



How can I help my children feel good about themselves?

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS is a different way of looking at your child's behavior.

Developing healthy relationships starts with a supportive and nurturing environment. It is easy to be positive and engage with your child when he or she is happy and manages transitions well. What about when he or she has a temper tantrum? Or does not want to go to bed? Or does not sleep through the night? Or can't be comforted? It is hard to be positive and engaging when you feel your child is not responding to you. **Positive Behavior Support** provides guidance on how to make changes to your environment that can be more responsive to the needs of your child.

Developing routines, planning for transitions, and maintaining a schedule can all help a child respond positively to the many transitions and changes that occur throughout their day. Building Blocks is a community resource available to you. For more about the social and emotional development and early relationships go to www.pbs.org/wholechild or contact us if you have questions about your child's development or would like more information on Positive Behavior Support.

Susan A. Radway, EdD
Project Director

What is Building Blocks?

Building Blocks, as a system of care, is a coordinated network of comprehensive services that meet the mental health needs of children and families.

What is POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS?

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) encourages identifying a child's strengths and then focuses on using these strengths as the basis for promoting positive behavior and changing negative behaviors. PBS is an intervention that is child-focused and parent-guided.

Some key characteristics of PBS include recognizing your child's strengths, developing nurturing and responsive environments, focusing on positive behaviors, improving communication, developing daily living skills, supporting the health and safety of the child, assistance in time management and organization skills to promote the development of routines and schedules within the child's life.

Information taken from *Parent Handbook: A Positive Approach to Helping Parents Change Their Child's Problem Behavior* by Karolyn King-Peery and Lynn K. Wilden

new at BB

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www.BuildingBlocksCT.org
or call 860-434-4275

Monthly Play Groups

2nd Thursday - FREE
Madonna Place, Norwich
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

3rd Monday - FREE
Thames River Apartments, New London
4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

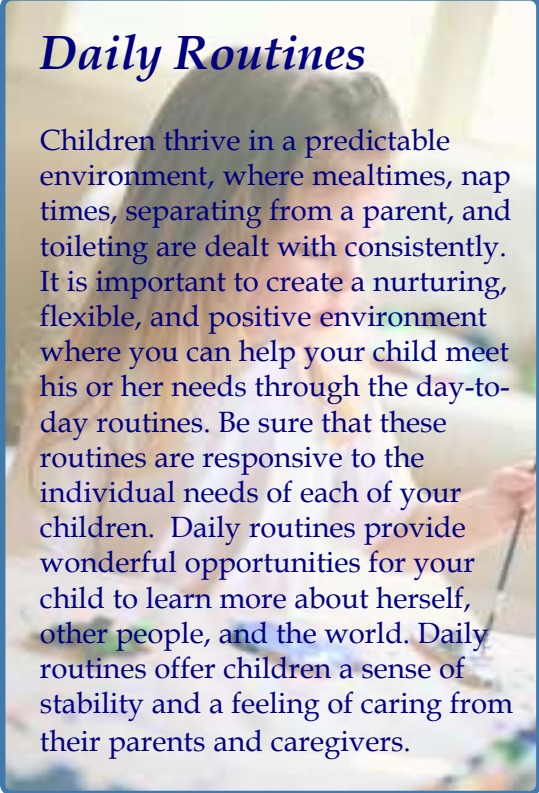
Monthly Support Groups

2nd and 4th Wednesday
The HES Center, Groton
Free, dinner and children's activities
5:00 - 6:45 p.m.

1st and 3rd Wednesday
Thames River Apartment, New London
Free, dinner and children's activities
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

If you are interested in attending,
please contact Rachel Smolenski
860~434~4890 Ext. 311
rsmolenski@learn.k12.ct.us

Daily Routines



Children thrive in a predictable environment, where mealtimes, nap times, separating from a parent, and toileting are dealt with consistently. It is important to create a nurturing, flexible, and positive environment where you can help your child meet his or her needs through the day-to-day routines. Be sure that these routines are responsive to the individual needs of each of your children. Daily routines provide wonderful opportunities for your child to learn more about herself, other people, and the world. Daily routines offer children a sense of stability and a feeling of caring from their parents and caregivers.

Engaging in conversation with your child at mealtime can help build her literacy skills. In fact, a Harvard study shows that "table talk" in the early years is related to children's academic achievement.

Writing to parents:

"Positive Behavior Supports" (PBS) promotes children's healthy social and emotional well being.

Positive Behavioral Supports can assist parents and caregivers with various strategies and interventions that can be used to help address and prevent challenging behaviors in their children. One goal of PBS is to replace disruptive behaviors by increasing understanding and awareness of these behaviors and promoting more socially acceptable alternative behaviors. PBS is widely used in childcare settings and schools and has been endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education for Special Education Programs. PBS seeks to increase children's social and emotional well-being through the use of a Public Health Model with a specific focus on prevention and timely intervention.

In the school and home environment, PBS promotes predictable routines and the learning of social skills through improvements in self-regulation, cooperation, and social problem solving among children. Parents, caregivers, and family members having children with persistent challenging behaviors create a "team" which then works together to identify challenging behaviors, develop a support plan and promote healthy change. Recognizing that the relationship between child and primary caregivers is the key to such healthy change, the family becomes the center of this new team. One of the first tasks of the team is to participate in a "functional assessment", which helps discover those factors contributing to the child's behavioral challenges and problems. At that point, strategies can then be created to address these factors, improve understanding for all involved in caring for the child, and help to guide the child down the road to greater social and emotional well-being.

Talking with Babies and Young Children

Young children have many ways to communicate, including sounds, gestures, facial expressions, and body language, but once they begin to master language, they can more easily let parents and other caregivers know what they want or need, what they feel, and what matters to them. A good command of language appears to go hand-in-hand with the ability to think logically and creatively. All of the important adults in children's lives, and especially parents, play an important role in helping young children develop verbal language skills and build a good foundation for later reading and writing. Well before they can respond with words, babies and toddlers can understand a lot of what is said. By listening to and watching children with real interest and responding in a way that continues the exchange, you let them know that they will be attended and responded to in a way that lays the ground work for real conversation and intellectual growth.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/parents/talk.html>

SPEAK OUT:

Positive Behavior Supports

how it has changed our life

Hi, my name is Lorraine and I am a grandparent raising a child with many mental health challenges. Building Blocks has offered me much assistance and also the opportunity to attend several trainings, such as “*Positive Behavior Supports*.”

In this training I learned how to change the way I work with my granddaughter using a number of tools such as rules poster, calendars and visual charts. One of our behavioral challenges is *not listening*. I'd like to share this experience with you. I have been able to create, with the help of Building Blocks, visual charts, now used in my home. I asked her to draw pictures of how it looks when using our *low voice or to be quiet* (a mouth with a finger over it was drawn) and how we *listen or follow directions* (an ear). When she misbehaves, together we go to the chart and I point to one of the pictures. She explains the meaning; takes a moment to re-focus; and do what is being asked of her. It is important that I always follow through on what I say. In the training I also learned how my behavior affects us as well. They educated me on responding with encouraging words versus reacting negatively or giving attention to negative behaviors. With this training I have been able to be more positive in my behavior, see more constructive behavior in my granddaughter and have been able to have a better relationship with her.

I know our family faces challenges on a daily basis in our home, community, and in our school. *Positive Behavior Supports* is an excellent way to manage my granddaughter's behavior, and I would recommend this training to other family members and professionals who work with our young children.

~ Lorraine Spath ~

A Building Blocks' Family Story

Making a visual chart:

Young children thrive on routines. Although they may not always want to follow the routine, it is comforting for them to know what to expect each day. If you are having difficulties getting your child to follow a routine, you may want to create a *visual chart*. These charts give your child something to look at in order to see what is coming next in her day. These charts also teach your child life skills, teach your child good behavior, and allows your child to participate in the process of creating the chart.

You can start by making a list of the tasks your child needs to complete in order to fulfill a specific expectation, for example, going to bed, play time, or getting ready for school. It is important to be specific so that your child understands what is expected. For example, setting a routine for going to bed may include some of these activities:

- ~ Put toys away
- ~ Brush teeth
- ~ Wash Face
- ~ Put pajamas on
- ~ Put dirty clothes away
- ~ Read book
- ~ Turn off light

Consider your child's age and any special needs your child has in order to choose the visual chart that is best for your child. Since young children cannot usually read, it is a good idea to include pictures under each word on the list. You may print images by using Clip Art or you could actually take a picture of your child pretending to do each of the activities on the list, and then insert those pictures under the words. You can start by gathering supplies and ask your child to name the things she/he must do, for example, to get ready for school. If your child cannot think of anything else to name, you could ask her/him, “Have you thought about _____?” Have fun putting all together!

Building Blocks Evaluation Highlights: Positive Behavior Supports Outcomes

How are Building Blocks Children Being Impacted by Positive Behavior Support Strategies?

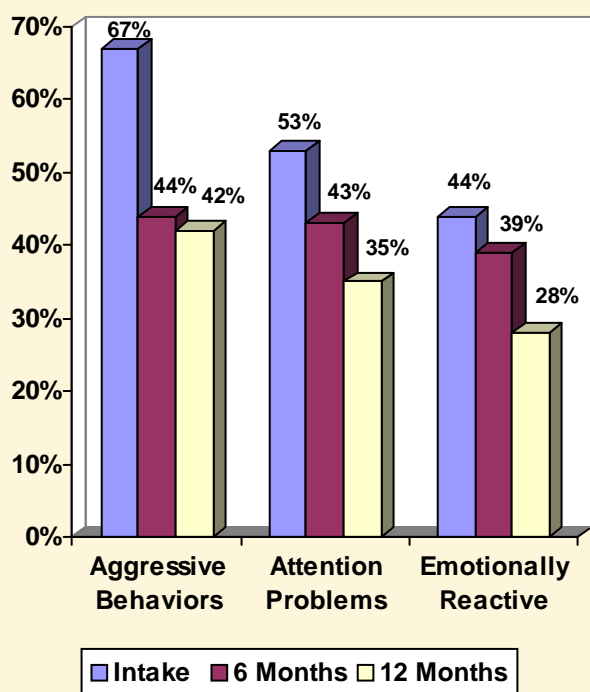
By Amy Griffin and Joy Kaufman, Yale Consultation Center

The aim of Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) is to reduce problem behaviors such as aggression, attention problems, and emotional reactivity

while increasing a child's ability to use appropriate behaviors so that he or she can form relationships with other children, function in a classroom or at home and improve the quality of their life.¹ During the outcome study interviews, parents and caregivers are

asked questions from the Child Behavior Checklist to learn if their child is having problems with aggression (i.e. hits others, gets into fights, has a hot temper), attention problems (i.e. poor concentration, can't sit still, wanders away), or issues with emotional reactivity (i.e. upset by new people and situations, disturbed by any change in routine, worries a lot). Results from initial interviews with caregivers show that more than half (67%) of Building Blocks children exhibit aggressive behaviors and attention problems (53%) at levels that place them above the clinical range, in other words these children struggle more than 90% of the children their age. In addition, caregivers report that nearly half (44%) exhibit emotionally reactive behaviors above the clinical range at intake (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage of Children Scoring in the Clinical Range of Problem Behaviors from Intake to 12 Months



Using the principles of PBS, the Building Blocks child and family team works with each child, family, and other concerned adults (such as the child's teacher), to create an individualized plan that fits the needs of the child. After six months of Building Blocks services, we see that parents and caregivers report that their children are behaving less aggressively, are better able to focus on an activity, and are better able to cope with transitions and everyday events than they were before they received Building Blocks services. We continue to see improvements in these areas at the twelve month interview (Figure 1) which is after most families no longer receive Building Blocks services indicating that children are able to maintain and continue to improve in these areas overtime.

In summary, after working to create a behavioral plan using PBS strategies, caregivers report that their children become less aggressive, have fewer attention problems, and become less emotionally reactive over time. A reduction in these problem behaviors allows children to form relationships with their peers, express their feelings, and contributes to their quality of life.²

¹ Duda, M.A., Dunlap, G., Fox, L., Lentini, R., and Clarke, S. (2004). An Experimental Evaluation of Positive Behavior Support in a Community Preschool Classroom. *Topics in early Childhood Special Education*, 24:3, 143-155.

² Hemmeter, M.L., and Ostrosky, M. Recommended Practices: Identifying and Monitoring Outcomes Related to Children's Social-Emotional Development. Retrieved June 12, 2009: www.challengeingbehavior.org

