

Behavior Impedes Learning

ARSD 24:05:27:01.02. (1) In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies to address that behavior.

When addressing behavior, it is important to remember that students use behavior to try to communicate. Whether it is a need/want/ like/dislike etc. all behaviors serve a purpose, and if we are to attempt to change a student's behavior, we must first look to find that purpose. Most behaviors can be divided into two categories, behaviors that "get" something and behaviors that "get rid of" something. If you can establish which of these categories the behavior fall in, it will be easier to select effective behavior supports.

Examples of "Getting" behavior:

- To gain adult attention
- To gain sustained peer attention and positive comments (use instead of "power")
- To gain a desired item or activity
- To get a choice in the pacing of activities (use instead of "control")

Examples of "Escape/Protest/Avoid" behavior:

- To escape or avoid a task student states is (a) too hard or (b) too long, or (c) not meaningful to the student or (d) to escape peer comments that the task is too easy
- To avoid or protest a demand or request or reprimand
- To escape an environment in which the student states negative comments from peers frequently occur
- To escape or avoid specific people or activities

Ways to prevent behavior from occurring:

- Increase the effectiveness of instruction for this child
- Increase academic skill levels
Ongoing assessment to ensure instructional match & success
- Modify the curriculum
Interests, preferences, choice, sequence
- Modify the demands
Quantity, difficulty, input, output, groupings, alternative tasks
- Clarify the expectations
Use of schedule, charts w/ visual cues of steps
- Reorganize the physical & interactional setting
Supplies available, pair or independent seats, structure interactions

When addressing behavior, it is also important to remember to **teach** the student a **REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR** that:

1. Is what you would like to see from the student,
2. Is as easy for the student to carry out as the problem behavior, and
3. Gets the student the same results as the problem behavior

You may have to start with a **REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR** that is not exactly what you would like to see, but is more socially acceptable than the current problem behavior. This replacement behavior can be shaped over time to become the same socially acceptable behavior exhibited by other students.

Examples of replacement behaviors:

- Swears at teacher: protesting a lack of attention – **teach the replacement behavior:** Verbally state a desire for attention from the teacher.
- Fights: protesting not getting his way during a recess game – **teach the replacement behavior:** Use protest language taught in verbal conflict resolution training.
- Screams: protesting an unexpected activity- **teach the replacement behavior:** Use the printed schedule to protest and then negotiate about an upcoming unexpected activity.
- Runs from room-escaping hard work – **teach the replacement behavior:** Go to time away/break center, or put work in a “do later” folder.
- Gains sustained positive peer attention from gang members for assaultive behavior) – **teach the replacement behavior:** Gain sustained positive peer attention from an alternative group for pro-social behavior.
- Teach students how to ask for help, acknowledge they need a break, how to interact with others, how to positively gain attention, how to ask for less demands, how to ask for more time, how to ask use the time away option, etc.
- Teach students **Social Interaction Skills:** How to initiate and respond to interactions, how to make friends, problem solve and deal with stress

Some suggestions for positive behavioral interventions and supports to be used in the section of the IEP to describe how behavior impedes learning:

Environmental Changes: How can you change the environment to support positive behavior?

Is something present in the environment that needs to be removed?

- Problems with seating arrangement, noise level of the classroom, size of the desk,
- Interactions going on around student, etc., so change these variables

- Peer status is gained for misbehaving, so arrange peer status for pro-social behavior

Is something missing in the environment that needs to be added?

- Student has not yet been taught how to transition quietly, so teach it.
- Rules, expectations, alternatives, consequences are not yet clear to the student, so explicitly re-teach and reinforce adherence.
- Not enough positive to negative interactions, increase positive interactions.

Time changes: Review environmental analysis for what to add or remove

- Provide a break after 15 minutes of work
- Allow completion of tasks in parts; develop a pacing technique
- Allow student to cross out a certain number of problems before starting
- Create a chart for the student to mark off on when they have completed tasks
- Give student time to finish assignments at home
- Give more/less time on tasks

Space changes:

- Student will sit near the front
- Student needs to sit near assigned support buddy
- Different work areas will be clearly identified, different work spaces for different tasks

Material(s) changes:

- Hands-on learning or manipulatives will be increased
- Tasks organized in sequencing trays; visual schedule provided on student's desk
- Notebook organizer for assignments (and instruction to use)
- Enlarged print size for texts
- Provide pictures for use in communicating needs and wants

Interaction changes:

- Use specific supportive voice volume and words; prepare the student ahead of time for change
- Cue the student to use previously taught coping strategies when changes to routine create anxiety
- Model positive self-talk language and teach a calming count down, 10 to 1, to aid relaxation

Use reinforcers to build/shape certain new skills

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IEP -A Technical Assistance Guide

Rules for Reinforcers

- **Specificity:** Be specific about the skill being shaped and what the reinforcer is to be given for. Focus on using one reinforcer for one specific skill at a time.
- **Contingency:** Contingently given following the desired behavior
- **Efficacy Evidence:** Student must WANT the reinforcer
- **Frequency:** The frequency of earning must match the student's ability to delay gratification. Approximately every 10 minutes? 2 times per week?
 - (High frequency is an especially important consideration for students with a limited history of reinforcement for desired behavior.)
- **Immediacy:** Delivered IMMEDIATELY after each desired behavior.
 - Young children
 - Just starting behavior plan
- **Choice-within-Variety:** Offer more than one reinforcer and allow the student to select.

Examples of Reinforcers

- **Physical:** High-five/low-five, pat-on-the-back, delivered immediately following each task completed.
- **Verbal:** Use specific praise, e.g. "I bet you are proud of this work!" "You Made a Good Choice! You worked very carefully on that assignment";
- **Activity Access:** Desired activities contingently available following the completion of less preferred activities, e.g., time on the computer; free time; listening to music;
- **Tangibles:** Positive phone calls or notes sent home; small toys.
- **Tokens and points:** Use a symbol standing for progress toward accessing desired outcomes:
- **Privileges:** Passes or immediate verbal permission to: exempt an assignment; get an extra point on the quiz of your choice; permission to sit where you want for one period.

Information above provided in part by Diana Browning Wright from the California Department of Education. For more on the above information, please see the Behavior Support Plan (BSP) reference guide by Diana Browning Wright at www.pent.ca.gov

Examples of Behavior Impedes Learning statements:

1. Timmy becomes frustrated when he receives an assignment with more than 20 problems or problems he is not sure how to complete, in math. Some signs Timmy is becoming frustrated are: Timmy will put his head down and refuse to work, he will throw his paper on the floor, he will begin to sigh and hit his fist on his desk (other signs of frustration may occur). When Timmy appears to be becoming frustrated, staff should remind him he can

select one problem from each row and cross it out, or he can come up to the teachers desk for more assistance in getting started. He may also chose to put his assignment in his "do later" file and stay in for recess or after school to complete it. Staff should also remind Timmy that if he remains calm when asked to complete an assignment he can add a star to his behavior chart and continue to get closer to his goal of 15 minutes of free time on the computer.

2. Sally becomes upset and nervous when it is her turn to read aloud in class. To help her stay calm and gain confidence in the classroom, the teacher should let her know what passage she will be reading aloud the day before so she has a chance to look it over and read through it. When Sally stays calm and finishes reading aloud the teacher should give her verbal praise and after class they will put a sticker on Sally's behavior chart.
3. Bob becomes physically aggressive on the playground when other students won't let him join in their activity. Before going out to the playground, staff should remind Bob of the correct way to ask to join in a group activity. Staff should stay in close proximity to Bob while he is on the playground to ensure all the students' safety. When staff hears Bob correctly asking to join in an activity, they should give him verbal praise and when he comes in for recess he can put a piece of pie in his pie chart. If he becomes upset on the playground, staff should remind him of his calming procedures and also what he is working towards for his reward. If Bob still becomes upset, staff should intervene by having the other children move to another place on the playground and Bob should be given some time alone to call down. Staff should not try process the situation with Bob until he says he is ready. When he is ready to talk about what happened, staff should start by reminding Bob of what he did correct in the situation, or how he has successfully handled situations like this in the past. Staff should also remind Bob that he can try again at the next recess and that he can be successful if he remembers the steps he has been taught.
4. Missy likes to get out of her seat and talk to the staff in the classroom instead of doing her work. Missy has a chart on the inside of her desk that she is using to help her keep track of this behavior. When the class is asked to work independently, staff should remind Missy that if she remains in her seat for the first 10 minutes she can cross off one of her "stay seated" squares. At this time she can also get up and walk quietly to the back of the room for two minutes and talk with staff about the assignment she is working on, and then she needs to walk back to her seat and begin working again. Once she has crossed off all her "stay seated" squares, she can eat lunch in the classroom with the teacher.
5. Billy is working on becoming more organized to help him be on time for class and to have his assignments in on time. He has stated that the reason he is late for class and does not hand in his homework on time is because his locker is messy and it is hard for him to find his books and assignments. He also has problems remembering what assignments are due and when. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, Billy's homeroom teacher, or another staff if assigned, will assist Billy in making sure his locker is organized. Staff has also assisted Billy in creating a locker organizer that is easy for him

to use. When Billy's locker is organized all week, he will receive 10 minutes of free time to choose from one of the activities from his list. Billy also has an assignment notebook. Before leaving school each day, Billy's homeroom teacher will go through Billy's notebook with him to make sure he knows what assignments are do the following day, and to ensure he has the correct materials to complete his homework. When Billy successfully hands in all his assignments on time for one week, he will have access to 10 additional minutes of free time on Friday afternoons.