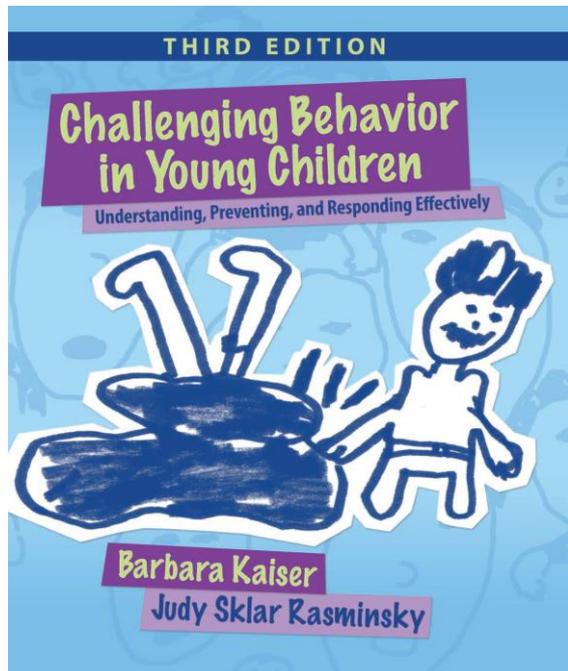


# Working with Children with Challenging Behavior: A Team Approach



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**Providing support and understanding to teachers and families when there is a child with challenging behavior at the center**



# Between a rock and a hard place



- You are an advocate for:
  - The child
  - The staff
  - The family
  - Inclusion and quality care

# Building a team and working together

- Develop a common approach to discipline that the team has helped to shape and can support
- Develop goals and procedures based on the this approach
- Identify individual strengths/skills that will help the team reach their goals
- Identify concerns that may make it difficult to obtain their goals
- Develop roles and procedures that will encourage appropriate behavior and discourage inappropriate behavior
- Ensure mutual accountability, trust, support and commitment

**Develop an approach to discipline that the educators  
have helped to shape and can support**



**What does challenging  
behavior mean to you?  
Your staff? The family?**

# What do I mean by challenging behavior?



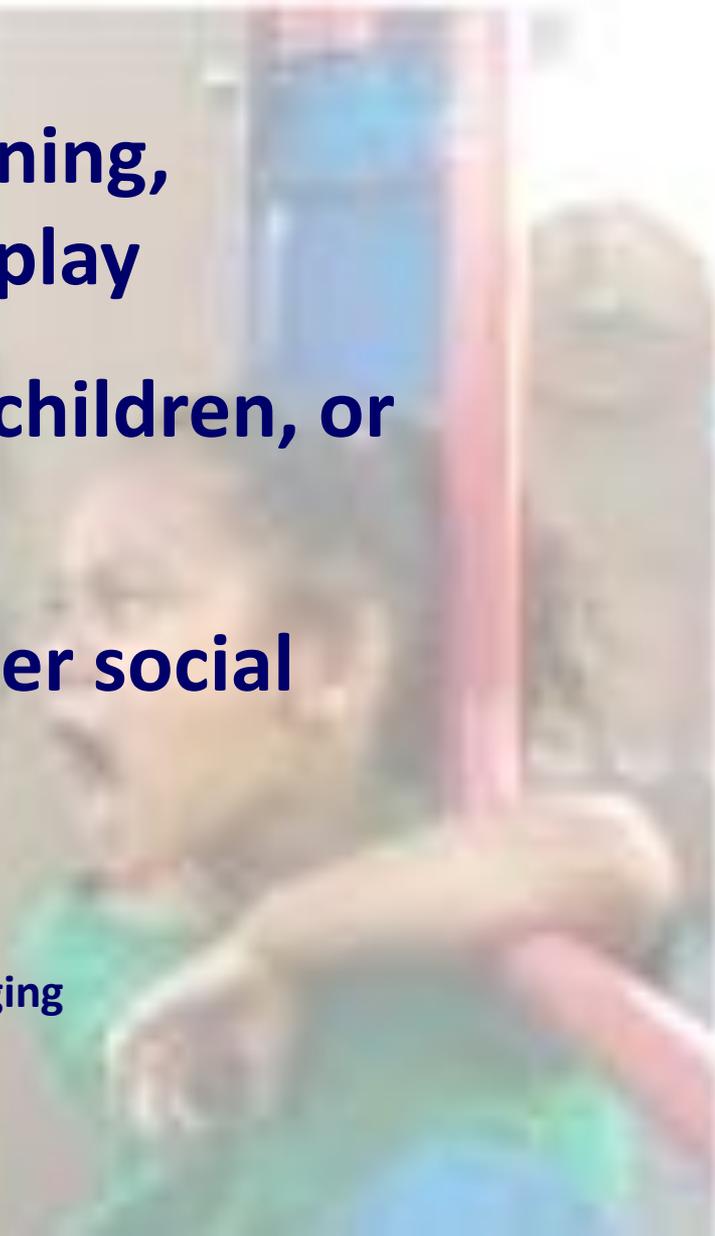
**Makes it  
impossible  
to achieve  
our goals  
& interferes  
with learning  
opportunities**

**Not a diagnostic term  
There may be no diagnosis  
Need to survive period before diagnosis**

# Challenging behavior

- **Interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play**
- **Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults**
- **Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure**

**Timid and withdrawn behaviors also qualify as challenging**

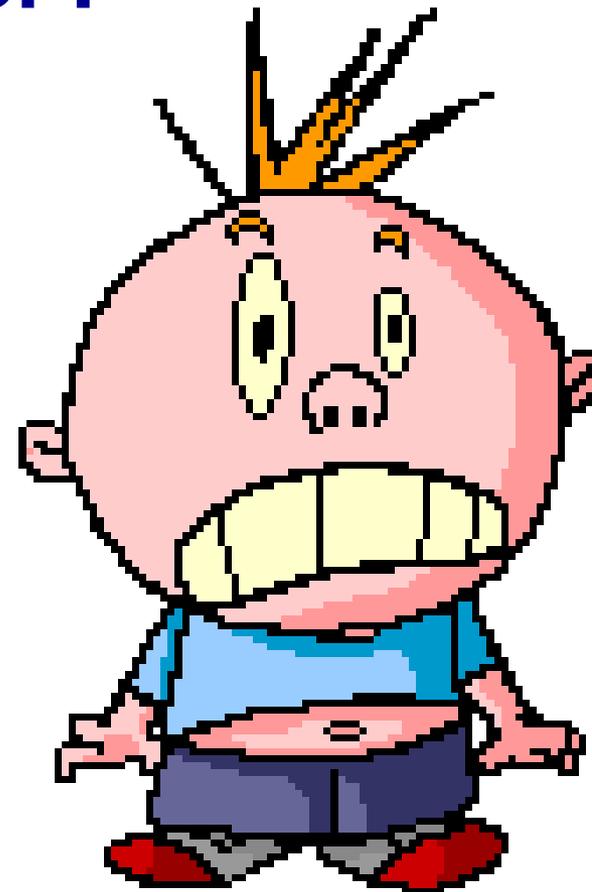




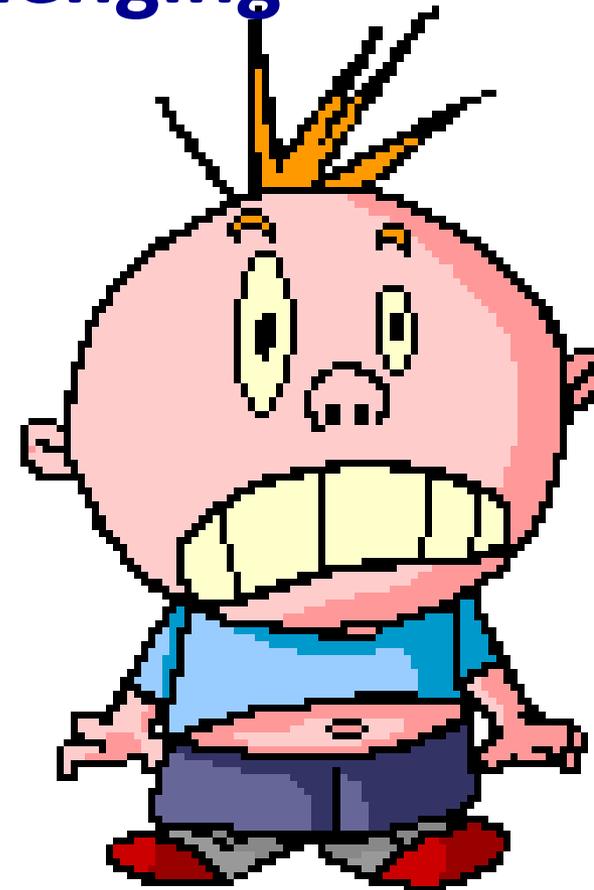
Develop goals and procedures based on a common purpose

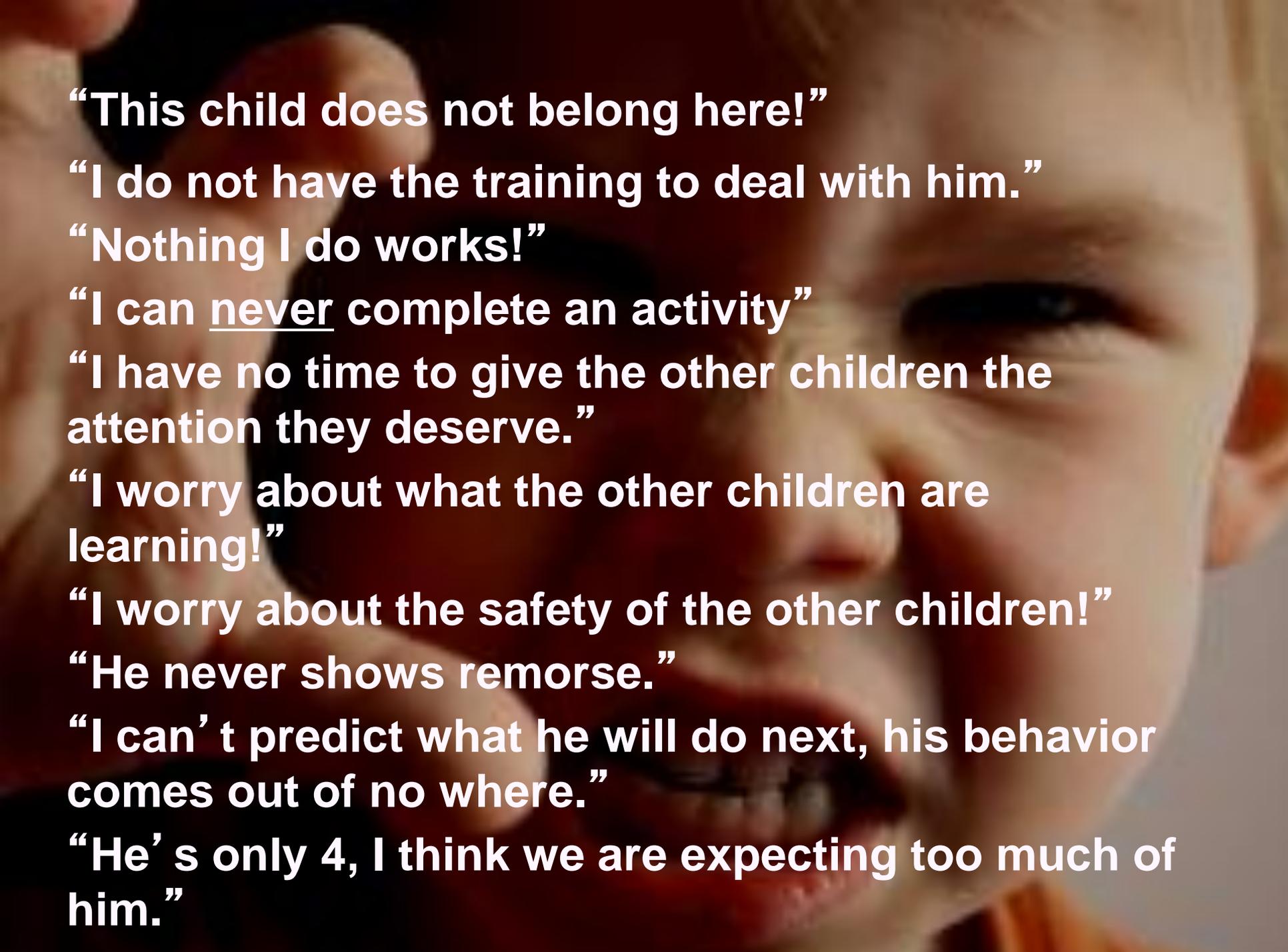
**Do you think that this child  
should remain in the center?**

**Your attitude affects your  
staff's attitude**



**Do you know how the teachers feel about having a child with challenging behavior in their class?**





**“This child does not belong here!”**

**“I do not have the training to deal with him.”**

**“Nothing I do works!”**

**“I can never complete an activity”**

**“I have no time to give the other children the attention they deserve.”**

**“I worry about what the other children are learning!”**

**“I worry about the safety of the other children!”**

**“He never shows remorse.”**

**“I can’t predict what he will do next, his behavior comes out of no where.”**

**“He’s only 4, I think we are expecting too much of him.”**



WE CAN'T AFFORD TO  
SAVE THIS ONE, BUT  
DON'T WORRY, SOMEONE  
WILL CATCH HIM.

IPS  
EXPERIMENT

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

JUDICIAL  
SYSTEM

WELFARE  
SYSTEM

GANGS

Gary Baseman  
THE INDIVIDUALS

**A child with challenging behavior can make any teacher or parent feel completely inadequate**



**Help teachers to understand how having a child with challenging behavior in the group/class changes their attitude and/or behavior?**





**Why is it important for you to identify your button pushers as well as to help your teachers to identify their buttons?**



# Team building with the family

**Parents want their communication with you and the teachers to be frequent, open, honest and non-judgmental**

- *Commitment* - Educators who regard their work as more than just a job.
- *Recognition* - Teachers who acknowledge the validity of their point of view
- *Skills* - Educators who can make things happen for their child and who admit to not knowing something but are willing to find out
- *Trust* - Educators who will treat their child with dignity and protect him/her from hurt
- *Respect* - Teachers to show respect by valuing their child as a person and acting and acknowledging their efforts and contributions on behalf of their child

**Identify individual strengths/skills that will help the team reach their goals**



# Promote a philosophy of staff and family ownership of the solution as well as the problem?

- The staff and family need to believe you are there to support them
- Acknowledge each person's unique contribution and personal/professional knowledge
- Acknowledge the importance of everyone's work and ideas
- Provide opportunities for success
- Help them meet their goals!
  - Consider their individual needs, interests, experience and skills



# The administrator's role

**Enhance staff capacity to provide the best behavioral supports for all children**

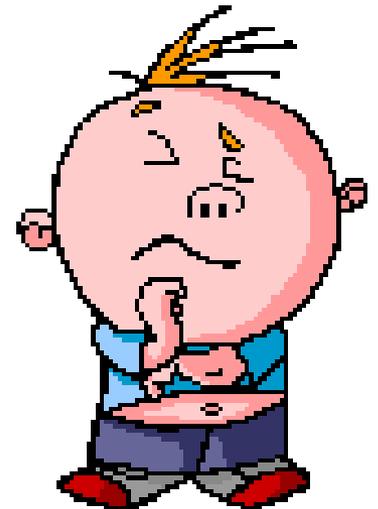
- **Create an atmosphere of trust**
- **Understand the teacher's and family's reality**
- **Role model ways of dealing effectively with the child and his/her family**
- **Provide physical, emotional and informational support**
- **Create a team that works together**
- **Believe in the educators' and family's ability to succeed**



# Getting things out in the open

**Do you know....**

- **What the teachers know about children with challenging behavior?**
- **What they feel they need to learn?**
- **How they perceive their role?**
- **What they feel you should be doing?**



# What role do you play?

When the teachers have a problem with behavior, what do they expect you to do?



- **What would the teachers say if you asked why children behave inappropriately?**
- **Their interpretation affects their attitude and response**

# **Children behave inappropriately**

**BECAUSE THE BEHAVIOR IS WORKING FOR  
THEM!**

- 1. To avoid/escape a situation or person(s)**
- 2. To obtain an object or attention**
- 3. To change level of stimulation**

**Since many children use challenging behavior at times, why do some children come to depend on these behaviors while others discover more effective strategies to help them meet their needs?**



- **BIOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS**

- **Genes**
- **Temperament**
- **Complications of pregnancy and birth**
- **Developmental delays**
- **Gender**

- **ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS**

- **Family factors and parenting style**
- **Poverty and the social conditions surrounding it**
- **Exposure to violence**
- **Violent media**
- **Cultural dissonance**
- **Child Care/School**



# Getting parents on board

- Get to know all the families before there is a problem
- Try to see things from their point of view
  - They may be afraid there is something wrong with their child
- Look for their strengths, competencies, and resources
  - What information do they have – is there a diagnosis
- Invite them to share their thoughts and concerns and past successes with their child
- Don't judge or blame them
- Check your feelings at the door
  - Define the behavior objectively
- Listen carefully



**We can't change a child's life,**

**BUT.....**

**WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



# Prevention is the best intervention

**Effective teachers spend more time promoting appropriate behavior than responding to inappropriate behavior**

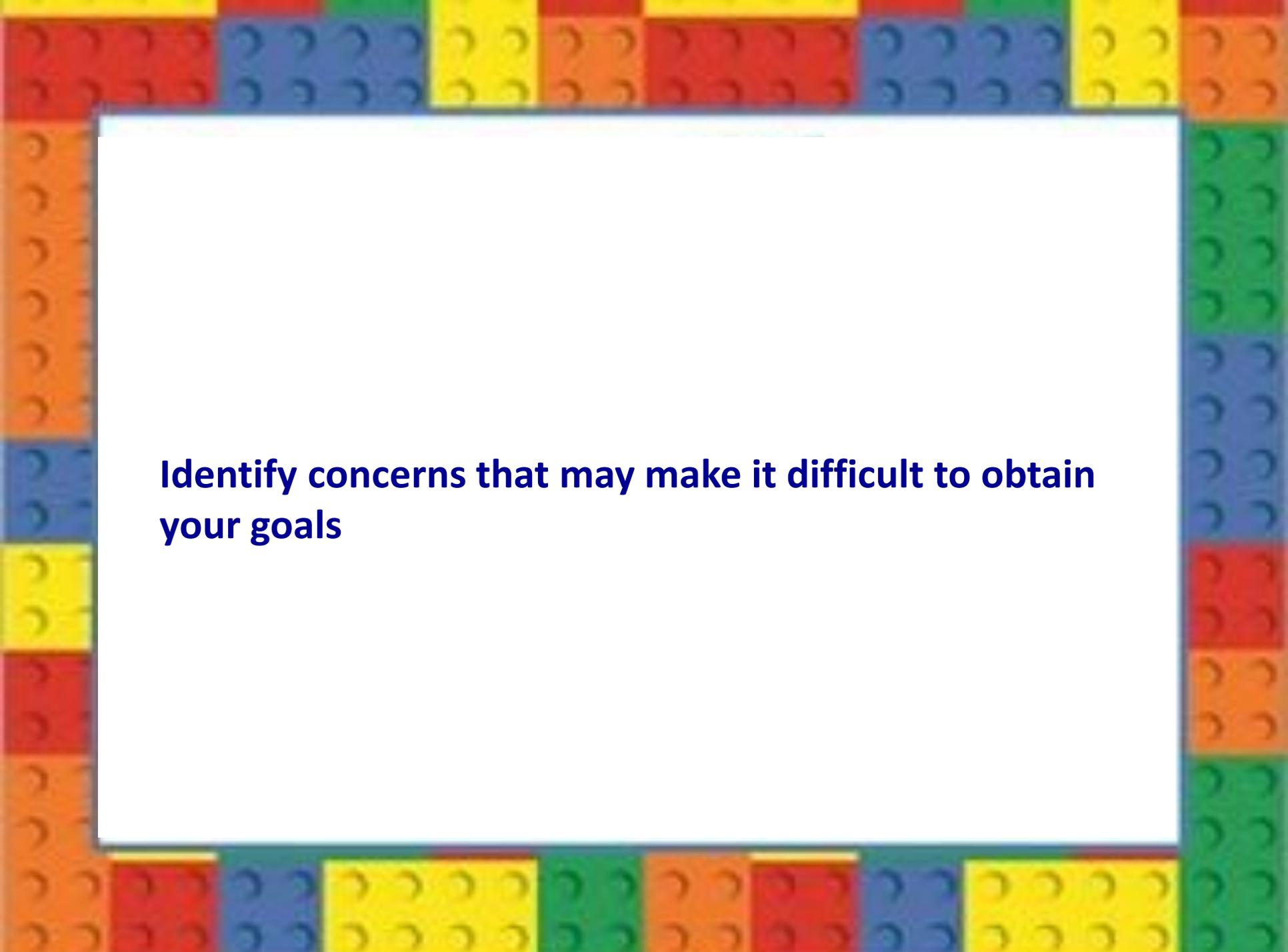


# Prevention

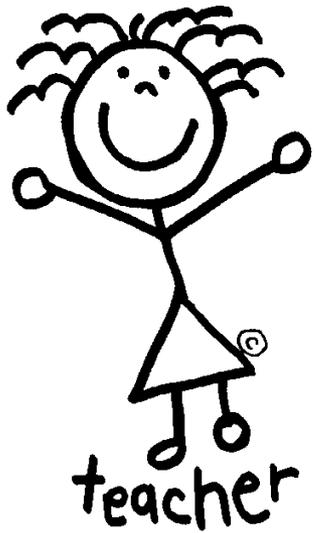
**Creating opportunities for ALL children to succeed**

- **Changing the social climate**
  - Changing your approach with the children
  - Utilizing preventative pro-social skills curricula
- **Changing the physical environment**
- **Changing the program**





**Identify concerns that may make it difficult to obtain your goals**



***“If there is anything that we wish to change in others, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves.”***

Carl Jung

# Adults have worked hard to become who they are

- **Sometimes we have to unlearn what we now in order to learn what we need to know**



# Reasons why educators resist change

- **Decisions or requests that are sprung on teachers without notice**
- **Not knowing enough about the change**
- **Feeling that changes are being done to, rather than done by them**
- **Concerns that change will require them to question familiar (and comfortable) routines and habits**
- **Change implies that the former way of doing things was wrong**
- **Educators question their ability: Can I do it? How will I do it?**
- **Change in one area can disrupt other projects or activities, even ones outside of work**
- **Change often increases workloads**
- **Lack of information**

# Reasons why families resist

- There is no relationship built between teacher/family or director/family
- They don't feel you recognize their efforts or understand their lives
- They feel judged
- They are afraid there may be something wrong with their child
- The behavior has not been defined objectively
- The behavior does not occur at home
- Lack of information

**Any challenging behavior that persists over time is working for the child.**

**Any intervention that does NOT produce a change in behavior is NOT working for the child or the teacher**



# Reframing How We Approach Challenging Behaviours

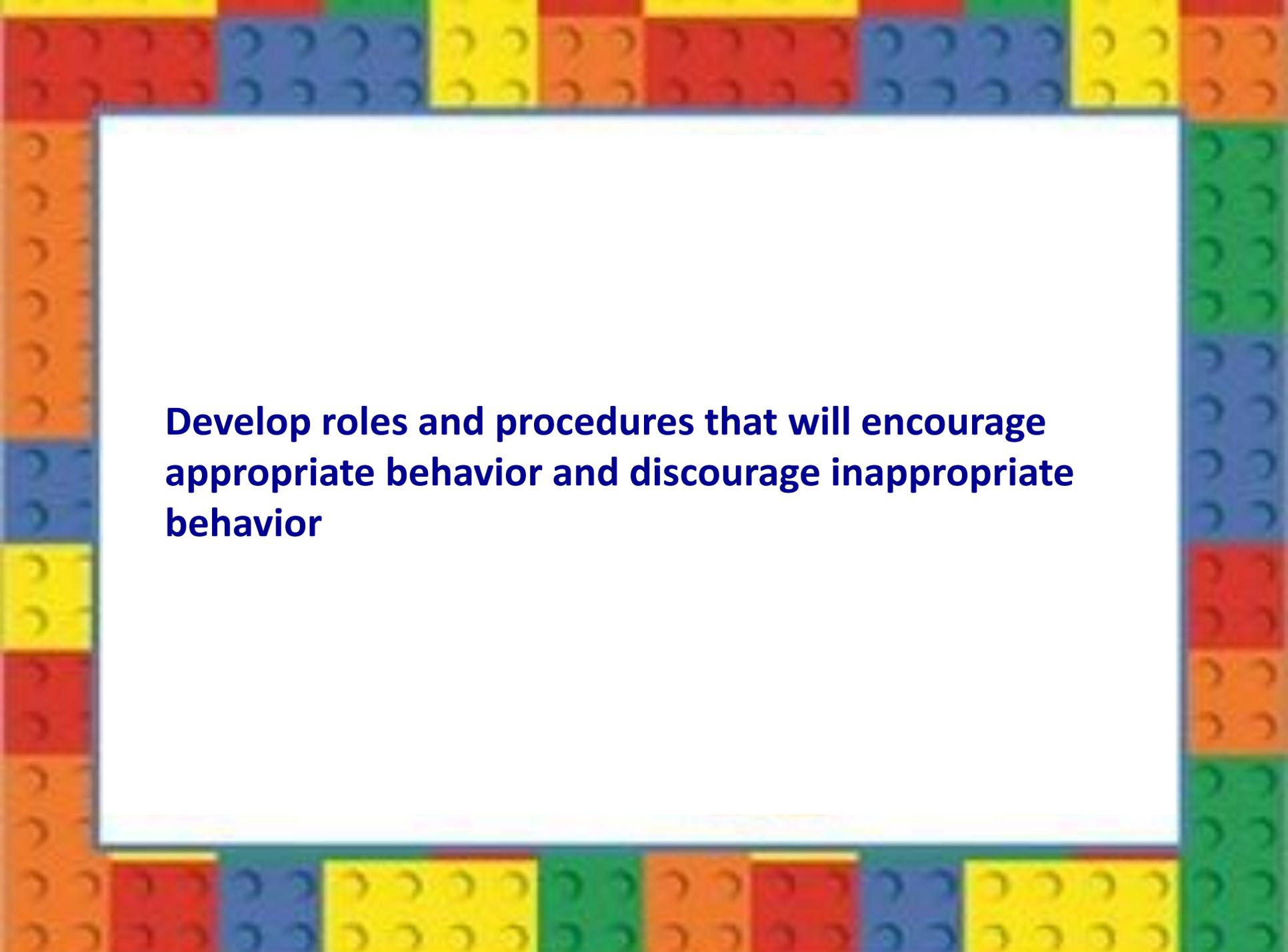
## Old Approach vs. New Approach

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>General intervention for similar behaviors (cookie cutter “fix”)</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Intervention matched to purpose (function) of the behavior</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Intervention is reactive</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pro-active - Prevention is emphasized</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Focus on behavior reduction</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Focus on teaching new skills</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>“Quick Fix”</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Long-term intervention</b></li></ul>

- Discipline is helping a child solve a problem
- Punishment is making a child suffer for having a problem
- To raise problem solvers we need to focus on solutions, not retribution



L.R.Knost

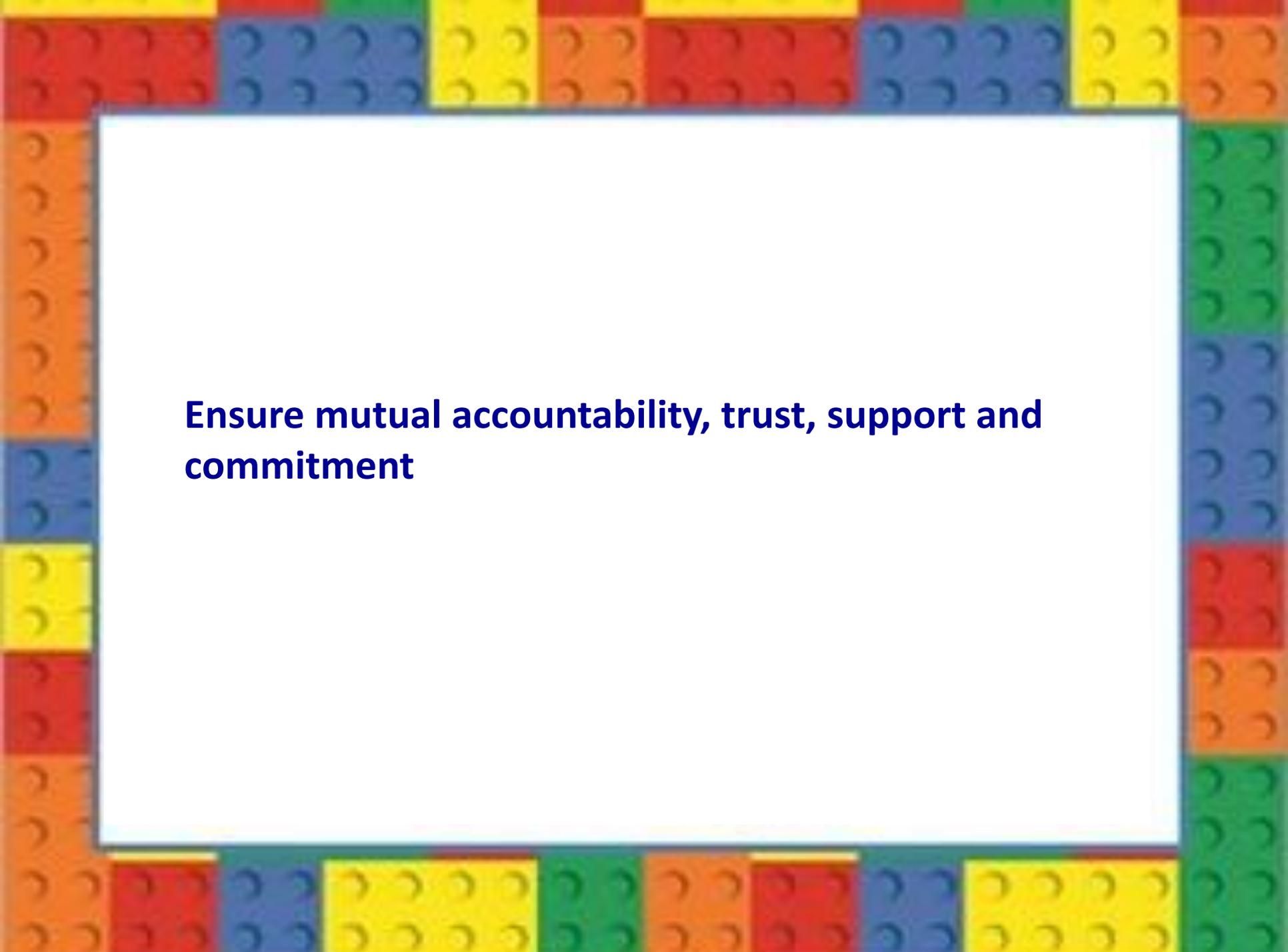


**Develop roles and procedures that will encourage appropriate behavior and discourage inappropriate behavior**

# Understanding the behavior

- **Challenging behavior is a form of communication**
  - A child's solution to a problem
- **The function of the behavior is as important as the behavior**
  - Obtain
  - Avoid/escape
  - Change the level of stimulation
- **It is the behavior that is inappropriate, not the function**





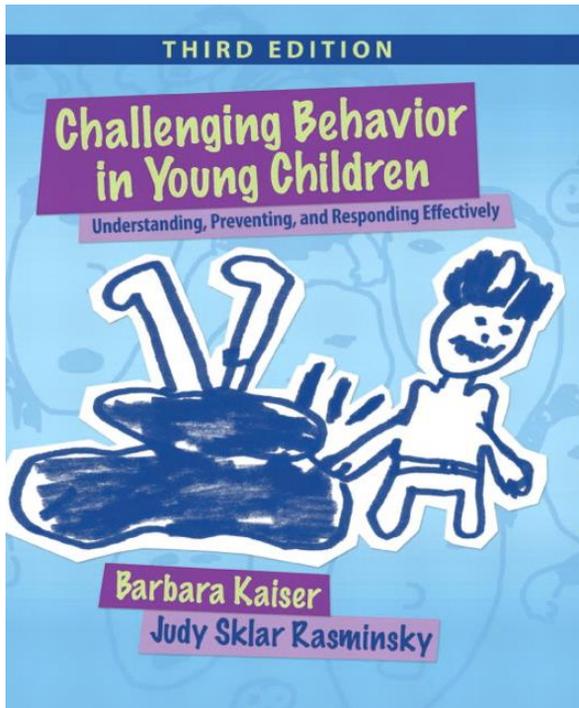
**Ensure mutual accountability, trust, support and commitment**

# Responding to challenging behaviour

An effective response to challenging behavior is a process, not an event, that provides children with the opportunity to develop the skills and attitudes they need to meet their needs appropriately



# Working with Children with Challenging Behavior: A Team Approach with Early Educators and Families.©



**THANK YOU**

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