Developing a Behavior Plan that Works

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Developing a Behavior Plan – The Process

1. Collect information about the student. Ask why? You have to see the student using interviews, home visits and information from staff.
2. Hypothesis "This student is _____ another student because he _____."
3. Test Hypothesis. What is he trying to avoid?
4. Create intervention – You have to tie the function into the intervention.

If you don’t match the intervention with the function, there will be frustration and increased behaviors.

When you understand why something is going on, you will be less punitive.

Developing a Behavior Plan

Collecting Information

A. Sources of information can include: teachers, parents, friends, other family members, school and community mental health workers.

B. When and where is/are the behavior(s) occurring?

C. Why do they think the behavior is occurring?

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Collecting Information

D. Team members should be assigned and assembled during this time. Everyone that works with the student should be included.

E. Sort and Analyze to determine if all of the information is pertinent and useful.

F. Is there enough data to form a hypothesis? If not, more data is needed.

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Forming the Hypothesis: the team should form a hypothesis as to the function of the behavior.

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Hypothesis

A. What are the specific events/activities that trigger the behavior?

B. What is the behavior? Define the behavior using action words.

C. What is the function of the behavior?

For example:

When told to complete a writing assignment, Jose will kick and hit his desk to escape the task.

When Amanda is completing work independently, she will yell out loud to get attention from her teacher & peers.

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Testing the Hypothesis

A. **Proving the Hypothesis: the team should verify as to whether or not their hypothesis was/is correct.**

B. **Did their data confirm their hypothesis?**

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Creating Interventions

A. **The team brainstorms possible interventions.**

B. **Who will be involved and specific procedures that will be followed.**

C. **How will data be collected?**

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Creating Interventions

D. The team must tie the function into the intervention.

E. Interventions need to be doable, have the resources needed and must be implemented consistently. For, example, if time-out is included but a time-out space is only available 2 days a week, it won't be effective.

Questions To Consider When Developing Interventions

1. What expressive communicative purpose does the behavior serve?
2. How can we eliminate or change the triggers to problem behavior?
3. What strategies will bring about the quickest results?
4. Can the strategies be easily implemented in the classroom?
5. Are we addressing the student's interests & preferences, as well as his/her needs?

Matching Interventions to Functions

1. **Attention –** ***Do they like verbal attention and/or physical attention? Do they have a way to get your attention?***
2. **Escape –** ***Do they know how to ask for help or end the task?***
3. **Tangible –** ***Do they have a way to ask for the item/activity?***
4. **Sensory –** ***Do they have a way to request sensory input?***
5. **Control –** ***Does the behavior occur when told "No" or "Stop"? Does the behavior occur when teacher is delivering an instruction to the student? Do they have a way to end or stop the activity?***

STOIC – The Five Variables

1. Structure/organize all school setting for success. Fore example:

- Physical arrangements
- Scheduling issues
- Organizational patterns
- Routines and procedures
- Expectations for students
- Expectations for staff

2. Teach students how to behave responsibly in those settings. For example:

- Lessons on classroom expectations, routines, and policies
- Lessons on common area expectations, routines, and policies
- Lessons on essential behaviors such as respect, bullying prevention, school pride

3. Observe students behavior. (Supervise!)

Without monitoring, even responsible adults will push the limits. In the classroom, this involves circulation and scanning.

STOIC – The Five Variables

4. Interact positively with students. This involves three different skills:

① Interact in a welcoming manner with every student.

- Say hello, use students' names
- Show an interest in students – listen, converse

② Provide age-appropriate, non-embarrassing positive feedback

③ Strive to interact more frequently with every student when showing a + behavior

5. Correct irresponsible behavior calmly, consistently, and immediately in the setting in which the infraction occurred.

- Develop a plan that allows you to be on "automatic pilot" when implementing your corrective consequence.
- Get back to instruction and providing positive feedback as quickly as possible.

Attention

Do they like verbal attention &/or physical attention? Do they have a way to get your attention?

- Teach communication – appropriate ways for getting staff's attention
- Reinforce the student on task completion & appropriate behavior.
- Do not focus on the inappropriate behavior
- Ignore the inappropriate behavior & redirect silently – get them back on task & reinforce work after 20 seconds of appropriate behavior
- Provide Preferred Activities during time when you can not provide attention

Attention (Cont)

Do they like verbal attention &/or physical attention? Do they have a way to get your attention?

- Schedule adult attention – work with student, provide periodic attention.
- Schedule peer attention – peer tutoring, peer groups.
- Increase proximity to student-moving seating arrangement, adult move throughout the classroom
- Reinforce them for being good 4 positives to 1 negative.

Escape

Do they know how to ask for help or end the task?

- Teach Communication – provide ways for the child to ask for help or end the task
- Errorless learning – teach the skill, tutor, remediate
- Adjust difficulty of the assignment – provide easier work, slow down lesson, change task demands
- Increase use of visual supports

Escape (cont)

Do they know how to ask for help or end the task?

- Offer choices – student chooses task, sequence of work to be completed, materials to use, where to complete work, when to complete work, with whom to complete work
- Embed student's interests in the activity
- Make work assignments meaningful – hands on activities
- Use alternatives to handwritten work – computers, stamps, & manipulatives

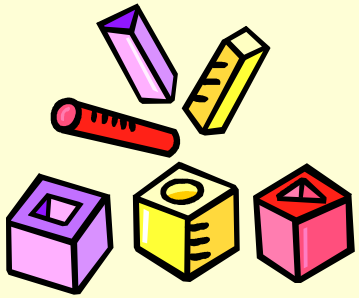
Escape (cont)

Do they know how to ask for help or end the task?

- Alter task length by providing short activities or frequent breaks
- Change materials used in activity
- Reduce paper pencil assignments
- Present easy request prior to difficult request – build behavior momentum
- Provide advanced notice – indicate the activity is about to end…
  - 5 minutes
  - 3 minutes
  - 1 more minute
- Use a pleasant tone of voice

Tangible

Do they have a way to ask for the item/activity?

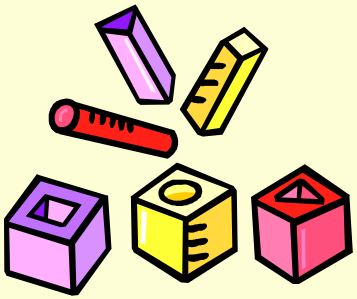


- Teach communication – create opportunities for the child to request desired item or activity
- Reinforce appropriate request
- Provide clear rules before activities – The rule is…
- Develop routines – First work, then break

Tangible (cont)

Do they have a way to ask for the item/activity?

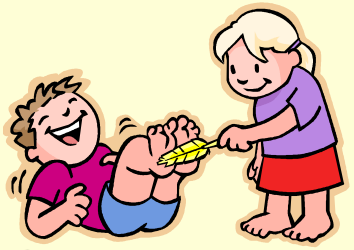
- Provide warning – indicate the activity is about to end…
  - 5 minutes
  - 3 minutes
  - 1 more minute



- Use desired items to assist with instruction
- Schedule a preferred activity between non preferred activities – “sandwich”

Sensory

Do they have a way to request sensory input?

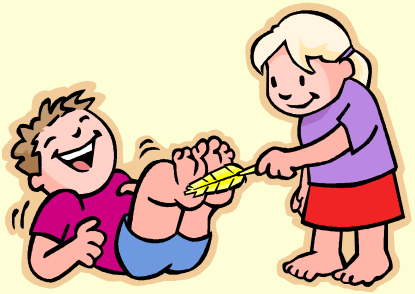


- Teach communication – create opportunities for child to request desired input or activity
- Structured, scheduled sensory diets – ongoing & changing (work with school's OT)
- Provide opportunities to move – put up items, sharpen pencil, take down chairs
- Create sensory rich environments

Sensory (cont)

Do they have a way to request sensory input?

- Provide sensory input the student is seeking – back rubs, vibrating toys, widget toys
- Provide alternative seating/standing arrangements throughout the day.



Control

Does the behavior occur when told “No” or “Stop”? Does the behavior occur when teacher is delivering an instruction to the student? Do they have a way to end or stop the activity?

- **Teach communication – create opportunities for the child to end or change activity**
- **Provide choices; give them the power – control**
- **Provide clear rules before activities – The rule is…**
- **Develop routines – First work, then break**

Control (cont)

Does the behavior occur when told “No” or “Stop”? Does the behavior occur when teacher is delivering an instruction to the student? Do they have a way to end or stop the activity?

- Provide a warning – indicate that activity is about to end… 5 min, 3 min.
- Develop Social stories and read daily not after the behavior occurs
- Use slight differences
- Utilize visual supports
- Be aware of the skill/cognitive level of the child

Commonly Asked Questions

1. **Will these interventions lead to a watered-down curriculum?** ***The first objective is to reduce the problem behavior, which often interferes with learning. After the problem behavior has been reduced, a plan for fading should be considered.***
2. **Is it fair to the other students?** ***Individualized interventions are supported and required with IDEA.***
3. **Will these strategies work in all settings?** ***Not necessarily. Other teachers and staff who work with the student should know the plan.***

References

- Adapted from: Lee Kern and Shelley Clarke, Chapter 8 Antecedent and Setting Event Interventions
- Karen H. Barineau, Fall 2007 Closing the Gap workshop on Developing a Behavior Plan
- Project Stay, *www.projectstay.com*
- Adapted from: Safe & Civil Schools, Randy Sprick