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Parent Network's Virtual Mini-Conference

"What's Next? Transitions Through the Years"

Saturday, January 30
9:00-11:30am

[whats-next-transition-through-the-years-mini-conference/](https://parentnetworkwny.org/whats-next-transition-through-the-years-mini-conference/)

Behavior is Communication

The first step in understanding behavior and behavior modification is to recognize that all **behavior is communication**. For example, a crying baby is communicating they are hungry or in need of a diaper change. Many parents can differentiate a 'hungry cry' from a 'diaper cry'. In other words, the parent is able to *'translate'* the behavior (crying) into an expression of the child's wants and needs (food or diaper).

As children grow and develop, the manner in which they communicate their wants and needs change. Challenging behavior may occur when a child does not know how to appropriately communicate their wants or needs. For example, a toddler may have a tantrum if they do not want to share a toy. A teen may skip a class if they did not complete the homework.

The message that is being communicated is not always clear. So how do we figure out what our child is trying to communicate? The "functions of behavior" break down behaviors into five categories. These categories can help decipher what a child is trying to communicate. Once the behavior is understood, we can begin to change the behavior.

Five Functions of Behavior

- Medical—the behavior is communicating sickness, illness, injury, pain, etc.
- Engagement—the behavior is intended to communicate the child's desire to interact, gain the attention of, play with, etc a specific person.
- Avoidance—behaviors are communicating that the child does not want to engage in a particular task, event, assignment, outing, etc.
- Tangible—the behavior is an attempt to communicate a desire to obtain a specific item, object, outing, activity, etc.
- Sensory—the behavior is communicating that the child has unmet sensory needs and/or is over- or under-stimulated by the current sensory environment.

What is My Child Trying to Communicate?

Trying to determine the function of behavior can be challenging. An effective way to determine the function is through tracking behaviors and identifying patterns. Next week's behavior bulletin will focus on how to track behaviors and start to *'translate'* a child's behavior into communication we can understand.

Upcoming Events

Date/Time	Topic	Link
Starting Tuesday, January 19th @ 6:00pm	Nurtured Heart Approach—Four Week Parenting Series	https://parentnetworkwny.org/event/nurtured-heart-approach-part-1/
Monday, January 25th @ 6:30pm	Live, Learn, Work, and Play	https://parentnetworkwny.org/event/live-learn-work-and-play-2/
Tuesday, January 26th @ 6:00pm	Structure, Routine, and Strategies During COVID-19	https://parentnetworkwny.org/event/structure-routine-and-strategies-during-covid-19-3/



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