Behavior Intervention Planning: Beyond Legal Mandates

Strategies for Advocates

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If the school says	An advocate may respond	Relevant resources
Our teachers are frustrated by the student's behavior problems and they want the student out of their classroom.	Research suggests that teachers become frustrated by behavior problems when they do not receive sufficient supports to help them provide educational services to the child. Has anyone asked the teacher what he/she needs (in terms of supports) in order to continue including the student? Providing emotional, resource, and problem solving support to a teacher can make a big difference in terms of their willingness to keep trying. Have you evaluated the procedures/process for teachers to access to help or signal that a student needs behavioral support. Often, teachers either wait too long to ask for help or if they do ask for help early enough they do not receive the assistance they need.	Lohrmann, S., & Bambara, L.M. (2006). Elementary teachers' beliefs about essential supports needed to successful include students with developmental disabilities who engage in challenging behaviors. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 31,*157-173.
We don't need more data, we see the child everyday and already know what is going on.	Collecting information about direct occurrences of behavior is essential to produce a high quality behavior intervention plan. Research suggests that intervention plans that are based on a function of behavior (determined through the FBA process) are more effective than plans based on subjective decision making. Specific reasons why collecting direct occurrence data is essential includes: 1. To make objective and factual decisions about the function of behavior 2. To establish a baseline of performance to use as comparison to evaluate progress. 3. To develop reasonable incremental criteria for improvement 4. To make decisions about interventions and intervention schedules	See Lohrmann & Brown (2006). *Working Together Guide* for a description of methods to collect data. See www.njpbs.org for reproducible data collection tools and completed samples See also www.pbis.org
The behavior happens out of the blue…the behavior is unpredictable.	Has information and data been collected on specific occurrences of behavior? If yes, did data collection methods include recording of antecedents and responses to behavior? All behavior operates within the operant learning model, meaning that all behavior is preceded by an antecedent event and often occurs within the presence of a setting event. The issue is not whether there is an antecedent or not but rather has the functional assessment been conducted with sufficient sensitivity to capture the antecedent. Identifying antecedents often means that staff need to be more reflective about their own actions and behaviors which is difficult for people to do.	Lohrmann, S. & Brown, F. (2006). *Working together: A guide to PBS for parents and professionals.* TASH, Washington DC. Crimmins, D., & Farrell, A.F. (2006). Individualized behavioral supports at 15 years: It's still lonely at the top. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 31*, 31-45.

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Staff attribute occurrences of behavior to conditions outside of their control (e.g., the family, need for medication, symptoms of the disability).	Behavior is under the influence of both setting event and immediate antecedent conditions. Therefore, while global life issues may set the stage for behavior, it is the immediate antecedents and consequences that ultimately trigger and maintain that behavior. Ultimately, school personnel have the ability to create interesting, engaging, and supportive learning environments that are more powerful than the influence of setting event conditions. Try reviewing the operant learning model using a recent scenario with the student. Map out the setting event/antecedents, behavior, and peoples' responses to the behavior on flip chart paper and have the group walk through the incident. Repeat with other incidents as necessary to establish the pattern.	See Lohrmann & Brown (2006). *Working Together Guide* for a description of methods to collect data. See www.njpbs.org See also www.pbis.org
School personnel are reluctant to try environmental modifications or teach alternative skills. They rely on the use of punitive consequences as the "essential" approach to behavior.	Explain that behavior patterns have four parts: setting events, antecedents, behavior, and consequences. It is ineffective to rely on strategies that deal with just one fourth of the behavioral model (i.e., consequences). For a plan to be effective, it **must** include the following components: - Setting event/antecedent strategies - Alternative skill instruction to teach replacement behaviors - Strategies to reinforce occurrences of appropriate behavior - Strategies to diffuse occurrences of behavior Some plans might also need safety plans (for crisis situations) or may include small doses of logical and natural consequences. Use the hypothesis statement as a "mini-test" for the selection of strategies (i.e., does this strategy help the student achieve the function of behavior?) In situations where staff are really reluctant try negotiating short term "try outs." "Let's try for two weeks and see what happens. If is doesn't work we will try something else." Sometimes it helps to have staff articulate what they would need (in terms of supports) in order for them to carry out the strategies and then develop a plan to get staff the support they need.	See Lohrmann & Brown (2006). *Working Together Guide* for a description of intervention planning strategies. See Bambara & Kern (2005). *Individualized supports for students with behavior problems: Designing positive behavior plans*. Guildford Press, New York.