

Talking with Families about Problem Behavior  
Do's and Don'ts

Do

Begin the discussion by expressing concern about the child

Let the parent know that your goal is to help the child

Ask the parent if he or she has experienced similar situations and are concerned

Tell the parent that you want to work with the family to help the child develop appropriate behavior and social skills

Tell the parent about what is happening in the classroom, but only after the parent understands that you are concerned about the child, not blaming the family

Offer to work with the parent in the development of a behavior support plan that can be used at home and in the classroom

Emphasize that your focus will be to help the child develop the skills needed to be successful in the classroom

Stress that if you can work together, you are more likely to be successful in helping the child learn new skills

Don't

Begin the discussion by indicating that the child's behavior is not tolerable

Indicate that the child must be punished or "dealt with" by the parent

Ask the parent if something has happened at home to cause the behavior

Indicate that the parent should take action to resolve the problem at home

Initiate the conversation by listing the child's problem behavior. Discussions about problem behavior should be framed as "the child is having a difficult time", rather than losing control

Leave it up to the parent to manage problems at home; Develop a plan without inviting family participation

Let the parent believe that the child needs more discipline. (The child needs instruction and support).

Minimize the importance of helping the family understand and implement positive behavior support