

Home Consultation Checklist: Having conversations with families about behavior

If is often difficult to have conversations about children’s social skills and behavior challenges. This checklist provides ideas about how to have those conversations. The conversation supports include ideas for A) Understanding family concerns about the child; B) Having conversations about positive parenting and providing tips to the family; and C) Collaborating with the family to develop supports for challenging behavior. You might find one or several of these conversation tips to be helpful, depending on family concerns and the child’s needs.

	Notes
A. Understanding Family Concerns	
1. Initiate the conversation about challenging behavior by expressing concern about the child’s ability to be engaged, communicate needs, self-regulate, etc.	
2. Receive information from the family concerning challenging behavior without judgment or alarm	
3. Allow the family to express their feelings about or reactions to the problem behavior without judgment or dismissal	
4. Ask the family to identify the behaviors that they consider as problematic.	
5. Validate family concerns and then offer to assist the family in developing strategies	
6. Ask family to describe the strategies or approaches they have used to resolve behavior problems and how well they have worked.	
7. Provide family with reassurance about parenting strengths when discussing their efforts to provide guidance to the child	
8. Ask the family to identify the routines or activities that are difficult for the child or the behaviors that cause the greatest concern	
9. Provide information on problem behavior that may be <u>developmentally expected</u> paired with an explanation of why the behavior may occur at that age	

10. Provide family with information on <u>how to guide children</u> when developmentally expected problem behavior is occurring.	
B. Providing Information on Positive Parenting Techniques	
11. Acknowledge family member frustration with behavior by offering reflections on what you see (e.g., “It seems like Tanya really pushes your buttons when she throws her toys”)	
12. Provide family member with suggestions on how to handle stress about problem behavior that may lead to anger or inappropriate actions	
13. Ask the family member about their goals for parenting strategies for guiding behavior	
14. Provide family members with ideas about fostering engagement, communicating expectations, and developing routines that will promote the child’s appropriate behavior	
15. Provide family member with ideas about how to respond to problem behavior in a manner that is positive, firm, and does not provide a pay-off for problem behavior. Match recommended strategies with family members needs and competing demands	
16. Inquire about the behavioral progress of the child by asking open-ended questions about the routine or activity (e.g., tell me about bedtimes)	
17. Express confidence in the family members ability to implement new approaches to guiding behavior and reflect that change may take time	
C. Developing Support Strategies for Challenging Behavior	
18. Ask the family to identify what they would like a routine or activity to look like to gain an understanding of the family’s expectations and desires	

19. Describe challenging behavior as serving a purpose for children and describe the need to do the “detective work” to determine why problem behavior is occurring.	
20. Ask the family member to identify when the challenging behavior is most likely to occur, who it is most likely to occur with, and what interactions seem to trigger the behavior	
21. Engage the family in a conversation about what the purpose of challenging behavior may be and offer ideas	
22. Provide family with information on the why the child may be engaging in challenging behavior (i.e., function) when providing information on support strategies	
23. Provide the family with concrete strategies for preventing challenging behavior and teaching replacement skills	
24. Offer strategies that will be easy for family members to implement within everyday routines	
25. Offer a simple written and verbal description of the use of a formal process for developing a behavior support plan when used	
26. Develop written plans, charts, or visuals that will help the family remember strategies that they choose to implement	
27. Offer to coach the family member through a problem behavior episode when it occurs during the visit	
28. Warn the family that initial attempts to change behavior may be difficult for them to implement and that the child’s behavior may get worse before it gets better. Encourage them to implement the plan consistently.	
29. Provide encouragement to the family member after intervening with an episode of problem behavior	

30. Provide encouragement to the family member when observing the implementation of the behavior support strategies	
31. Ask the parent to use simple outcome measures (e.g., rating scales or behavior charts) that emphasize change in child appropriate behaviors and reflect family goals	
32. Review progress of the child and family efforts to implement the plan. Celebrate success with the family	