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Preschool

**Webinar: Using Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement to Promote Social Competence and Reduce Challenging Behavior**


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1

**Carol Dweck on Praise and Growth Mindsets**



**PRAISE**




2

**Good News/Bad News**

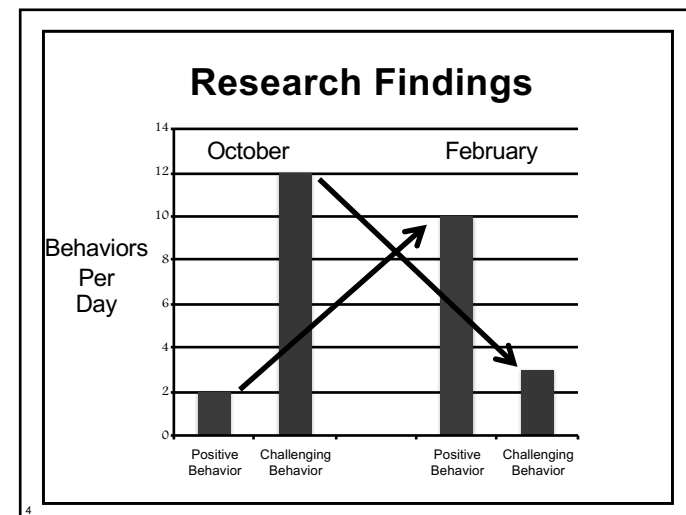
- The Bad News:
- The Good News

There isn't really anything you can do to make a child stop performing a challenging behavior

You can teach a child positive, socially acceptable, skilled behavior



3



### Close to Magic: PDA

- Positive, Descriptive Acknowledgement (PDA) and PDA Plus
- Use acknowledgement and encouragement more than praise and much more than directions or corrections
- Be explicit and specific
  - Instead of saying “Good job,” say “You were really concentrating on your work.”
  - Link behavior to the expectations for PDA Plus -- “When you walk so quietly, you are really respectful.”
  - Think of the behaviors you want to see and make a list of ways to acknowledge them
  - Nonverbal acknowledgement is great too!



5

### What is PDA?

- When a child performs a positive behavior
- Acknowledge the behavior by describing what the child did with a short statement



6

### What PDA is NOT— Directions and Corrections

- **DIRECTIONS** tell children what they should be doing
- **CORRECTIONS** tell children what they should be doing instead of what they are currently doing
- **DIRECTIONS and CORRECTIONS** sound like this:

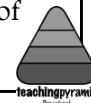
*You need to be sitting down—He had that first—  
What are you supposed to be doing right now?—  
We don't climb the shelves here—Bikes stay on the  
pathway—How many children are supposed to be  
in this center?—Keep your hands to yourself.*



7

### Positive Descriptive Acknowledgment (PDA)

- **POSITIVE:** It immediately follows a positive behavior, something you want the child/children to be doing
- **DESCRIPTIVE:** It describes *exactly* what the child did (and perhaps what was happening before and/or what happened after)
- **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** It's a sign of recognition




8

**It sounds scary.....**

.... but it is actually very easy and simple:


**Say what  
you see!**



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**Here are some examples of PDA:**



- You are really concentrating on that puzzle
- You kept your hands to yourself
- She asked you to stop and you stopped
- You came right to circle
- You kept all four legs of the chair on the floor
- You passed the bowl to your friend
- You took turns running the car down the slide



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**Why use PDA? It builds language**


- Children learn language and concepts by hearing words relating to what they are doing in that moment
- You are teaching them the language and concepts relating to social and emotional skills and abilities

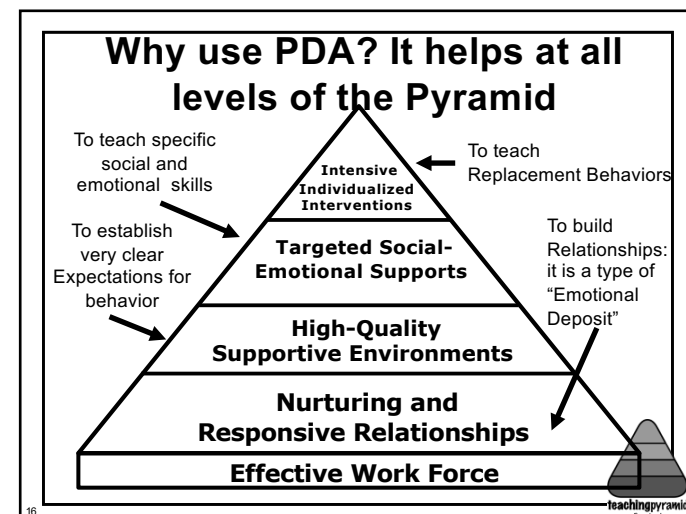
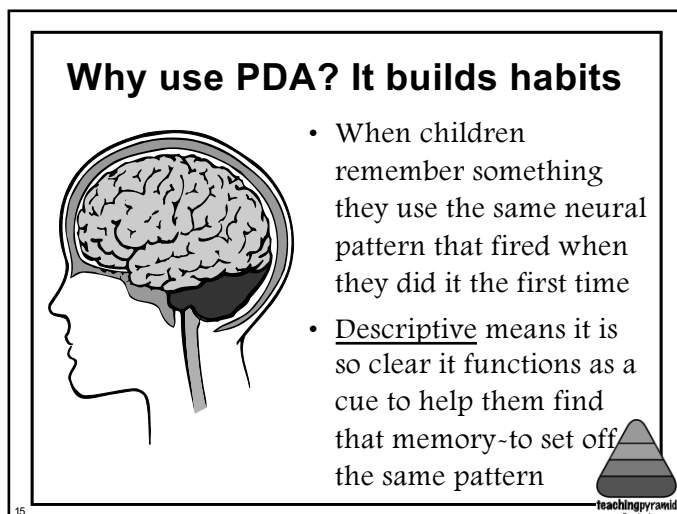
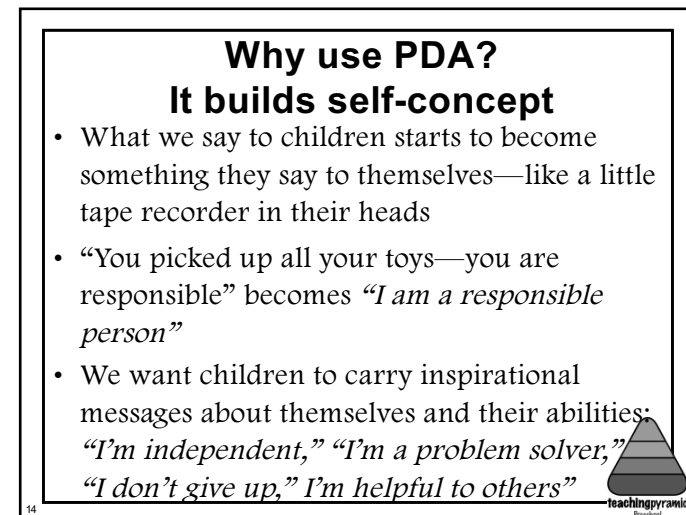
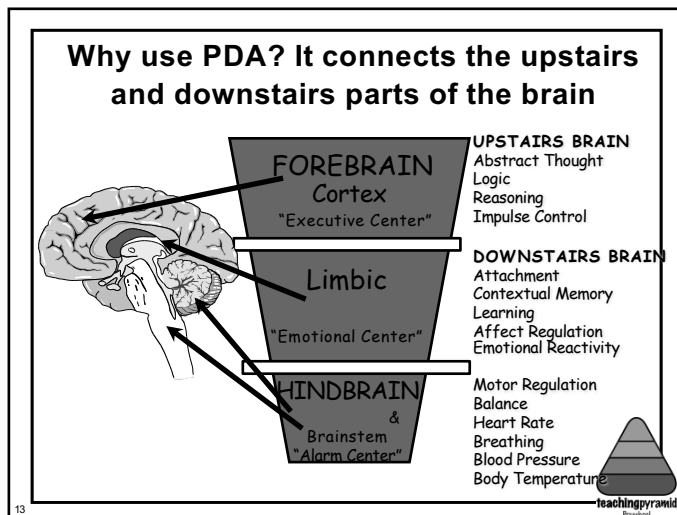
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**Why use PDA? It builds cognition**

<p><b>The Past</b></p> <p>“When you were in the block area with James and he took your block, you asked for it back and he gave it to you!”</p>		<p><b>The Future</b></p> <p>“When you are in the block area, if someone takes your block, you can ask for it back and they will give it to you!”</p>
<p><b>The Now</b></p> <p>“James took your block, you asked for it back and he gave it to you!”</p>		




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### Challenges



- “It’s hard!”
- “I keep saying ‘Good Job’ ”
- “I’ve been trained to say ‘I like ....’ ”
- “I’ve been using praise my whole career—it’s a habit that’s hard to break”
- “I just forget”
- “I don’t know WHEN to do it”

**Learning to use PDA is like learning a new language**



17


### Introducing PDA to Children

18

### How do we learn it?


By doing it!  
By practicing!  
By hearing other adults use it!  
By hearing it come from our own lips!  
By writing it down!



19

### Here’s a secret:

It all starts by  
knowing what  
to look for



20

## Cape Head Start



21

## PDA Plus (PDA +)

+ what?

**PDA + :**

- Expectations
- Outcomes/Results/Impacts
- Desired characteristics



22

## Expectations for Behavior

- Expectations are a framework for the behaviors that are expected of everyone in the program, including children, staff, and families while on the site
- Expectations are the “big ideas”; what had been rules become examples of how the expectations happen
- Expectations are the “WHY” behind the rules



23

## How Are You Using the Expectations?

- We are Friendly (Caring, Kind)
  - There are so many opportunities to comment and acknowledge friendly behavior or words during small group time and transitions
- We are Respectful
  - Respect can be for people, toys, or space
- We are Safe (and Healthy)
  - Looks different in different parts of the classroom and outside



24

### Here are some examples of PDA:

- You are really concentrating on that puzzle
- You kept your hands to yourself
- She asked you to stop and you stopped
- You came right to circle
- You kept all four legs of the chair on the floor
- You passed the bowl to your friend
- You took turns running the car down the slide



25

### Examples of PDA + Expectations

PDA +

- You kept your hands to yourself ... that was very RESPECTFUL
- You kept all four legs of the chair on the floor... SAFE
- You took turns running the car down the slide. ...How FRIENDLY you are!



26

### PDA Plus (PDA +)

+ what?

**PDA + :**

- Expectations
- Outcomes/Results/Impacts
- Desired characteristics



27

### Here are some examples of PDA+ Desired Characteristics (Social Skills):

PDA +

- You are really concentrating on that puzzle. You are a PROBLEM SOLVER.
- .... you kept your hands to yourself • You were really angry but ...
- She asked you to stop and you stopped. You listened to your friend and went with the flow.



28

## PDA Plus (PDA +)

+ what?

### PDA + :

- Expectations
- Outcomes/Results/Impacts
- Desired characteristics



29

## + Outcomes/Results/Impacts

What does the child's behavior lead to/allow/produce? EXAMPLES:

### PDA

+

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| • You are sitting on your bottom         | ...your friends can see the book |
| • You are staying in your own body space | ....you are able to dance!       |



30

## PDA Squad in Gilroy



31

## Read More About It!

*Handout 1b.7*

*All About PDA:*

*Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement*

Laura Fish, Linda Brault, & Craig Zercher


*(Page 14 in the Handout Section)*

32



### With Gratitude

- Secret Code: **Watch the recording to find out!**



33