

# Behavior Thinking Guide

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Child's name:

Age:

How long have I known the child:

What are my concerns?

What patterns have I started to notice?

What do I know about the child's family? (members, who do they live with, who don't they live with, relationship quality...)

What is this child's history of caregiving? (sensitive and responsive parenting, attachment, neglectful, abusive, unknown, parent with mental illness or chemical addiction, incarcerated parent, foster, child protection, intact family)

How is the child doing developmentally?  
(physical, language, communication, cognitive, sensory, social, emotional, etc)

What is going well for the child? (What strengths does this child have? What are they good at?)

**What is my hypothesis?** (based on what I've observed, what do I think is happening with this child?)

I have a child who is \_\_\_\_\_ months/years old.  
This child is exhibiting \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and so they need \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How can I help?** (Based on what I know, what can I do in the moment, in the care context, and in other contexts to help this child?)

**In the moment**

**Care Context**

**Other Contexts**

**What will I try next?** (Based on my hypothesis, and things I think I can do to address the child's needs, what approaches will I try to better help this child next time?)

# Reflection Prompts

## Think about the relationships this child has:

- What is my relationship like with this child? How do I know that?
- Am I showing the child that I am glad they are here?
- What kind of relationships does the child have with other children?
- What skills does the child need to learn to be able to be in relationship more effectively?
- Is this child “pushing my buttons?”
- What changes can the ADULTS in the classroom make to be more accommodating to the child?

## Think about the behavior:

- What is the behavior communicating?
- What function does the behavior have?
- When is it happening?
- Am I documenting the behavior?
- What is my hypothesis about the behavior?

## Think about trauma:

- What changes or stressors is the family experiencing?
- What do I know about this child/family’s past experiences? Has there been a traumatic or highly stressful experience? Past or current?

## Think about the environment:

- Is there anything about the set-up of the classroom I could adjust to help prevent the behavior?
- Have I taught the rules and expectations? Are we reviewing them daily? Are they posted?
- Is the picture schedule being reviewed daily? Or throughout the day? Is it posted?
- Would the child benefit from revisiting the picture schedule with a staff during the day?
- How many transitions does the child need to work through each day? Can I reduce that amount?
- How long is group time? How can I shorten or change group time so THIS child can be successful?
- Are children provided with the expectations each time a transition is made?
- Are there other children who are having the same problems?

## Think about the social emotional skills being taught on a regular basis:

- Are feeling words being taught? Are strategies for handling feelings being taught?
- Am I acknowledging and naming the child’s feelings about the situation?
- Where is the child's development socially and emotionally? Are they missing skills?
- Are social stories being used to teach and model specific skills the child needs to learn?

## What skills does the child need to learn in order to be more successful?

- Is there something I can send home so parents can help reinforce the skills?
- Are the skills being modeled daily at school?
- Is the child receiving one-on-one support when required?
- Are we teaching the skills when the behavior isn’t occurring?
- What kind of reinforcement is the child receiving to use the new skills?
- Does the parent know what behaviors we have been observing? What do they think?