

Levels of Response™

Responses to challenging situations with children should be *Efficient*, meaning that the caregivers response should match the situation at hand. Over-responding to a relatively minor transgression can push a child into more severe behavior. The TBRI® Levels of Response™ outline what caregivers can do in various challenging situations with children.

Levels of Response™

Playful Engagement (Level 1)

- Redirect the child without breaking stride.
- E.g., “Would you like to try it again with respect?” or “Are you askin’ or tellin’?” in a playful voice.
- Using playful engagement reduces misbehavior dramatically over time because it strengthens the relationship between the child and caregiver.

Structured Engagement (Level 2)

- Pause the situation and use a more regulated voice.
- Offer two choices – this provides a concrete, quick way to get children back on track.
- Use behavioral ‘re-dos’ to help children feel more successful. Walking through the motions of the *right* behavior is good for muscle memory.

Calming Engagement (Level 3)

- Allow the child to regulate with adult assistance.
- Use a time-in and keep the child close rather than sending him or her away (as in a traditional time-out). The time-in communicates that you are there for support and guidance.
- Work out a predetermined ‘quiet’ or ‘calm’ place adolescents can go when overwhelmed or if they prefer to be alone.

Protective Engagement (Level 4)

- Reserve use of this level for violence or aggression.
- Seek formal training that is accepted/recognized by state or facility.