Overview: Every Child is Special: Montessori for All Learners

Key Points:

- Difficult behaviors indicate that something is wrong- neurological, environmental or a combination.
- Difficult behaviors require special assistance.
- Difficult behaviors most often have overlapping causes.

Possible Causes:

- Sensory Processing- Sensory Processing Disorder to extreme of Autism Spectrum
- Attention Deficit Disorder with or without hyperactivity
- Learning Difficulties- Specific Learning Disability to Gifted

Management Continuum: **Prevent**   **Minimize**   **Respond**

Prevention:

Prepared Environment- too much/too little stimulation (visual, auditory, meaningful work, room arrangement provides for appropriate movement, enough space, ordered)

What could you change that might contribute to a responsive environment for all children?

Child Development- adult's knowledge of appropriate expectations, developmental tasks, range of typical behavior

Is this child's behavior more intense and frequent than age peers? Does it interfere with the child's benefit from the classroom? Does it interfere with peers' benefit from the classroom?

Observation- describe specific behaviors

Can you identify- what behaviors, when, where, how often, and with who?

Classroom Routine- predictable daily schedule; consistent, uniform ground rules; carefully planned and followed transitions/movement

What changes could you make that might add to predictability and consistency for all children?

Roles and Interactions- clarity and consistency between the adults in the classroom; one lesson giver, one "manager" (even if roles change during the daily schedule); consensus of understanding of behavior and appropriate plan

Are all adults in the room handling difficult behaviors in the same manner?

Minimize:

- Children with behavior challenges need a specific plan of "treatment" and support that is consistent, routine, and individualized
- The "managing" adult needs to understand the child's difficulties, anticipate situations that contribute to difficulties and plan for prevention; provide treatment/intervention at first sign of difficulty
- Adults agree on a behavior plan which includes treatment, support, structure, and response

  Identification of specific behaviors + knowledge of techniques = interventions

Response:

When child is having a difficulty that is disruptive or interferes with peers, assess his need for support-

- If problem is still small, remind of the ground rule and give alternative
  We walk in the classroom, will you walk with me?
- Remove child from the situation and provide technique that will soothe, calm and regulate.
  I think it would be helpful for you to do some wall pushing. Can I help you with that?
- If behavior is interfering with others, set a limit by reminding that the behavior is not ok, and give a positive alternative and/or consequence for repeating the behavior.
  You may not take work from your friend. Let's find a work for you.
- If behavior is dangerous or disruptive to peers, remove the child from the situation, take him to a quiet place where he will not be seen by peers, and help him "regroup."
- When the child has calmed, problem solve and discuss alternatives in an developmentally appropriate way

Setting a limit must include follow through that is developmentally appropriate and responsive to the child's needs.