



Sun Prairie Area  
School District  
Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

APRIL 2019  
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# SP4K– Early Learning Newsletter

Hello 4K Families!

As we enter into April I am sure we will be met with a lot more sunshine, a little rain, and hopefully NO MORE SNOW! I love the smell of the earth and can't wait to see those small green stems poking through the ground. As we bounce back and forth between sun and rain don't forget to give a quick look inside your child's backpack for that extra set of clothes and maybe an extra pair of socks— those puddles can be so inviting!

I hope you all had an opportunity to sit down and talk with your teachers during conferences last week. Thank you for taking the time to meet with your child's teachers. Conferences are a wonderful opportunity to hear about the growth your child has made and the fun things they have in store for the rest of the year.

In the next few weeks you will be receiving a Sun Prairie 4K Program evaluation. There will be an online version or if you prefer paper those will also be available. We look forward to your feedback and appreciate your time in completing the survey.

It is hard to believe that we have been together for six months now, more half way through our year together. It just amazes me how quickly the time flies, especially when you are having as much fun as we are!

Enjoy these spring days!

Elizabeth Knudten  
SP4K Program Supervisor

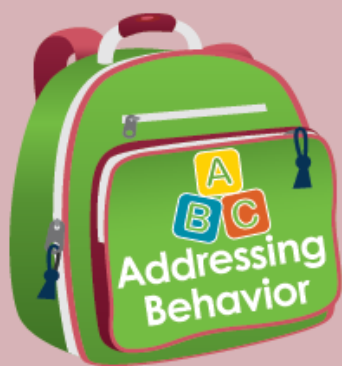
**“EDUCATION**  
is not the learning  
of facts,  
but the training  
of the mind  
to think.”

Albert Einstein

ART  
BAR

**REMINDERS  
THIS MONTH:**

**SPRING BREAK  
APRIL 15-19**




## Backpack Connection Series

### About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

### The Pyramid Model



The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

### More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).



National Center for  
Pyramid Model  
INNOVATIONS

[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

# Teachable Moments: How to Help Your Child Avoid Meltdowns

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

Does this sound familiar? Your children are playing in the living room while you clean up the kitchen. You answer the phone, and a few minutes later, one child is angry and screaming because someone took her toy and the other is in tears because her sister hit her. It is in escalated moments like this that parents often find themselves trying to teach rules or give long explanations. Unfortunately, in moments such as this, your child usually is not even hearing your words let alone learning the rule. This is not a teachable moment.

There are countless teachable moments daily when skills can be taught and emotions discussed, such as during play time, in the car, at bath time or while reading together. As a parent, you can reduce challenging behaviors such as hitting, biting, pushing and whining when you 1) concentrate on calming your child during a challenging behavior incident and 2) wait until an appropriate teachable moment to actually teach your child.

Think again about the scenario when you are on the phone and your children are fighting. Below are several examples of how you could use teachable moments throughout the day to reduce the chance that the challenging behavior occurs in the first place.

- **Teachable Moment #1** – During morning reading time, read the book *Hands Are Not for Hitting* by Martine Agassi. For additional activities to do with this book, go to <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#booknook>.
- **Teachable Moment #2** – During breakfast time, intentionally teach the skill of sharing by saying, "Thank you for sharing the syrup with your sister!"
- **Teachable Moment #3** – When your children are playing on the floor quietly, sit on the floor, make eye contact and say, "Wow, you girls have been playing for 10 minutes quietly! Tell me about what you are building." This teaches the desired behavior of playing quietly together.
- **Teachable Moment #4** – When the phone rings. Put the phone down, tap both girls on the shoulder and say, "I am going to be on the phone for 10 minutes. When this timer is done, come tap me on my leg and show me the timer."



### Try This at Home

Find teachable moments throughout the day!

- **Play Time (responding to common challenging behavior):** "Oh, no! I see that your bunny is super sad. Her sister is trying to take her toy. I wonder what she can do?" You can teach appropriate ways of getting her needs met. She

can ask for help, get a timer or trade her sister for another toy.

- **Bath Time (teaching rules):** "The water stays in the tub. You can use the cup and pour water into another cup or you can pour water on your body."
- **Car Time (teaching friendship skills):** "I saw that your friend, Bella was sad at school today and you made her a picture. I bet that made her feel better. What a great friend you are!"
- **Story Time (teaching emotions):** "Wow, that little girl in this book is really angry! I saw that she asked her mom for a hug. That is a great way to feel better. I wonder what you can do when you feel angry?"
- **Meal Time (teaching expectations):** "Let's practice asking for more milk." Role play with whining, yelling or just banging your cup. Then, teach the expected behavior. "You can ask nicely, say, 'Mommy, milk please.' When she does this, jump up and say, 'I'm happy to get you milk!'"



### Practice at School

At school, teachers prepare students to solve social problems in appropriate ways before problems occur. Teachers use role playing, puppets or circle time to discuss emotions and possible solutions. Teachers provide opportunities to practice and reinforce skills during class. For example, children may practice how to trade a toy at circle time with a puppet. Later, teachers can compliment a child when they see him trade during play time. "Wow! You remembered that when a friend is using a toy, you can ask him to trade!" Teaching skills in advance gives children the confidence to successfully manage a situation and allows caregivers the opportunity to praise a child for making a wise choice.



### The Bottom Line

Young children are learning in every moment. They are actively discovering the world around them. You are always teaching your child. Strolling in the park, reading books and giving her a kiss before bed all teach her about her world. You can use the many calm and happy moments in your day to intentionally teach expectations, rules and skills that will help your child be successful and reduce challenging behavior.



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## Why Do We Play?

“Is this all they do – just play? How will they learn when they’re only having fun?” These are important questions that you might have when you visit your child’s classroom. The very core of our curriculum is based on play. Does this promote learning? The answer is a resounding YES!

Erika Christakis, an Early Childhood Education Faculty Fellow at the Yale Child Study Center, and Nicholas Christakis, a pediatrician named to Time Magazine’s list of the 100 most influential people in the world, wrote an article for CNN titled, “Want to Get Your Child into College? Let Them Play.” This article can be found at [cnn.com](http://cnn.com). They say, “One of the best predictors of school successes is the ability to control impulses.... The beauty of a play-based curriculum is that very young children can routinely observe and learn from others’ emotions and experiences.” They also refer to non play-based or, “skill and drill” programs, as those that “promote more of a social isolation.” They go on to say that, “Through play, children learn to take turns, delay gratification, negotiate conflicts, solve problems, share goals, acquire flexibility, and live with disappointment...a key ingredient for intellectual and social-emotional success.” We do this EVERY DAY during work/center time in our classrooms. As a parent, you might wonder what your child is learning when he/she is:

### When Children Do This:

### They are Learning to:

Put blocks into trucks & dump them out	Understand size, weight, and number concepts (Math & Science)
Pretend to be grown-ups	Engage in socio-dramatic play and making connections to their world
Finish a puzzle	Complete a task and fine motor (using working fingers/hands to strengthen for writing)
Gather paper, scissors and glue for a project	Plan and carry out a task, fine motor, creative thinking, independence
Make boats sink	Recognize cause and effect and problem solving (Science & Logical Thinking)
Scribble on paper	Use writing as a form of communication (Literacy) and fine motor
Sort or classify objects that are the same	Math and classification
Catch and throw balls	Coordinate eye and hand (large motor) movements

These are just a few of MANY examples of learning taking place through PLAY!!! Feel free to ask your teacher if you have any questions and don’t forget to PLAY, PLAY, PLAY!!!!



## **WHO DO I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?**

*The best place is to always start with your child's teacher. They have close contact with your child and have a deep understanding of their program and can most quickly address any of your concerns.*

*The next step is to contact your 4K site director. They have a wealth of knowledge and can answer questions about the many site specific policies and procedures.*



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