

Positive Behavioral Interventions & IDEA 2004

New Opportunities for Teaching & Learning

Positive Behavioral Interventions & IDEA 2004

The notion of using positive approaches to help students learn new behavioral skills is not new.

What IS new is the requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that for the student with disabilities who exhibits inappropriate or unacceptable behavior, schools must consider the use of positive interventions to help that student learn more acceptable alternative behaviors.



Positive Behavioral Interventions & IDEA 2004

Obviously, some behaviors – resulting from physiologic function, such as tics associated with Tourette Syndrome or obsessive behaviors related to Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder – create challenges, as the behaviors do not serve a function that is understood. They are known as “non-purposive” behaviors, and do not appear to have a purpose or aim as do other kinds of behaviors.

Since stressful environments can trigger these behaviors or increase their occurrence, data about their frequency and/or occurrence can provide information useful to the planning team in predicting and planning for the behaviors.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & IDEA 2004

This presentation is not designed to promote a specific philosophy, or to serve as a blueprint for conducting a functional behavioral assessment or developing positive interventions. Rather, its purpose is to help families understand the reason for behavioral assessments and positive interventions.

Its focus is on behaviors that serve a specific purpose for a student, rather than on “non-purposive” behaviors such as those previously described. Certainly many students with such non-purposive behaviors may also have other behaviors that serve a specific purpose that is more clearly understood.



Changing Behavior

There is logic behind the behaviors of our children. Our challenge is to understand its context.

Parents have often been the strongest advocates for a more informed approach to helping their children learn new behavioral skills.

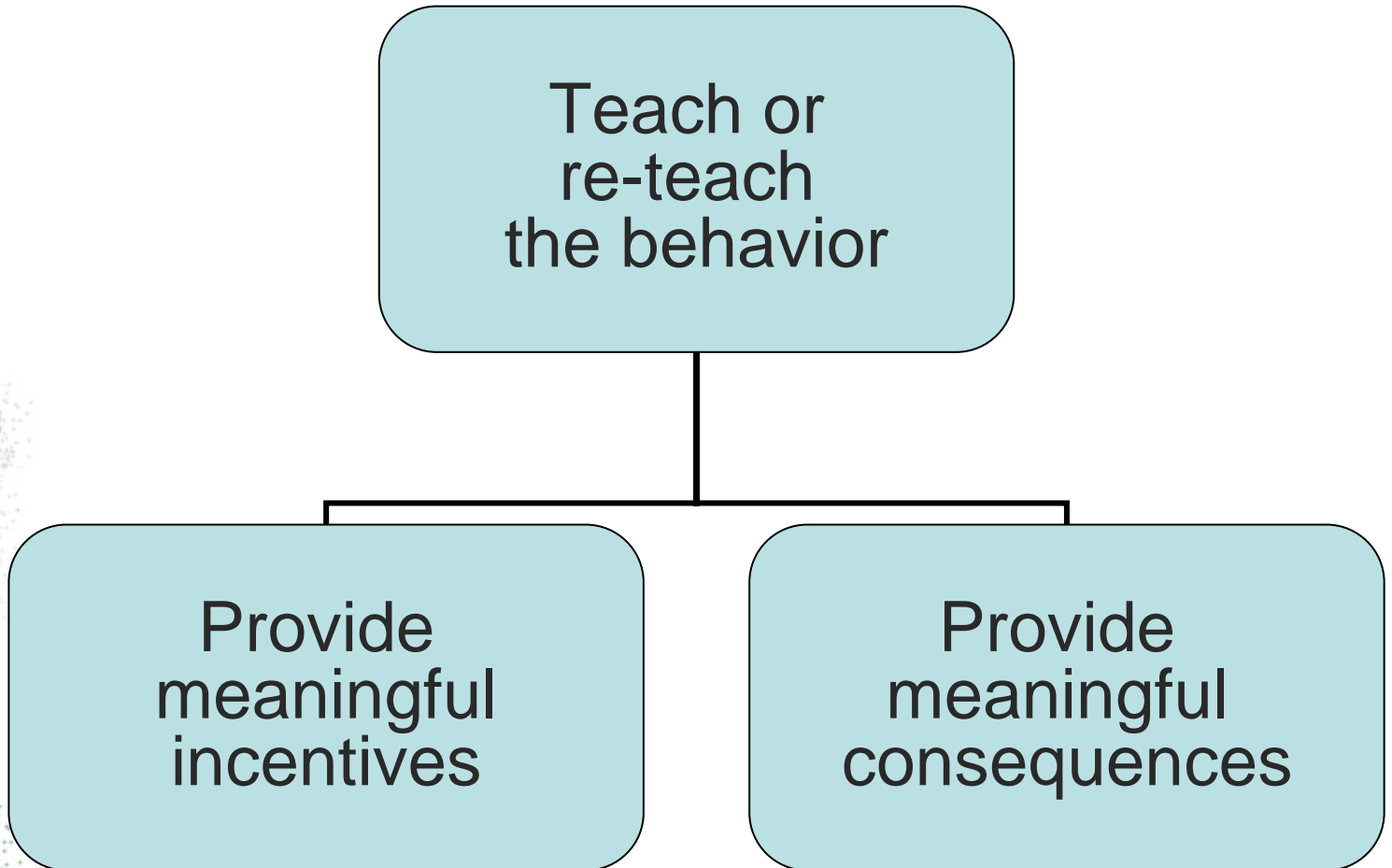
While not all parents have the skills to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviors, many have expressed frustration and anger over the use of repeated punishment. Their experience has been that punishment does not address the problems that their child is having, but instead addresses the symptoms.

Changing Behavior

The challenge for parents and educators is to find new ways of understanding the interactions between a child and his or her environment so that useful interventions can be developed that lead to lasting behavior change.



Changing Behavior



Meaningful: Having significance, meaning or purpose in the student's life (from the student's perspective).

Children Model Adult Behavior

In the classroom, the teacher is the model for student behavior. At home, the parents provide the model.

A teacher who yells, threatens or punishes excessively is setting the standard for the future adult behaviors of students by demonstrating to the students how to respond to the undesirable behaviors of others. The same is true of parents.

Teachers and parents who rely on punishment as a primary intervention may increase the level of unacceptable behaviors as children begin to copy the behaviors of their models.



2 Perspectives of Behavior

There are basically two attitudes that people have about the behaviors of children, which is really polarities of thought.

1. The child **IS** a problem.
2. The child **HAS** a problem.



Negative Perspective of Behavior

The child IS a problem.

Imagine that Billy, a 12 year old boy, is sitting at a desk but refusing to do his schoolwork. He is oppositional and angry when his parents or the teacher remind him of his work, and may swear, spit, or even throw his work on the floor to get the adult “off his back.”

How do adults feel when confronted with these behaviors?



Negative Perspective of Behavior

The child IS a problem.

If their attitude is that Billy is lazy, unmotivated, deliberately mean or otherwise disrespectful, the likelihood is that adults will become angry, or even feel threatened.

An angry person often responds to negative behaviors negatively, with punishment or with coercion – “Do it or else.”

Negative Perspective of Behavior

The child IS a problem.

When a teacher uses punishment frequently, he or she runs the risk of becoming associated with negative consequences, and a student may come to fear or avoid the teacher.

Or, the student may become angry and try to “get even” by escalating his or her behavior, walking out of the room, or refusing to accept a punishment, such as refusing to go to time-out.

This cycle of behavior often results in severe consequences to the student.





Negative Perspective of Behavior

The child IS a problem.

But what message is the student receiving?
Where is the instruction in this approach?

When negative behaviors result in excluding a student from his or her classroom, the student may learn that the behavior is successful in helping him or her to avoid doing the required work.

Exclusion may actually be reinforcing the negative behavior it was designed to correct.



Positive Perspective of Behavior

The child HAS a problem.

Imagine again Billy, the 12 year old discussed in the previous model.

In this perspective, Billy is still refusing to do his school work, is still oppositional and angry when reminded to get back to work, and has even threatened to punch someone or to run away.

What is different is that we now have assessment data showing that Billy reads at a 2nd grade level. Before him on the table is 7th grade work. His parents recently divorced and he is dealing with intense anger over being abandoned by his father.



Positive Perspective of Behavior

The child **HAS** a problem.

When adults understand the motivation behind misbehavior, their attitudes often change.

Billy's behaviors are still not appropriate or acceptable, and they obviously should not be permitted to continue.

How that problem is addressed, though, will generally be more constructive than in the previous model.

In this more positive approach resides the opportunity for instruction.



Positive Perspective of Behavior

The child HAS a problem.

What we do:

- ✓ Teach academic skills.
- ✓ Teach behavioral skills.
 - Use same strategies as for other skills.
 - Individualization at school for intensive problems - Section 504 Plan, Individualized Education Program [IEP], Behavior Intervention Plan [BIP].



Positive Perspective of Behavior

The child HAS a problem.

What we do:

- ✓ Positive behavior is expected and taught.
- ✓ Positive behaviors are reinforced.
- ✓ Negative behaviors receive consequences that are meaningful and instructive.

IDEA 2004

IDEA 2004 says:

“The IEP team will...in the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child’s learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies to address that behavior.”



IDEA 2004

A student who is removed from his or her educational placement shall...

- ✓ Continue to receive services to participate in the general curriculum and work on meeting IEP goals, and
- ✓ Receive a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), behavior interventions and modifications to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

What Are Positive Behavioral Interventions?

Student's behavior can change if adults:

1. **TEACH** the behaviors that are expected,
2. **MODEL** those behaviors,
3. Consistently **RECONGNIZE** and **REWARD** the behaviors when they occur, and
4. Consistently **ENFORCE MEANINGFUL CONSEQUENCES** for behavioral interventions.

Behaviors are Governed by Consequences

An understanding that most behaviors are governed by their consequences is key to planning interventions.

A student has a fight (behavior) and is suspended (consequence).

If the student does not want to be in school, he or she may learn that fighting is a good way to get sent home. If the student wants to gain attention from his peers or the teacher, fighting may be used again as a way to secure attention and status.

Behaviors are Governed by Consequences

Any time a student exhibits a behavior (acceptable or unacceptable) that is successful in meeting one of his or her needs, it is likely that the behavior will be repeated.

Behavior, then, serves a logical function for the student.

A widely used approach to dealing with difficult behavior has been to wait until the behavior occurs, then impose a consequence.

Behaviors are Governed by Consequences

Parents and schools using this approach simply expect children to be “good” and punish them when they are not.

Adults may feel that punishment is good medicine for bad behavior.

The intent of punishment is to provide a consequence following a problem behavior that makes it less likely that the behavior will recur in the future.



Behaviors are Governed by Consequences

While most would agree that problem behavior needs a response, often nothing is done to teach, support or sustain appropriate behavior prior to the occurrence of the problem behavior.

The inherent flaw in this approach is that the student does not develop appropriate skills as a result of the negative consequence (punishment) – the consequence does not teach replacement behaviors.

If a student is able to learn appropriate behaviors to achieve the same desired outcome as is gained through using inappropriate behaviors, the need for the negative behaviors no longer exists.

Positive Intervention

Positive behavioral interventions are planned interventions that take place:

- **Before the onset** of problem behaviors,
- **Before escalation** of those behaviors, or
- **To prevent the behaviors from reoccurring.**

If it is possible to identify events in the environment that contribute to problem behavior (class size, teacher-student interaction, curriculum, etc.) it may be possible to modify those events sufficiently to inhibit or reduce the behavior.

Positive Intervention

If a teacher knows, for instance that Mary becomes argumentative when seated next to a particular student because she and the student have a history of disagreements outside of school, simply separating the two students may solve (or partially solve) the problem.

If Mary's arguments with her peer result from a lack of social skills, providing social skills instruction as part of her program may give Mary the skills needed to get along with the student.



What We Know About Behavior...

Problem behaviors are context related (respond to environmental or ecological events).

Classroom Environment

- Seating
- Noise level
- Disruptions

Child-Specific Condition

- Medication
- Allergies
- Sickness
- Anxiety
- Fatigue

Setting Events

- Peer issue
- Teacher interaction
- New person(s)

Instruction/Curriculum

- Work too hard
- Work too easy
- Transitions
- Assignment
- No choices

What We Know About Behavior...

Problem behaviors serve a function.

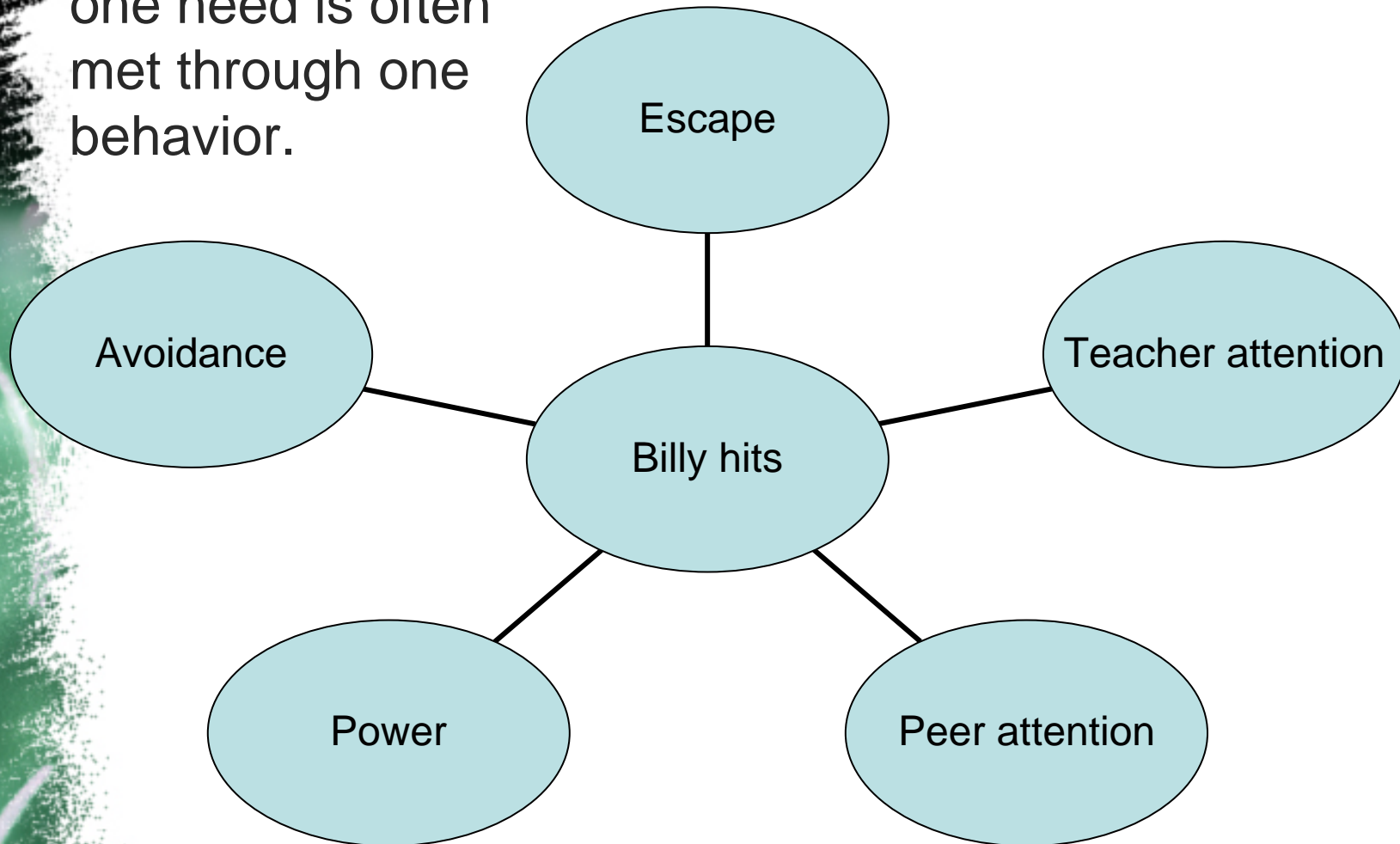
- To get something (power, attention, approval).
- To avoid or escape something (teachers, class work, a situation).
- To have control.

The **function** of a behavior is not the problem – new behaviors that are taught should serve the same function.



What We Know About Behavior...

Problem behaviors have multiple causes. More than one need is often met through one behavior.



What We Know About Behavior...

Fixing problems does not lead to desired outcomes:

“If you stop swearing, you will have a job...”

“Finishing work will get you a friend...”

If we do not teach students what to do instead of what they are doing, they will continue to do what they do – **and get better at it!**

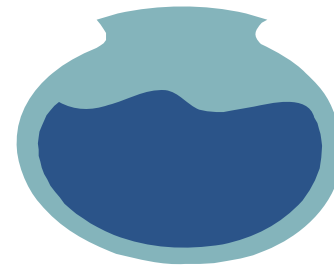
The ABC's of Behavior



A
antecedent



B
behavior



C
consequence

Antecedent

Antecedent: A cause, course, or event that influences the development of a behavior or behaviors:

- Size of an environment
- Number of people in it
- Specific event, time of day, etc.

We can manipulate antecedents in the environment to:

- ✓ Increase positive behavior
- ✓ Reduce misbehavior



Behavior

Behavior: What one does in response to the event, cause or condition. Behavior (positive or negative) fulfills a specific need for a student.

For example:

Antecedent: The work is too hard (I don't want to do it).

Behavior: I throw my chair.



Consequence

Consequence: What happens as a result of a behavior that affects whether it is likely to happen again.

If the consequence of a behavior meets a need, the behavior is likely to be repeated.

For example:

Antecedent: The work is too hard.

Behavior: I throw my chair.

Consequence: The teacher gets angry. I get sent to the office. I do not do the work.





Teach the Behavior You Expect

1. Begin with 2 to 5 simple rules.

➤ *Example: Be respectful of others.*

2. Describe what the rules mean in specific terms.

➤ *Respect means speaking in a normal tone of voice.*

➤ *Respect means keeping your hands and feet to yourself.*



Teach the Behavior You Expect

3. Provide instruction about what to do instead.

- *State your expectations for behavior.*
- *Provide examples of expected behavior.*

4. Discuss and model the expected behaviors.

- *At home and in the actual locations.*
- *Re-teach regularly.*

Teach the Behavior You Expect

5. Be sure the expectation is positive.

- ✓ Positive: *“Once you have finished your chores, you may go to Mary’s house.”*
- ✗ Negative: *“You cannot go to Mary’s house until the chores are finished.”*



Provide Meaningful Positive Incentives

Teaching is not always enough to change behavior over the long haul.

Students need to be recognized and rewarded when they are meeting the expectations that have been established.

Positive recognition (rewards, other reinforcements, praise) must occur more frequently than negative recognition (at least a 4 to 1 ratio).

Functional Assessment

Functional assessment is a way of collecting data on why a student has problem behaviors.

Problem behaviors generally occur in relationships between the student and the environment.

IEPs should include behavior goals and positive behavioral interventions.

Positive behavioral interventions are based on a functional behavioral assessment.

Functional Assessment

Special education decisions are to be driven by **data**, not opinion or belief systems.

Functional assessments should collect data from as many sources as possible including samples of the student's class work.

The IEP team will consider the data, including interviews conducted by with the student and/or parents to develop a hypothesis about why problem behaviors occur (the function of the behaviors), and will identify replacement behaviors that can be taught and that serve the same purpose to the student.



When to Use Functional Assessment

- ✓ When a student's behaviors do not respond to the interventions used with all students, or
- ✓ When the team cannot provide data that supports why inappropriate behaviors occur, or
- ✓ When a student is repeatedly disciplined for behaviors that do not improve.

If any of these situations occur, the team should request a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) as part of initial or ongoing evaluation.



Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

An FBA is NOT a list of misbehaviors, but an effort to determine why a behavior occurs.

An FBA:

- ✓ Helps the team to understand the purpose that a behavior serves for a student.
- ✓ Guides decision-making.
- ✓ Leads to intervention strategies.
- ✓ Required for removals beyond 10 days.
- ✓ Useful when behaviors have not responded to standard interventions.

Typical Steps of an FBA

1. Identify the behavior of concern.
2. Where does it occur and not occur?
3. Antecedents (what happened beforehand)?
4. Is there a consistent pattern? Is it predictable?
5. What does the student “get” from it (the reinforcer)?
6. Possible reasons for the behavior (hypotheses)?
7. What replacement behaviors can be taught to the student that serve the same function?

General Interventions

1. Make changes in the environment (seating, etc.)
2. Provide opportunities to make choices.
3. Modify the curriculum.
4. Provide reinforcement for appropriate behavior.
5. Teach appropriate pro-social behaviors.
6. Teacher adapts instructional style.
7. Develop a behavior intervention plan using the data acquired through an FBA.



An FBA for Billy

An accurate description of Billy's behavior is:

Billy is out of his seat an average of 6x per class hour (class average .75). The greatest frequency (9x) is in math and geography, the lowest (2x) is in art.

When out of his seat, Billy tries to engage other students in conversation. If ignored, he pokes or touches them or their belongings. During one observation, Billy was asked by another student to return to his seat; he then threw that student's papers onto the floor.

NOT "Billy is disruptive"



An FBA for Billy

Billy pokes at other students when they ignore him...

Hypotheses:

- *Billy does not know how to make friends.*
- *Billy is trying to get attention (from the teacher or students)*

Billy has a hard time staying seated during math...

Hypotheses:

- *Math is too hard.*
- *Billy does not understand directions.*
- *Billy cannot read the math book.*
- *Too many problems on a page; Billy is overwhelmed.*
- *Billy needs breaks during academic activities.*



An FBA for Billy

Billy stays in his seat more during art...

Hypotheses:

- *Billy likes art, or is good at art.*
- *Billy needs hands-on activities.*
- *Billy works well with color.*

Billy tries to engage other students in talking. If ignored, he pokes at them...

Hypotheses:

- *Billy is bored.*
- *Billy wants the teacher's attention.*
- *Billy wants the other students to like him.*
- *Billy does not have good problem-solving skills.*



Possible Interventions for Billy

1. Plan to provide more attention.
2. Scheduled activity breaks.
3. Alternative curriculums at learning level.
4. Use additional art work as earned reward for increasing in-seat time.
5. Pair Billy with another student for social reinforcement.
6. Teach problem-solving skills.

Why Focus on Positive Interventions?

- ✓ Required in IDEA.
- ✓ Builds positive relationships.
- ✓ Encourages new behaviors.
- ✓ Reinforces skills (maintenance).
- ✓ Increases self-satisfaction and optimism among youth, parents and teachers.





Building the IEP

Do the goals address:

- Academic support?*
- Mental health needs?*
- Behavioral needs?*

Does the student need:

- An FBA?*
- Related services?*
- A behavior intervention plan (BIP)?*

Behavior Intervention Plan

An Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) should be positive and instructive, based on an FBA, and address:

- ✓ Effective re-teaching of the expected behavior.
- ✓ Rewards and consequences that are personally meaningful to the student (no two plans are alike).
- ✓ Opportunities to self-manage behaviors.

Considerations for Developing a BIP

1. Are changes needed in the classroom (seating arrangement, instructional approach, grouping, curriculum, etc.)?
2. Will replacement behaviors be specifically taught and/or reinforced?
3. Do the replacement behaviors serve the same function as the problem behaviors?
4. Is the student able to perform the desired replacement behaviors?
5. Will new behaviors be reinforced across environments? Will parents, teachers and others use similar reinforcement systems?

Interventions That Work

Planned Ignoring

Plan ahead of time to ignore specific behaviors that are directed at gaining the attention of the teacher or others. *Do not use for peer problems.*

Ignoring takes practice – you must plan to do it!

Planned ignoring may work for:

- Calling out answers in class.
- Not having materials ready for class.
- Interrupting the teacher.
- Whistling or humming.

Provide the attention the student is seeking when he or she displays appropriate behaviors.

Interventions That Work

Preventive Cueing (Signal Interference)

Used to alert the student who is doing something unacceptable.

A frown, shake of the head, making eye contact, pointing to a seat for a wandering student, or snap of the fingers can convey the need to pay attention or to stop behaviors before they escalate.

Do not show approval when using preventative cueing.



Interventions That Work

Proximity Control

Stand closer to the student who is beginning to have a problem with behavior. Less effective, move student closer to the teacher.

Be sure that proximity is not seen as a threat to the student.

Use during question/answer periods or when giving directions; may pair this intervention with “preventive cueing” for some students.

Interventions That Work

Nonverbal Warnings

Place cue cards inconspicuously on a student's desk as a reminder to change the behavior, or point to the posted rules.

Discipline Privately

Whenever possible and not before the student's peers. Students can gain power from daring to "take on" the teacher in a disagreement.

Humor

A lighthearted comment or joke (NEVER ridicule) can let a student "save face" who is in a confrontational situation with an adult.

Interventions That Work

Positive Phrasing

Let a student know exactly what behavior is expected, not just what is not expected.

State the reinforcement for carrying out the desired behavior:

- “You will be able to go outside with friends during recess if you keep your hands on the desk during discussion” or
- “I will call on you to answer as soon as you raise your hand.”



Interventions That Work

Use “I” Messages

A 3-part verbal intervention to help a student understand the impact of his or her behavior:

1. Describe the behavior;
2. Describe its effect on teacher, parent or others;
3. Describe your feelings about the misbehavior.

Caution: When children do not like their teacher, “I” messages may cause an increase in the behavior.



Interventions That Work

Behavioral Shaping

Reinforce behavior that is close to the desired behavior, then raise the criteria for reinforcement in small steps until reaching the desired goal.

Reinforce Learning

Go over rules and expectations daily, demonstrate if necessary. Remind student of the rules, “Remember, the rules say that you are not to interrupt others.” Reminders that do not redirect the behavior must be followed with meaningful consequences.



Interventions That Work

- ✓ **Give attention to a student who is performing well**, so that other students can hear.
- ✓ **Encourage students to ask for help** but do not withhold it for students who are too shy or angry to ask.
- ✓ **Find opportunities for a student to be of service** – line leader, food drives, etc.
- ✓ **Provide advance notice of a change in activities** and give reminders.

Interventions That Work

- ✓ **Place low priority behavior before high priority behavior** – such as scheduling spelling before recess.
- ✓ **Teach students how to keep track of their own behaviors** (self-monitoring; a check sheet to show frequency and occurrence of a specific behavior).
- ✓ **Move about the classroom.** Acknowledge anything a student has done acceptably well.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding special education and positive behavioral interventions, please contact us:

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This curriculum was developed by the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers and the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education.

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