

Factors That Contribute to Challenging Behavior

To better understand what a child may be communicating through challenging behavior, it is important for adults to play detective and gather information. Think about when, where and with whom the challenging behavior occurs. Notice any patterns that occur. Think carefully about your child's day at school, home and other places you tend to see challenging behavior. See if you can find any patterns to your child's behavior by asking:

- Is my child avoiding something, some place, or someone?
- Does my child like the way this behavior (for example hand flapping or spinning) feels?
- Is my child uncomfortable, hungry, tired, or not feeling well?
- Is my child having a reaction to medication or food?
- Is my child angry, sad, anxious, or scared?
- Is my child confused, bored, or frustrated?
- Does my child want to get away from something or someone?
- Does my child want something?
- Does my child need more time or help to finish what she started?

Many adults find it helpful to take note of what happens directly before and directly after the challenging behavior occurs. For example: Does your child get easily frustrated, even when she's working on something she likes to do, like playing a game or playing with the family pet? If so, maybe she's not understanding the instructions or the steps that you have provided. Or maybe the expectations are not clear (Gently petting the family dog, Alex, is ok, but tightly hugging her is not.). Are you paying attention to your child only after her challenging behavior occurs? If so, maybe a few minutes of "together time" before your child begins the activity or event could prevent future challenging behavior. Start thinking about whether the circumstances before and after the challenging behavior support the child in a positive way.

Source - http://www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities/challenging_behavior3.html