Practical Strategies That Work with Challenging Behavior!

Karen H. Barineau Mrs.
Karen_H_Barineau@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us

Carli Ferris Harrell
carli_M_ferris@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us

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PRACTICAL STRATEGIES
THAT WORK WITH
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR!

Karen Barineau, Ed. S.,
Karham@aol.com

Carli Ferris Harrell, M.Ed.,
cmferris@optonline.net

I Don’t Know, I Don’t Know!!!

- What is the student telling me by misbehaving?
- What is the student getting by acting out?
- What is the student getting out of?
- What appropriate behavior will get the student what he/she needs or wants?

Potential Behavioral Roadblocks

- Delayed processing of behavioral cues and shifting attention
- Difficulty with self-management skills
  - May have difficulty waiting for rewards
  - May act before thinking—impulsive
  - May show little remorse or guilt
  - May not follow rules or foresee consequences
- May demonstrate aggression
  - Tantrums, fights, property destruction, self-injury
- May demonstrate noncompliance
  - Breaks rules, argues, makes excuses, does opposite of what is asked or requested

What do I do Now?

- Define the problem behavior in observable, quantifiable terms.
- Determine the behavior’s function.
  - FBA
- Create a Behavior Improvement Plan.
  - Choose replacement behavior
  - Decide how to teach replacement behavior (intervention)
  - Determine methods and schedules of reinforcement
- Monitor progress with data
- React to the data

Behavior is Communication

- For children who have limited communication skills, challenging behavior serves to communicate wants and needs
- Any challenging behavior that persists over time is “working” for the child.
- Behavior is related to the context within which it occurs.

Determine Function

- Escape
- Tangible
- Attention
- Sensory/Automatic
- Communication
Functional Behavior Assessment

- **Describe** the behavior (action words)
  - Hit, Spit, Kick, Clear Table
  - Not “pitching a fit”
  - Observable and Measurable
- Collect data and observe the behavior across a broad sample of environments
- Determine the function - why?

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Behavior Management

Vs.

Behavior Modification

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Direct Measures

Maladaptive Behavior Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happened before?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appears to be in pain/comfort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Was told to do something (across context)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was told to do something (across time)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not clear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Something new</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not get desired item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost disruptive environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored (no materials or activities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing “out of the blue”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Out of seat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrespectful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-compliance</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal aggression, threat, or abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provoking others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical aggression, hit, scratch, kick, pinch, poke, bite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Property destruction, throwing, breaking, moving objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Running away from area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Screaming/garbling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-injurious behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did staff do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical discomfort related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-verbal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Required to continue task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interruption/taking break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation within room or area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Removal from normative environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical restriction to task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical restraint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeout duration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office referral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Data Based

I saw...
I counted...
I observed...
This is what **she** did.
This is what **I** did.
**She** said...
The sound **s/he** made sounded like this...
**S/he** stood in this place.
**S/he** made an action that looked like this...

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Develop an Intervention Plan

- The focus should be on replacing problem behavior with a desired behavior that serves the same purpose (function) for the child.
- Change for all: staff and family (80%) and student (20%)
- Environment changes are needed
- Skills need to be taught to the student
- Need consistent response of staff to student’s appropriate and inappropriate behaviors

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Behavior Action Plan

- Environmental changes needed
- Skills that need to be taught to the child
- Response of parent to child’s appropriate behavior
- Response of parent to child’s inappropriate behavior
A Note on Time Out
- Time out IS a break from activity
- The reinforcer for escape behavior is a break from work
- Giving a break following behaviors that serve to escape work actually strengthens those behaviors
- Why it might not work
  - If you use this during work or other non-preferred activities
  - If you deliver attention
  - If child can interact with others
  - If there are no clear rules about what leads to time out
  - Inconsistency

Is it Working? Am I Delusional? Am I Wasting my Time?
- This is NOT an overnight process.
- Minimum of ONE MONTH of intervention to every behavior has occurred.
- Prepare for the behavior to GET WORSE before it gets better
- Monitor the plan for AT LEAST 2-3 weeks before changing the intervention.
- CONTINUE to collect data to monitor effectiveness.
- CHANGE THE INTERVENTION if data collection shows there is no improvement in the problematic behaviors.

Environmental Changes
- Preparing your students with changes in routine
- Notify your student 5 minutes before an activity ends
- Provide items or activities to engage your student during difficult situations
- Give your student choices to allow more control over his/her environment

Methods of Intervention

Visual schedules provide structure & predictability.

Visuals
- Visuals are used to strengthen receptive language.
- Symbols provide information to the learner and increase understanding of the desired behavior.
Visuals make abstract concepts into concrete ideas.

Make a class-sized volume chart for the front of the room. If necessary, make a smaller version for students who need visuals right in front of them. Adjust the chart’s level of complexity to match the students’ level of comprehension.
Visuals Make Rules Concrete
- Sit, Stand
- Work
- Quiet Mouth
- Raise Hand for Question

Sensory needs must be satisfied for optimal learning to occur.
- Build sensory opportunities into the daily classroom schedule
- Consult with school OT
  - Behavior does not drive the “sensory breaks”
  - Structured
  - Scheduled

Structured Scheduled

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Structured Scheduled

Direct Instruction of Replacement Behaviors
- Direct and planned instruction that is designed to increase social competence of students
- There is great difficulty with scheduling social skills instruction due to pressure for academic achievement.
- Incorporate teaching social skills into daily class curriculum, and take advantage of “teachable moments.”
Ways to Directly Teach Social Skills
- Direct instruction
  - Tell, Show, Do, Prompt, Reward
- Use visuals
- Video modeling
- Educational software
- Social skills curricula
- Lunch Bunch
- Star Program
- Interview a friend
- Social scripts
- Social Stories
- Comic Strip
- Conversation
- Power Cards
- Peer modeling
- Social Autopsies

Educational Software
- Brainpop.com
- Teachtown Program
- Educreations.com
- Toontastic app

Peer Mentors Need Specific Roles
- Recess companions
- Bus companions
- Transition buddies
- Physical education buddies
- Computer buddies
- Library buddies
- Lunchtime buddies
- Homework companions
- After school friends

Superflex Social Thinking Curriculum

Direct Instruction Using Modeling and Visual Cues
- Models can be other people, characters in videos, or objects.
- “Alex’s” personal space instruction
  - Personal Space Camp by Julia Cook
    - Read and do book activities
  - Superflex’s Space invader lessons
    - Watch video, do lessons’ activities
  - Identification practice with figurines, drawings, people...Work up to student practicing it himself!
  - Reminders via visual cues

Social Scripts
- Interview a Friend
  - Chapter 4 1.36
Reinforcement

- Reinforcement should be given only after a desired, or good, behavior.
- Behavior is maintained by reinforcement, or what follows/results from the behavior.
- If you're doing it correctly, think of reinforcement as rewarding good behavior, as opposed to a bribe rewarding bad behavior.
- Reinforcement can lead to positive, long-term behavior modification and skill acquisition.

Reinforcement/Reward System

- What is being rewarded has to be concrete and specific.
- It has to be clear what the individual should do, not what he/she should not do to earn the reward.
- Focusing on failures and inadequacies can make people feel worse rather than better.
- Timing
  - Avoid interrupting play
  - Comment immediately after play
  - Describe skills used
  - Be specific

Reinforcement vs. Bribery

- A bribe is something which is unacceptable or inappropriate.
- Although the bribe can produce short-term results - stopping temper tantrums or getting a kid to do homework - it can also "up the ante".
  - This sets up a continuous cycle of crying, whining, and bad behavior
- Think of a bribe being given AFTER a negative behavior is shown. It's like rewarding bad behavior.

Types of Reinforcers

- Privilege/activity reinforcers
  - (be team captain, help custodian, free time to use specific equipment/supplies, sit next to a friend)
- Edible reinforcement
  - (candy, ice cream, pop, pizza, "Baha Chips", Hot Cheetos)
- Material/tangible reinforcement
  - (crayons, key chains, stuffed animals, wax lips & teeth, yo-yos)
- Social reinforcement: Aim for this one!
  - (e.g., smile, a comment on a job well done, ATTENTION!)
  - Specific: praise - Good job Becky you are talking SLOWLY!!

ASK the student what he wants to earn!

Update students’ desired reinforcers every so often. Rotate them so the students don’t get bored.
Positive behavior charts allow the child to see how close they are to earning a reward. Instead of getting the reward straight away they get a puzzle piece, color a box, or receive points. When they fill up their chart they can exchange it for a reward.

Using Positive Behavior Charts/Point Sheets

- Positive behavior charts allow the child to see how close they are to earning a reward.
- Instead of getting the reward straight away they get a puzzle piece, color a box, or receive points. When they fill up their chart they can exchange it for a reward.

Behavior Charts

www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com
**Consistent Response from ALL Staff**

- Required. Necessary.
- Pertains to both appropriate AND inappropriate behaviors

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**Educate Peers About SWD**

- “The practice of inclusion rests primarily on unaffected schoolmates rather than teachers...The children whose diagnosis was fully disclosed enjoyed more consistent social support in the classroom and on the school playground.” - Ochs, Kremer-Sadlik, Solomon, & Sirotka, 2001
- Obtain written and signed parent permission for disclosure of a specific student’s disability!
- Peers must have an understanding of the child’s strengths and challenges; this leads to an acceptance of the child as a person.

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**Set Classroom Expectations: Band-Aid Lesson**

- Ask students to create a definition of “fair” on the board.
- Have each student come up with a fake injury.
- In front of the class, ask a student what is wrong. Place a Band-Aid on that student’s injury.
- Ask each remaining student what is hurt. No matter the injury, place a Band-Aid wherever the first student’s Band-Aid was placed.
- When the class says, “That won’t work!”, reply that you’ve got to be fair and treat everyone the same.
- At the end, ask if everyone got what they needed (NO). Ask if giving everyone the same treatment was fair (NO).
- Have the class revise their definition of fair. Hang the definition poster on the wall using Band-Aids.

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**Informed Peers**

- Peers need to understand what they can do to assist the child with autism. The more knowledgeable they are, the more helpful they will be.
- Select partners with care and rotate assignments.
- Structure and lead their interaction opportunities.
- Training within the classroom
  - General information about the disability/disabilities
  - Specific information about an individual student
  - Highlight similarities b/t student and peers
  - Highlight “why” some behavior occurs

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**Responsive Classroom: Morning Meeting**

- Stop greeting
- Greet students
- Listen to greeting
- Repeat greeting
- Action Name
- Early morning greeting

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Class-Wide Incentive Program

- **Marble Jar**
- **Ticket System**
- **Crumpled Doll**
- **Bonus Points**
- **Homework Pass**
- **Token System**
- **Talk Time**

**School-Wide Incentive Programs**

- PBIS system
- Oak Grove Elementary
- SOAR cards
- Student/Character Traits of the Month

**Final Thoughts**

- Choose your battles carefully:
  - How much do you really care about the request that is about to cause a meltdown?
  - Provide choices for all students so they feel more in control of their day.
  - Allow for behavioral momentum- Set up a lot of successes before you give a challenging task.

**References**