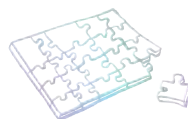


**Say good-bye  
to blustery days!**

**Research shows that  
parents and caregivers  
can help calm the  
turbulent behavior  
of stormy preschoolers  
by using techniques  
focusing on positive  
child behavior.**

The early childhood practice described in this brochure is based on findings presented in a practice-based research synthesis conducted at the Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development by N. G. Gallagher (2003). Effects of parent-child interaction therapy on young children with disruptive behavior disorders. *Bridges, 1(7)*. To read or download the complete research synthesis and/or a user-friendly, illustrated summary, *Bottomlines 1(T)* visit [www.researchtopractice.info](http://www.researchtopractice.info). Printed copies can be obtained from Winterberry Press ([www.wbpress.com](http://www.wbpress.com)). All opinions expressed are those of the Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice Division, funder of the work of the RTC (H324K010005).



### **Evidence-Based Practice Guides**

Additional practice guides are available from the RTC for this and other important early childhood topics.

Related materials also are available as part of *Solutions* evidence-based tool kits.

Please see descriptions of these resources and information for ordering under "Products" at

[www.researchtopractice.info](http://www.researchtopractice.info)

Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development  
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*Cornerpiece*

# **Interplay**

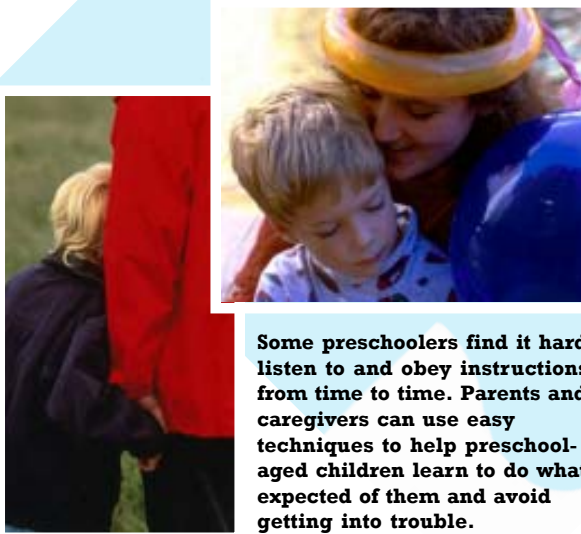
**Simple techniques  
promote preschoolers'  
prosocial behavior  
... and they can  
work for YOU!**

*Sunny days ahead!*

**An  
Evidence-Based  
Early Childhood  
Intervention  
Practice**

# Hello, blue skies!

Interaction techniques help parents and preschoolers avoid “stormy weather”



Some preschoolers find it hard to listen to and obey instructions from time to time. Parents and caregivers can use easy techniques to help preschool-aged children learn to do what is expected of them and avoid getting into trouble.

## What is the practice?

The practice is a set of relationship-building and behavior-management techniques that parents can use during playtimes and everyday activities with preschool-age children who exhibit challenging or difficult behaviors. The practice focuses first on building a strong adult-child relationship (using techniques like praise for appropriate behavior) and then on controlling difficult behavior (with techniques that include establishing consistent consequences when a child fails to follow directions). The combination of relationship building and behavior management is key because children change their behavior more readily with guidance from an adult with whom they have a positive relationship.

## How do we do it?

During adult/child playtimes and everyday activities, promote a positive relationship with a child by:

- 1 Describing and praising appropriate behavior** (“You’re using lots of crayons to make your drawing. I like the way you’re handling the crayons so gently.”)
- 2 Imitating appropriate play** (Parent draws a circle on paper and colors it in after the child performs the same action.)
- 3 Reflecting and expanding upon appropriate statements made by the child** (Child: “I like to draw big.” Parent: It looks nice when your picture fills the whole page!”)

While engaging in playtimes and everyday activities, promote prosocial child behavior by:

- 1 Giving simple, direct, and specific commands using a calm and respectful tone** (“Please pick up the crayon you just threw on the floor.”)
- 2 Praising the child when she follows directions in a way that lets her know what you liked about her behavior** (“Thank you for picking up the crayon so nicely.”)

If any of the above fails to work, **consistently implement a series of consequences when the child fails to follow directions so that she learns what to expect if she doesn’t listen** (“If you don’t pick up the crayon, you will have to sit in the time-out chair.” *Child continues to not listen, and parent consequently places child in time-out chair until she complies with the original request.*)

## Take a look!

**Try this idea:** Work on building a sandcastle together with your child using various plastic molds. During the course of the building project, describe and praise his attempts to build the various parts of the castle. Let your child take the lead in determining the castle’s design by imitating his actions. If he starts to dig a moat around the castle, for example, assist him in digging from the other side. When the project is complete, instruct him to put the plastic molds away and be sure to provide specific praise when he follows your directions and requests.



## Is it working?

Has the number of the child’s temper tantrums decreased?

Has the child demonstrated improved attention to adult directions?

Is the child following adult directions more often?

