

## ADHD in Preschool: Placing all young children on a path to success

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### Disclosures

I am currently receiving research support from:

- Foundry10
- National Institute of Health




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### Today's Goals

- > Describe what ADHD in preschool looks like?
- > Identify what you can do if you suspect ADHD?
- > Practice how you can involve parents in the process?




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## Who am I?



**PEECE**

(Promoting Equity in Early Childhood Education)

**HARBORVIEW  
MEDICAL CENTER**

UW Medicine  King County

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## Why ADHD?



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## Why Early Childhood?



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### Research to Practice Gap

- > Children of color are less likely to get a diagnosis of ADHD
- > ADHD interventions are less effective for children from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds
- > Preschool expulsion rates 3X higher than K-12
  - Large discipline disparities by gender and race
  - Black children 19% of enrollment, 47% of those expelled

*How can we place all young children on a path to success?*




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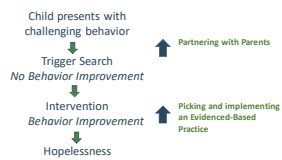
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### What is ADHD?

- > Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- > Neurodevelopmental disorder
- > 5-10% of school-age children
- > Endures into adulthood




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### What is ADHD?

#### Hyperactivity/Impulse

Fidgety  
Can't sit still  
Runs around  
Difficulty staying quiet  
Takes things from others  
Blurts out answers  
Doesn't want to nap

#### Inattention

Doesn't appear to listen  
Forgetful  
Distracted  
Difficulty staying on one task  
Takes a long time to eat




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### An Example

Sam is a four-year old who has difficulty sitting still, at circle time they are the first to shout out an answer, and they often require redirection during routines. During structured learning time, Sam becomes easily upset when they don't know the answer




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### Recognition of ADHD in preschool is on the rise!

- > Children as young as 4 can be diagnosed with ADHD
- > According to the National Survey of Children's Health, approximately 194,000 preschoolers (2.4%) had a current ADHD diagnosis
  - By some estimates it is up to 5%
- > Research shows that 3-year-olds who show symptoms of ADHD are much more likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for ADHD by age 13




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### Warning Signs

- > “When compared with other preschoolers of the same age, where does this child’s behavior fall?”
- > Has this kid been suspended or expelled before?
- > Are they having difficulty learning concepts?




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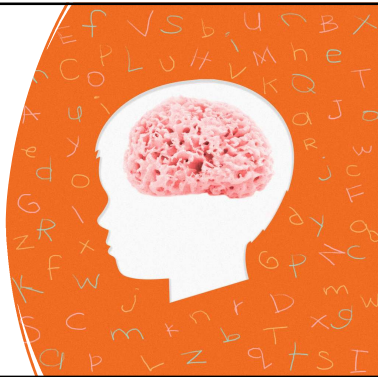
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### Preschool is a time of rapid development

- These early years are a time of significant brain development
- It’s best to address problematic behaviors sooner rather than later




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### How can we support young children at-risk for ADHD?

- > **Behavioral Interventions** are well-established treatments
  - Recommended as the first line of treatment by the American Academy of Pediatrics
  - Don’t need a diagnosis!




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### What are behavioral interventions?

- > They support adults in reinforcing positive behaviors and skill development
- > Can occur in clinics and schools
- > They can support parents, teachers, or both!




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### Parent Behavior Management Training

- Teaches the child and the adult
- Increase positive behavior with positive discipline
  - Decreases negative behavior with extinguishing
- Helps manage negative behavior
- Helps adults develop a positive relationship with the child

Triple P; Incredible Years; Parent-Child Interaction Therapy




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### What does it look like in the classroom?

- Teaches the child and the adult
- Increase positive behavior with positive discipline
  - Decreases negative behavior with extinguishing
- Helps them manage negative behavior
- Helps adults develop a positive relationship with the child




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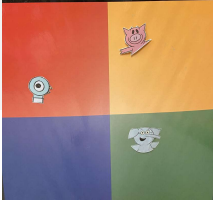
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We are learning new words to describe our feelings.

**We can feel:**



**The Mood Meter**  
How are you feeling?



**Teaching Emotions: Mood Meters or Feeling Charts**

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**Teaching Regulation:**

- > Wiggle Breaks
- > Calm Down Corners
- > Deep breathing


WHEN I TAKE A DEEP BREATH



1. I SMELL THE FLOWER



2. I BLOW OUT THE CANDLES



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**Teaching & Modeling: Calm Down Jar**

- Shake all of your anger, frustration, disappointment, or sadness into this jar
- The swirling glitter is like your brain when it's all wound up
- Watch the glitter settle and think of your mind settling down
- Take big slow breaths while you watch the glitter calm down
- When your glitter is all at the bottom, how do you feel now?




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## Reinforcing Positive Behaviors: Routines and Transitions

Step 1. Take off your coat		<b>Planned choices</b> "Do you want to put your shirt on first or your pants?"
Step 2. Breakfast		"You can have a banana or strawberries with your yogurt this morning"
Step 3. Wash your hands		"You can use the bubbly toothpaste or the mint-tasting toothpaste"
Step 4. Books		"Which book do you want to read first? (hold up choices for your child)"




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## Reinforcing Positive Behavior: Token Economy

- Children earn "tokens" for desirable behaviors
- Focus on specific behaviors
- Helps you catch the child being good




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## Reinforcing Positive Behavior: Daily Report Card

- Allows parents and teachers to communicate
- Lists daily target behaviors at school (and home!)
- Indicates when child meets target behavior goals
- Provides rewards for meeting goals

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Daily Behavior Card

	Use New Words to Friends	Raise my hand not yell out	Listen the first time
Morning			
Work			
Literacy			
Math			
Science/Good Studies			
Special			
Lunch/Recess			

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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### Steps for responding to challenging behavior

#### > Step 1: Label and Validate the Emotion

*"I can see that you are very angry. Is there anything else that you are feeling?"*

#### > Deal with the bad behavior

*"It is okay to feel angry, but it's not ok to throw things"*

#### > Problem Solve & Plan for the future



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### Remember consequences should help kids learn!

#### > Should be developmentally appropriate

- 2 minutes in the calm down corner

#### > Should help the child next time

#### > Shouldn't remove the child from the opportunity to learn and practice skills

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### Key Elements of behavioral interventions

#### > Teach and model appropriate behavior

#### > Reinforce positive behaviors

- Ignore undesirable behavior when you can

#### > Respond to undesirable behavior in a way that helps the child learn and grow

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### Reality Check... this isn't easy

- > Most young children don't receive these supports
- > CDC estimates that only 1 in 2 preschoolers receive the recommended behavioral treatment
- > Large disparities by child race and SES




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### How can we support teachers when faced with challenging behavior in the classroom?

Received 22 October 2021 | Revised 27 April 2022 | Accepted 3 June 2022  
DOI: 10.1111/jcpp.15188

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**  
**How teachers' perceptions of the parent-teacher relationship affect children's risk for early childhood expulsion**

Courtney A. Zalsaf-McCarthy | Katherine M. Zinsner

WILEY

Early Childhood Education  
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.15188

**Parent and Teacher Perceptions of the Parent-Teacher Relationship and Child Self-regulation in Preschool: Variations by Child Race**  
C. A. Zalsaf-McCarthy<sup>1</sup> & K. M. Zinsner<sup>2</sup>

Journal of Research in Child Psychology and Psychiatry  
2022, 63(1), 1-12

**A Qualitative Examination of the Parent-Teacher Relationship and Early Childhood Expulsion**  
Capturing the Voices of Parents and Teachers

Charlotte A. Zalsaf-McCarthy, PhD  
Katherine M. Zinsner, PhD

Journal of Research in Child Psychology and Psychiatry  
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.15188

**Parental Perceptions of the Parent-Teacher Relationship and Early Childhood Expulsion: A Mixed-Methods Examination of the Potential Protective Role of Teachers' Perceptions of Parents**  
Charlotte A. Zalsaf-McCarthy<sup>1</sup> & Katherine M. Zinsner<sup>2</sup>

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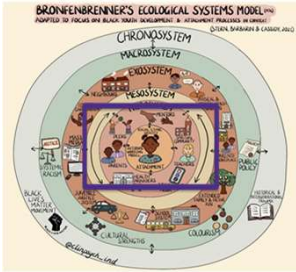
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**You aren't in this alone**



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**Tips and Tricks**

- > **Connect early and communicate often**
  - Set up a system for communication with all families at the start of the year
- > **Build a respectful partnership**
  - Learn about the families
- > **Don't run from Healthy conflict**
  - Keep an open mind
  - Don't take things personally
  - Be aware of how your body is feeling



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- Consider fitting in 5-min "Calm Moments" during your day that tap into one of your 5 senses (vision, smell, taste, touch, hearing).

Example Activities:
•Enjoying a cup of coffee or tea
•Writing, texting or calling a friend or family member
•Watching clips from favorite show
•Step outside and breathe fresh air
•Smelling a candle
•Short yoga or workout video
•Turn on favorite music

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**Questions?**

Please reach out, I want to hear from you!  
[czulauf@uw.edu](mailto:czulauf@uw.edu)



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