

## Behaviour Systems

Assisting children in the early years learn socially appropriate behaviours, requires CHANGE. Change will affect everyone involved in the classroom / group context. The instructional process will change as the teacher implements a deliberate change in their behaviour development and management systems. This change may require the teacher to relearn / re-define his or her own role. Environmental changes will lead to a change in class / group climates. The whole situation will be different for the child as he/she creates new behaviours.

Areas relating to the instructional process, environmental factors and child factors are all affected in this change action. The 'WHAT' of the change action is outlined here...

### Instructional Process

#### The Teacher ...

Develops a successful behaviour development and management system for the child who is learning new behaviours.

Defines baseline behaviour expectations with the child.

Teaches the defined baseline behaviours.

Coaches the child and guides to mastery level as he / she learns and creates new behaviours.

Teaches and practices the child in the use of a non-belonging non punitive 'out system'.

### Environmental Factors

#### The Environment ...

Adopts new behaviour management processes into its system.

Evaluates the health of each system (unhealthy, low health, healthy, high health, quality).

Allows new behaviour learning's to be taught and practiced in the social context where they are required to be used.

Allow peers to respond differently to the new behaviours of the child.

### Child Factors

#### The Child ...

Learns and applies new behaviours appropriate to the social context.

Changes from inappropriate to appropriate ways of meeting basic life needs.

Gains success through positive responses to new behaviours.

Learns a process of behavioural self-management and self-responsibility.

Let's translate this CHANGE into the early years classroom / group context. As the teacher embarks on the behaviour teaching process she defines the non-negotiable baseline behaviour expectations with the child. She teaches these baseline behaviours to the child, being forever conscious of the necessity to cater for the preferred learning style and preferences of the child.

Once the behaviour expectations have been taught to the child it is time for the teacher to coach the child in creating these new behaviours. This coaching needs to happen in the social context where the behaviours are required to be used. The purpose of this coaching is to guide the child to a level of mastery. Throughout this

coaching process the teacher encourages the child's peers to respond differently to the new behaviours chosen by the child.

In conjunction with being a social coach, the teacher teaches and practices the children in the use of the non-belonging non punitive 'out system'. This system is not a mystery to the children as the teacher consistently implements it within the early years contexts and across early years settings. It is based on a non-blame approach to behaviour development and management.

These instructional processes enable the teacher to develop a behaviour development and management system for the child who is learning new behaviours. In this process of creating a relevant behaviour development and management system, the teacher may need to adopt and / or adapt behaviour processes comprised within systems.

If we take the 'transition planning' system, areas in the environment requiring consideration may include beginning of day transitions, concluding part of day transitions, break times transitions, moving from / back / between indoor and outdoor space transitions, moving between play areas transitions, whole group – small group transitions. The teacher would need to teach and coach required behaviour for each transition and be able to monitor the child's behaviours during different transitions time.

Next, the teacher would evaluate the health of each behaviour system. In the case of the transition planning system, the teacher would evaluate each transition system that is named (i.e., beginning of day transitions, concluding part of day transitions, break times transitions, etc). This would involve viewing each transition named in the system and gauging whether it is (1) unhealthy, low health, healthy, high health, quality and (2) working for the child all of the time, some of the time, never.

As the teacher focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of various behaviour development and management systems, the child is learning new behaviours appropriate to the early years social context. In this process the child learns more appropriate ways of meeting their basic life needs. They learn a process of self-management, thus enabling them to develop self-responsibility for their behaviour choices.

Everything is separate yet connected.  
The whole is contained in every part.  
The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

A well-organized environment contributes significantly to the likelihood that appropriate behaviours will occur. For example, the teacher notices several children poking one another with their hands during show and tell time. Without intervention, this poking behaviour has the potential of creating ongoing disruption to the show and tell learning task. One way to address this behaviour is to teach the children the behaviour expectation 'Helping Hands', specifying that at show and tell time helping hands means hands beside own body, resting quietly in own space. In conjunction with teaching the children the behaviour expectation the teacher may have the children sit on carpet squares which are placed more than an arm's reach apart.