Hitting” and “On Monday When it Rained”; usage of personal thinking area, and the short story “Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think” by Rochelle Lentini.

In closing of module four, the parents are introduced to problem solving, the steps children need help in discovering and implementing, and setting the stage up for success (by anticipating problems, staying near children, and encouraging the children to use their emotional vocabulary).

Module five (part 1), Facing the Challenge, introduces the parents to logical consequences for children, presenting reasonable choices, and two different ways to redirect a child (physical or verbal redirection). Facing the Challenge introduces parents to “DO-WAWP” which should be implemented when children do not comply the first time they are asked to do something. Do-WAWP stands for: Do- re-state what you want the child to do, W- wait for compliance (silently count to 5), A- ask the child to restate the direction, W- Wait for compliance (silently count to 5), P- provide encouragement or help. Part two of Facing the Challenge discusses strategies to deal with challenging behavior that continues even though the parent is implementing all of the parenting practices discussed during the Pre-K parent modules (Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2014).

For the purpose of this thesis project the researcher used three of the Pre-k parent training modules: Modules Three, Four, and Five. Each module was analyzed for key components, and strategies were hand-picked to fit the workshop topics created for the above thesis project. The researcher used selected aspects of the PowerPoint slides, as well as handouts and worksheets from Modules Three, Four, and Five.
Bridge to Chapter Three

In the next chapter, the proposed Project Audience and Implementation Factors will be described. The description will include the workshop creation and timeline, purpose of the workshop, researcher and evaluator(s) qualifications, and project outline.
CHAPTER THREE

Project Audience and Implementation Factors

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child’s success is the positive involvement of parents.” Jane D. Hull

This project was designed to describe the development of a workshop divided into a series of training sessions to be implemented with parents to inform them about their children’s social-emotional development and how to support their growth in this area in a developmentally appropriate and positive manner. The sessions are geared towards parents, parent educators, as well as teachers (to be used in their classrooms and/or to provide this information to parents so they have the tools needed to foster their children’s social emotional development). It can also be used as training for parents-to-be, preschool centers, social workers, and any other type of early childhood component. This chapter describes the development of the project (sessions), as well as the pre and post-evaluations used to attain feedback from parents and professionals. The qualifications of each individual that evaluated the project are included, as well as equipment required, and project framework.

Development of Project

Purpose of the Sessions

For the most part, parents want to do what is best for their children, they want to be able to guide them and teach them as much as they can. Typically parent trainings and other sources of support are given to parents after their child has been showing challenging behaviors—after they are in trouble in school or daycare, and when they are already older and it is harder to change a habit. The thesis project provides information
and support to parents to allow them to know what to do before a challenging behavior arises. Prevention before intervention is the motto of the project presented. The goal of this project is to create parent/educator training sessions that would assist them in implementing developmentally appropriate strategies to use with their children. By doing so, the parents would improve in their parenting techniques, feel a sense of accomplishment as well as consistency; this also applies for those working with young children in various educational settings. The children will feel valued, respected, and develop a sense of self.

Creation of the Sessions

For the purpose of this thesis project, the author adapted materials from the Center for the Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) that included information from Module Three (http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_parent.html#mod3); Module Four (http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_parent.html#mod4), and Module Five (http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_parent.html#) to create a workshop consisting of three unique brief, topic focused sessions with each addressing a different aspect of how to promote healthy social-emotional development. The CSEFEL materials were selected because they are evidenced-based, are used in many states (including California) as statewide curriculum for promoting positive social-emotional development in young children. Additionally, the materials are public domain and can be freely used by educators and parents.

It is important to note that in the context of this thesis project the workshop sessions were not actually implemented; only content for workshop’s three sessions were
developed by adapting information from the Modules readily available to parents and educators on the CSEFEL website. The CSEFEL parent education Modules (approximately 2 hours each) are designed for presentation to groups of parents and consist of a comprehensive curriculum with facilitator scripts for presenting information, videos, as well as handouts and activities to reinforce concepts and to serve as aides for parents to use at home. What makes the workshop sessions developed for this project unique is that the Modules were reduced to small discreet topics that could be used in a more informal discussion format within the context of parent-child groups, friends meeting at the park, mini lessons presented by teachers, and so on. Furthermore, because the information is readily available and provides explicit guidance on how to present the topics in a way that appeals to adult learners, these sessions can theoretically be picked up by most parents or educators and taught to others.

The sessions were designed to deliver information to parents about tools and techniques they could use for fostering their children’s social-emotional development as well helping those children that are already showing signs of challenging behaviors. The sessions use an informal conversational tone and include a facilitator briefly delivering content followed by hands-on activities and opportunities for participants to learn from one another through sharing of ideas and experiences.

Using the information, materials, and techniques provided by the CSEFEL website and described in Chapter Two of this project, each session consists of learning objectives that pertain to a specific topic designed to promote positive social-emotional development and to prevent challenging behaviors. The specific content of each session can vary depending on the interests and needs of the participants. For example, if several
parents express concerns about their child’s tantrums, then a parent or teacher facilitator could use easily pick-up the topic for “on the spot” delivery when it is most needed. The objective of each session is to give parents techniques related to setting up routines and schedules; developing proper ways of reacting to challenging behaviors, as well as engaging in age appropriate modes of communication. The session’s topics can increase parents’ confidence in their parenting skills leading to more effective ways to support their children’s development by using effective, appropriate age techniques.

The first session introduces parent(s) to the idea that they play a critical role in their child’s development and learning, how to set reasonable expectations for their children, as well as how to find better ways to say every day phrases in less negative ways. The second session covers how to establish household rules, how to introduce rules to their children, how to make rules effective and easy for children to follow, and how to set up a schedule that works. Lastly, the third session provides parents with ideas for how to help children control their anger and frustration, as well as how to prevent challenging behaviors in children. All materials and information for the sessions were obtained from the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), which was created to strengthen the capacity of social emotional development as well as school readiness in children enrolled in Head Start and child care programs. CSEFEL’s website contains a series of workshops geared towards teachers, educators, and parents to help them strengthen their children’s social emotional development (See Appendix A for Workshop Sessions and Appendix B for Activities and Handouts). The thesis project its unique within itself due to the fact that it presents the audience with hands on activities,
real-life situations and an open communication amongst the participants thus they can learn from each other.

In a true implementation of the workshop session, parents will be provided with a Pre and Post-Test Participant Survey to determine parent’s wants/needs, satisfaction with the workshop sessions, and the effectiveness of workshops in meeting their needs (See Appendix C for Workshop Pre/Post Survey).

**Evaluation of the Sessions**

Using a convenience sampling method, parents and professionals (reviewers) were asked to review and assess the workshop sessions and supporting materials (See Appendix D for Recruitment Letter). Based on each session, the topics presented, and the intended goals of each session, an evaluation form was developed. The evaluation was organized into two sections. The first requested the reviewer’s background information (education, job title, and years in the field of education/parenting) (See Appendix E for Demographic Information Survey). Then, for each topic of the session, evaluators were asked to comment on the strengths and areas of growth related to the organizational layout, writing style, activities, and examples presented to participants in the workshop sessions. Feedback from the evaluators will be used to make appropriate and necessary modifications to the workshop in order to create sessions in the future that are relevant and valuable for participants (See Appendix F for Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire).

**Intended Audience**

The sessions are designed primarily for parents of preschool age children. However, the information would also be useful for teachers of preschool age children because they could use the techniques in their classrooms as well as use the information
to provide guidance to the parents that need/ask for support. These sessions would also be helpful for administrators, healthcare professionals, and all those in the realm of early childhood that could use the information for their personal use and to pass on to others in need.

For evaluation purposes, the outlines of each session and the evaluations were sent out to four parents, four teachers, and two early childhood experts in order to acquire valuable, useful, and reliable feedback.

**Personal Qualifications**

**Researcher’s Qualifications**

In my ten years of experience working with children and parents in various settings (e.g., teaching, parenting workshop educator, coach), I have learned a great deal about how to approach and teach children, as well as their parents. Each parent and child dyad differs in the way they learn and the way they approach each other. As a master’s student in the field of Educational Psychology, with a focus on Early Childhood Education, I have learned about family diversity, child-home dynamics, the effects of socio-economic status on the parents and the child, as well as what parents’ need in order to be the best parent they can be for their child.

Soon after starting my master’s program I discovered I wanted to help parents help their children. I often found myself searching for and finding new techniques and resources to facilitate my student’s parent’s knowledge of their children’s social emotional development as well as how to set reasonable expectations from their children. In my journey I have meet many professors and professionals in the field of Early
Childhood Education that have guided me and helped me to create this project, which is the culmination of a life-long vision.

Early Childhood Educators have an immense responsibility to promote health and wellbeing of the children they serve. The California Early Childhood Educator Competencies (California Department of Education, 2011), in their competency area of professionalism state “Early childhood leaders require a breadth of knowledge and skills to effectively represent the profession publicly; to develop, implement, and advocate policy; and to engage with others in continuous quality improvement” (p.90). My sessions provide the proper, developmentally appropriate techniques, information for educators to take with them and in turn provide the information to the families they serve.

Evaluator’s Qualifications

Using a convenience sampling technique from a mommy and me group that the researcher participated in, eight evaluators were invited to assess the workshop session materials. Each evaluator has a personal or professional relationship with the researcher. All evaluators have professional or personal experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. The requirements for the assessors were to be parents themselves, for them to have experience working with parents and their children, for them to have previously given formal and informal advice to parents as it related to children’s developmentally appropriate growth, and for them to be receptive to change.

Qualification levels of each of the evaluators are listed below:

- Evaluator 1 has an extensive background in Early Childhood Development.

  She is a Master’s student in Educational Psychology, graduating May 2014.
She is also a mother of two young children, a seven year old and a one year old, both girls. She has also been a preschool teacher for over six years.

- Evaluator 2 has Master’s in Education with an emphasis in special education, has been in the field of education for over twelve years. She is a mother of a six year old boy and two year old twin boys.

- Evaluator 3 has been a preschool teacher for over six years and a parent of four children under the age of eight. She has dealt with behavioral issues from her boys, as well as assisting parents with their children’s challenging behaviors.

- Evaluator 4 has been in the Early Childhood Education field for over six years. She has her Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood and is currently attending school for her Master’s in Psychology. She has worked with behavior problem children and their parents at their home to assist in behavior management.

- Evaluator 5 has her Bachelor’s in Political Science and is currently an executive assistant for a large corporation. She is currently planning to be a mother and acted as “future” parent during the evaluation process of this thesis. She has also been a nanny to a family of four children.

- Evaluator 6 is a social worker trainee while finishing up her Master’s in Social work, anticipated graduation on May 2014. She has been in the field of education for over five years, mainly as a preschool teacher and working alongside with parents during her social work duties.
Evaluator 7 is a screening and service learning program coordinator for a child development service center. She has a Bachelor’s in global studies and has been in the field of education for over seven years.

Evaluator 8 is a fifth grade teacher at a private school, holding her teaching credentials for multiple subjects. She has been in the field for over eight years. She is also a mother to two-year-old twins (boy and girl). She is also involved in the accreditation process of the school she works for.

**Project Outline**

The following is a chronological timeline of the process of this project:

- Fall 2013 – Information gathering by speaking to professionals in the field, speaking to parents—seeing what their needs, their concerns, and coaching they are seeking with regard to their children and their behavior.
- January – February 2014 – Drafting workshop sessions, fine tuning details, finalizing sessions, creating evaluation forms, recruiting assessors
- March, 2014 – Sessions outline and evaluation form sent out to evaluators
- March 31st - April 4th, 2014 – Evaluation forms sent back completed by evaluators
- April 2014 – Compiling of data from evaluation forms
Bridge to Chapter Four

The next chapter includes a summary of the previous chapters, a detailed analysis of the data attained from the evaluations, and a discussion of future implementation of the sessions.
CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

“Children love and want to be loved and they very much prefer the joy of accomplishment to the triumph of hateful failure. Do not mistake a child for his symptom.” Erik Erikson

Summary

The purpose of this thesis project, Parenting Sessions: How to Deal with Difficult Behaviors in preschool-age Children, was to develop brief, discreet training sessions by adapting materials readily available to parents and educators on the Center for Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning website. The purpose of the sessions is to provide parents, as well as child development educators, with the tools needed to manage challenging behaviors in preschool-age children. Parents along with educators would acquire the tools and techniques through the sessions on how to foster social-emotional development in young children, in a developmentally appropriate way. With the tools/techniques given in the sessions, the parents/educators would be able to incorporate them in their everyday life. The goal of this thesis project is to create a series of parent training sessions that would guide first-time parents, experienced parents, educators and facilitators in the child development field, on how to developmentally appropriately nurture children’s social-emotional development. The session also introduces the participants on effective time management techniques to implement with children.

Results of Evaluations

Chapter Four consists of a compilation of the evaluations, the results from each assessor’s answers, as well as their most valuable, sincere, and useful comments. The
evaluations consisted of five multiple choice questions, a table divided into different sections from each parenting session including: Children’s Capabilities, Setting Reasonable Expectations, Re-Phrasing Expectations, Setting Appropriate Rules, Creating Your Own Rules, Ways to Present/Display Rules, When a Rule is Broken, or No Longer Applies, How to Create Schedules, Types of Schedules, Recognizing and Reacting to Their Emotions, Turtle Tuck Concept, Preventing Challenging Behaviors, Offer Choices, Redirection. Another table asked the assessors to define the areas of strength and areas for growth in: Writing Style, Organization, Activities, and samples implemented in the sessions. The last components of the evaluation was for the assessors to list valuable aspects of the sessions; two questions using a Likert-type scale (a lot, a moderate amount, none at all); and lastly, a question for evaluators to give their opinion on future follow-up sessions and next step. Lastly, quotes from each evaluator were selected in a comprehensive manner; making sure their comments pertained to the topic in hand and in their understanding of the topic.

**Demographic Information**

In order to gather demographic and personal information that pertained to the thesis in hand, five questions at the beginning of the evaluation were asked. The columns in the chart contain the following information that was provided from the evaluators: Job title, years in the field of education and/or as parent, education level, number of children, and the ages of the children. As the table below depicts, the eight evaluators represent various roles in the field of early childhood, some have been in the field as educators and/or parents for a long time, some for a short period of time, and some not at all. The
wide range of experience was selected in order to assure the parenting sessions created for this thesis would benefit all levels of parents that the sessions might be used with.

Table 4.1

Demographic Information on Evaluators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluator #</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Years as Parent/Educator</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Ages of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 1</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Masters in Educational Psychology (May 2014)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 &amp; 1 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 2</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>12 Years</td>
<td>Masters in Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 &amp; 2 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 3</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6 Years</td>
<td>Associates in Early Childhood</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8, 6, 4, 2 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 4</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>6 Years</td>
<td>Bachelors in Early Childhood</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 5</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>Bachelors in Political Science</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 6</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>5 Years</td>
<td>Masters Social Work (May 2014)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 7</td>
<td>Service Learning Program Coordinator</td>
<td>7 Years</td>
<td>Bachelors Social Sciences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator # 8</td>
<td>Elementary Teacher</td>
<td>8 Years</td>
<td>Bachelors in Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation of Workshop Topics

Each of the following sections was taken directly from the parenting sessions.

Each evaluator was asked to evaluate the strength(s) and area(s) of growth for each section. Their input, comments, and recommendations are listed below.
Children’s Capabilities

This section will consist of what children are capable of doing at a given targeted age. The parents were introduced to a short poem that stated how we help and teach children in all dynamics of life, but when it comes to discipline, many parents become “Stuck” and forget to teach. Six evaluators agreed that the opening statement of the first session was very powerful and spot on. The evaluators agreed that the activities and hand-outs were easy to follow and went along nicely with the topic of session one. One area of growth that was mentioned by every evaluator was to add information with regard to “children’s capabilities.” Thus, a hand-out showing children’s capabilities for the target age of the sessions (3-5 years old) was added to session one (Appendix G). For example, it was noted:

Evaluator 2

“Need to give examples of capabilities”

Evaluator 5

“Not sure what children’s capabilities are”

Setting Reasonable Expectations

In this section the parents will be shown what constitutes reasonable expectations for the target age group of the session, as well as an introduction to age appropriate language usage by parents, such as not using contractions or slang. Seven of the evaluators did not specify areas of growth for this section and expressed a lot of areas of strength. For example, all evaluators agreed that the language used in this section as well as the samples were relevant. Furthermore, all evaluators stated that this section was well received and understood. One evaluator expressed that an area of growth could be to
change the usage of the word “compliant,” as it seemed a bit harsh for the receiver; as a result this change will be made to future workshops. To illustrate,

**Evaluator 8**

“I like that you included appropriate language”

**Evaluator 7**

“Explain why saying it negatively can still leave the child wondering what to do”

**Evaluator 5**

“So TRUE! We are often very vague, so confusing for children”

“Will examples be given? Need examples to know parents are doing well”

**Evaluator 2**

“Compliant seems a fit harsh for a parent to understand, maybe change wording?”

**Evaluator 4**

“Give examples on what to do & what not to do”

**Re-Phrasing Expectations**

In this section of session one the parents will be encouraged to participate in an exercise and practiced “re-phrasing” common used phrases that are ineffective. Six evaluators stated that the flashcards, as well as the examples, were extremely useful in understanding why it is beneficial for children that parents’ use positive phrasing instead of words that denote negativity. An area of growth for this section was noted by three evaluators, which consisted of providing the participants with ample samples to confirm understanding. Accordingly, appropriate additions of samples were added to this section of the sessions in order to ascertain full understanding of re-phrasing. For example,
Evaluator 6

“Nice activity”

Evaluator 8

“I like the positive instead of the negative focus!”

Evaluator 4

“Great examples of responses normally given when a child misbehaves”

Setting Appropriate Rules

This section will allow the parents to go back in time and think of how their rules were enforced, how they came about, and how children feel about the rules. This exercise allowed the parents to put themselves in their children’s shoes for a little while.

According to the evaluators, this section had no suggested areas of growth as all evaluators felt that this section was the strongest and that it was easy for the participants to follow. Evaluators also stated that this section contained material that was doable and was not time consuming; especially for those parents/educators that are single parents, have no teaching assistant, and/or work full time. Some examples include,

Evaluator 4

“Loved learning how rules work”

Evaluator 8

“I like that this section calls attention to the idea that we assigned rules with the preposition they already know”

Creating Your Own Rules

This section will give the participants concrete instructions on how to successfully create rules with young children. The participants were given a set of rules to follow
when facilitating the conversation on “creating rules” with their children. Some comments from the evaluators:

**Evaluator 5**

“Simple yet sophisticated ideas”

**Evaluator 6**

“How will you incorporate cultural expectations?”

**Evaluator 8**

“Short, Sweet, to the point and positive”

Overall this section was well received by all evaluators. One area of concern brought up by Evaluator 6 was how to incorporate “cultural diversity.” One way to assure cultural diversity is accomplished is for the facilitator to facilitate a discussion amongst the participants in sharing about their different ways of raising children within their culture.

**Ways to Present/Display Rules**

This section will contain a lot of verbal examples that the facilitator would demonstrate for the participants. Seven evaluators noted that the samples presented were great ideas, especially the picture component of the rules as well as creating a “rule book”

One area of growth that was noted by Evaluator 5 was to include one or two samples of a “universal rule”; for example, creating a rule that could apply to multiple scenarios throughout the day; this change has been included in session two.

**Evaluator 8**

“Love the ideas of pics! Will totally steal for my own home/classroom”
Evaluator 6

“Good, different options!”

“Pick rules that are universal? Examples?”

Evaluator 7

“The rule board with photos of the child; book!”

When a Rule is Broken, or No Longer Applies

This section will concentrate on the inevitable, of how to adapt rules, as children grow older, and how to evaluate rules to see if they are still appropriate and then to make the necessary changes. Evaluators appreciated the “6 month” rule of re-evaluating the “rules”; most of them stated it was a perfect time frame for re-evaluating the rules. An area of growth noted by evaluators was to add some samples of how rules can change over time, reliant on children’s age and developmental growth. Modifications, such as adding samples of rules and samples of how they can be altered/changed over time/growth of the child, were made to this section to reflect the evaluator’s comments.

Evaluator 4

“Nice reminder about checking if rule is developmentally appropriate”

Evaluator 5

“I liked the changing rules every 6 months to stay fresh and showing child to help”

Evaluator 7

“Explain developmentally appropriate rules and give examples of how one could change overtime”
How to Create Schedules/ Types of Schedules

This section will consist of presenting some ideas on how to create schedules for daily routines of children. Five evaluators appreciated the distinctions between the variety of schedules that come along with having a child or facilitating a classroom filled with children. All eight of the evaluators praised how the thesis project included children in creating their daily schedule; along with taking photographs of them doing the task as a visual aid.

Evaluator 8

“Child involvement in covering up tasks is a great idea”

Evaluator 7

“Stress the importance of having child involved”

Evaluator 5

“LOVED the getting the children involved and taking pictures of them doing scheduled activities”

“Can giving children the power to make their rules make them think they are in charge?”

Turtle Tuck Concept

This concept/book was well received by all evaluators, the overall comments from them was that it was a great concept to teach children that it is “okay to have emotions” (Evaluator 3), and “a feeling that you are not alone” (Evaluator 6). One area of growth was to add directions for parents when reading “Turtle Tuck” with children. The addition was to inform parent to assert that their children are aware and understand what being
“angry” and “Calm” looks like, what it feels like, and that it is okay to feel all those emotions. This suggestion was added to Session Three.

Evaluator 4

Turtle Tuck is an amazing tool to give parents”

Evaluator 5

“Love this concept! I think some adults should practice this too”

“Its good to have a child have a safe place to go to and blow off steam too”

Preventing Challenging Behaviors

The evaluators indicated that this section was clearly explained and the samples along with the definition from CSEFEL were valuable in understanding challenging behaviors. One addition that the evaluators wanted to see in this section was to emphasize the importance of parents understanding that all behaviors occur for a reason, and it is important to determine what is causing the behavior. Per the evaluators’ request, this change was incorporated in “Challenging Behaviors” section.

Offer Choices

This section had no areas of growth from the evaluators, only areas of strength where noted including: great samples and good inclusion of limited choices. Some examples,

Evaluator 8

“Offering choices encourages independence and feeling of autonomy; great to share with parents”

Evaluator 7

“I like that you keep them simple and clear”
Redirection

Redirection was well received by all evaluators as well with most of them stating that the samples of redirection were “great.” No further comments were received, and no areas of growth were allocated for this section.

Writing Style

Overall, the evaluators stated that the writing style was easy to understand and follow. Some evaluators stated that it was “short and to the point” (Evaluator 1), which again made it “enjoyable to read” (Evaluator 3). Some areas of growth in the writing style were: grammatical errors, typos, and asserting that the material “flowed.”

Organization

The organizational aspect of the project was well received by all evaluators, they stated it was very well organized and user friendly. None of the evaluators stated an area of growth for “organization.”

Activities

A few of the evaluators stated that they would like to see more samples incorporated into the activities. These changes have been incorporated into the thesis project parenting sessions.

Evaluator 1

“Fun and Engaging”

Evaluator 4

“Easy to understand and complete”

Evaluator 5

“Perfect”
“More examples would be great”

Evaluator 6
“LOVED!”

Evaluator 7
“Are related and appropriate”

Evaluator 8
“Relatable and applicable”

Evaluator’s Recommendations

The evaluations concluded with two open-ended questions that allowed them to freely express their opinion in regards to the most valuable aspect of the parent training sessions. Below are the answers from the evaluators.

Evaluator responses to the first question, what are the 3 most valuable aspects of the sessions, are reported as follows,

Evaluator 1
“The strategies; The examples; Quickness of activities”

Evaluator 2
“Anything involving parent and parent/child interactions; Real examples given that the parents can relate to; Tangible handouts for use of reference”

Evaluator 3
“First hand samples; Questions and Answers; Handouts and book”

Evaluator 4
“Teaching the parent; Behavior is learned just like any other skill; Homework allows parents to practice what they learned”
Evaluator 5

“Samples; The Why we are doing this and not only the how’s; Short, simple to follow”

Evaluator 6

“Educational; Examples; Communication between facilitator and parents”

Evaluator 7

“Having “homework” and being able to bring something personal back to the group; Helping children recognize their emotions and how to cope with them; Having developmentally appropriate expectations/rules for children”

Evaluator 8

“Forces one to rethink old/bad habits; Applicable to parents and anyone in education; Focuses on involving children vs. telling them what to do”

Evaluator responses to the second question, “What might you suggest as a follow-up to the sessions? What do you believe should be the next step for parents in training?” included:

Evaluator 1

“Check in on behaviors and actions of parents (possible observations) to see if it is helping the child’s behavior”

Evaluator 2

“A “Show & Tell” or “Questions & Answers” session where parents can share positive and negative examples of scenarios where they used new knowledge can attain more guidance or reassurance”
Evaluator 3

“Emailing participants articles of ideas”

Evaluator 4

None stated

Evaluator 5

“The rebuttal when child doesn’t want to comply”

Evaluator 6

“Follow up after completion”

Evaluator 7

“A reflection about parents own reactions to challenging behaviors and how it affect their interactions with their children”

Evaluator 8

“Classroom management or more direct age specific material”

Rating of Sessions

The last two questions in the questionnaire used a Likert style scale to determine whether evaluators would implement the workshop sessions in their classrooms, their homes, or with their children and/or students. Table 4.2 illustrates evaluator responses, in which all eight evaluators agreed with the techniques provided during the three sessions; meaning all eight Evaluators approved of the techniques provided during the Sessions.

In Table 4.3, the evaluators responses are shown about the degree of NEW information they attained by the end of evaluating the parenting sessions created for this thesis. Four evaluators stated that they have learned A LOT from the sessions, and four
evaluators stated they have learned a *MODERATE* amount of information from the sessions.

Table 4.2

*Response to Techniques*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do you agree with the techniques provided in the sessions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3

*Response to Information Gained*

Please rate how much new information about how to handle challenging behaviors in children you have gained by evaluating these sessions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>Moderate Amount</th>
<th>None at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion/Future of the Sessions

The Parent Workshop: How to Handle Challenging Behaviors was designed to provide parents with techniques on fostering social-emotional development in their children as well as preventing and dealing with challenging behaviors that arise from lack of social-emotional skills. Adapting materials from the Center for Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, as well as other resources and literature reviews, the sessions were created, being mindful of developmentally appropriate practices throughout the sessions. Based on feedback given by eight evaluators that included parents, early childhood professionals, ECE administrators, and soon-to-be parents, the information in the sessions was perceived to be informative, developmentally appropriate, easily understandable and applicable, and relevant for the targeted audience. According to the evaluator responses, the sessions provided the necessary information on the basic concepts of social-emotional development in young children, the objectives, methods, and implementation of how to foster social-emotional development, and strategies for how to help children with challenging behaviors.

Conclusion

The CSEFEL materials were selected because they are evidenced-based, are used in many states (including California) as statewide curriculum for promoting positive social-emotional development in young children. Additionally, the materials are public domain and can be freely used by educators and parents. The main objective of this project was to design multiple training sessions with the focus of “Social-Emotional development” of young children at its core. The intention of the creation of the sessions is for future implementation at parenting training centers, and those that are interested in
learning how to foster their children’s social-emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors. At the conclusion of evaluating all the comments and suggestions by the evaluators, the necessary changes were made in order to increase the effectiveness of the training sessions as a whole. Once the present sessions have been implemented, have been mastered, and are deemed successful, there will be future plans in expanding the sessions to incorporate more concepts from CSEFEL as well as other components of developmentally appropriate practices for young children.

Future goals would be to create a “study” of the participants and follow their progress, their implementations, and their success/failures when implementing the techniques learned in the sessions for a period of time. Through a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of the sessions, the facilitators would be able to assess what is effective, what is not, and what needs to be changed, added, or omitted. Lastly, the participants would be interviewed in increments of three months post-sessions to perceive what material has been retained over time.

An interesting concept brought up during the evaluation portion of the sessions was that of considering cultural differences. It would be worthwhile to see how the different cultures that would attend the parenting training sessions affect the sessions materials, how does the material change their views, and how well perceived is the new material by the different cultural beliefs? This concept is extremely important because there are so many different cultural beliefs in our society, even within a culture there could be extreme differences among them. Thus, the goal of the facilitator would be to be aware of the different cultural beliefs that would be present during the sessions, for the facilitator to be culture sensitive and be able to provide an alternative for those
differences. Ultimately, the objective of the sessions is to provide a cultural sensitive parenting session where parents feel there are valued, where their personal values are respected, and their children’s wellbeing and development is at the center of the finish line.
References


APPENDIX A

Description of Workshop Sessions

Helping Parents Foster Children Social-Emotional Development

The relationship between healthy emotional and social development in young children is recognized as forming the foundation for all future growth and development (Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle, 2008; McDermott, 2002). Long before children ever reach school age they are building emotional and social competencies associated with success in school and beyond as well as with family and friends within their home environments (Diener & Mangelsdorf, 1999). Parents often are not aware of the powerful role they play in their child’s emotional and social development, and may believe that it is something that develops on its own with minimal parent involvement. This project will inform parents of the importance of their involvement in their child’s social emotional development and will provide tools to implement positive parenting practices.

Context for the Sessions

This series of sessions will be led using a lecture/open discussion format. The facilitator will conduct each session in a manner that invites conversation, interaction, and learning from the participants. Each session will be approximately 30 minutes long to maximize parent engagement. The length of time for each session was selected because according to adult learning theory, most adults stop attending to learning new information after about 20 minutes (Knowles, 1970). Furthermore, this set-up allows the parents to meaningfully engage with one concept at a time, enabling them to comprehend what is being presented, and helps them to attain parenting skills from professionals in a short amount of time.
The intended audience includes individuals who are parents, parents who are also teachers and educators in the field of child development. The sessions could take place within the context of an early learning center in which there is a place that offers privacy with a sense of welcoming atmosphere. Since the session would entail conversations about children’s behaviors that are not commonly accepted and frequently labeled “bad” behavior, it is recommend that children old enough to understand complex language not be present during the sessions. However, I understand that parents often must bring their children; therefore accommodations could be made for older children to be cared for in a separate room by a caretaker, while younger children could remain with their parents. Materials for the sessions would be designed and developed for each session’s content and would include a combination of visual aids, worksheets, paper work, and homework assignment print outs. Prior to beginning the workshop, parents will be provided with a Pre-Test Survey to capture information about their children and areas of need/concern.

**Individual Sessions Content**

The first session will introduce the parent(s) to the idea that they play a critical role in their child’s development and learning, how to have reasonable expectations of children, as well as how to find better ways to say every day phrases in less negative ways.

The second session will introduce the concept of how to establish household rules, how to introduce them to their children, and how to make rules effective and easy for children to follow, and how to set up a schedule that works.
Lastly, the third session will introduce parents to ideas for how to help children control their anger and frustration, as well as how to prevent challenging behaviors in children.

All materials and the foundation of the present thesis was attained from the *Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning* (CSEFEL), which was created to strengthen the capacity of social emotional development as well as school readiness in children enrolled in Head Start and child care programs (See Appendix G for Activities and Handouts). CSEFEL’s website contains a series of workshops geared towards teachers, educators, and parents to help them strengthen their children’s social emotional development. With the information attained on CSEFEL and all other research conducted, new sessions were developed for the intended purpose of this thesis project.
SESSION 1: Children’s Capabilities

Introduction

First, the session’s facilitator will introduce her/himself followed by introductions from the participants and explain the purpose of the first session. Session one will describe how to set reasonable expectations and how to use re-phrasing as a strategy to promote positive communication and healthy social and emotional development.

To begin, the following passage will be read to the participants, the words in italics will be left out as each sentence is read, to illicit participant input, and the facilitator will confirm it.

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we...

...punish? ... teach?”

“Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”

—Tom Herner (NASDE President), Counterpoint, 1998, p.2
Set Reasonable Expectations

The first activity will inform participants about what constitutes a reasonable expectation for young children; they will also receive a handout that informs the participants of what their children are capable of according to their age. Often, us adults, inform children of what not to do without informing them what our expectations are of them. According to CSEFEL, young children are given direction that is just too vague, “be nice”, “be careful”, “watch out” and so on. The tools below will guide the parent on how to be successful in getting their message across.

- What to do vs. What not to do, which one would make you be more amenable?
- Use age appropriate language as well as age appropriate expectations.

Re-phrase Expectations

The purpose of the second activity is to help parents learn tactics for restating common phrases that parents often use when disciplining their children. First, participants will be asked if they could state a different way of saying these common phrases that are said to children while fostering their social-emotional competence. Each participant will be provided a handout to write down their responses; these responses will be later discussed as a group (See Activity #10).

- Stop yelling!
- Don’t throw your toys!
- Stop bothering your sister!
- Don’t spill your milk.
- Stop whining.
• Be good.
• Be nice.
• Cut it out.

We instead can say:
• I need you to use your inside voice please
• Balls are for throwing, would you like a ball?
• I think your sister wants to be left alone, want to play with the dog instead?
• Oh, I see you spilled your milk; I need you to clean it up now.

Next, participants will be asked to share a common phrase they catch themselves using and if they can come up with a more positive way of saying it. They will be asked to write down the old phrase on one side of a flashcard and the new one on the other side. They can keep the flashcard with them as a reminder to use the new, more positive phrase.

Closing

At the end of the session (say during the last 10 minutes?) parents will have the opportunity to ask questions and then the facilitator will recap the information covered during the session.

Homework

In order to reinforce concepts learned during Session One, parents will be given Activity #9. The purpose of Activity #9 is to provide instructions for observing their children’s challenging behaviors, noting the number of times the behavior occurred and how long the behavior lasted. The worksheet guides parents through the process of
identifying what occurred before the behavior, what happened after, and how the behavior ended. Lastly, the activity prompts parent to analyze the purpose of the challenging behavior, as well as what they think their children were trying to tell them.
SESSION 2
Consistency is Key

Introduction

The second session will begin with a brief review (i.e., 5 minutes) of the content of the last session on expectations and re-phrasing. The facilitator will ask participants to share if they tried out a new phrase, how did it go? How did the children react, and how did you feel?

Parents will be asked if they would like to share their results/findings from the first session homework assignment, including what they learned and how they could use this information in the future to improve challenging behaviors. If parents are hesitant to participate, the facilitator could utilize post it notes of same color and have each parent write down their findings. Facilitator will then collect the post-its and post them in a common wall for all to see.

After reviewing the first session, the facilitator will present the second session’s purpose, which is to provide information related to setting rules and schedules

Set Appropriate Rules

This session will begin with having parents close their eyes and visualize that they are their children’s age. Instruct them to think of how they were kept safe by their parents, caretakers, teachers and any other adult. Were there rules involved? How were those rules presented, enforced, and accepted? Did the rules seem to be realistic, developmentally appropriate, or doable? Do you wish you, as a child, could have been more involved in creating some of the rules, to feel a sense of belonging and ownership?
Once the parents have done this visualization exercise, have parents open their eyes and think of the rules they have their house. Were their children involved in the process of making these rules? Do they really know the rules? Do they use the rules? Do they have a reminder of rules, just in case they forget?

The facilitator will share information about the importance of rules to keep order in the home, to keep children safe, as well as to keep parents’ sanity intact. Miller (2004) stated that in order for rules to work the child must be involved, the reason for the rules should be explained, and they should be stated in positive language; all of which encourages children to be more willing to abide by the rules.

**Creating your own rules**

The participants will be given Activity Sheet #10 to fill-out during this aspect of the session and instructed to create their own rules. These instructions include:

- Pick 3-5 rules ONLY
- Use positive wording, state what you want to see, describe it as much as possible and in simple terms.
- Pick rules that are at most universal to all aspects of your day. Sample: Keep food in tray while eating (instead of saying: keep lunch area neat).

The facilitator will then share examples of the rules from his/her own household or general examples of rules meeting the criteria above. After parents have had the opportunity to share and discuss a variety of rules, the facilitator will take them through the follow exercises.

**Ways to present/display rules**

The presenter will discuss various strategies for how to present or display rules.
- Use pictures, even snap pictures of your own child doing the task!
- Post the pictures on a poster that has a title “House rules” or “rules”
- Create a picture book that portray the character following the rules, and even breaking them once in a while and what occurs when the character does so.

**When a rule is observed, broken, or no longer applies**

In addition to strategies for creating and displaying rules, the presenter will describe how to respond to rules when their child complies with or breaks a rule.

Praise when you see the rule being done:

- I liked how you pick up the food from the floor,
- I really appreciate you cleaning up your toys,
- I loved how you patted the dog so nicely

Provide gentle reminder when the rule is broken or not done properly

- The dog likes it when you pet her nicely.
- Oh I see you forgot to pick up your trash
- Can you please help clean up your toys?

Revise rules every 3-6 months; are they still developmentally appropriate/applicable?

- “Help clean up your toys” CHANGES TO “Clean after yourself”
- “Dirty dishes go in the sink” CHANGES TO “Wash dirty dishes”

***Presenter will have samples of different ways of presenting and displaying “rules”.

Schedules
Setting up a daily schedule is helpful for the child, the parents and the family as a whole. A schedule is not set in stone, but it’s a great tool to use for setting up routines, expectations and it leaves little room for “surprises.” The child can refer to the schedule to see what is coming up next, prepare for it and know what is expected of them (clean-up of activity they are currently on, finishing up their meal, saying their goodbyes, etc.). The following activities will assist parents with strategies for using schedules.

**How to create schedules**

In order to assist parents in creating schedules for their children, the presenter will provide several examples.

- **Photographs** - again you can use photos from the internet, or take your own personal photos of your children performing the task to make it more personable and meaningful to them!
- Create a way for child to cover or remove the activity once it has been completed.
- Schedule should have major events or activities.
- You can create multiple schedules, i.e. bedtime routine, morning routine, daily routine.

**Types of Schedules**

In addition to providing ideas for how to create schedules, this session will identify different types of schedules that parents can use depending on their child’s developmental level and/or individual needs.

- Picture schedules (younger children or visual learner)
- Written descriptive schedules (older children)
• First/Then
• Wheel of events
• Interchangeable/ flexible schedules

** Presenter will have samples of all the different schedules for parents to explore and see a visual of what was being taught.

Closing

Time will be allowed for the parents to ask questions as well as a recap on what was covered during the session.

Parents will be given Handout #12; *Things to try at home*, this informative handout would guide the parents on how to introduce rules, and how to keep them going in their home.
SESSION 3

Helping Children Understand their Emotions and Behaviors

Introduction

This session will start with activity #13; *Parent Encouragement and Positive Comments*. Parents will be instructed to write a positive note of an encouraging interaction that occurred between the parent and child since the last session. This worksheet will be given back to the parent at the end of the session.

Similar to Session Two, Session Three, will recap the last session on rules and schedules. The facilitator will ask: Did you introduce the new rules? Did your children play part in creating the rules? How are they going? Have you created a schedule for your child? Which one and how is it going?

This session will first explain how to help children recognize when they are angry and how to react to their emotions in a positive way, as well as how to prevent challenging behaviors in children.

**Recognize and React to their Emotions**

**Turtle Tuck Concept.**

Tucker the Turtle is a strategy that helps children stop and think about how to react when they have strong emotions. The facilitator will first read the story “Tuck the Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think” by Rochelle Lentini. A copy of the book will be given to each participant to keep and share with their children. The parent should start a conversation with the child about what they think “calm” and “angry” are? The parent can ask the child to “show” their calm and angry face, how would they react when they are angry or calm, and so on.
When the facilitator has finished reading the story, the group would go over these key points.

- First- recognize that you are feeling angry
- Second- Stop and Think
- Third- Go into “Shell,” take 3 breaths, and calm, coping thoughts.
- Fourth- Come out of shell when calm and think of a solution

Parents will then be assisted to identify strategies for incorporating Tucker the Turtle with their children. Ask Parents: Can you think of a place where your child can go to think when they are angry or upset? Could you create one?

Generate Ideas: Help parents think of spaces such as: under a chair, a desk, and table. Paint a box like a turtle to represent the “turtle tuck” concept, or just have children color and decorate a box to make it their own, giving them pride and a sense of belonging.

**Preventing Challenging Behaviors**

Challenging behaviors can be best explained by CSEFEL as: any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults. Parents need to understand that a challenging behavior occurs from frustration and cannot be corrected until that “trigger” is found and corrected. Examples of challenging behaviors include:

- Behavior that is not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures (e.g., a five year old biting).
• Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive vocal and motor behavior (e.g., screaming, running), property destructions, self-injury, noncompliance, and withdrawal.

Two strategies for managing children’s challenging behaviors will be discussed, offering choices and redirection.

**Offer Choices.** One strategy that can help children learn to regulate behavior is by giving them reasonable choices that are appropriate for their developmental level. For example:

- **Offer limited choices**
  - Do you want this or that?
  - You can either get in the car or I can help you.

- **Give reasonable choices**
  - You can eat an apple or a banana.
  - You can put on your shoes or stay inside.

- **Give choices that you are okay with them picking and doing at the moment you give it to them, or after the said task is completed.**
  - You get in the bath or I help you.
  - I wash.
  - your hair with this hand or silly hand (showing child your other hand wiggling).

- **Use visual as much as possible (show the items they can choose from).**

**Activity**
After discussing different strategies for offering choices, the presenter will lead parents in generating some of their own ideas.

- Can you give choices?
- Dressing
- Bathing
- Dinner
- Outside play
- TV
- Riding in car
- Shopping
- Cleaning up toys
- Going to bed
- Eating at a fast food restaurant
- Snack time
- Playing with siblings
- Reading a story

**Redirection**

Redirection is a great tool to use when a child is doing/showing a behavior that is not acceptable, not safe, or not adequate for the time/location they are doing so.

Redirection is facilitated by an adult whom is aware of the behavior that needs to be interrupted. When the adult steps in the behavior should be stated as well as your action. By stating the behavior and what the adult will be doing the child would not be surprised. The success of redirection is shown when the child no longer does the behavior, there
might be a need for reminders; however, the child will know that if the behavior is not stopped by them, they will be redirected by an adult.

- Physical redirection- interrupts the child’s challenging behavior and reengages the child in a more appropriate activity.
  
  Example: A child is playing in the sink and splashing water all over the bathroom.

  o The parent might choose to physically move the child away from the sink and over to toys in the child’s room.

  o The parent then sits down on the floor near the toys and begins to play in a way that is inviting to the child.

- Verbal Redirection- provides a distraction for the child and an introduction to a new, more appropriate activity.

  Example: A child is upset and throws a temper tantrum because he/she was asked to turn off the television.

  o The parent redirects the child by saying, “Wow, it is beautiful outside. I feel like going to the park to play.”

- Redirection with Teaching- a way to redirect and teach the child at the same time.

  Example: A child begins to have a tantrum because he is frustrated with putting a toy together.

  o The parent says to the child, “Evan, you can say, ‘Help please.’”

  o Evan says, “Help please,” and the parent then puts the toy together.

Closing
As a final wrap up of the three sessions, participants will be given Handout #26 that provides strategies that were touched on during the three series of sessions.

**Final Activity**

Participants will also be given Handout #27 to fill-out before they leave the last session. This handout will allow them to pick 3 strategies they learned during the sessions that they would like to implement at home.

**Session’s Evaluation**

At the end of Session Three, participants will complete an evaluation form about their experiences during the three sessions at the completion of the session three. The results from these evaluations will provide information that will be used to make improvements for future sessions.
APPENDIX B

Workshop Activities and Handouts

Activities (10, 9, 11, 13, 18) and Handouts (12, 26, 27)

*Activities are in the order presented in the workshop

Activity #10

Session 3—Activity #10

Positive Words Activity
Let’s Practice

Tell your child what to do instead of what not to do.
Clearly and simply state what you expect your child to do.
Have age-appropriate expectations.
Use language that your child can understand. Young children often have difficulty with contractions (two words that are combined to form one, such as "don’t" and "can’t").

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t…</th>
<th>Do…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t run!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop climbing!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t touch!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No yelling!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop whining!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t hit!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No coloring on the wall!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t throw your truck!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
Vanderbilt University
vanderbilt.edu/asef
### Session 3 – Activity #9

**Things to Try at Home!**

**Determining the Meaning of Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the Challenging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of times behavior occurred</th>
<th>How long the behavior lasted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### What Happened Before?
- I told or asked my child to do something
- Changed or ended my child’s activity
- I removed an object from my child
- An object was out of reach
- My child was doing an activity he/she didn’t like
- My child requested something
- Other (specify) ___________

- My child was playing alone
- My child moved from one activity to another
- I told my child “No,” “Don’t,” “Stop”
- I was giving attention to others
- The task/activity was difficult for my child
- Other (specify) ___________

#### What Happened After? How did it end?
- I gave my child attention
- I gave my child an object/activity/toy
- I removed my child from activity/area
- I ignored my child
- I used “time-out”
- Other (specify) ___________

- I punished or scolded my child
- I withdrew my request or demand
- I hugged my child
- I helped my child
- Other (specify) ___________

**Why do you think your child was using this behavior?**

**What do you think he/she was trying to tell you?**
Session 3—Activity #11

Household Rules

Write out 3-5 household rules. Remember the “rules” for rules:
• Set no more than 5 rules.
• State rules as “do’s” (not “don’ts”)—tell your children what you want them “to do.”
• Pick rules that apply to many situations.

1. __________
2. __________
3. __________
4. __________
5. __________
Session 3—Handout #12

Things to Try at Home!
Teach Your Household Rules

• Make a rules chart (pictures may be helpful) with your child.
• Discuss and demonstrate the rules until you are sure that your child understands the rules.
• Review the rules every day! You can even make up songs about the rules!
• Remind your child of the rules before challenging behavior can occur.
• Praise your child for following the rules.

Don't worry about how to respond if your child does not follow the rules. At this point, we just want to focus on teaching your child the rules and expectations!

How to TEACH rules:
Step by Step—Focus on teaching your child the new skills and expectations.
• Children need to have tasks broken down for them. Often we have to help them learn how to
do the skill before we can expect them to do it independently. That might involve showing them
how, doing part of a task and having them finish it, or asking them to only do one part of the

task.

Review, Review, Review!—Review the new rules many, many times!
• It may take repeated review of the new information before your child really understands it. If
you show your child the rules chart only 1 time and then forget to review it again, and again,
and again, he/she is going to forget what is on it.

Practice, Practice, Practice—Give your child many opportunities to follow the rules.
• Children need lots of practice to learn new skills.

Support, Not Criticism—While your child is practicing the rule, help him/her or tell him/her how
great it is that he/she is trying.
• When we learn something new, we need people to encourage us and cheer us on.

Celebrate Your Success!
• Give your child encouragement. Let your child know how proud you are!

How did it go? Write comments to bring back to the next session:
Session 4—Activity #13
Parent Encouragement and Positive Comments!

Write an encouraging note or positive comment to yourself about something you did with your child this past week that you feel really proud about!
Session 4 – Handout #18

Turtle Technique
(Includes Picture Cues, Tucker Turtle Story, Teaching Tips, and Puppet Pattern)

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4
Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think

A scripted story to assist families with teaching the “Turtle Technique”
By Rochelle Lentini
Adapted for Families September 2006

Tucker Turtle is a terrific turtle. He likes to play with his friends at the park and in his backyard.
But sometimes things happen that can make Tucker really mad.
When Tucker got mad, he used to hit, kick, or yell at his friends. His friends would get mad or upset when he hit, kicked, or yelled at them.
Tucker now knows a new way to “think like a turtle” when he gets mad.

Step 1

OUCH!
He can stop and keep his hands, body, and yelling to himself!
He can tuck inside his shell and take 3 deep breaths to calm down.

1..
2..
3..

Step 3
Tucker can then **think of a solution** or a way to make it better.

*Step 4*
Tucker’s friends are happy when he plays nicely and keeps his body to himself. Friends also like it when Tucker uses nice words or has an adult help him when he is upset.
The End.
Teaching Tips on the Turtle Technique

Tucker’s friends are happy when he plays nicely
- Model remaining calm.
- Teach your child the steps of how to control feelings and calm down (“think like a turtle”).
  - Step 1: Recognize your feeling(s).
  - Step 2: Think “stop.”
  - Step 3: Tuck inside your “shell,” and take 3 deep breaths.
  - Step 4: Come out when calm, and think of a “solution.”
- Practice steps frequently.
- Prepare for and help your child handle possible disappointment or change and “to think of a solution.”
- Recognize and comment when your child stays calm.

Session 5—Handout #26

Strategies That Help

1. Know what is reasonable
2. Plan ahead
3. State expectations in advance
4. Present limited reasonable choices
5. Say “when”
6. Catch your child being good!
7. Stay calm
8. Logical consequences (see Handout)
9. Neutral Time
Activity #27

Session 5 — Activity #27
Things to Try at Home! Strategies To Do List!

3 Strategies that I will try at home:

1.

2.

3.
APPENDIX C

Workshop Pre/Post Test

Workshop Pre-Test

Name:________________________________________________________

Education: __________________________________________________________________________

Job Title: __________________________________________________________________________

Age of Children: ______________________________________________________________________

What challenging behaviors are you currently experiencing?

What behaviors do you need/want help with?

What are you looking to learn from the sessions?

What do you know about challenging behaviors?
Workshop Post-evaluation

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Age of Children: _______________________________________________________

What did you learn about challenging behaviors?

What did you like/dislike about the format/content of the sessions?

What tools are you walking away with from the sessions?

Which session helped you the most?

What tools that you attained from the sessions have you/will you implement?

Has the sessions helped you with your children’s challenging behaviors?
APPENDIX D

Evaluator Recruitment Letter

Dear (evaluator),

Thank you for taking part in this evaluation for my Master’s thesis project.

The purpose of this thesis project is to:

- Create training sessions that provide tools and techniques for how to prevent and handle challenging behaviors in children
- Define challenging behaviors
- Understanding of how helping prevent/children overcome challenging behaviors enhances children’s social-emotional development

The training sessions for parents and educators will consist of three interactive sessions that include hands-on activities, hand-outs, conversations with peers, and discussions on how the tools assist children. In each session, parents/educators will be able to:

- Define and understand the concepts presented
- Implement techniques taught during the sessions
- View, create, and implement activities during sessions and home
- Get materials to take-home to continue the learning process

The goal of this project is to create parent/educator training sessions that would assist them in implementing developmentally appropriate strategies to use with their children. By doing so, the parents would improve in their parenting techniques, feel a sense of accomplishment as well as consistency; this also applies for those working with young children in various educational settings. The children will feel valued, respected, and develop a sense of self.

Attached are the outlines for each of the 3 workshop session presentations and a two page evaluation form. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take the time to read through the sessions and complete the evaluation from and return to me in 5 days. For your convenience, I have attached a stamped envelope addressed to me for you to mail back evaluations.

Sincerely,

Magali Williams
APPENDIX E

Evaluator Demographic Survey

Name: _________________________________________________________________

Job Title: ______________________________________________________________

2. How long have you been a parent and/or been in the Education field?
   ☐ 0-2 years
   ☐ 3-5 years
   ☐ 6-8 years
   ☐ 8+ years

3. What is your highest level of educational?
   ☐ AA
   ☐ BA, BS degree in ________________________________________
   ☐ MA, MS degree in ________________________________________
   ☐ PhD degree in ________________________________________
   ☐ Other, please specify _____________________________________

4. How many children do you have?
   ☐ 0
   ☐ 1
   ☐ 2
   ☐ 3
   ☐ 4+

5. What are your children’s ages? Please check all that apply
   ☐ 0-4
   ☐ 5-8
   ☐ 9-12
   ☐ 13-15
   ☐ 16-18+
APPENDIX F

Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

Please consider each topic below and identify strengths and areas for improvement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTIONS OF SESSIONS</th>
<th>AREAS OF STRENGTH</th>
<th>AREAS FOR GROWTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Capabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Reasonable Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Phrasing Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Appropriate Rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Your Own Rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to Present/Display Rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a Rule is Broken, or No Longer Applies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Create Schedules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Schedules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing and Reacting to Their Emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turtle Tuck Concept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing Challenging Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer Choices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redirection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMAT OF SESSIONS</th>
<th>AREAS OF STRENGTH</th>
<th>AREAS FOR GROWTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continues on next page …
Please rate the value and utility of the workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. What are the 3 most valuable aspects of the Sessions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To what extent do you agree with the techniques provided in the sessions?

- [ ] None at all
- [ ] A moderate amount
- [ ] A lot

Please rate how much new information about how to handle challenging behaviors in children you have gained by evaluating these sessions:

- [ ] None at all
- [ ] A moderate amount
- [ ] A lot

What might you suggest as a follow-up to the sessions? What do you believe should be the next step for parents in training?

*Thank you for your time and feedback!*  
*It is greatly appreciated*
Appendix G

Developmental Milestones Ages 3 – 5 Years
Center for Disease Control
www.cdc.org

![Image](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/checklists_3yr.pdf)
Developmental milestones – con’t.