

NETWORKER

a publication of Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center • Spring 2017

Matrix Parent Network is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1983 to serve families of children with special needs. We serve Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties.

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SOME MUSINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Managing Behavior in Uncertain Times

WILL THERE BE CUTS TO NECESSARY PROGRAMS FOR OUR CHILDREN? What will happen to mandated services? What will the future look like? So far 2017 has felt very disconcerting.

Is it just me or has anyone else felt some anxiety recently? If you have felt calm and serene the past several months, you have probably not looked at any news or social media. Or maybe you are ardent practitioners of mindfulness. For the rest of us, we have been trying to negotiate everyday life while the whole world seems unsettled and rocky.

Managing the stress and anxiety of uncertainty, as adults, is challenging enough. Maybe we decide to make a mental checklist to help predict what will happen next. This might include:

- Observing the environment and people around us
- Observing how others are responding to these uncertain times
- Recalling similar situations and how those situations were resolved

We assess the situation, look for familiar patterns, and try to predict what might happen next.

What if this stress of uncertainty—of not really being able to predict what is next—was a daily occurrence? Imagine not being able to “read” the environment or people’s moods.

Suppose you didn’t have the language to express your confusion. What if you couldn’t understand the meanings of the words the teachers or adults were using? Would this reduce stress and anxiety, would it be calming and soothing? Most likely not.

Perhaps this current state of the world is a reminder to us, as adults and parents. While we generally operate in a somewhat predictable, familiar world, *we still need to be capable of managing unpredictability and uncertainty.*

We’ve already honed these skills over years of practice and had some epic stumbles along the way. We’ve learned strategies and acquired tools that allow us to calm down and move forward.

What’s important right now is to remember to:

- Use these strategies and tools
- Model using them for our observant offspring
- Breathe

Nora

Nora Thompson,
Executive Director

Managing Behavior in Uncertain Times

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY
COLLEEN ARNOLD, MS



Colleen Arnold, founder of Arnold Advocacy, is the Board Secretary for Matrix, and works to provide high quality training and instruction for parents, as well as to create collaboration efforts between teachers and families of students with disabilities.

Students who have challenging behavior are some of the most difficult to reach. This impacts their ability to complete work, but can also lead to difficulty with friendships and even school dropout. It is important not to take behaviors personally, as all behavior is a way of communicating. If we look at behavior this way, we are able to brainstorm ways to support students. Students also may need to be taught how to do things in a more acceptable way, as behavior may be due to a lack of skill in a specific area (Greene, 2014). Some questions and tips to consider when thinking about behavior:

- When is the behavior least likely to occur? What is different about this environment or experience that supports the student?
- How often is the child having positive interactions? Students with behavior issues often get a lot of negative feedback, which makes it difficult for them to recognize when they are doing something right.
- What skills might the student need to handle situations calmly? What programs or strategies can we use to teach these skills?
- What are the events that occur right before the behavior? What can we do to change the environment to make them less likely to occur?
- Is the student engaged throughout the day? Increase engagement through the use of technology, student choice, and increasing involvement.

These questions can be brought to the school team to consider how to handle behavior in a more preventative, proactive way.

You are not alone!

Reach out to Matrix.

During these times of uncertainty, reach out to Matrix. Call our Helpline. We can refer you to resources and connect you with other parents dealing with similar issues. We can help you to work with your school to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan. Please remember that you are not alone!

Call our Helpline

800.578.2582



ARTÍCULO ESCRITO POR
COLLEEN ARNOLD, MS

Colleen Arnold, fundadora de Arnold Advocacy, es la secretaria del consejo de Matrix y trabaja para proveer entrenamiento e instrucción de alta calidad para padres, así como para crear esfuerzos de colaboración entre maestros y familias de estudiantes con discapacidades.

Links/References on Managing Behavior in Uncertain Times

Enlaces / Referencias sobre cómo manejar el comportamiento en tiempos inciertos

Urbani, J. M., Arnold, C. D., & Brown, B. (2016). *Evidence based interventions for positive behavior support*. Retrieved from: <http://www.behaviormarinselfpa.org>

Greene, R. (2014) *Lost at school: Why our children with behavior challenges are falling through the cracks and how we can help*. New York: Scribner.

Allensworth, E. M. & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago public high schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year*. Retrieved from Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago website: <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/07%20What%20Matters%20Final.pdf>.

Kerr, M.M., and Nelson, C.M. (2012). *Strategies for Addressing Behavior Problems in the Classroom*. Pearson Education Inc., New Jersey.

PENT is an excellent behavior resource <http://www.pent.ca.gov/index.htm>

Cómo manejar el comportamiento en tiempos inciertos

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ALGUNAS REFLEXIONES DEL DIRECTOR EJECUTIVO...

Managing Behavior in Uncertain Times continued

something as small as a scratchy clothing tag could cause sensory overload. Behaviors interfere in many things...access to education, social interactions, and ability to build meaningful relationships. But what is the behavior really trying to tell us?

Understanding behaviors and what they mean requires patience and practice. It also requires an understanding of the context of the behavior. There are many good resources available about positive behavior plans. As a Parent Training Center, we hear from families daily about their children's behavior challenges. Social isolation, suspensions and expulsions are all brought on by behavior problems. We provide information about how to get a Behavior Intervention Plan and offer resources to help families access needed services.

A good behavior plan is as much about the adults' behaviors as it is the child's. It creates strategies and plans that help us to recognize behaviors. This makes it possible to redirect, reward positive actions and help the child. Our behavior, as adults, absolutely communicates messages to the child. Let's hope we are communicating the most positive messages we possibly can. What we do is so much more powerful than what we say, or not understanding a social interaction. Even



The Early Edition

• a publication of Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center • Spring 2017

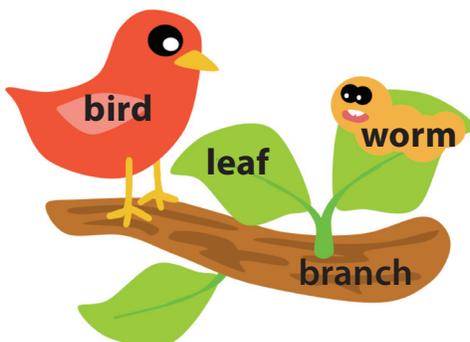
The Early Edition is a publication of the Matrix Family Resource Center (FRC) program — part of California's interagency system of early intervention services for children from birth to 36 months. Our FRC staff is here to provide information and support to help you care for your baby. Additional information and resources are also provided in a designated Birth to 3 section on our website at www.matrixparents.org.

BIRTH TO 3

Tips on Managing Behavior

Behavior is how we express ourselves in response to a situation or being stimulated. Before a child learns a method of communication, behavior is their only tool to get their needs met. Along with teaching our little ones how to communicate their needs, one of our first jobs as parents is to teach and model appropriate behavior to our children. This is a difficult aspect of parenthood under normal circumstances! When you experience the effects of your child coping with a disability, an array of emotions can weigh heavily on the whole family.

The emotional life of a toddler can be overflowing with a variety of feelings: excitement, frustration, boredom, fear, joy, and anger, to name a few. Our pint-sized whirlwinds are also famous for a lack of impulse control! Admittedly, it is easier to teach them how to communicate a physical need like hunger or thirst than it is to teach them how to express their emotions. Sometimes on an exhausting daily basis, toddlers will demonstrate many maladaptive behaviors in response to a feeling, situation or need. When your toddler struggles with a feeling that cannot be soothed by a tangible item, it can be helpful to begin labeling those feelings.



Flooding emotions can be the root cause of bad behavior. For a child lacking the maturity and communicative skills to handle these situations, helping them label emotions can be a good first step. Labeling your own emotions is also a great strategy since we understand how deeply we can sometimes feel the sensations of fear and anger! Showing your little one that you experience the same feelings can give them confidence and generalization. The goal is to avoid teaching our children to engage in bad behavior in favor of them expressing themselves.

Over time, if your child gains the ability to identify when they have a negative feeling, reward them! Give positive reinforcement and keep up the great work!

links or images
or resources
could go here



• We can help with
transition to preschool.

• call
800.578.2592



La Edición Temprana

• una publicación de Matrix Centro de Recursos Familiares • Primavera

La Edición Temprana es una publicación Matrix Centro de Recursos Familiares (FRC) programa como parte del sistema interinstitucional de los servicios de la intervención temprana para niños de California desde el nacimiento hasta los 36 meses. Nuestro personal del FRC esta aquí para proporcionar información y apoyo para ayudarle a cuidar de su bebé. Información adicional y recursos también están proveídos en un área designada en la sección recién nacido a tres en nuestro sitio de web, www.matrixparents.org.

NACIMIENTO A 3

Consejos sobre cómo administrar el comportamiento

Are you feeling like simple activities turn into disasters? That your little one's behavior is just out of control? That things are getting worse, not better? Well, you're not alone.

The good news is that there are strategies that you can use to create positive solutions for your family. Thanks to the Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behaviors (www.challengingbehavior.org) for the following tips.

1. **Keep Your Expectations Realistic:** You know your child's abilities and limitations best; expecting too much (or too little) from your child will cause frustration for both of you.
2. **Plan Ahead:** Try to anticipate what your child may need in any given situation – Hope for the best, plan for the worst, always have a back-up plan.
3. **Clearly State Your Expectations in Advance:** Giving clear instructions as to what you expect from your child can be helpful, especially during those situations where you know your child is capable of complying, but just doesn't want to.
4. **Offer Limited, Reasonable Choices:** Offering your child choices will help her develop decision-making skills and take personal responsibility for her actions; support and practice will help her learn what your child's capabilities are, she can learn to be responsible for some things.
5. **Use "When ... Then" Statements:** Give a simple instruction about what your child must do in order to then do what he wants to do; Be positive, follow through, and be prepared for a "no!", but remain consistent with your simple instruction.
6. **Catch Your Child Being Good:** Give specific, positive attention to the behavior you want to see.
7. **Stay Calm:** Acting calm with a minimum of attention will reduce the risk of strengthening the very behavior you want to discourage. Modeling calm behavior helps your child learn one appropriate way to respond to difficult situations.
8. **Use Neutral Time:** Neutral time is when you and your child are both calm enough to think and talk and listen. Identify these times and use them wisely to review past difficult behaviors and strategize about what to do in difficult situations.

In Spanish

links or images
or resources
could go here



Podemos ayudar con la transición a la pre-escuela

- Llama
- 800.578.2592

CALLING ALL GOLFERS!!

Matrix Classic - Charity Golf Tournament

- food
- hole challenges
- fun
- libation



Friday, April 28th

Windsor Golf Club, Sonoma County

11am Check-In, 1pm Shotgun Start

Single Golfer \$135 Foursome \$500

Register online at matrixclassicgolf.brownpapertickets.com
or email kristiea@matrixparents.org

"Fajitas & Margaritas"



Benefit Dinner, Raffle, & Silent Auction

at Charlie's Restaurant, immediately following
the Matrix Classic golf tournament!

**5pm - Festivities will begin, including silent
auction & raffle**

6pm - Fajita dinner buffet

Dinner tickets \$40, purchase at
matrixclassicgolf.brownpapertickets.com or
email kristiea@matrixparents.org

Matrix News

NEW HIRES



Erin Gruzcz, Parent Advisor

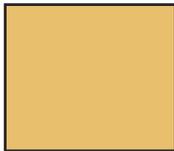
is a special education advocate, working with families across Marin County to empower students with learning differences through strength-based solutions for both school and home. Colleen specializes in working



Dominique Soileau, Event Coordinator

Is a special education advocate, working with families across Marin County to empower students with learning differences through strength-based solutions for both school and home. Colleen specializes in working

NEW BOARD MEMBER



Mary Strebigs

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Join Us at the Kitchen Table



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New Matrix Trainings & Events

TRAININGS FOR FAMILIES*

Conservativeships

- April 18, Marin, Español

Behavior

- April 19, Marin, Español
- April 20, Solano, Español
- April 27, Solano, English

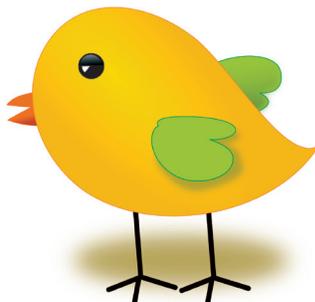
Special Education Rights

- April 26, Marin, Español



* All trainings held from
10 am — 12 pm

For details on events
and trainings, visit us at
www.matrixparents.org



NETWORKER

Managing Behavior Issue • Spring 2017

Our mission: To empower families of children with special needs to successfully understand and access the systems that serve them.

Nuestra misión: Capacitar a las familias de niños con necesidades especiales para entender y acceder a los sistemas que los sirven.

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FaceBook!!

