

Supporting Emotion Regulation in Early Childhood

August 30, 2018

Crystal Day-Hess, PhD
University of Denver





PRACTICE GUIDE

Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom



Released: September 2008

PDF (1.3 MB)

Recommendations

Details

Panel

Designed for elementary school educators and school- and district-level administrators, this guide offers prevention, implementation, and schoolwide strategies that can be used to reduce problematic behavior that interferes with the ability of students to attend to and engage fully in instructional activities.

<p>1 Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it.</p> <p>MODERATE EVIDENCE</p> <p>▼ Show More</p>	<p>2 Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.</p> <p>STRONG EVIDENCE</p> <p>▼ Show More</p>	<p>3 Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.</p> <p>STRONG EVIDENCE</p> <p>▼ Show More</p>	<p>4 Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students' families for continued guidance and support.</p> <p>MODERATE EVIDENCE</p> <p>▼ Show More</p>	<p>5 Assess whether schoolwide behavior problems warrant adopting schoolwide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative and foster positive interactions.</p> <p>MODERATE EVIDENCE</p> <p>▼ Show More</p>
--	--	---	--	---

Practice Guide Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it.

Recommendation 2. Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.

Recommendation 3. Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.

Recommendation 4. Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students' families for continued guidance and support.

Recommendation 5. Assess whether schoolwide behavior problems warrant adopting schoolwide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative and foster positive interactions.

Recommendation 2

- *Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.*
 - Triggers of problematic behavior can result from a mismatch between the classroom setting or academic demands and a student's strengths, preferences, or skills.
 - Reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behavior by:
 - Revisiting and reinforcing classroom behavioral expectations.
 - Rearranging the classroom environment, schedule, or learning activities to meet students' needs.
 - Individually adapting instruction to promote high rates of student engagement and on-task behavior.

Recommendation 3

- *Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.*
 - Actively teach students socially and behaviorally appropriate skills to replace problem behaviors, using strategies focused on both individual students and the whole classroom.
 - Helps students with behavior problems:
 - Learn how, when, and where to use these new skills.
 - Increase the opportunities that the students have to exhibit appropriate behaviors.
 - Preserve a positive classroom climate.
 - Manage consequences to reinforce students' display of positive “replacement” behaviors and adaptive skills.

Your Turn!

- What challenges have you observed with students in your classrooms in relation to emotion regulation?



Emotion Regulation: Helping Kids Control Their Emotions in the Classroom

Brief Overview

Colorado • Kansas • Missouri • Nebraska • North Dakota • South Dakota • Wyoming

What Can Be Regulated?



Physical Regulation



Cognitive Regulation



Emotion Regulation

How Do We Learn to Regulate?



Regulation by Others

- Teacher regulation – setting boundaries and rules



Other-Regulation

- “I can state the rules for others”



Self-Regulation

- “I follow the rules”

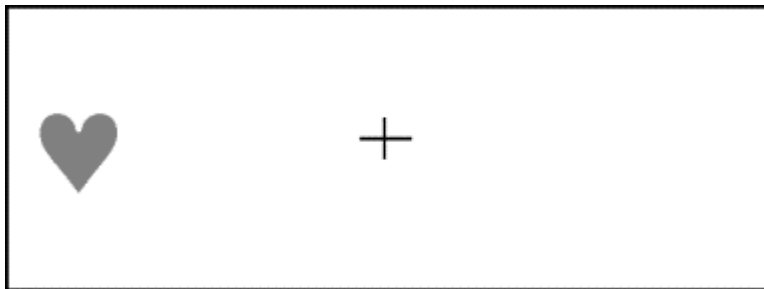
Your Turn!

- Let's try a little task that simulates what it is like for a young student to manage distractions in the classroom.

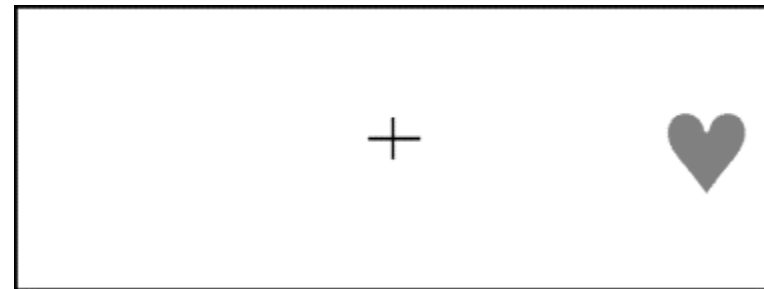


Hearts – Congruent

- Each time you see a HEART, tap with the thumb or forefinger on the SAME side as the stimulus.
- For example, if the heart appears on the left, tap with thumb and forefinger on your left hand.
- Remember . . . PRESS ON THE SAME SIDE AS THE HEART.



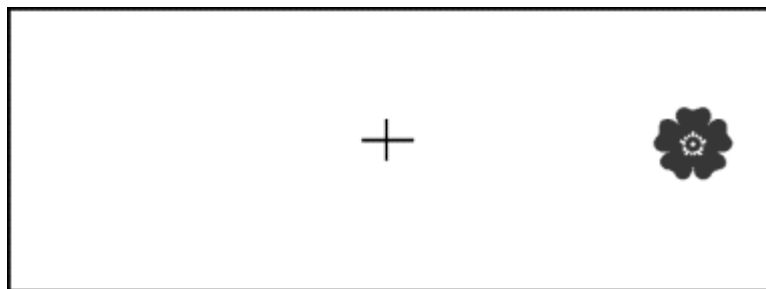
Push Left



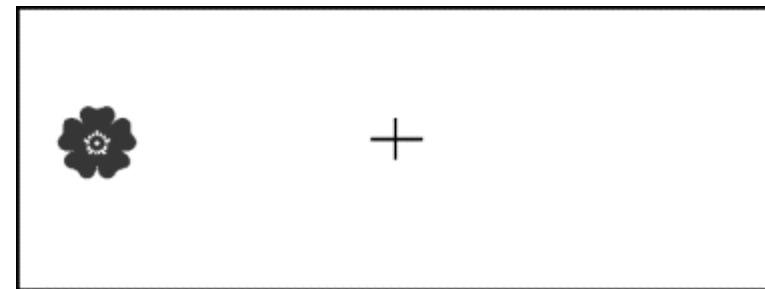
Push Right

Flowers – Incongruent

- Now, you'll see a FLOWER. Press on the the side OPPOSITE the flower.
- For example, if a flower appears on the left, press with your right hand.
 - Here, you'll need to inhibit the natural tendency to respond on the same side as the stimulus.
- Remember . . . PRESS ON THE SIDE OPPOSITE THE FLOWER.



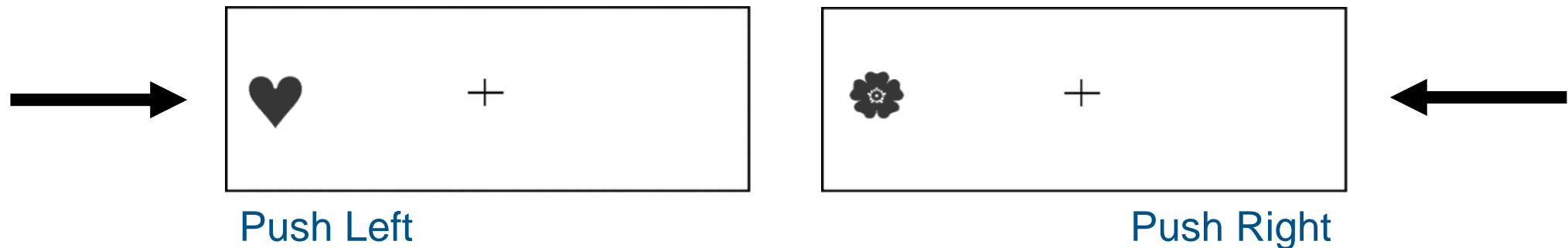
Push Left



Push Right

Hearts & Flowers – Mixed

- Now, you will sometimes see a heart and sometimes a flower.
- You'll have to switch between the same-side and opposite-side rules.
- The rules stay the same:
 - For HEARTS, press on the SAME side.
 - For FLOWERS, press on the OPPOSITE side.



Why Is It So Challenging?

- It requires holding 2 rules in mind (hearts – same side; flowers – opposite side) AND, on incongruent trials, inhibiting the tendency to respond on the same side as the stimulus.
- This is what it can feel like for children, particularly those who may have a hard time controlling their emotions, to navigate through the classroom every day.

Why Does It Matter?

- Being able to control emotions is connected to children's achievement in school.

Remember How We Learn to Regulate



Regulation by Others

- Teacher regulation – setting boundaries and rules



Other-Regulation

- “I can state the rules for others”



Self-Regulation

- “I follow the rules”



Recommendation 2

Modifying the Classroom Learning Environment

Strong
Evidence

Moderate
Evidence

Low
Evidence

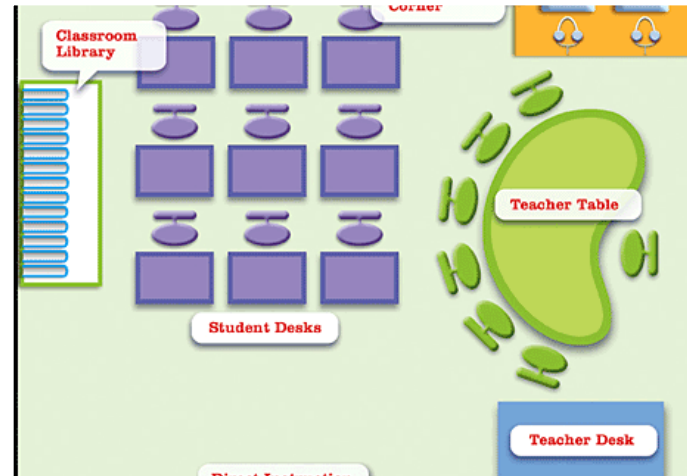
Why Does It Matter?

- Learning environments can include triggers that lead to challenging behaviors in children.
- Altering the environment to eliminate or mitigate these triggers can help encourage emotion regulation and reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behavior.

Putting It Into Practice



1. Revisit, re-practice, and reinforce classroom behavioral expectations.



2. Modify the environment to encourage instructional momentum.



3. Adapt/vary instructional strategies to increase opportunities for academic success and engagement.

1. Classroom Behavioral Expectations

- Teach and practice behavioral expectations throughout the year.
- Use explicit teaching strategies, modeling, and the power of positive relationships to reinforce expectations.
- Practice, practice, practice.

Classroom Expectations

- Considerations when setting classroom expectations/rules:
 - Limit to less than five.
 - Apply to all children.
 - Tell children what *to do*.
 - Include visual icons.



[This photo](#) by unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA](#)

2. Instructional Momentum

- For persistent behavior problems, identify and modify specific environmental variables that trigger problem behavior.
 - Physical environment
 - Schedule
 - Transitions
 - Lesson pacing and duration
 - Teaching strategies
 - Student choices

Physical Environment

- Implement a center management system to help children navigate centers.
 - Clearly define spaces.
 - Designate and label spaces for materials.
 - Strategically arrange spaces based on the activities that take place there (e.g., small-group vs. whole-group spaces).

Center Management: Defining the Space

Dramatic Play Center



Center Signs

- Teacher- or child-made signs should be visible to children.



Color Coding

- Consider color coding centers to help visually separate centers.



Other Methods

- Screens, tape, or strategically placed furniture can also help define centers.

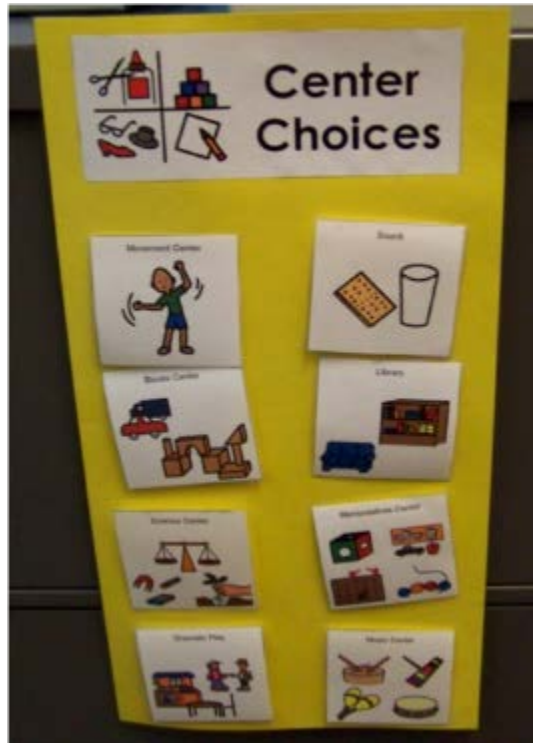
Center Management: Limiting the Number of Children

- Visuals can be used to limit the number of children in each center at one time or to support center rotations.



Center Management: Choices and Steps

Activity Choices

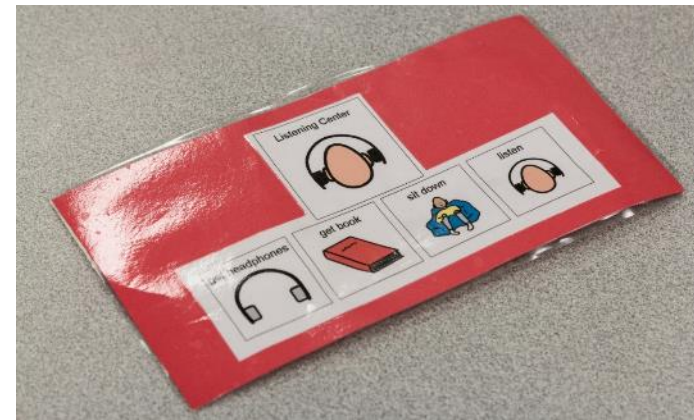


Activity Steps



Schedules and Routines

- Plan your daily schedule strategically.
- Explicitly outline steps in routines within the daily schedule.
- Use visual schedules and routine reminders for younger children, children with special needs, or children who are dual language learners.



Transitions

- Manage transitions quickly and efficiently.
 - Prepare children for upcoming transitions.
 - Provide clear and succinct directions ahead of time.
 - Have materials out and ready for the next activity.
 - Begin the new activity immediately.
 - Use it as a fun (learning) opportunity!

Teaching Strategies

- Ensure the chosen teaching strategy is appropriate for the lesson, children, and time of day.
 - Consider using multiple strategies strategically – whole group, small group, individual work, center time, etc.
 - Schedule and arrange activities so children move around the classroom throughout the day.

3. Instructional Strategies

- Identify the children's level of understanding, and adjust instruction to meet abilities and rate of learning.
- Use strategic and targeting questioning during activities.
- Keep activities moving along at a brisk pace.
- Vary materials, processes, and assessment strategies.
- Don't be afraid to engage children in peer tutoring and learning.

Questioning to Promote Engagement

- Use strategic questioning to determine children's level of understanding during a task.
- Help sustain/increase engagement by asking questions throughout the task.
 - New tasks: Elicit 4–6 responses per minute, with a target of 80 percent accuracy in student answers.
 - Practice tasks: Elicit 8–12 responses per minute, with a target of 90 percent accuracy in student answers.

Your Turn!

- Reflect on the strategies we've just discussed, and develop at least one concrete step based on these strategies for supporting positive behavior in your classroom or child-care setting.



Recommendation 3

Teaching and Reinforcing New Skills to
Increase Appropriate Behavior

Strong
Evidence

Moderate
Evidence

Low
Evidence

Why Does It Matter?

- We know that children can learn to control their behaviors and emotions, thus decreasing challenging behaviors, when they are taught appropriate and effective skills.


Putting It Into Practice



1. Identify where the student needs explicit instruction for appropriate behavior.



2. Teach skills by providing examples, practice, and feedback.

2	's behavior	15
3	PUNCH CARD	14
4		13
5		12

3. Provide reinforcers for appropriate behavior and withhold for inappropriate behavior.

1. Identify Need for Explicit Instruction

- Does the child know what behavior is expected, *or* do they lack the skills needed to carry out the desired behavior?

Identifying the Area of Need

- For all children, observe:
 - Are there any circumstances in which the child can perform the behavioral skill successfully?
 - Does the child know when and where the behavior is appropriate?
- For older children, consider:
 - Implementing a self-monitoring system so that students can work to become more aware of their behavior.

2. Teach Skills

- Help children gain the needed skills by providing instruction and reinforcement of new and appropriate replacement behaviors.

Instructional Strategies to Support New Behaviors

(Re)explain the appropriate behavior

Break behaviors into concrete steps

Model and provide many examples

Create opportunities for practice

Prompt and cue often (at first)

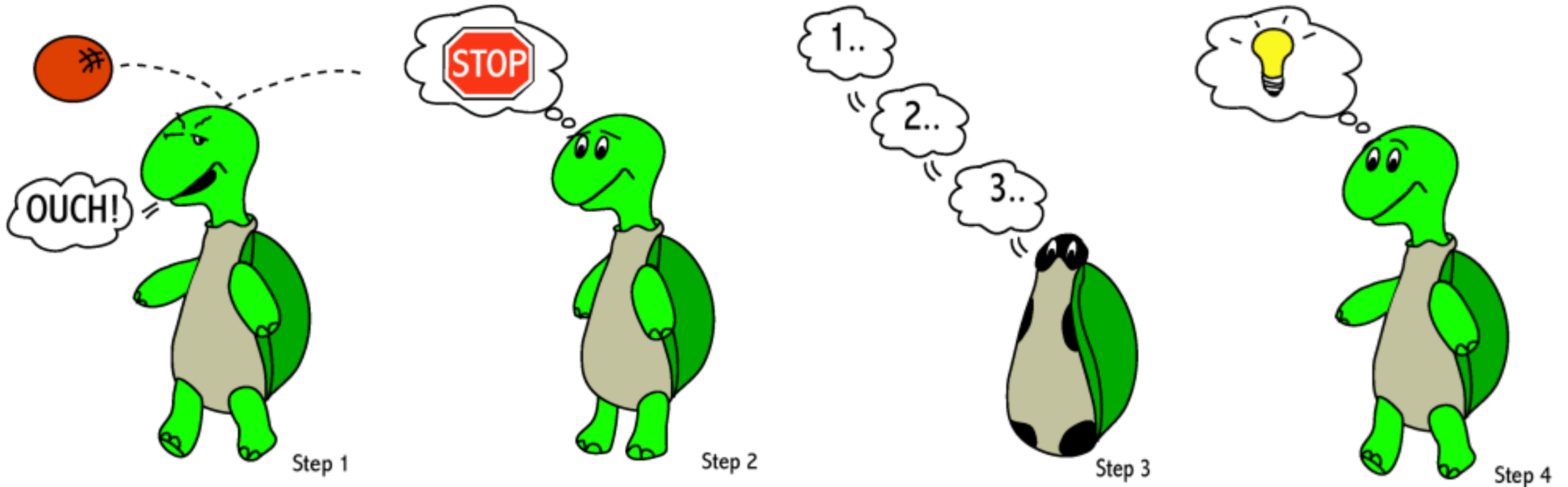
Give specific feedback and praise

The Pyramid Model

Teaching Emotion Regulation



The Turtle Technique



Recognize that you feel angry or upset.

“Think” stop.

Go into shell. Take 3 deep breaths. And think calm, coping thoughts.

Come out of shell when calm, and think of a solution.

Tucker the Turtle



Video file: v2.16 Teaching Tucker 1.mpg

Obtained from CSEFEL Preschool Module 2: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_preschool.html#mo

Colorado • Kansas • Missouri • Nebraska • North Dakota • South Dakota • Wyoming

Solution Kit



When to Teach New Skills

- Identifying the most effective “teachable moments” to introduce new skills is key.

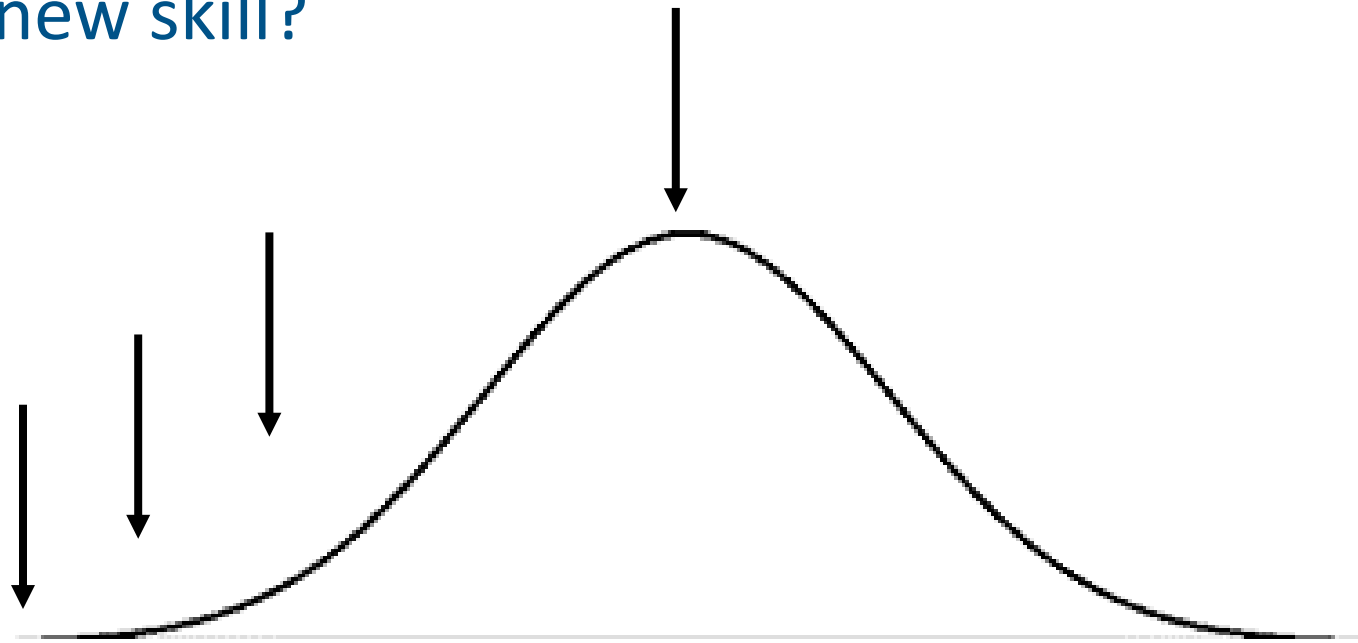
Solution Kit



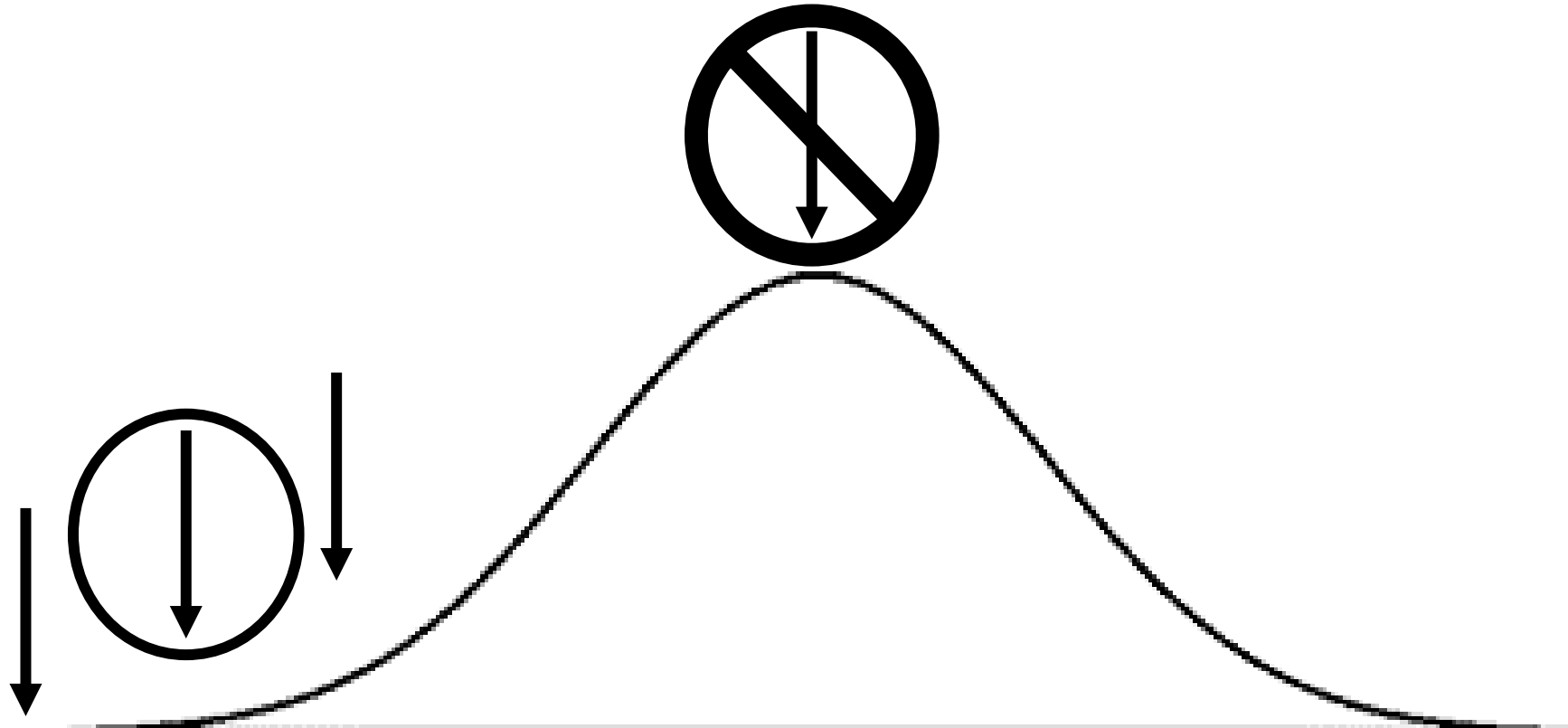
Video file obtained from <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/modules-archive.html>

Your Turn!

- What might teachers or child care providers say to Oscar and Anna, or what skill might they try to teach Oscar and Anna?
- When might be, or might have been, the ideal time to begin to teach this new skill?



When to Teach New Skills: An Example



Adapted from the resources http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_preschool.html#mod2

3. Reinforcers and Consequences

- Manage consequences so that reinforcers are provided for appropriate behavior and withheld for inappropriate behavior.

Positive Reinforcers

Positive:

Increase frequency of recognition and reinforcement of appropriate behavior

Negative:

Withhold or prevent access to reinforcing consequences for inappropriate behavior

Your Turn!

- Reflect on the strategies we've just discussed, and develop at least one concrete step based on these strategies for supporting positive behavior in your classroom or child-care setting.



Remember How We Learn to Regulate



Regulation by Others

- Teacher regulation – setting boundaries and rules



Other-Regulation

- “I can state the rules for others”



Self-Regulation

- “I follow the rules”

Thank You

Please visit our website,
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/index.asp>,
and follow us on Twitter, @RELCentral,
for more information about our events, priorities, research alliances,
and access to our many free resources.

Or contact us by email: RELCentral@marzanoresearch.com

This webinar was prepared under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0005 by Regional Educational Laboratory Central, administered by Marzano Research. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.