

Working with Challenging Behaviors Worksheet: Refuses to Clean Up



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

The refusal to clean up seems to happen most often during transitions and when do not want to stop what they are doing. It also happens when they are having fun or are very focused and are expected to move from a preferred activity to one they don't want to do. If it is a bigger mess, maybe overwhelming, it may also happen. Or, it occurs if they have a favorite toy.

Why are they doing this behavior?

- Not ready to go inside yet
- They didn't make the mess
- They are hungry
- They are crabby, tired, or overwhelmed
- Want to keep playing or are still working on something so they are not ready to move to the next activity yet
- They created something cool and do not want to take it apart
- They are busy having fun!
- Cleaning is not fun
- Unclear expectations around clean up or the daily schedule
- Not sure how to clean up or have not learned why it is important
- Want to be with their friend
- They have no clean up at home
- May feel overwhelming
- No prior warning was given
- Difficult to transition from one thing to the other
- Persistent temperament so it is difficult to stop without completing the current task
- They don't want to
- Want to be on control
- Afraid of missing out
- They don't want to stop playing
- Want your attention
- Development
- Stress
- Temperament
- Off Schedule
- Frustrated

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Give a warning
 - 10 minute warning, then 5 minute warning, then flick the lights and turn on music and *then* pick up toys
 - Set a timer / Visual timers / Visual Schedules
 - Do a positive countdown to cleanup time
- Make cleaning up fun
 - Sing a cleanup song
 - "oh my goodness - look at this mess"
 - Make into a game or competition
 - Act like superheroes
 - Use magic powers
 - "Let's see if you can pick up all the blue socks before I pick up the red ones!"
- Assure of when play can continue at a later time
- Talk about the next fun activity, like a mystery bag
- Make the expectation more clear such as providing visuals on the baskets to help show where each toy goes.
- Join them in cleaning up and do it together
- Provide encouragement and descriptive praise, "WOW! We are cleaning up together. What a team we all are! Now, we will get more time outside!"
- Offer choices
 - Want to clean up the "trucks" or the "Balls"?
 - Want to clean up the "Red" toys or "Green" toys?
 - Which area they clean that day and then switch the next day?
 - Would you like to clean up for 3 minutes or 4?
- Model and demonstrate what you want the child to do next
- Give clear direction, "Put the play-doh in the bin please."
- Be consistent and maintain a clean up routine
- Empathize with them and label their feelings
- Engage in communication
- Figure out their stressors/ triggers
- First - Then: "5 minutes to play, then clean up"

What can you do if the behavior occurs?



Working with Challenging Behaviors Worksheet: Instigating

What have you observed about the challenging behavior "Instigating?"

More likely to occur when an older preschooler is instigating with the younger child or siblings are together. Also, it is triggered during transitions, later in the morning, before lunch, or free play time. It tends to happen when energy is higher, they are stuck inside, stress is higher due to a change in routine or something different is happening. Also, if they are not interested in the activity or what is happening. It also happens when a child is not being included or is trying to engage another child in play or if they feel the need to dominate a situation or exert power over another child.



Why are they doing this behavior?

- Their basic needs are not met (attention, bored, hungry, or tired)
- The content is too hard for them
- High stress hormone so feel anxious, agitated, or whiney
 - Changes at home or at school
 - Being rushed
 - Caregiver is stressed
 - Over stimulated - too much going on
- Need to move and get energy out
- Thinks it is funny, makes it a game
- Development:
 - Need to feel like they are useful and important
 - Need power/control so seeking to control their environment
 - Strong drive to be first and win
- Temperament
 - Highly persistent - Keep working to get that toy
 - Highly active - Need to get things moving
 - Highly sensitive - May act out when feeling overwhelmed
- Lacking skills
 - Play: How to get others to play with you
 - Self-regulation: Manage strong impulses and be able to calm themselves
 - Emotional: Does not know how to use words or properly express their emotion (knowing what they feel and what they can do about it (frustration, distracted, lonely, isolated, ignored)

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Figure out what is driving the instigating, identify what the child needs, and then address that need/feeling
- If they are bored
 - Shorten circle time or the learning activity
 - Incorporate something the child is interested in
 - Add some new activities and/or rotate activities
 - Make the learning more active such as reading a book that includes movement
- Need attention
 - Give them a special job or activity just for them.
 - Spend one on one time together
 - Praise specific behavior, recognizing when they behave well
 - Talk to others about what you love about the child and where they succeeded
 - Give "important" jobs throughout the day so they feel valued and focused on being a helper
- Hungry
 - Offer a snack before too hungry
- Lack of knowledge
 - Differentiate the activity to meet all kids' need and meet them at their level
 - Give choices instead of having them answer a question
- Upset /Sad/Overwhelmed/Overstimulated / Stressed
 - Change the environment, moving to play in another room or another type activity
 - Teach to communicate their feelings and needs with a list or picture of feelings to help them express themselves
 - Label their feelings and problem solve what they can do.
- Hyper and/or feeling antsy
 - Shorten the amount of time expected to sit quietly and/or wait
 - Offer movement regularly and incorporate "shake breaks", especially when you observe they are feeling antsy
 - Get the "wiggles" out with a dance break or kids yoga
- Does not feel included
 - Do more group activities and help children learn how to play and enjoy playing together

What can you do if the behavior occurs?



Working with Challenging Behaviors Worksheet: Hitting Other Children



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

It seems to happen most often when another child is taking a toy from them, or transitioning. It can happen when they are tired and unsure how to communicate how they are feeling.

Why are they doing this behavior?

- Hitting out of frustration or anger
- No control over the situation the precedes the hitting.
- No impulse control
- Tired or hungry
- Friend not doing what they want
- Unsure how to use their words
- Feel rushed, feel helpless - lack of control
- Needs not being met
- Another child took their toy, they don't want to share
- Needs physical contact
- Aggression due to home/life changes
- Transitions
- Not feeling well
- Lack of appropriate language/communication skills
- Temperament
- Trauma
- Stress
- Feel they are not being understood or listened to
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Wanting to connect
- Lack social-emotional skills

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Read books about - hand are not for hitting
- Teach problem solving with stories
- Notice tension rising and give verbal reminders
- Teaching them how to, encouraging with being positive, giving choices
- Provide a calm/ quiet space
- Try to make sure to meet necessary needs of the child
- Doing a physical group activity first to expend the excess energy, set up different play areas to help keep the kiddos away from each other
- What can they do?
 - Wall push
 - Downdog
- Give warnings before transitions
- Positive reinforcement when they are being kind
- Set timers for toys, ask if they need a break, nap, snack or cuddle. Let them take a break from each other by different play stations
- Get down at their level
- Be clear about what the rules are and how we are going to participate when introducing a new activity
- Be empathetic
- If they are tired make sure they know they can stop to rest at that time
- Print out a chart with pictures to let them point and tell you how they are feeling (if they can describe with words)
- Give them prompts on what words they can use to express their feelings
- Change up the routine

What can you do if the behavior occurs?



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Working with Challenging Behaviors Worksheet: Disruptive Circle Time



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

It tends to happen more during transitions, later in the day, or if they are bored. They talk out of turn, get up and play and are unable to remain focused. It causes disruption and can lead to touching or throwing things at other children.

Why are they doing this behavior?

- They are bored or uninterested
- Want to do something else
- It has been too long to sit without movement
- Tired
- Hungry
- Don't feel good
- Excited to say answer
- Wants to be first
- Doesn't understand the idea of taking turns
- Too overstimulated
- Stressed
- Did not have a smooth transition into circle time
- Lacks ability to wait
- Feel overwhelmed
- Distracted
- Want Attention

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Talk calmly and remind them the rules of circle
- Draw attention to and celebrate to the positive behaviors happening, praising those who are sitting nicely
- Help them get wiggles out before circle time starts ex. play a game (freeze game)
- "Space check" Have them put their arms out forward and then out to the side to see if they are touching a friend. If they can touch a friend they need to move a little and try the space check again.
- Do a one-minute meditation to help find calm center.
- Give jobs, inviting them to be a helper
- Use "Feeling cards" before circle time starts
- Go through the routine/rules of circle time in a fun way
- Incorporate music and dancing into circle time
- Sing a song to gain attention: "Eyes are watching, ears are listening" then say "It's teachers turn to talk. Raise your hand if you have something to say"
- Tell them what TO DO with their wiggles such as using sit spots & fidgets
- Be consistent and clear
- Empathize with how it feels to sit and listen
- Visual timers and visual cues
- Provide a brain break
- Use puppets and other novel and interesting engagement tools

What can you do if the behavior occurs?



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Working with Challenging Behaviors Worksheet: Running



What have you observed about this challenge?

Running can happen during transitions, when the child needs to move and has a lot of energy, when they have sat too long, or when they are playing or chasing a friend. If they are super excited, it might be more difficult to walk. Also, later in the day when they are tired or worn out seems to make it worse.

Why are they doing this behavior?

- They have a lot of energy, need to move their bodies
- Have sat too long
- They are excited
- They are chasing another child
- Their friend is running
- They are bored and need a change of activity or scenery
- They are overstimulated by choices of what to play with and want to make sure they have enough time to play with their choices
- There is an open space
- Transitions
- Stressed
- Out of routine
- Tired
- They are pretending they are a super hero
- Attention
- They chase a child who has a toy they want
- They want to be first
- They are inside and want to get outside

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Use "When -then" statement - "When you stop running, then we can eat our snack."
- Give them time when it is okay that they run or move their body
- Have the class do a game that helps get their wiggles out before expected to sit. For example, before circle time, have everyone sit first do a music activity with dancing or movement.
- Change the classroom set up, avoiding big open spaces
- Make it fun to do something other than run - "First cleanup, then we can hop to the bathroom". "Do you want to walk like an ape to get your coat?"
- Praise them for doing things calmly - "Who can walk to go wash their hands?" "I love how you walked to your locker!"
- Provide ample opportunities during the day to move
- Pay attention and be aware when they are getting antsy or causing issues they need to move and prompt them about appropriate movement "You are feeling so wiggly! Can you wiggle your toes in your shoes?" "Feeling antsy? Let's twiddle our thumbs!"
- Give them an choice to show you how an animal walks
- Provide reminder that we use "walking feet".
- Help them get their wiggles out by playing physical games like red light - green light and tag.
- Praise the kids that are listening and walking
- Have fun with transitions:
 - Bunny hops to the washroom or stomp like an elephant
- Use the magical Fairy talk about how it would be so fun to run like a magical unicorn through the room.
- Place tape on the floor to make a hop/jump area

What can you do if the behavior occurs?



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Working with Challenging Behaviors Worksheet: Fighting



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

It seems to happen most often when they are tired, hungry, stressed or during transitions. Usually it is fighting over toys or not wanting to play with each other.

Why are they doing this behavior?

- Hungry
- Stressed
- Bored
- Tired
- Transitions
- They love the toy or activity they are playing with or doing
- When others clean up their toys and they wanted to do it
- They want to play by themselves
- They feel left out
- Want attention
- Impulsive
- Need for adult interaction
- Overstimulated
- Not able to communicate
- Need to move

How can you prevent this behavior from occurring?

- Fingerplays and singing songs to teach expectations
- Have them be a helper
- Give heads up to transitions
 - Set a visual timer
- Read social stories/books to teach about rules and strategies for coping with big emotions
- Offer a quiet place
 - Take time to breath and calm down
 - Start the day with yoga or meditation
- Give options before they start playing or doing a task
- Give their feelings validation
- Group time
 - Fidget toys
 - "Catch a butterfly and put it in your lap"
 - Practice deep breathing and centering together
- Pay attention to the cues - Observe
 - If you see them get bored switch things up
 - If you see they are starting to have difficulty, offer a break
- Have a routine in place
- Provide designated instruction or spots having large motor movement
- Practice our "playing together" skills at group time and small group moments throughout the day
- Set up more stations/play areas
- Green choice card- given to child when a "green" or kind choice is made.
- During a rainbow week, we read rainbow fish and talk about how to be a kind friend. Then I make a giant rainbow fish on our walk and put all their ideas of a kind friend on the scales.
- Connect with the child
 - Morning greetings and hugs
 - Play/interact with them
- Turn on music and sing or dance

What can you do if the behavior occurs?



Preventing Challenging Behaviors: Talking Back



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

It seems to happen most often when during transitions, during peak social times and when they need to do something they don't want to do. More so in the afternoon time.

Why is the child doing this?

- Tired, hungry, mad or sad
- Homesick
- Jealous
- Not interested
- Having a bad day
- Want to feel control over their choices, feeling powerless
- Frustrated
- Wants attention
- Tired of sharing toys and not having any alone time
- Stressed or anxious
- Too many changes
- Overwhelmed
- Observed this behavior from others
- Not sure how else to communicate
- Feeling misunderstood - wants to be heard
- Issues at home
- Out of routine
- Experienced trauma and/or high stress
- Lack of social, self-regulation, and communication skills to identify how they are feeling and what to do about it
- Wants to be independent
- Does not want to transition

What can you do to prevent it?

- Make sure we are giving a choice , when possible
- Note the time of day and situation that set it off to avoid or modify in the future
- Stick to routines and give warnings before transitions.
- Ask for their ideas and input.
- Get down on their level, talk to them and be more understanding.
- Show them respect and understand where they are coming from.
- Engage in conversations and play with the child, build that relationship before the challenge comes up
- Help them get their needs - Are they hungry, tired, sick, stressed, overwhelmed?
- Stay connected with the child
- Acknowledge that you hear what they are saying "I hear you say you want to play, you can play when we finish putting away 3 things."
- Give options "Do you want to put away the paints or the blocks first?" This will allow them some sense of control.
- Observe what is causing the talking back and what seems to trigger the behaviors. Work to see it coming to prevent or soften it "Do you need to take a break?" or "Hey, can you help me with..."
- Keep calm yourself, what is your tone? Are you modeling respectful behavior and assertive (not pushy) language?

What can you do if behavior still occurs?



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Preventing Challenging Behaviors: Screaming



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

Happens during redirection, transitions, and when adult is busy with other tasks.

Why is the child doing this?

- Attention seeking
- Control
- Tired
- Room is overwhelming
- Room is underwhelming

What can you do to prevent it?

What can you do if behavior still occurs?



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Preventing Challenging Behaviors: Crying at Separation



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

Drop off and pickup time. More likely when parent is rushed or looks worried.

Why is the child doing this?

- Tired
- Separation anxiety
- Transitions
- Attachment
- Stress
- Change between teachers
- Change in routine

What can you do to prevent it?

- Consistent routine
- Provide parents with resources on the importance of sleep

What can you do if behavior still occurs?



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Preventing Challenging Behaviors: Climbing on Furniture



What have you observed about this challenging behavior?

Safety issues, excessive, models negative behavior

Why is the child doing this?

- Want a reaction
- Need to move
- Lack boundaries
- Can do it at home
- Overstimulated
- Tired
- Hungry
- Miss parents
- Manipulate
- Lack of communication
- Miss social skills
- Trauma

What can you do to prevent it?

- Separate group - split up
- Teach skills/ exception
- Assertive voice
- Sing
- Read books
- Eye contact
- Redirect

What can you do if behavior still occurs?



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