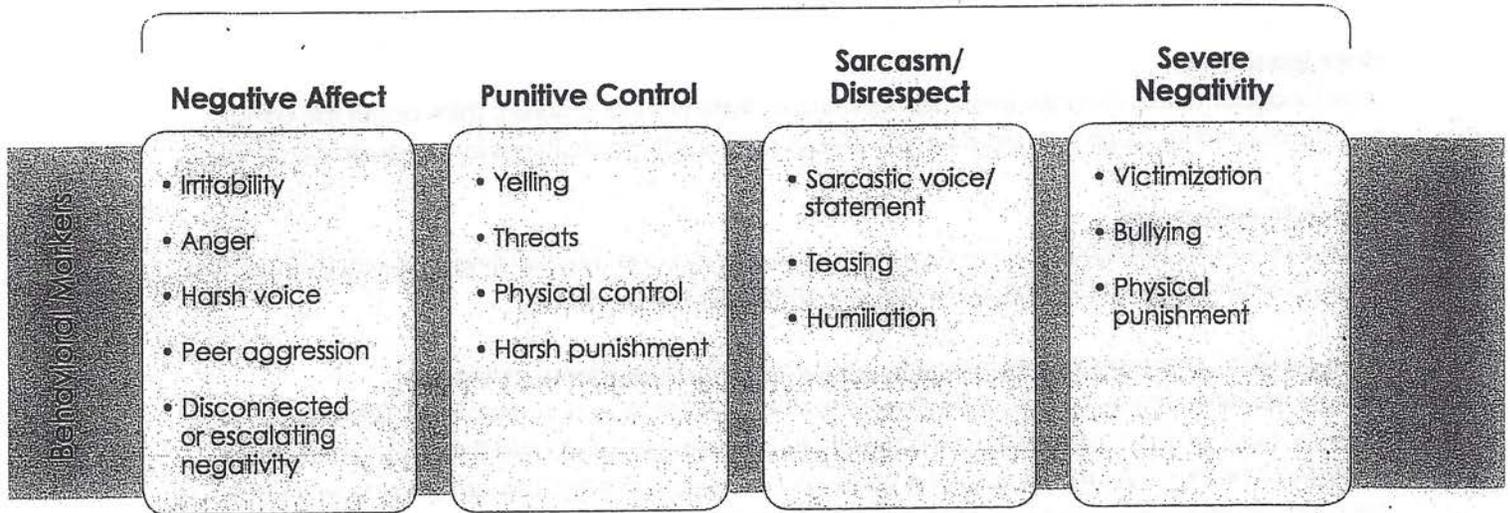


Negative Climate

Indicators



What is it?

Negative climate refers to the level of expressed negativity such as anger, hostility or aggression shown by teachers and/or children. In classrooms with negative climate, teachers and children appear angry or irritated and make sarcastic or disrespectful comments. Teachers may yell or threaten to control children's behavior. In classrooms with severe negative climate, teachers or children may hit or fight.

Why is it important?

Children learn better and develop positive social-emotional skills in environments free from aggression and threats to physical and emotional safety. Working to improve other dimensions of Emotional Support can help decrease negative climate.

How can I reduce negative climate in my classroom?

Build close, warm relationships with each child in your classroom.

A strong relationship with the teacher helps children feel safe and secure. When children feel secure, they are less likely to display negative or challenging behaviors.

Think about when and why negativity happens in your classroom and come up with a plan to diminish it.

Ask yourself questions like, "When and why does this child display negative behaviors?" or "Do I react with irritation to specific behaviors or children or during specific activities? Why do I do this? How can I change this?" Then, come up with a plan to diminish these behaviors. For example, when Kejra can't sit still during meeting time, instead of becoming irritated and sending her to time out, I will ask my assistant to take her to the puzzle area to play.

Spend one-on-one time with children who present challenging and/or negative behaviors.

Some children need extra support and attention to build a sense of trust and to develop a close relationship with you. A few times a week, spend one-on-one time with a child who presents challenging behaviors, doing something that the child enjoys. This will help you to focus on the child's positive qualities while also building the child's trust in you.

If needed, support children in working through intense, negative feelings.

When a child behaves in a negative way, such as by using aggression, calmly intervene and clearly let the child know that type of behavior is unacceptable. Afterward, talk with the child one-on-one about what happened and give her alternatives for dealing with intense feelings such as anger. For example, tell a child that if she feels angry she can talk with you about it, stomp her foot, or take some time to be alone and calm down.

Implement positive, proactive behavior management strategies.

Be proactive and plan ahead to prevent misbehavior and/or potential negative behaviors. For example, tell children you are bringing a timer out to the playground so that each child gets a turn on one of the bicycles. Being proactive cuts down on time you spend responding to misbehavior or negative behaviors. However, if you do need to respond to misbehavior, use low reactivity by keeping your face and demeanor calm and directly stating the behavior you expect.

Take care of yourself.

Teachers work hard and have to juggle a lot to implement a nurturing and educational program for children. When teachers feel overwhelmed or fatigued, they are more likely to react with irritation. Take your lunch and other breaks in your schedule, and whenever possible, use the time to relax and decompress.