Effective, Positive and Practical Behavior Management Strategies that Create Safe Learning Environments

"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be."

- Rita Pierson, Educator

Melisa Genaux
Allan Whitmore
Understanding How the Brain Develops

• The Brain develops/matures from the bottom up

  • Cerebellum
  • Brain stem
  • Limbic
  • Prefrontal Cortex
Dan Siegel's handy brain anatomy model

Neocortex
Limbic Brain
Brain Stem

Neocortex
Limbic Brain
Brain Stem

Neocortex
Limbic Brain (hidden)
Brain Stem

Neocortex
Limbic Brain
Brain Stem
The adolescent brain is often likened to a car with a fully functioning gas pedal (the reward system) but weak brakes (the prefrontal cortex).

- National Institute on Drug Abuse
“Flipping One’s Lid”

Prefrontal cortex
P.F.C.
“THE WISE LEADER”

“Flipped Your Lid”

The big emotions, anger, fear, anxiety etc...
The AMYGDALA - The alarm center
Acts on instinct
fight, flight or freeze

Credit: Daniel Siegel, M.D. is the creator of this metaphor and expression “Flipped Lid”. Copyright © 2015 www.SharonSelby.com

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Our Brains are Designed to Keep Us Safe

• What is your body’s physiologic response when you see a police car with lights on approach from behind you while driving on the freeway?

• Share with a partner a situation where you were forced into your fight and flight response, and how long did it take to return to normal?
When educators use **FEAR, SHAME** and **GUILT**...we force our students to “shift down” to a lower part of their developing brains and they lose the capacity to use their higher order thinking skills.

When educators discipline using PBIS systems and a strong relationship focus, students are able to utilize their brains at its highest developmental level.
My Big Ah Ha

Staff Behavior

Positive Interaction Strategies

Interacting with those we help in a positive manner can greatly enhance our effectiveness and reduce challenging behavior. As professionals, we must always:

✓ Communicate **Respect**.
✓ Promote **Dignity**.
“We know how to change student behavior. The hard part is getting adults to change.”
Keys to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

• Student behavior won’t change until adult behavior changes. PBIS is not about kid behavior, but adult behavior.

• Kid behavior is not the adult’s fault, we just have to make change to get change.

• All behavior change is an instructional process.

• Work smarter not harder – what’s the simplest way to make a difference in the success of students?
Underlying Beliefs Must Be Established

“...Faculty and staff must believe that any change in student behavior starts with the adults in the school changing their approach to behavior management.”

(Sprick, 2009)
Implementation Drivers

• Requires the following:
  • Leadership to set the vision and maintain the course
  • Creating a good organizational environment that supports people’s use of the innovations
  • Developing competency so people have the knowledge and abilities to use the components of the innovation well (accomplished through good selection, training and coaching)
"If controlling another human being is the goal of parenting (educating), then force is necessary. Fear, intimidation, threats, power-plays, and physical pain are the means of control. But if growing healthy humans is the goal, then building trust relationships, encouraging, guiding, leading, teaching, and communicating are the tools for success." L.R. Knost
No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.

- James Comer
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Changing Adult Behavior

Kid behavior gets better when adults are…

Predictable
Changing Adult Behavior

Next three sections:

- Getting compliance (it’s important)
- What to do about non compliance
- How to use reinforcement

… all like a wizard (practical magic)

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For each section

What we *tend to do* (non examples)

What to do *instead* (replacement behaviors)
Behavior Escalation or How We Make Kids Worse Over Time (non example)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kid</th>
<th>Adult</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdraws or Changes Request/Stop</td>
<td>Tantrum/Aggression Stop</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Negotiates”</td>
<td>Tantrum/Aggression Argue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Threats</td>
<td>Verbal Prompts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Threats/Warnings</td>
<td>Request in Question Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Behavior Escalation
(or How We Make Kids Worse Over Time)

ASKING
NAGGING
ARGUING
THREATS

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ASKING
NAGGING
ARGUING
THREATS

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Components of the Replacement Behavior

• Directions given in statement form
• 2x only
• Start with name
• Verbal cue that a consequence is coming
• Wait time
• Pre-planned consequences

Other factors that affect compliance:
- proximity (about 3 ft.)
- eye contact
- reinforcement for compliance

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Precision Requests

(what to do instead)

1. “Name, direction, please”

WAIT 3 - 5 seconds  
(students with no language delays)

WAIT 7 - 10 seconds  
(students with language delays)

Compliance  
REINFORCE!  

Non-Compliance

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Precision Directions

2. “Name, you need to direction.”

WAIT 3 - 5 seconds  
(students with no language delays)  
WAIT 7 - 10 seconds  
(students with language delays)

Compliance  
REINFORCE!  

Non-Compliance  

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Precision Directions

3. Pre-planned Consequence

Label the behavior - “That’s not following dir.”
Label the consequence - “That’s ________.”
Common adult responses to non compliance (non examples)

1. Anger, shaming, emotional reactions (all of Allan’s non examples)

2. Shoot from the hip:
   - send kid to the office
   - send kid to the school psych’s office
   - sit in the hall
   - warnings, warnings, warnings

3. Steps that are too big (all of recess—BOOM!)
Or (cue villain music)

4. All of the above, combined
Why don’t clipcharts work?

- Too subjective
- Adults aren’t consistent
- Often there are no clear criteria for moving
- Public shaming

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And, in addition…

When you use the same system for both positives and negatives, both types of consequences *lose their impact*. 
Consequence Hierarchy (what to do instead)

- Small
- Inconvenient
- Hierarchy

1. _________________________
2. _________________________
3. _________________________
4. _________________________
5. _________________________
Negative Consequences (sample-recess min.)

1. 32 sec.

2. 1 min., 13 sec.

3. 1 min., 28 sec.

4. 1 min., 47 sec.

5. 2 min., 7 sec.
Negative Consequences (sample for secondary-passing time)

1. 17 sec.

2. 23 sec.

3. 38 sec.

4. 42 sec.

5. 1 min., 3 sec.
Other consequences for school

- Elementary–recess time
- Secondary–passing time
- Free time minutes
- iPad minutes
- 3 min free time at end of resource or other small group time (Speech-Language group; school psych group, etc.)
Sample Home Consequence Hierarchy

1. 13 min.
2. 27 min.
3. 48 min.
4. 1 hr., 2 min.
5. 1 hr., 30 min.

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Severe Clause

- After all steps above
- For physical aggression toward others or objects

*This typically involves a removal from the instructional setting*
- Time-out to another classroom
- In-school suspension
- After-school detention
- Lunch detention

When at recess:

Seat-away on designated spot for a pre-specified number of minutes
Correcting Myths about Positives (non examples)

1. It’s not the same as bribery.

2. It doesn’t need to contain sugar or cost a lot of money

3. It’s not unfair to the other kids.

Punishment STOPS behavior, but only reinforcement CHANGES behavior.
Pointers for Using Positives

1. Always include a visual feedback component (chart, point card, etc.)
2. Use a *cumulative* system (as in #1) instead of an all-or-nothing rating

Non example: 4/5 ‘good’ days = privilege on Friday

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Non example: 4/5 ‘good’ class periods = privilege at end of day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>4th</th>
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<tr>
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</table>
3. Keep positive and negative systems separate.

4. Use privileges, activities, and items that are already in the environment (that are now free).
Other Classroom Essentials

- Rules
- Routines
- Procedures
- Clear expectations from the beginning

*Having all of these in place helps teachers to say “yes” more often*

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Example

Classroom Rules

1. Follow directions.
2. Stay in seat.
3. Raise hand to talk.
4. Keep hands, feet, and objects to self
5. Do your work.
Teach classroom expectations and procedures

Listening

1. Sitting quietly
2. Looking at the teacher
What happens when you have

1. *Consistency* in the way directions are given
2. *School-wide positives consequences* class and selected individual kids
3. *School-wide negative consequence hierarchies*
4. *School-wide setting of expectations with built-in review*
Middle School (small school district in FL) Data after School-wide Implementation

- Office referrals

  2013-2014
  476

  2014-2015
  90

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Out of School Suspensions

2013-2014
390

2014-2015
288

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In-school Suspensions

2013-2014

515

2014-2015

36
And it all comes back to… relationships

- Kids want to behave for people they like

- Kids want to behave for people who like them

- Kids will behave when people and environments are predictable… because this makes them feel safe

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References


