Functional Behavior Assessment and Positive Behavior Supports for Students with Disabilities

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SUMMARY OF THE STEPS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

Step 1. Define the problem.

As specifically as possible, describe the problem(s) that you are concerned about. Label them according to their seriousness (destructive, disruptive, or distracting). Circle the behavior(s) you want to work on first.

Step 2. Answer key questions.

Who is present when the behavior tends to occur? When it almost never occurs?
What is going on when the behavior tends to occur? almost never occurs?
When does the behavior tend to occur? Almost never occur?
Where does the behavior tend to occur? Almost never occur?
How often does the behavior occur per hour?_____ per day?_____ per week?_____
How long does the behavior occur per episode_____?

Step 3. Observe and record antecedents, behavior(s), and consequences.

When? (Time, day, date)
What happened before the behavior occurred?
Describe the behavior. Include how intense, how long, how many.
What happened after the behavior occurred?

Step 4. Develop a theory.

Decide what purpose the behavior is serving for the child. Use the *who-what where-when* information to think about situations in which the behavior occurs. Do you see any consistent patterns? You may also find the checklist below to be helpful in developing your theory. Remember, behaviors may serve more than one purpose.

The purpose of the behavior may be ATTENTION if...
___It occurs when you're not paying attention to the child
___It occurs when you stop paying attention to the child.

The purpose of the behavior may be ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE if...
___It occurs when you ask the child to do something s/he doesn't like/want to do.
___It stops after you stop "making demands."

The purpose of the behavior may be GETTING SOMETHING if...
___It occurs when you take away a favorite item or activity.
___It stops soon after you give the child an item or activity s/he likes or has recently requested.
___It occurs when the child can't have an item or activity s/he has requested.

The purpose of the behavior may be SELF-REGULATION if…
___It tends to be performed over and over again, in a rhythmic or cyclical manner.
___It tends to happen when there is either a lot going on in the area or very little
___The child can still do other things at the same time as the behavior.

The purpose of the behavior may be PLAY if…
___It occurs over and over again in a rhythmic or cyclical manner.
___It would occur repeatedly when no one else is around.
___The child seems to enjoy performing the behavior.
___The child seems to be in his or her own world when performing the behavior and s/he can't do other things at the same time.

Step 5. Make a plan.

A good plan will usually have three parts:

Preventing: How will you change the situations (who-what when-where) that seem to be associated with the problem behavior(s)?

Teaching: What other behavior or skill will you (or others) teach the child/adult that will meet his or her purpose in a more acceptable way?

Reacting: How will you react when the problem behavior occurs in a way that does not "feed into" the child/adult's purpose, cause you greater upset or stress, or punish the child/adult?

Step 6. Use the plan.

What arrangements to you need to make to follow-through with the plan? What is your timeline for getting materials and help from others, and starting the plan?

Child   Task   Date to initiate/complete

Step 7. Reconsider the plan.

At this point, carefully consider your success at both following through with the plan, and how successful it has been in preventing or changing the problem behavior you are working on. Have you been able to follow the plan you wrote?
___For preventing?   ___For teaching?   ___For reacting?
___Do you still feel that your theory about the purpose of the behavior was correct?
___What positive changes have you seen?
___What areas of the plan do you need to continue to work on using as planned?
___What areas of the plan need to be changed?

THE CONTEXT OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

If the model for developing power resides in the powerful - that is, if what we learn about how to behave is by observing those who have power over us - then those in power must assume responsibility for modeling appropriate behaviors.

Positive behavior supports is a strategy designed to encourage positive behaviors in schools, homes, and other social situations. It is based on three key principles:

- All children have inherent value, dignity, and worth;
- Behaviors are learned responses to environmental and experiential conditions and factors; and
- Behaviors can be changed when their function is understood and positive supports are provided for the change.

If we truly believe that all children have value, then our goal must be to maximize each child's capacity to have positive social relationships with others. If someone is struggling with inappropriate behaviors, we can act as if the child *is a problem* – and negate their innate human value – or approach the situation by understanding that the child *has a problem*, and seek to help them address and solve that problem. In order to do so, we must understand that there is (usually) *logic* behind the behaviors of all children; our challenge is to understand its context. The behaviors in which children engage serve a purpose, fill a need; if those behaviors are inappropriate, we must help the child fill that need in a more acceptable way.

It is also critical for us to understand that behaviors are reinforced. Behaviors that result in desirable consequences are likely to be retained or strengthened. Behaviors that result in undesirable consequences are likely to be avoided, rejected, or lessened.   However, consequences alone do not result in development of appropriate skills, and punishment (i.e., suspension, firing, etc.) does not teach someone to be able to behave appropriately in the future, it merely delays the need to address the underlying problem or hands it over to someone else.

Positive behavior interventions, on the other hand, recognize the inherent value and dignity of all children and seek to support each child's capacity to be an effective member of our society, school, workplace, and community. Positive behavior interventions take place before the onset of problem behaviors, before those behaviors escalate, and after problems occur to prevent them from reoccurring.   They are *positive*, in that they are characterized by or display approval, acceptance, or affirmation. They recognize that *behavior* is something an organism does in response to its environment. And their purpose is to *intervene*, to enter a course of events so as to successfully change it.

WHY A FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT IS NECESSARY

Although professionals may hold a variety of philosophical beliefs, they generally agree that there is no single cause for problem behaviors. Although the topography (what the behavior looks like or sounds like) of the behaviors may be similar, in each case, the "causes" of the behaviors are very different. Thus, focusing only on the topography will usually yield little information about effective interventions. Identifying the underlying cause(s) of a child's behavior, more specifically, what the child "gets" or "avoids" through the behavior, can provide you with the diagnostic information to develop proactive strategies crafted to address those behaviors. Restrictive or punitive procedures only address the symptoms of the problem; thus, these behaviors are likely to occur again, unless the underlying causes are addressed.

Functional behavior assessment is an approach that incorporates a variety of techniques and strategies to diagnose the causes and to identify likely interventions intended to address the behaviors. Functional assessment looks beyond the overt topography of the behavior and focuses instead on identifying biological, social, affective, and environmental factors that initiate, sustain or end the behavior. The functions that the behavior serves may be appropriate (to get attention, for example), while the behavior itself is an inappropriate means of meeting that need.

By incorporating functional behavior assessment into the process, team members can develop a plan that teaches and supports replacement behaviors, which serve the same function as the problem behavior itself. At the same time, strategies may be developed to decrease or even eliminate the opportunities for the child to engage in behavior that hinders a positive school or work experience.

STEPS TO DEVELOPING A POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN

1. Establish a collaborative team.
2. Identify the child's strengths.
3. Describe the challenging behavior.
4. Identify the communication/function of behavior.
5. Brainstorm and plan supports.
6. Identify replacement behaviors and how to teach them.
7. Plan how to respond to challenging behaviors.
8. Select other relevant skills to teach.
9. Monitor progress and plan for transitions.

WHAT MAKES SUPPORT PLANS WORK?

- Empower participants by providing choices and sharing decision-making.
- Build upon the child's strengths and positive attributes.
- Don't do it alone – form a collaborative team.
- Provide the child with input into and ownership of the plan.
- Base the plan upon a careful analysis of the child's underlying needs and supporting other ways to meet those needs.
- View difficult behavior as communication.
- Focus on building relationships that are fair and enjoyable to all involved.
- Whenever possible, develop supports that prevent problems from occurring.
- Continue to question what you are doing and why.
- Regularly monitor, troubleshoot, and change the plan as needed.

Plans that work view teaching and learning as a dynamic process in which flexibility is critical. Implementing a mechanical, step-by-step plan may be easy but it is very unrealistic, ineffective, and contrary to the human situation. Teaching positive behaviors requires being sensitive to and adjusting for the moment-to-moment needs of children, and it requires teaching styles that meet the needs and personalities of those involved.

HOW SHOULD THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS BE DESCRIBED?

1. List all challenging behaviors.
2. Define each behavior in observable terms.
3. Delineate the history (how long has the child used it), frequency (how often does it happen), and duration (how long does an incident last) of each behavior.
4. Rate the behavior for level of seriousness:

  -Is the behavior distracting (interferes with others' acceptance of the child; makes the child difficult to be around)

  -Is the behavior disruptive (severely limits or seriously interferes with other children's functioning)

  -Is the behavior destructive (threatens the health or life of the child or others around them).

Defining the Behavior in Observable Terms

It's important not just to use labels in describing behavior ("lazy," "aggressive," "sexist," "harassing") because it doesn't tell us exactly what the child is doing that needs to be changed. Defining behavior in observable terms is beneficial because:

- It's easier to develop appropriate interventions.
- It's easier to develop a measurement system to determine if interventions are having any effect.

- Labels typically over-generalize and often inaccurately describe children in a negative fashion.

It may be necessary to carefully and objectively observe the child's behavior in different settings and during different types of activities, and to conduct interviews with supervisors, peers, and others to pinpoint the specific characteristics of the behavior. Once the problem behavior has been defined concretely, the team can devise a plan to conduct a functional behavior assessment to determine the underlying causes and functions of the behavior.

Functional Assessment Strategies

Using a variety of assessment techniques will lead teams to better understand the behavior. Each technique can bring the team closer to developing a workable plan.

A good functional assessment will identify the contextual factors that contribute to behavior; determining the specific contextual factors for behavior is accomplished by collecting information on the various conditions under which a child is most and least likely to be exhibiting acceptable behavior. That information, collected both directly and indirectly, allows you to predict the circumstances under which the problem behavior is likely to occur.

Multiple measures are used for this kind of assessment, as a single source of information generally doesn't produce sufficiently accurate information, especially if the problem behavior serves several functions that vary according to circumstance (e.g., making inappropriate comments during a meeting may serve to get peer attention in some instances, while in other instances it may serve to redirect attention from an incomplete project).

Contextual factors are more than the sum of observable behaviors, and include affective or cognitive behaviors as well. The trigger, or antecedent for the behavior, may not be something that anyone can directly observe and therefore must be identified using indirect measures. For instance, if the child acts out when asked to complete a report form, it may not be the report form that caused the acting-out, but the fact that the child doesn't know what is required and thus anticipates failure or ridicule. Information of this type may be gleaned through a discussion with the child.

Since problem behavior stems from a variety of causes, it's best to examine the behavior from as many angles as possible. Teams should consider what the "pay-off" for engaging in either inappropriate or appropriate behavior is, or what the child "gets," "escapes," or "avoids" by engaging in the behavior. Consider the following questions:

Is the problem behavior linked to a skill deficit?

Is there evidence to suggest that the child does not know how to perform the skill, and therefore, cannot? Children who lack the skills to perform expected tasks may exhibit behaviors that help them avoid or escape those tasks. If the team suspects that the child "can't" perform the skills, or has a *skill deficit*, they could devise a functional behavior assessment plan to determine the answers to further questions:

- Does the child understand the behavioral expectations?
- Does the child realize that s/he is engaging in unacceptable behavior, or has that behavior simply become a "habit"?
- Is it within the child's power to control the behavior, or does s/he need support?
- Does the child have the skills necessary to perform expected, new behaviors?

Does the child have the skill but not the desire to modify his/her behavior?

Sometimes it may be that the child can perform a skill, but, for some reason, does not use it consistently. Children who can, but do not, perform certain tasks may be experiencing consequences that affect their performance (e.g., their non-performance is rewarded by peer or authority attention, or performance is not meaningful). If the team suspects that the problem is the result of a *performance deficit*, it may be helpful to devise a plan that answers the following:

- Is it possible that the child is uncertain about the appropriateness of the behavior, under certain circumstances? (For example, in previous settings, the behavior was acceptable, but in this setting, it is not).
- Does the child find any value in engaging in appropriate behavior?
- Is the behavior problem associated with certain social or environmental conditions? Is the child seeking to avoid a "low-interest" or too demanding task? What current rules, routines, or expectations does the child consider irrelevant?

Techniques for Conducting the Assessment

Indirect Assessment: Indirect or informant assessment relies heavily upon the use of structured interviews with the child, peers, authority figures, etc. who have direct experience with the behavior. Individuals should structure the interviews so that they yield information regarding the following:

- In what settings do you observe the behavior? Where does it not occur?
- Who is present when the behavior occurs?
- What activities or interactions take place just prior to the behavior?
- What usually happens immediately after the behavior?
- Can you think of a more acceptable behavior that might replace this behavior?

Interviews with the child may be useful in identifying how s/he perceived the situation and what caused him/her to react or act in the way they did. Examples of question might include:

- What were you thinking just before you engaged in the behavior?
- How did the situation make you feel?
- When you engage in this behavior, what usually happens afterward?

Direct Assessment: Direct assessment may be regarded as a narrative account of situational factors surrounding a problem behavior (e.g., antecedent and consequent events) by a direct observer of the event(s). Data can be recorded using an Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) approach. The observer may choose to use a matrix or scatter plot to chart the relationship between specific variables and responses. These techniques will be useful in identifying possible environmental factors, activities, or temporal factors (time of day, etc.) that may influence the behavior. Regardless of the tool, observations that occur consistently across time and situations, and that reflect both quantitative and qualitative measures of the behavior in question, are recommended.

Data Analysis: Once you are satisfied that enough data has been collected, the next step is to compare and analyze the information. This analysis will help the team determine whether or not there are any stimulus-response patterns associated with the behavior (e.g., whenever the child does not get her way, she reacts in a certain way).

Hypothesis Statement: Drawing upon the information that emerges from the analysis, you can establish a hypothesis regarding the function of the behavior(s). This hypothesis predicts the general conditions under which the behavior is most likely to occur, as well as the probable consequences that serve to maintain it. For example, if a co-worker reports that a child makes inappropriate comments after a difficult staff meeting, a functional behavior assessment might reveal the function of the behavior is to gain attention, avoid responsibility, seek excitement, etc.

Only when the relevance of the behavior is known is it possible to speculate the true function of the behavior and establish a positive behavior support plan. Before any plan is set in motion, the team needs to formulate a plausible explanation (hypothesis) for the child's behavior. It is then desirable to manipulate various conditions to verify the assumptions made by the team regarding the function of the behavior. Accommodations might be made, for example, to provide positive peer attention as a consequence of appropriate behaviors. If this manipulation changes the behavior, the team can assume their hypothesis was correct; if the behavior remains unchanged following the environmental manipulation, a new hypothesis needs to be formulated.

Common Behaviors Associated with Each Communication Category

To Get Attention

Characteristics of the Behavior
- Behavior is distracting to others
- It occurs when no one is paying attention or someone stops paying attention to the child
- It occurs when attention is paid to someone else
- It occurs in front of valued peers
- It occurs as a result of peer pressure

Possible Origins
- Children pay more attention to inappropriate than appropriate behaviors
- The child doesn't know how to ask for attention appropriately
- The child doesn't get sufficient personal attention
- The child has few friends
- The child has low self-esteem

Others' Reactions
- Feel irritated or annoyed
- Have an impulse to say something

Positive Aspects
- Child is interested in relationships with peers. Child is asking for attention, which can be used to motivate positive behavior.

Categories of Supports to Be Considered
- Increase the child's personal control and choices.
- Increase opportunities for positive attention and friendships.
- Increase the child's status, self-esteem, image.

To Escape or Avoid Something

Characteristics of the Behavior
- The child does the behavior when pressured to succeed or in stressful situations
- The child procrastinates, fails to complete projects
- The child develops temporary incapacity or physical complaints, or assumes behaviors that resemble a learning disability
- The behavior occurs when the child is asked to do something s/he doesn't like to do, and stops after you stop making demands

Possible Origins
- Unreasonable expectations by others

- Child's belief that only perfection is acceptable
- Emphasis on competition in the classroom or workplace
- Failure is to be avoided at all costs
- The work is too difficult for the child.

Others' Reactions
- Professional concern, prescriptive response
- Resigned to failure
- Feel frustration; the child could do better if s/he just "tried harder"

Positive Aspects
- Child may want to succeed if s/he can be sure of not making mistakes and of achieving some status.

Categories of Support to be Considered
- Increase the child's personal control and choices.
- Increase the child's status, self-esteem, image.
- Match activities and feedback to child's strengths and interests.

Control

Characteristics of the Behavior
- When doing the behavior the child is disruptive and confrontational
- Quiet noncompliance – when doing the behavior, the student is pleasant and even agreeable
- Behavior occurs when an activity is taken away
- Behavior stops when the child gets his/her way

Possible Origins
- Society stresses dominant-submissive roles rather than equality in relationships
- Success is defined as achieving personal power
- Lack of control in a child's life
- Past history of abuse/victimization

Others' Reactions
- Feel angry or frustrated
- Feel like they are losing control of the situation; power struggle
- Impulse to do something physical

Positive Aspects of Behavior
- Child exhibits leadership potential, assertiveness and independent thinking.

Categories of Support to be Considered
- Increase the child's personal control and choices.

- Increase opportunities for positive attention and friendships.
- Increase the child's status, self-esteem, image.

Revenge

Characteristics of the Behavior
- Behavior is hurtful
- Child is sullen and withdrawn, refusing overtures of friendship
- Child doesn't show remorse following behavior
- The behavior occurs after something is taken away
- The behavior occurs after the child is required to do an unwanted activity
- The child stops the behavior only when s/he wants
- The child expresses concerns about "fairness"
- Behavior is directed at someone who is perceived as more "valued" by others

Possible Origins
- A reflection of increasing violence in society; media role models that solve conflicts by force
- Unjust society, unequal treatment
- Anger over personal circumstances or past "wrongs"
- Provocation by another
- Jealousy

Others' Reactions
- Dislike, hurt, devastation, anger, frustration, fear
- Fight or flight

Positive Aspects of Behavior
- Child shows a spark of life; may be trying to protect self from further hurt.

Categories of Support to be Considered
- Increase the child's personal control and choices.
- Increase opportunities for positive attention and friendships.
- Increase the child's status, self-esteem, image.

Self-Regulation

Characteristics of the Behavior
- Behavior tends to happen over and over again
- Behavior happens either when there is a lot going on, or little going on
- The behavior occurs when the child is bored, especially following periods of non-activity, OR
- The behavior tends to occur in stressful, anxiety-producing or highly demanding situations

Possible Origins
- The child has not learned alternative ways of coping
- The child is either understimulated or overstimulated by their environment

Others' Reactions
- Frustrated/exasperated
- Irritation
- Impulse to say something to redirect the child (Get back to work, pay attention)

Positive Aspects of Behavior
- Behaviors may work to reduce anxiety.

Categories of Supports to be Considered
- Increase the child's personal control and choices.
- Match activities and feedback to child's strengths and interests.

Play

Characteristics of the Behavior
- The behavior would occur even if no one else was around
- The child seems to enjoy performing the behavior
- The child is sorry if someone gets hurt
- The child is reluctant to stop the behavior when asked to do so

Possible Origins
- Child is involved in routine, structured activities for long periods of time, especially when their work is primarily on their own
- Lack of opportunities to interact with peers

Others' Reactions
- Feel helpless, ineffective
- Impulse to say something

Positive Aspects of Behavior
- Child enjoys life, can amuse self. Child wants friends

Categories of Support to be Considered
- Increase the child's personal control and choices.
- Increase the child's status, self-esteem, image.
- Match activities and feedback to child's strengths and interests.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT/BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PLANS

After collecting data on a child's behavior, and after developing an understanding of the likely function(s) of that behavior, a team must develop a positive behavior support plan, which should include positive strategies, environmental modifications, and supplementary aids and supports required to address the behaviors in question. It is helpful to begin such a process by using the data collected during the functional assessment to determine the discrepancy between the child's actual and expected behavior.

The input of teachers and classmates/peers is especially critical at this point, as they will be able to relay their behavioral expectations as well as information about how to modify the existing environment.

Intervention plans emphasizing skills children need in order to behave in a more appropriate manner, or plans providing motivation to conform to required standards, will be more effective than plans that simply serve to control behavior. Interventions based on control often fail to generalize (i.e., use behaviors for long periods of times, in many settings, and in a variety of situations) – and many times they serve only to suppress behavior – resulting in a child manifesting unaddressed needs in alternative inappropriate ways. Positive plans for behavior intervention, on the other hand, address both the source of the problem and the problem itself.

Teams may want to consider the following techniques:

- Revise the antecedents or consequences of the behavior;
- Teach more acceptable replacement behaviors or skills that serve the same functions;
- Recognize, acknowledge, and reinforce positive behaviors;
- Identify appropriate responses to inappropriate or challenging behaviors; and
- Implement changes in the environment, work/class activities, etc.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Increase Control and Choices

- Ask the child what they need to have a better experience at school/work.
- Include the child in planning and problem-solving.
- Increase the number, variety, and importance of the decisions the child makes or is involved in making.
- Support flexibility in the child's daily schedule.
- Support the child shortening the length of an activity or taking mini-breaks.
- Grant the child legitimate power – involve in leadership role.
- Add interesting activities or experiences matched to the child's individual needs.

- Support the child's ability to leave the class/workplace when needed.
- Develop school/work assignments that emphasize the child's choices, strengths and talents.

Increase Opportunities for Positive Attention and Belonging

- Assign the child to an advisor or mentor
- Increase the number of friends or allies who know and spend time with the child.
- Encourage others to include the child in activities.
- Increase others' knowledge of the child's interests, strengths, etc.
- Speak and react to all in the class/workplace in ways that model respect and friendship.
- Develop a peer buddy system.

Increase the child's Status, Self-Esteem, Image

- Support the child to be a peer mentor or advisor to another in the environment.
- Give the child assignments that "guarantee" success.
- Teach the child pro-social skills.
- If any characteristics of the child's life reinforce a negative reputation among classmates/coworkers, try to decrease the stigma the child experiences.
- Increase the amount of time the child spends in roles that offer the best opportunities to express their natural abilities or strong interests and show their positive attributes to others.

ADDRESSING SKILL DEFICITS

An assessment might indicate the child has a skill deficit, and does not know how to perform desired skills. Although ineffective, the child may engage in inappropriate behaviors to escape or avoid a situation: (1) for which s/he lacks the appropriate skills, or (2) because s/he lacks appropriate, alternative skills and truly believes this behavior is effective in getting what s/he wants or needs. For example, a child may engage in physically violent behavior because s/he truly believes violence is necessary to efficiently end a confrontational situation, or the child may believe that these behaviors effectively accomplish her/his goals. However, when taught to use appropriate problem-solving techniques, the child is more likely to approach potentially volatile situations in a nonviolent manner. If this is the case, the intervention may reflect that deficit by including, within the larger plan, a description of how to teach the skill needed to support the child.

If the child does not know what behavioral expectations are, the plan can be formulated to teach expectations, and would include the supports, aids, strategies and modifications necessary to accomplish this instruction, with expectations

explained in concrete terms.   The plan will include the goal, objectives, and activities to accomplish the goal and objectives.

If the child does not realize that s/he is engaging in the behavior (i.e., the child is reacting out of habit or learned behavior), the team may devise a plan to cue the child when s/he is so engaged. Such a cue could be private and understood only by the supervisor or affected peer(s).

Sometimes for biological or other reasons, a child is unable to control his or her behavior without supports. A medical referral may be needed in these cases.

Should the child not know how to perform the expected behaviors, the intervention plan could include modifications and supports to teach them the needed skills. Such instruction may require a task analysis (i.e., break down a skill into component parts) of the individual behaviors that make up the skill.

SELECT & TEACH REPLACEMENT BEHAVIORS

Replacement behaviors are appropriate behaviors that take the place of (fulfill the function of) inappropriate or challenging behaviors. Replacement behaviors help children unlearn inappropriate behaviors. Remember that children engage in inappropriate or challenging behaviors to meet specific needs, and that their current behaviors may be the best ways they have found to meet these needs. So the replacement behaviors we teach them must serve the same purpose as the inappropriate or challenging behavior. The replacement behaviors(s) must:

- work as well as the problem behavior is meeting the child's needs;
- be an acceptable alternative to the problem behavior;
- be something the child chooses to do and others around them support; and
- help build a positive reputation for the child.

Examples of Additional Skills Areas to be Taught

Non-Verbal Communication/Body Language

- Show preferences; indicate rejection/protest through head shake and facial expressions, indicate acceptance through head nod and facial expressions
- Make eye contact
- Use appropriate body postures and facial expressions
- Keep interpersonal distance; limit physical contact to appropriate levels, types
- Maintain physical appearance

Social Relationships

- Begin and end a conversation; join in a conversation
- Ask a favor
- Participate in turn-taking
- Offer assistance
- Appropriate salutations
- Appropriate compliment behavior (giving and accepting)
- Sharing
- Cooperating
- Apologizing
- Negotiating
- Standing up for rights assertively, not aggressively
- Treating others with respect
- Following social rules and routines
- Acting appropriately towards the opposite sex
- Accepting no, saying no, asking permission

Self-Management

- Know feelings
- Express feelings
- Recognize another's feelings
- Express concern for another
- Express affection appropriately in social situations
- Deal with anger (own and others')
- Deal with fear (own and others')
- Use self-control
- Respond to teasing
- Deal with losing, failure
- Avoid trouble
- Accept consequences
- Deal with group pressure
- Deal with contradictory messages
- Relax
- Set goals
- Make decisions/choices
- Solve problems

Are there specific approaches to teach pro-social skills?

The most common approach to teaching new skills is one in which the child relies on others to direct their behavior. Teachers or supervisors change the behaviors of students or their staff through establishment of clear rules and consequences for

appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. However, sole emphasis on authority-directed procedures can make children overly dependent on authority interventions to manage their behavior. The goal is to teach children better ways to cope and establish and maintain positive relationships by regulating their own behavior. For example, when a child is faced with a stressful situation, they may have an emotional reaction that makes it difficult or impossible for them to handle the situation in an appropriate manner. They can be taught to use a variety of techniques, depending on the situation, to deal with their emotions. The advantages of teaching children to regulate their own behavior are:

- It involves them actively participating in the development of their own solutions, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own behavior now and in the future.
- The approach is proactive rather than reactive. It teaches children skills that can be used to prevent challenging or inappropriate behaviors from reoccurring.
- It can produce more enduring changes in the child's behaviors. The child may learn to manage their behavior even when interventions have been removed and there are no authority figures present to supervise.

Teaching a child to regulate their own behavior requires more than just breaking down a social skill and role playing the steps. The child must understand an event, be motivated to change, and trust the children around them. Understanding an even includes recalling and sequencing what happened, acknowledging their actions and feelings and recognizing how others are affected and reacting. Acquiring the motivation to change includes believing that situation can change for the better, having sufficient self-esteem to recognize that they deserve something better, and having the confidence to try to change. Trust is established and built on their experiences with others who respect their feelings, value them, focus on their strengths, and use power wisely. These are some of the essential components of creating a social context for empowering children to assume responsibility for managing their own behavior, controlling their inappropriate impulses, adhering to social norms, and developing positive relationships.

Self-monitoring teaches children to keep track of their feelings, thoughts and behavior. They may be required to make judgments about the quality of their thoughts or behavior. A self-monitoring checklist may includes questions such as:

- What happened?
- How were you feeling?
- What positive or negative comments did you tell yourself before you acted?
- Were there positive or negative reactions from others?
- What did you tell yourself about how you acted?
- What positive or negative comments did you tell yourself after you acted?

Self-instruction teaches children to talk to themselves (think) before, during and after they act. Through self-instruction, children can learn to prompt themselves to calm down, talk themselves through the steps of a social problem-solving procedures, use problem-solving routines to come up with a plan of action to resolve a conflict, etc:

- Stop, tell yourself to calm down, and think before you act. Identify and use relaxation techniques.
- Say what the problem is and how you feel.
- Set a positive goal – what do I really want?
- Think of many solutions.
- Think ahead to what might happen – what is the best possible result of each solution?
- What is the best solution for me?
- Practice your best choice (role-play).
- Act out or try out your best choice.
- Evaluate its effectiveness.

Self-reward teaches children to give themselves positive feedback for how they act. Although it's important for all of us to seek out and receive appreciation from others, it is equally important to avoid exclusively depending on others to reward our behavior. The steps for rewarding oneself are to recognize the you did a good job, tell yourself "nice going," and do something that you enjoy.

Procedures for teaching these skills involve a combination of the following:

- *Modeling*
- *Role-playing*
- *Coaching* (prompting and giving feedback) in naturally occurring situations.

ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE DEFICITS

If the team determines that the child knows the skills necessary to perform the behavior, but does not consistently perform the skills, the intervention plan may include techniques, strategies, and supports designed to increase motivation to perform the skills.

If the assessment reveals that the child is engaging in the problem behavior because it is more desirable than the alternative, appropriate behavior, the intervention plan could include techniques for making the appropriate behavior more desirable. For instance, if the child makes rude comments in order to feel like part of "in crowd," the plan might include strategies for rewarding appropriate comments as well as teaching the child appropriate ways to gain peer attention and

peer membership.   Letting the child understand the negative consequences of such behavior on the peers to whom it is directed may be an effective strategy.

Another technique for working with children who lack intrinsic motivators is to provide extrinsic motivators. If the child cannot seen any intrinsic value in performing the expected behaviors, it may be necessary to, at least initially, reinforce the behaviors with some type of extrinsic reward. Of course, such extrinsic rewards should be gradually replaced with more "naturally occurring" rewards, such as approval from others or the sheer pleasure that comes with success.

ADDRESSING SKILL & PERFORMANCE DEFICITS

Some problems are so severe they require a combination of techniques and supports. For example, if the child has problems controlling anger, s/he may need to be taught the following skills to:

- Recognize the physical signs that s/he is losing control,
- Use relaxation skills,
- Apply problem-solving skills, and
- Practice communication skills,

and have the added support of:

- A counselor, and
- Environmental modifications.

Professionals agree that it is usually ineffective and often unethical to use restraint techniques to control behaviors, except for very limited amounts of time in very extreme cases, such as situations in which:

- The child's behavior severely endangers the safety of her/himself or others; and
- Every possible intervention has been tried for an appropriate length of time and found ineffective.

Planned Interventions

- Planned ignoring
- Planned cueing (signal interference)
- Proximity control
- Touch control
- Humor
- Nonverbal warnings
- Discipline privately

- Positive phrasing
- Use "I" messages
- Never threaten
- Behavior shaping
- Maintain clear routines/expectations
- "Catch" children doing well
- Encourage asking for help
- Find opportunities for child to be of service to others
- Give notice re: change in activities
- Place low priority behavior just before high priority behavior
- Teach children how to keep track of their own behaviors

ADDRESSING OTHER FACTORS

In addition to factors of skill and motivation, conditions within the environment itself may precipitate problem behavior. Factors that can serve as precursors to inappropriate behavior may range from the physical arrangement of the classroom or workplace to unexpressed, unclear, or unrealistic expectations, inappropriate authority or peer behaviors that trigger, contribute to, or escalate behaviors, and/or inappropriate responses to behaviors. These must be addressed proactively.

ENCOURAGING EFFORTS TO TURN THINGS AROUND

It's important for authority figures and peers to find an acceptable way to "reward" the child when they respond appropriately or reduce or eliminate challenging or inappropriate behaviors. Always take time to process a situation with those involved, including the child with the inappropriate behavior(s). Place the focus of intervention on prevention and teaching, not blaming and punishing. Tips for providing immediate feedback and reward for any effort the child makes to turn the situation around include:

- Recognize improvements and don't wait for complete elimination of inappropriate behaviors before reinforcing positive changes.
- Acts of human kindness are not limited to verbal praise. Be creative. There are numerous ways of expressing your appreciation.
- Find out from the child what would "reward" and encourage them (a hug, a pat on the back, a "thank you," etc.)
- Be reassuring and positive.
- Demonstrate how caring about another human being and helping in a time of need is never a mistake.
- If at first the child rejects your attempt to show appreciation, try to do so in some other way (reflect on how difficult it is at times to accept praise, especially if we are feeling lousy about ourselves).

- Consider stating the compliment as an "I" message ("When you responded in that way, I felt very positive about your contributions to our work."), which may be easier for the child to accept.

Information excerpted from:

Addressing Student Problem Behavior: An IEP Team's Introduction to Functional Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans (October 10, 1997) by The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

Positive Behavior Supports Information Packet, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Positive Strategies to Support Behavior Change (August, 1992), Westchester Institute for Human Development/University-Affiliated Program

Prevention, Teaching & Responding, University Affiliated Program of Vermont

POSITIVE PROFILE

This form is to be filled out by the child involved, their supervisor, and the peers who have been involved in negative interactions with the child. This will be used to help develop a Positive Behavior Support Plan.

Who is _____? (Personality, likes, dislikes, positive attributes)

What are _____'s strengths? (Highlight all areas in which the child does well).

What are _____'s successes? (List all successes).

What are _____'s greatest challenges?

What supports are needed for _____ to help her/him achieve his potential?

What is our vision for _____?

Other helpful information:

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Observed/Reported Behavior	Time Occurred	Setting*	Present**
_____			_____
_____		_____	_____
_____		_____	_____
_____		_____	_____
_____			_____
_____		_____	_____
_____		_____	_____
_____		_____	_____
_____		_____	_____
_____		_____	_____
_____			

*Setting includes: in a large group, in a small group, one-on-one, during a meeting, during individual work, during transitions, etc. Was the child actively engaged with others prior to the behavior, on the outskirts of social engagement that was occurring between others, isolated from social engagement, etc.?

**Present means who was present when the behavior occurred, what is the relative "status" of that child (authority figure, peer, subordinate figure, etc.), other relevant characteristics (i.e., male/female, of color/white, older/younger, etc.); indicate if the behavior was specifically directed at one or more of those present

ABC OBSERVATION FORM – #1

Child:_____   Observer:_____

Date:_____ Time:_____ Activity: _____

_____

Context of Incident/Behavior:

Antecedent:

Behavior:

Consequence:

Comments/Other Observations:

ABC OBSERVATION FORM - #2

Child:_____   Observer:_____

Date:_____ Time:_____ Activity: _____

ANTECEDENT	BEHAVIOR	CONSEQUENCE