Defining Challenging Behaviors

Challenging behavior is defined as behavior that includes:

- Physical aggression—such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects forcefully, pinching, pushing, and biting
- Not permitted climbing—on and over furniture and other classroom objects
- Destroying property—destroying what another child is working on regardless of the other child’s response
- Forcefully taking toys—from other children or other objects in which others are engaged
- Running—that poses a safety risk for the child or others or elopement from the classroom
- Tantrum behaviors—that might include kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet, or head banging
- Verbal aggression—including yelling, threats, screaming at another person, calling bad names, and saying bad words
- Ordering—an adult to do something (e.g., “Leave me alone.”)
- Persistent or prolonged crying—that is loud, disruptive, or ongoing and that interferes with the child’s engagement in activities
- Inappropriate use of materials—such as jumping off chairs, slamming materials, throwing objects
- Statements that are noncompliant—for example, “I am not going to do it.” or clear and explicit verbal or physical refusal to follow directions
- Inappropriate touching, stripping—and other behaviors that are hurtful, disruptive, or dangerous to self or others.

References: