

10 Simple Things You Can Do to Decrease Challenging Behaviors: Develop Meaningful Relationships with Children in Your Classroom

Meaningful relationships (positive, supportive bonds or connections between teachers and children) help the children feel loved, valued, and able to learn. The [Pyramid Model](#) is grounded in positive, supportive relationships between teachers and children because these relationships are essential in supporting children's social emotional development; increased social emotional competence then decreases challenge behaviors.

Ask Yourself:

(be honest 😊)

	How Often Do I...	<i>I do this most of the time</i>	<i>I could do this more often</i>
1	Greet each child by name at arrival and throughout the day? For example, "Good morning, Cian. I'm happy to see you today."		
2	Engage in 1:1, warm, positive, eye-level interactions with children? For example, sitting beside a child, "Tell me about that tall tower you're building."		
3	Speak calmly to children? For example, taking a breath and checking your tone before saying, "Use gentle hands to be kind to your friends."		
4	Comfort children when they are upset? For example, "You seem sad. Would you like to sit with me for a while?"		
5	Acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations; respond with respect and help them find appropriate ways to cope? For example, "You look like you are feeling angry. You might feel less angry if you take a break - you can go for a walk or hug a stuffed animal or get a drink of water."		
6	Follow children's lead and interests during play? For example, "I notice you're building a green tower; I'll build one too."		
7	Acknowledge children's positive behaviors? For example, "You shared the Legos with Emma; now you both have some."		
8	Invite children to actively participate in personal care routines and activities? For example, "It looks like your nose is runny. Can I help you wipe it or do you want to wipe it yourself?"		
9	Acknowledge children's accomplishments and efforts? For example, to a child who has difficulty taking turns, "It's so hard to wait and you are trying really hard to wait patiently for your turn" or to a child who sometimes runs out of the room, "You must feel proud of how you stayed safe by staying in the classroom today!"		
10	Love what I do and show it? For example, share one good thing that happened each day (with coworkers and with your class, too!).		

Reflect on your responses to determine which pro-social behaviors you can do more often and/or more consistently. You may enjoy the following related resources (also available online as PDF at www.wnybehaviortoolbox.com)

[Giving Positive Feedback & Encouragement](#) • [Alternatives to Good Job](#) • [Building Positive Relationships](#)

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