



Responding to Escalating Behaviours

Attending to Escalated Behaviours

1. **Be curious**
2. **Reduce dangers/perceived threat.** Remove other children and get between the child in distress and other things or people.
3. **Communicate to the child**
 - a. Match the intensity of the child for just a moment (i.e. louder but level voice if they are screaming), and begin to **lower and slow** your voice and body over multiple seconds to de-escalate them. Ex, “Wow! You are really upset!:
 - b. Then say: **“I want to help.”** Wait for the response. They may process information over 10 seconds, so waiting is important to allow them to hear what you’ve said.

If in mid level escalation:

1. **Agree** (I know it was very upsetting for you when Billy took the playdough you were using)
2. **Validate** (it can be really frustrating when other people take the toys that we are using away from us)
3. **Give them a choice** (i.e. we can say "I'd like the playdough please" or play with x (preferred item or activity)

If in high level escalation:

1. **Agree** (I know it was very upsetting for you when Billy took the playdough you were using)
2. **Validate** (it can be really frustrating when other people take the toys that we are using away from us)
3. **Sequence:** The process of *breaking down everything that has happened which has led to the child's current state and can include traumatic events.*
Break down the sequence of events: “first, you came into the block area and wanted to play with X”, “next, you tried your very best to teach X how to play the game”, “then, you became frustrated because they were not understanding how to play the game”.
4. We need to help the child find more **functional ways of communicating** their need: “Ask for (teacher) to help?” or “It looks like I can help.”

If in FULL Escalation (screaming and laying on floor, for example): Say, “I will be right here for when you are ready”. Give some space to the child, close enough that they can still see you and know you are close. Wait until they request support, asking calmly **“I'd like to help. Are you ready for me to help?”** We can also offer suggestions they have told us in the past to help them. Example: “Squishy hugs.”

It's important to remain calm and factual when explaining incidents to child(ren), colleagues and parents. Use an incident report to guide the discussion. Take a break and use your mental health coping strategies whenever needed. We as educators need compassion too.

Responding to Escalating Behaviours

Prevention of Future Challenges

1. Some children have a higher need to be **co-regulated**. They are born this way and consist of ~5% of the population. These children need to be our helper, have jobs to complete and **need** to be close to adults to feel safe. Feeling safe leads them to be calmer.
2. **Discussion** planned when children and adults are calm, no other children are around and the child is not missing out on special activities.
 1. **(CPS) Show empathy** - Give a neutral observation about the unwanted behavior and as specific as possible.
 - a. "I've noticed that ... (insert unsolved problem) ... what's up?". Ex. "I noticed it's hard to be calm when X child takes your toy."
 - b. Then, listen well to the child's response.
 - c. When the child has finished giving their side of the story, you can clarify any questions you have about the problem, and ask them what they are thinking about the problem. If they say "I don't know" as their response, try to figure out why. Maybe they really don't know why. Maybe the problem needs to be broken down more. Maybe the problem is attached to other challenging behaviour that they are afraid to admit to.
 2. **Define your (adult) concern** - Say "the thing is ... (insert adult concern)", or "my concern is ... (insert adult concern)". Ex. I am concerned that all children need to be safe in this room, even when we are upset. Make sure that you express your concern neutrally, and in a way that the child will understand. Don't start talking about solutions at this stage.
 3. **Invitation** - Invite the child to join you in thinking about a solution that is relevant to the problem, and will address the concerns of you and your child.
 - a. You can restate the concerns addressed in the last two steps, and then say "I wonder if there is a way ..." as a way of offering a solution.
 - b. If the solution actually works less than 60-70%, you may need to develop a different solution that is more likely to work.

Restraints should be used only as a last resort. Please see the longer document created, named, *Using Restraint and Physical Touch* if needed, Inspire Community Outreach, 2020.