Pillars of Support: Designing Positive Behavior Interventions for Students with Disabilities

Considerations Packet

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Purpose

This Considerations Packet provides evidence-based, proactive strategies for creating classroom and individual behavioral supports for students with disabilities in general education settings. It offers an array of effective interventions at school-wide, small-group, and individual levels. The packet also highlights practical strategies for teachers to utilize regularly in classroom and non-classroom settings.

Background

A growing body of research supports the use of positive behavior interventions to address student behavior in the classroom (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, n.d.). Research conducted for over 30 years has demonstrated that positive behavior interventions lead to long-term, sustainable changes in student behavior (Killu, Weber, Derby, & Barretto, 2006).

In their effort to achieve well-behaved classes, teachers often resort to punitive, reactive interventions that not only exacerbate problem behaviors, but also increase their prevalence (Turnbull et al., 2002). Thus, typical systems for maintaining classroom discipline, including reprimands, detention, and loss of privileges, tend to be reactive and punitive in nature. Research shows that these are often the least effective means of improving student behavior. Furthermore, consistent use of reactive approaches actually makes behavior problems worse because teachers focus a majority of their attention on inappropriate rather than responsible behaviors (Sprague & Golly, 2005).

The goal of this Considerations Packet is to help teachers prevent behavior problems by focusing on the variables that are within their control—the academic task, the instructional approach, and the fidelity with which strategies are implemented. This packet approaches behavior as an instructional issue: Appropriate behaviors are taught and recognized when exhibited, and data are collected to determine the effectiveness of the strategy.

A Multi-Tiered Approach

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) describe a multi-tiered process in which struggling students receive behavior interventions at increasing levels of intensity (Netzel & Eber, 2003; OSEP, n.d.; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Selected interventions have a sound research base, and the data that result from each intervention are used to guide further intervention. Typically, the PBIS model is based on three tiers of intervention, but more tiers are possible.

- Tier 1 - Primary (School-wide) interventions, including classroom systems
- Tier 2 - Secondary (Targeted) interventions for small groups of students
- Tier 3 - Tertiary (Individual) interventions

At the primary level, faculty design and implement proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors in both classroom and non-classroom settings.
School personnel establish school-wide expectations, and teach and reinforce these expectations in all school settings including the classroom. A positive culture is created intentionally by school staff and students. Only when these school-wide supports are in place with fidelity should educators determine which students exhibit chronic behavior problems and, therefore, are in need of more intensive interventions. Research suggests that over 80% of students are successful with primary interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

A small percentage of students (approximately 10-15%) struggle with school-wide interventions and require more intensive targeted support. Commonly, students at the secondary level (Tier 2) have similar behaviors and are at risk for chronic problem behavior, but do not require individualized interventions. Secondary (targeted) interventions build upon existing school-wide interventions, but the frequency and intensity of instruction and reinforcement increases (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

An even smaller percentage of students (approximately 1-5%) may not respond to primary- and secondary-level efforts but require tertiary (individualized) supports tailored to their specific needs. Tertiary interventions often include conducting functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and designing positive behavior intervention plans (BIPs). Tertiary supports build upon existing primary and secondary interventions. In fact, they often look similar to targeted interventions but are tailored to each individual’s needs.

This Considerations Packet’s focus is Tier 1 and Tier 2. Figure 1 illustrates the three-tiered model for school-wide positive behavior interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Figure 1. Continuum of school-wide instructional and positive behavior supports.

(OSEP, 2008)

Primary (School/Classroom-Wide) Interventions

Arranging the Classroom

Educators should carefully consider the level of structure needed to keep diverse groups of students successfully engaged. For example, students who require additional structure may be
more successful if their desks are separated by enough space to discourage off-task conversation but still allow for interaction with peers. Wong and Wong (2004) suggest teachers’ desks be placed near the entrance to the classroom. Other researchers (e.g., Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003) recommend that teachers’ desks be placed in the back of the room to allow them to monitor independent seatwork without students knowing which part of the room is being observed. Regardless of the chosen layout, teachers should arrange student desks according to the strategy appropriate for a given content lesson. Kagan (1992) recommends that teachers rearrange desks approximately every six weeks.

Sprick, Garrison, and Howard (1998) suggest that teachers never do things for students that they are capable of doing for themselves. Related to classroom structure, the following is a quick, effective math lesson that may help arrange a class. The lesson involves groups of students designing classroom layouts and arranging the furniture accordingly. The lesson can be adapted to geometry or algebra.

- Teacher writes the math word problem on the board. (There are a total of 24 desks in this room. Each group has to find a way to arrange them equally. All students must be able to see the whiteboard.)
- In cooperative groups, students design a room layout on graph paper.
- Teacher posts all designs and students vote on their favorite layout.
- Teacher places students within the design.
- Students move desks according to the visual.

### Establishing Beginning and Ending Routines

To enhance structure, classrooms need beginning and ending routines. Classroom routines are events that are completed by students on a regular basis such as entering the classroom in the morning, transitions (lunch, recess, changing classes, etc.), and preparing to leave school at the end of the day. The teacher provides guides that outline rules for acceptable behavior during routines. In order to teach the appropriate behaviors, the teacher models and provides opportunities for practice (Knoff, 2005). In order to establish these routines the following actions need to happen:

- Post, directly teach, and review rules with the students.
- Be consistent with students; students want their classrooms and schools to be structured and predictable (Knoff, 2005).
- Strive to be consistent at least 80% of the time, and reasonably consistent for the other 20% (Knoff, 2005).

Figure 2 shows a portion of a classroom self-assessment designed by Lewis (2007) to help ensure procedures and routines are clear and consistently followed.

### Figure 2. Self-assessment for classroom procedures and routines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routine</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I have procedures and routines that are clear and consistently followed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Inconsistent or predictable … 5 = Consistent and predictable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of class</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certain routines tend to be more difficult than others to implement consistently. Figure 3 highlights strategies adapted from Sprick, Knight, Reinke, and McKale (2006) that may help ensure routines are taught and implemented consistently.

**Figure 3. Strategies for handling more complex routines.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routine</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering the classroom</td>
<td>Greet each student individually at the door. Have ready a short (3- to 5-minute) instructionally relevant warm-up activity that students can work on at their desks. Once students are seated and attendance is taken, provide feedback on the assigned task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with tardiness</td>
<td>Have students who are late sign in on a notebook so you will remember to talk to them after instruction has taken place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with students who do not have materials or are not prepared</td>
<td>Give students a limited number of supply tickets every month. These may be used to borrow or purchase missing supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure for students returning after an absence</td>
<td>Set up two baskets in the classroom—one labeled “Absent—What You Missed” and the other labeled “Absent--Assignments to Hand In.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up/clean-up</td>
<td>Allow enough time at the conclusion of an activity, period, or school day to ensure things end on a relaxed note. Set aside time for students to clean and organize materials, and for you to provide last-minute announcements and feedback to students about things that are going well and those that need improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Teach and practice the expectation that students are not to leave the room unless dismissed by the teacher. Explain that the bell is the signal for the teacher and that students will be excused when they are quiet and wrap-up tasks have been completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Developing Expectations and Rules**

Often the terms “expectations” and “rules” are used interchangeably. While there are some similarities between the two, they are different components of a well-executed classroom. Both expectations and rules should be limited in number, typically three to five. They are positively

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stated, based on data, and aligned with the school’s mission statements and policies. Expectations and rules are taught explicitly, reviewed often, and acknowledged appropriately in order to ensure successful performance. Differences between rules and expectations are highlighted below.

What are expectations?

- They are broadly stated.
- They apply to all people in all settings and describe general ways that people will behave.
  - Examples of expectations may include: Be safe, Be organized, Be accepting, and Be responsible.

What are rules?

- They further define expectations.
- They describe specific behaviors in observable, measurable terms.
  - Examples of rules may include: Keeping all four chair legs on the floor, Focus eyes on the speaker, and Participate.

Figure 4 is a matrix that further defines expectations through rules within the context of classroom routines.

**Figure 4. Example of classroom matrix.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Rules for Specific Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seatwork</td>
<td>Small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be safe</td>
<td>Keep your hands and feet to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use chairs and tables appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuck all computer cords under tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walk at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be organized</td>
<td>List assignments not completed in agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assign members of group their responsibilities (note-taker, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete all assignments before surfing or gaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean up after self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be accepting</td>
<td>Use a silent voice unless directed otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to understand before speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help a peer in need if she is experiencing difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help a peer in need with packing up materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be responsible</td>
<td>Take care of school and personal property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribute your part to the assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refill printer paper if you use the last piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wait until teacher dismisses you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teaching Rules**

Simply posting classroom rules is not sufficient to ensure all students understand and can apply them. As in effective academic instruction, students need explicit examples of what behaviors
should look like and sound like. Sprick et al. (1998) offer the following guidelines for teaching classroom rules.

- Provide direct instruction (explain, model, practice with feedback) for teaching behavior.
- Define rules in operational terms—tell students what rules look like and sound like within routines.
- Provide students with examples and non-examples of rule-following within routines.
- Actively involve students in lessons through games, role-play, etc., to check for understanding.
- Provide opportunities to practice rule following behaviors in natural settings.
- Provide students with visual prompts such as posters and illustrations.

T-charts are simple ways to get students thinking about what rules look and sound like. Following are two examples of student-generated t-charts. Figure 5 offers examples and non-examples of behaviors, whereas Figure 6 focuses solely on describing what rules for a routine look and sound like.
Figure 5. Elementary example of teaching rules for a routine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTERING THE CLASSROOM</th>
<th>Does NOT Look/Sound Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looks/Sounds Like</strong></td>
<td><strong>Does NOT Look/Sound Like</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher greeted at the door</td>
<td>• Out-of-seat socializing with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Belongings not in use placed under desk</td>
<td>• Belongings scattered in aisles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Materials needed for class (e.g., pens, pencils, paper, books) organized on desk</td>
<td>• Notes to friend written instead of morning activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Morning activity completed using a silent voice</td>
<td>• Morning activity completed in anything other than a silent voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Secondary example of teaching rules for a routine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOR DURING TEACHER-DIRECTED INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>Sounds Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looks Like</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sounds Like</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eyes on speaker, screen, or your own notes</td>
<td>• Only one voice at a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone looks as if they are listening to the speaker</td>
<td>• Presentation voice is used when you are the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Notes being taken on essential points</td>
<td>• Questions and comments from the speaker relate to lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone in seat except the speaker</td>
<td>• No noise other than turning a page of your notes if you are not the current speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If someone disagrees or has a question, s/he raises hand to become the speaker</td>
<td>• All verbal participation sounds respectful even when you disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledging Appropriate Behavior

According to Sprick and colleagues (2006), feedback should be specific and contingent (occur right away) when acknowledging appropriate behavior. Specific feedback tells learners exactly what they are doing correctly and should continue to do in the future.

Example of specific feedback
“You are showing me active listening by having quiet hands and feet and eyes on me – great!”

Non-example of specific feedback
“Great job.”

Contingent Feedback

Contingent feedback occurs immediately after the desired behavior.
Rath and Clifton (2004) found that teachers consistently increase student achievement rates when they use a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative comments. The following is a method for providing specific, contingent feedback to students exhibiting a desired behavior.

**Catch Students Engaged in Appropriate Behavior**

- Identify a class behavior such as staying on task.
- Set the timer to go off at unpredictable times (e.g., 7 min, 32 min, 3 min, 4 min, 27 min).
- Explain to students that when the timer goes off, the whole class will be observed.
- If all students are engaged in the behavior, teacher or student makes a check mark on the white board.
- Tally checks so that $x$ number of checks = $x$ minutes of free time.

(Adapted from Sprick et al., 2006)

**Responding to Inappropriate Behavior**

Marzano et al. (2003) argue against the use of punishment in response to inappropriate behavior. According to their meta-analysis, punishment does not eliminate problems as it is not instructional and does not teach students other ways to respond or behave. In addition, punishment can lead to lying, aggression, or other escape-motivated behavior; can cause strong emotional reactions; and only works for a short time, typically while the punisher is present.

Instead, Marzano and his colleagues offer the following tips for de-escalating problem behavior:

- Focus on what to do by reminding the student of the expected appropriate behavior. For example, if a student becomes disruptive during whole-class instructional time, instead of saying “Be quiet,” focus on replacement behaviors with a reminder to the student to “Please sit quietly while others are talking.”
- Be non-confrontational. Make eye contact or use proximity to subtly inform the student that he is behaving inappropriately.
- Explain why the student should stop (how she will benefit). Some students have difficulty getting along with their peers because of poor social skills (talks too loudly, interrupts others, stands too close while talking). They are unaware that their behavior annoys others, and become upset because they have difficulty making and keeping friends. These feelings of isolation can negatively impact learning. Help by making suggestions and modeling appropriate social skills.
- Avoid the reinforcing consequence. For example, a student is frequently displaying inappropriate and disruptive behavior in math class. Because of the severity of the behavior, the student is consistently referred to the office, resulting in removal from class. If a student displays negative behavior in a particular setting, determine the function of the student’s behavior. Removal of the student from class is reinforcing the behavior as the student may be trying to avoid being in math.
- Be brief, be private, and validate the student’s feelings. Schedule a time to meet with the student to discuss your observations and offer assistance and suggestions for achieving the desired outcome. Begin by recognizing the student’s feelings. “Cathy, it seems to me that you are very frustrated and upset with school and with yourself.”
Validating and redirecting students can be challenging. Following are some dialogue suggestions that help students feel valued while at the same time redirecting the conversation to a more appropriate time/setting (Marzano et al., 2003):

- “It sounds like you have some concerns. Let’s meet after class so we can discuss them.”
- “Sounds like you disagree. How about you write down your reasons why and I’ll review them tonight.”
- “Although your opinion is important to me, I also need to teach this concept to the class. Can you meet me briefly after class to finish this discussion?”

Secondary (Targeted) Interventions

Check In/Check Out (CICO)

Filter et al. (2007) provide a synopsis of the CICO strategy as follows:

The CICO program is built on a daily cycle in which a student checks in with a designated adult (para-educator, counselor, teacher) in the morning to develop behavioral goals, carries around a point card which provides numerous opportunities for adult behavioral feedback throughout the day, reviews behavior relative to goals with designated adult at the end of the day, and gives the point card to a parent at the end of a day, which the parent then signs and returns to school. (p. 70)

According to Crone, Horner, and Hawken (2004), successful implementation of CICO requires collaboration among students, school personnel, and families. While analyzing the effects of the program, researchers found “that teachers consider the program to be easy to implement and would recommend it to other schools” (Filter et al., 2007). Student goals can be meshed with primary, school-wide expectations/rules and can stem from a behavior intervention plan. CICO is most effective for students whose disruptive behavior is reinforced by adult/peer attention (March & Horner, 2002).

Filter et al. (2007) outline the following steps of the CICO process:

- Student meets with a staff person for A.M. “check-in.” Staff discusses, in non-judgmental manner, behavior goals and point goals for the day and gives the student a point card (see Figure 7). At this point, allow the student to choose the incentives for which they are working. Student gives the point card to his teacher(s) at the beginning of every class period.
- Student obtains feedback about his or her behavior at the end of each class period (e.g., “0” did not meet expectations, “1” somewhat met expectations, “2” met expectations).
- Student meets with the staff person to “check out” at the end of the school day. Staff person, in a non-judgmental manner reviews the student’s performance, discusses successes and difficulties, and problem solves better behavior options for the next day. Staff person also determines if daily goal was met and, if met, provides the agreed-upon reward.
- Student carries the point card home, obtains a family member’s initials, and returns the point card to school the next morning.
• If a parent is not involved, an adult in the school can be the person to whom the student brings the card at the end of the day for a signature. This person could be a mentor for the student.

*Figure 7.* Sample CICO point card. ([download figures](#))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name______________________________</th>
<th>Date______________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal #1</td>
<td>Be Safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal #2</td>
<td>Be Organized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal #3</td>
<td>Be Accepting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal #4</td>
<td>Be Responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points

2 = Great  
1 = Good but received a warning  
0 = Required a time-out

Today’s goal: _____  
Today’s incentive: ______________________________  
Total possible: _____  
Parent signature:_________________________________

Today’s total: _____  
Goal met:

(Adapted from Filter et al., 2007)

*Check & Connect*

The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (2008) holds that Check & Connect is an effective strategy for preventing disengaged students from dropping out. Essentially, the check component of the model refers to the continuous and systematic assessment of student levels of engagement with schools (e.g., attendance, suspensions, grades, credits). The connect component refers to the timely and individualized intervention focused on student’s educational progress, guided by the check indicators, and provided by program staff in partnership with school personnel, family members, and community workers. (Sinclair, Christensen, & Thurlow, 2005, p. 466)

A crucial factor in ensuring student success with this model is the presence of a Check & Connect monitor, a caring adult who works with the student and his or her family for several years. The monitor oversees the student’s learning and development of basic life skills, which enables the student to maintain the motivation and commitment to remain in school. Throughout this process, the monitor provides positive and negative feedback in a nonjudgmental way to all students.  

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parties involved. Communication remains open, and the focus is on an action plan geared to resolving performance areas needing improvement (http://cecp.air.org/safetynet/check.htm). The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (2008) notes that with Check & Connect, monitors are assigned to participating students to ensure that the intervention is implemented as follows:

- Monitor meets with family, student, and school staff and addresses how to keep school involvement a priority
- Monitor teaches the Stop and Think Social Skills Program (Knoff, 2001)
  - Stop! Think about the problem.
  - What are the choices?
  - Choose one!
  - Do it!
  - How did it work?
- Monitor connects through weekly/monthly conversations to share information and reinforce skills and support school progress and engagement
- Monitor keeps education the primary issue for students, family, and teachers through regular, consistent, and sustained contact

**Self-Monitoring**

Self-management refers to students monitoring their own behaviors and recording the behavior occurrences on data collection forms. Students may then evaluate their progress by graphing data (Gunter, Miller, Venn, Thomas, & House, 2002). Self-management may be used to increase a positive behavior or skill or to decrease a problem behavior. Borrowing from behavior intervention theory, self-management teaches students to self-instruct (the antecedent), self-monitor (the behavior), and self-reinforce (the consequence).

Lewis (2007) lists the steps to implementing self-management as follows:

- Involve the student in setting goals, criteria to meet goals, consequences, and selecting/designing the data collection instrument.
- Develop the recording instrument, which should be easy to use and provide data for evaluation.
- Teach the student the recording procedure (what to record, how to record, and how often to record).
- Implement the procedure.
- Set up periods for both teacher and student to record behavior and compare data.
- Set up goals, criteria, and contingencies to increase accurate recording.
- Reinforce both appropriate behavior and accurate recording.
- Reinforce the student when he displays appropriate behavior, accurately records behavior, and reaches behavior criteria.

The self-management approach offers several advantages. It is simple for educators to implement, but also powerful for changing behavior. It increases student independence and can be applied at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Figure 8 is an example of a self-management tool that can be used in the classroom.

*Figure 8. Sample self-recording sheet. (download figures)*
FOCUS Strategy

The FOCUS strategy is a self-management strategy that students use to remind themselves to stay on task. Each step encourages an internal dialogue that may have to be modeled initially, but becomes a part of students’ thought processes given time (Rademacher, Pemberton, & Cheever, 2006). Following is a description of the strategy.

- **Free your mind of distractions**
  Example of dialogue: “O.K. I need to focus on my assignment”

- **Organize yourself**
  Example of dialogue: “I’ve got everything I need to do this assignment on my desk. Everything else has been put away.”

- **Check the expectations and get started**
  Example of dialogue: “O.K. I know what to do. I have checked the expectations. Now I can get started.”

- **Use help wisely**
  Example of dialogue: “I need to think before asking for help so that it is the right time and I have my question ready. Then I need to signal the teacher and keep working until help arrives.”

- **Supervise yourself**
  Example of dialogue: “I need to make sure I am using the FOCUS steps effectively.”

Social Skills Instruction

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According to Knoff (2003), social skills are behaviors students learn; they need to be taught at all grade levels just like academic skills. He organizes social skills into four skills areas: survival skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and conflict resolution skills. While the names of social skills do not change over time, the expectations for student performance do.

Effective social skills programs are comprised of two essential elements: (a) a core element, or set of steps that can facilitate the conditioning of new behavior; and (b) a teaching process that uses a behavioral/social learning approach. Following are the steps that Knoff (2001) emphasizes as being essential to any social skills teaching process.

- Teach the steps of the desired social skill.
- Model the steps and the social skills language (or script).
- Role-play the steps and the script with students.
- Provide performance feedback to students relative to how accurately they are verbalizing the skill script and how successfully they are behaviorally demonstrating the new skill.
- Apply the skill and its steps as much as possible during the day to reinforce the teaching over time, in different settings, with different people, and in different situations.

**Antecedent Interventions**

Antecedent interventions provide the opportunity to address problem behaviors proactively, before they occur. Moore, Anderson, and Kumar (2005) note that the occurrence of undesirable classroom behavior is often associated with a mismatch between curricular expectations and student skill levels. The authors refer to the following dimensions of the instructional environment as serving as antecedent events: task difficulty, student preference, reinforcement rate, distracting environment, and the presence of competing activities or reinforcement.

**Task Interspersal**

Task interspersal involves including tasks that a student can complete quickly and easily among other tasks that the student finds more difficult (Kern & Clemens, 2005). Task interspersal interventions work because they help increase the amount of reinforcement (completing work) a student receives during a particular task or period of time without reducing the amount of instructional opportunities (e.g., shortening or “watering down” the task) for the student.

**Skill-Building Interventions**

Teams are typically well versed in designing setting event interventions, antecedent interventions, and consequence interventions. However, skill-building strategies, specifically identifying desired behaviors and teaching replacement behaviors, often pose a greater challenge and, subsequently, become the least emphasized of the four components.

If skill-building strategies require specially designed instruction, they may be incorporated into IEPs as annual goals.
### Skill building strategy
(Listed on the BIP)

| Teach Mary to increase on-task behavior during independent seatwork. | Measurable Annual Goal for Functional Performance
(Listed on the IEP) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By June 2008, when given independent seatwork, Mary will increase her on-task behavior from 0 minutes to 15 minutes. She will (a) ask her teacher to clarify directions if necessary, (b) begin the assignment within 3 minutes, and (c) continue working on the assignment for 15 minutes with no more than one verbal prompt at least two times per school day as documented daily on a teacher observation log.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Teach Steven self-monitoring skills. | By June 2008, when given a daily self-monitoring checklist, Steven will document by the end of every class period the number of times he raises his hand to ask for help when needed and bring his checklist to his teacher(s) to see if his results match for 5 consecutive days documented daily on a teacher observation log. |

### Conclusion

The purpose of this Considerations Packet is to offer proactive, positive alternatives to reactive consequence-based methods of behavior support. For more information, see the references, websites, and T/TAC library materials at the end of the packet.

### References


**Additional Resources**

**Websites**

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<tr>
<th>OSEP PBIS website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.PBIS.org">www.PBIS.org</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td><a href="http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/">http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/</a></td>
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<td>Maryland’s PBIS website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pbismaryland.org/">http://www.pbismaryland.org/</a></td>
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TTAC library: [http://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/index.php](http://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/index.php)

This *considerations packet* was updated by Butler Knight in 2010.