

Behavior Guidance Filter

When addressing challenging behavior, there are no cookbook answers (ie. if a child is whining, do this). However there is a filter through which you can process all of your responses to challenging behavior in order to have the most appropriate and effective approach.

Step 1

Am I calm and regulated right now? If not, take a breath before engaging with the child. You are the anchor and need to maintain a sense of calm and self-control.

Step 2

Acknowledge the child's emotions and tie it to a cause. Their behavior is telling you something and it needs to be acknowledged.

You seem angry because you really want to keep playing the game and it is homework time; that is hard. I sometimes get frustrated when I have to stop doing an activity I enjoy.

Step 3

Help the child to regulate. Without this step, a child has limited access to their cortex or thinking brain. Any discussion or problem solving without this step will be time wasted.

When I feel upset, taking some deep breaths helps me. Take a few breaths with me right now.

Step 4

Offer them choices using a positive, assertive voice; use options to address the situation that are both desirable outcomes. Do not make a request (please get out your homework); state what it is you want them to do. Think about the goal and give the child a couple ways to get there.

It's time to take out your homework; you can come sit at the table by me or get a clipboard and do your homework on the rug, your choice.

Step 5

Have reasonable consequences (result of an action) established if the child does not comply – either natural or logical – NOT punishment.

If you choose to continue playing the game, we will send an email to your teacher together letting her know about your homework. OR If you choose to continue the game when it is homework time then the game will be put away for a couple of days and we can practice jumping right into homework when you arrive tomorrow.