

CONNECT THE DOTS



What is Connect the Dots?

Learning to address challenging behaviors of young children in 4 steps!

Connect the Dots summarizes social and emotional best practices into 4 easy-to-remember steps.

Connect the Dots (CTD) provides a common language and a common approach to addressing challenging behaviors in a way that builds strong social and emotional skills in young children.

The primary focus of CTD is on two protective factors from the Kentucky Strengthening Families framework: 1) Social and Emotional Competence of Children; and 2) Nurturing and Attachment.

This universal tool can be used in any setting serving families and children by teaching children how to recognize and express their emotions appropriately.

Another strategy for CTD is to enhance materials for specific child and family needs. The four steps serve as an umbrella to organize targeted social and emotional supports for different audiences. Specialists teach families the basics of all four steps and highlight specific tools they can use within each dot to meet their child's specific needs.

Ensuring a safe, healthy and age appropriate environment supports healthy social and emotional development in children. Encouraging positive behaviors, emphasizing positive discipline and embracing their unique strengths promote healthy social-emotional outcomes in young children and provide families a way to help their children manage and communicate their feelings.



Connect the Dots 4 Easy Steps

1

ENSURE
SUPPORTIVE
ENVIRONMENTS

So the child feels safe,
prepared and ready
to succeed

2

ENCOURAGE
POSITIVE
BEHAVIORS

To help the child link
positive behaviors to
healthy relationships

3

EMPHASIZE
POSITIVE
DISCIPLINE

By teaching appropriate
behaviors to meet the
child's needs

4

EMBRACE
UNIQUE
STRENGTHS

Through nurturing
individual differences and
natural temperament

Connect the Dots in 4 Steps

In Connect the Dots, you will learn to evaluate challenging behavior through a child's eyes. See the example of the 4 Steps below:

1

Am I acting out because I don't feel safe in my surroundings? Do I have a sense of control?

2

Am I acting out because we haven't spent quality time together? Am I seeking connection to adults or peers?

3

Am I acting out because I haven't learned how to handle my feelings and needs? Have you taught me a better way?

4

Am I acting out because I haven't learned how to embrace and use my unique strengths?



Framework Flexibility

Trainers and providers are using CTD in the following settings:

- Parent Groups for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Parent Groups for Children with Down Syndrome
- Classroom Management Techniques
- Home Visiting with Children over 2 years (families transitioning out)
- Family Crisis Intervention (DCBS cases)
- Preschool Social and Emotional Training
- Baseline Training of Social and Emotional Best Practices

These tools are conversational, engaging and simple. Providers and families are able to modify and enhance CTD to meet individual needs while maintaining the statewide common language and common approach to social and emotional best practices.



Program Evaluation for Effectiveness

"Real life examples really helped connect it with everyday situations." Preschool Teacher

Therapists, families, school age teachers, early education teachers, home visitors and early childhood administrators are using CTD to reduce challenging behaviors.

99% Indicated as a result of the CTD training, their knowledge of reducing challenging behaviors and promoting social and emotional development increased.

88% Increased at least 2 levels in confidence when asked if they could identify how a predictable schedule, organized routines, transition tools, and visual aids improve a child's behavior.

100% Indicated they knew how to use proven skills to help a child link positive behavior to positive experiences and feelings, compared to just 80% before the training.

96% Stated they could demonstrate at least two positive discipline techniques (not punitive) after the training.

The formal pre- and post-evaluation was completed in Fall 2017.



CTD FREE Tools

Receive access to FREE tools that help you manage challenging behaviors:

- ConnectTheDotsKY.com
- CTD Positive Discipline Brochure (Dot 3)
- CTD Poster: Challenging Behaviors Through a Child's Eyes (8 ½ X 14)
- CTD Pinterest Page
- Schedule a CTD Training: brooke.gill@ky.gov

