

# ***Positive Directions*** **for** **Student Behavior**



*What Families and Educators Need To Know  
To Support Student Success*



**Parents Reaching Out**  
*Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family*

**Fall 2010**

## Open Your Mind



New ways of thinking can expand your possibilities.

It's easy to fall into ruts and routines—

Stay where we're competent and comfortable.

But if you don't challenge yourself or seek challenges from others,  
your world and thinking can get progressively smaller.

And that's a shame because your mind has incredible potential.

A fresh perspective can improve every aspect of your life.

Being healthy is about finding balance...

between working and playing,

between thinking and feeling and

between believing and doing.

If you neglect one area, you will often pay the price in another.

Author Unknown



# Welcome to Parents Reaching Out!

*Children succeed when the adults in their lives communicate and work as a team.*

We invite families and educators to use this guide for planning successful outcomes for every child. Our children go to school to learn. The adults in their lives (parents, educators, and others) are responsible for providing learning opportunities and support to help them be effective members of society. When problem behaviors interfere with the teaching and learning process - no one wins. When we teach and support appropriate behavior with interventions that address the function of problem behavior - everyone wins!

Good things happen when families and schools discuss problem behavior when it occurs rather than just hoping that it will go away. Open communication between home and school keeps the focus on what your child needs for success. Conferences with the classroom teacher are a good place to start. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) in your child's school is a good source for ideas and support. If your child is receiving special education services, use the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process to work with your IEP team to build a plan that meets your child's needs.

No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) call for family involvement and early intervening strategies to improve the academic and functional outcomes for children in today's schools. Both laws focus on scientifically-based practices and system-wide approaches to improve results for all children. With thoughtful planning, communication, and commitment we can make a difference for our children that will help them now and in the future.

Our book begins with information about school-wide positive behavior supports for all students, including those with disabilities. We include intervention strategies that can be used in schools and at home to prevent or reduce problem behaviors. We outline the team process for identifying specific problem behavior(s) through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and the steps for a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Our Tools section provides useful resources for families and schools as they work together to make a positive difference in the life of a child.

Behavior issues take us on a complex journey. Use our *Positive Directions—At a Glance* guide following the Table of Contents to quickly find the information you need.

*There is logic behind the behaviors of our children. Every behavior serves a function. Our challenge, as families and educators, is to understand the interactions between a child and their environment...to look at the function of behavior and plan strategies to promote positive behavior!*

## Parents Reaching Out

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Other sources cited within the content of this book

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## Positive Directions—At A Glance



*We know that this is a BIG book!* We know that families and professionals may not have time to read it from cover to cover. That is OK! We want you to find the information you need. Parents Reaching Out works with over 50,000 New Mexicans each year. About 80% of those have concerns regarding behavior. This tells us that both families and schools feel they are in crisis when it comes to behavior issues.

The following questions will help you find information that will help you *now*. When you have time, we encourage you to review the rest of the book for the amazing tidbits of information that will ultimately improve children outcomes.

- Q.** My school has targeted student behavior as one of our EPSS goals (Educational Plan for Student Success). I'm a member of my school's Action Team and I really want to understand what a good running school system looks like.
- A.** Check out "**School-Wide Systems for Student Success**" - Section 1. Review "**Early Intervention & Positive Behavior Supports**" on page 95. The family survey on page 93 might be a tool you can suggest to your committee.
- Q.** How will the information in Section 1 make a difference for my child?
- A.** **Section 1** gives ways schools can work with families to build a strong foundation for all children. It includes common sense tips about making decisions based on the information we have collected about what works and does not work. (This is called data collection and making decisions based on data.)
- Q.** We are struggling at home with our daughter's behaviors. We also seem to always be at odds with the school on behavior issues. What can we do to improve these situations to help our daughter succeed?
- A.** Check out **Positive Behavior Supports at Home** on page 20 and pages 81-83 in our Tools section for ways that you can work with your child's school. **Take a Close Look at Problem Behavior** that begins on page 27 helps us take a deep breath and try to understand the reasons for problem behaviors.
- Q.** We seem to be getting calls about our son's behavior at school. Nothing seems to be working. What can we do?
- A.** We all need to understand the proper procedures to improve student behavior and academic results. Please check out the chapter on **Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)** beginning on page 33. The steps to build a **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** begin on page 43. *It is critical that both families and schools understand these processes and work at them with honor and integrity.*

**Q. My daughter does not seem to have ‘acting out’ behaviors that affect her learning, but she doesn’t want to go to school this year. Her grades are not as good as they were last year. Should I be concerned?**

**A.** Yes, this is something you should discuss with your daughter’s teacher. If your daughter has an IEP, schedule a meeting with the IEP team. As the parent of a student with a disability, it is a good practice to at least get a Functional Behavior Assessment that sets a baseline for behavior. We often see that when a student begins to act out (misbehave) it is because they are struggling academically. Problem behavior is often the first sign of academic problems - *set the baseline*.

If your daughter is not receiving special education services, you and her teacher can make a referral to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) to discuss intervention steps.

**Q. Our son has a Learning Disability and receives Special Education services. The school just called to tell us that he has been suspended. What do we need to do? What do we need to know?**

If your family and child are facing school discipline, there is absolutely nothing more stressful or complex. We have found that there is no replacement for a good IEP that includes an FBA and BIP. If those are in place with a solid discipline plan, things seem to go easier. **Discipline and Disabilities: Navigating the System** beginning on page 59 describes the process that must be followed. We have also included a question and answer section that begins on page 75.

**Q. We are attending an IEP meeting next week for our daughter. She has 3 Office Discipline Referrals this 9 weeks. She loses class time. Is there anything we can do to ensure we are heard at the meeting?**

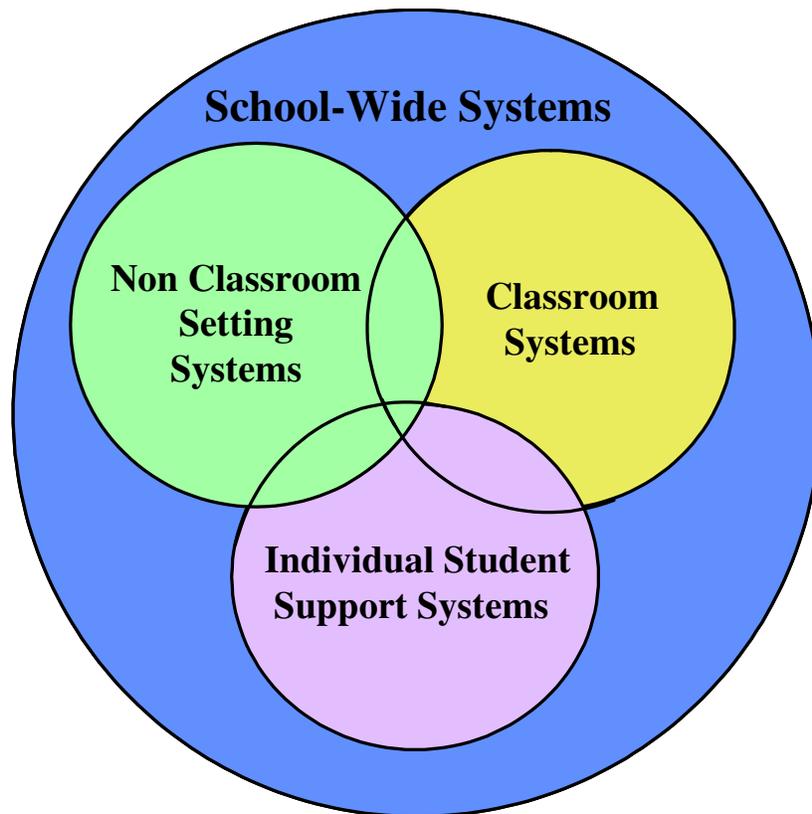
**A.** Yes, Prepare a written **Parent Report** (page 90). According to IDEA Section 300.503 - **Prior Written Notice of Proposal**, the district must address your concerns in writing page 102. Make an *informed decision*—take time to read and understand page 104 before signing anything.





**Section 1**

# **School-Wide Systems for Student Success**



"If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to behave, we...

...teach? ...punish?"

*"Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"*

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2

# School-Wide Systems for Student Success

The work of schools affects the lives of thousands of children and young people every day who will be the leaders of tomorrow. Schools are a business—BIG Business! Our taxpayer dollars flow to schools each year to improve students' achievement and social competency so they are prepared for life beyond school. State and national goals require schools to:



- Improve student achievement;
- Make schools safe, caring places that are focused on teaching and learning;
- Improve student character and citizenship;
- Provide a free and appropriate education for all;
- Prepare students for success in the workforce;
- Reduce high-risk, antisocial behavior; and
- Leave no child behind.

When it comes to our children, we can't afford to waste time or money on practices that have not been effective in the past. We cannot continue to make the same mistakes over and over. We need to invest our limited resources in long-term commitments to a process that provides lasting improvements over time. "Schools need to work smarter - not harder." (R. Horner, G. Sugai) It is time for schools to build effective relationships with families and use a system-wide approach to address the challenges of:

- Accountability demands (achievement)
- Creating school environments that use research-based practices
- Educating diverse groups of students
- Competing demands on use of time in schools
- Understanding the importance of addressing social or emotional needs

## **Look at the Big Picture**

*We cannot afford to think of academics and problem behavior as separate issues. To improve the academic success of our children, we must also improve their social success. Academic and social failures are related and have a lasting effect on the quality of life for every child.*

## What Have We Learned?

- Problem behavior is the single most common reason why students are removed from regular classrooms.
- Harsh punishment and zero tolerance policies have not been effective at either improving behavioral climate in schools, or preventing students with problem behaviors from entering the juvenile justice system.
- Three years after being excluded from school, almost 70% of these youth have been arrested.

<b>Get Tough approach to address problem behavior</b>		<b>→ Long term results:</b>
Zero tolerance policies	→ Short-term changes to address immediate problem	→ Creates environments of control → Fails to address the functions of behavior
Increased surveillance	→ Reactive approach occurs after the problem behavior	→ Triggers/reinforces antisocial behavior → Budget increases for “enforcers” drain dollars from instruction
Increased suspension and expulsion	→ No acknowledgement of appropriate behaviors	→ Takes away from child-adult relationships → Loss of student/staff instructional time
In-service training by outside “expert”	→ Train/retrain staff for “new” approaches	→ Shifts accountability away from school → Decreases leadership opportunities for staff, family, students, and community → Reduces capacity to sustain change
Alternative programs	→ Assume students know how to behave & what is expected	→ Weakens relationship between academic and social behavior programs

“Failure to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), due to a lack of incentives or negative attitudes toward children with challenging behaviors by administrators, policy makers and school personnel, is unacceptable. Students should not be excluded from school based solely upon inappropriate social behavior. Appropriate services can readily address and modify many of these behaviors, leading to more positive outcomes than simple punishment.” (Andrea M Cohn, 2001)

### **Improving results requires leadership.**

We can use strategies that work in the business world in this place we call *school*. District administrators, building principals, classroom teachers, support staff, families and students all have a job to do. School-wide systems built on data-based decisions offer opportunities for shared ownership in the school improvement process. What goes on in classrooms, playgrounds, biology labs, and libraries may not seem like big business, but it is! It is the key to a successful future for every child attending our schools.

## ***Make A Difference Through A School-Wide Approach***

Every child comes to school with different strengths, interests, and needs. Research tells us that 80% of children in schools respond successfully to quality instruction in the regular education classroom and universal school-wide positive behavior interventions. What happens to the other 20% of students? Designing school-wide systems that promote student success is no easy task. It requires dedicated time for planning and decision making that involves the school community. School-wide systems require leadership and support from school district administration and school board members for long term commitments of resources to promote change that lasts over time.

Schools are held accountable for providing an appropriate education for all students. The Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) required for schools in New Mexico identifies a long range strategic plan for student success and continuous school improvement that involves families as an integral part of the process. The School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) process builds capacity for sustained improvement to meet EPSS goals with a *continuum of supports* addressing the needs of all students.



### **Reducing office referrals regains quality time for instruction!**

Teachers have time to teach. Children have quality time to learn. Achievement results improve. Decisions are based on data so that resources are used wisely. School climate research shows that when these things are in place, staff turnover and sick leave is reduced. So what does this mean for our children? The school can provide instructional programs that are more consistent and stable. The benefits of implementing school-wide systems far outweigh the costs.

### **School Wide Positive Behavior Supports Made a Difference in this School**

	<b>Office Referrals</b>	<b>Administrative Time Spent on Office Discipline Referrals (15 min per referral)</b>	<b>Instruction Time Lost by Students Involved with Office Discipline Referrals 45 min per referral</b>
<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>1847</b>	27705 min (461.75 hrs)	83115 min (1385.25 hrs)
<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>697</b>	10455 min (174.25 hrs)	31365 min (522.75 hrs)
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-1,150</b>	<b>Office Discipline Referrals Reduced by 60%</b>	

### **Time Regained Through School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)**

**Administrator Time Regained**                      **287.5 hours per year (48 days)**

**Student Instructional Time Regained**            **862.5 hours regained (143.75 days)**

**What does this mean for students and staff? More time to focus on teaching and learning**

## ***Meeting the Needs of Students: Three Tiered Model:***

System-wide approaches that focus on prevention, early intervention, and a planned system for targeted or intensive intervention show improved results. Student achievement improves and the incidents of problem behaviors decrease. Positive learning environments with planned instruction and supports based on scientific research can break a cycle of learning failures including problem behaviors.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports is a *process* not a magic program that is filled with one-size-fits-all cures. It requires investing time to collect data (information) in an organized way and using this data to make decisions that create proactive, universal expectations that fit the school community. This school-wide approach uses the leadership talents of staff, students, families, and community to “grow positive change” through shared learning opportunities and communication networks.



**Universal Strategies** build a strong foundation for *all* students that is positive and designed to prevent problem behavior. School-wide expectations for student behavior are paired with sets of pre-planned strategies for all classrooms and all other settings in the school. Change does not happen overnight. Skills, strategies, and interventions are taught, practiced, and learned daily. Everyone learns. Everyone practices to improve their skills (adults, too!). 80% of the students in school will have positive outcomes.

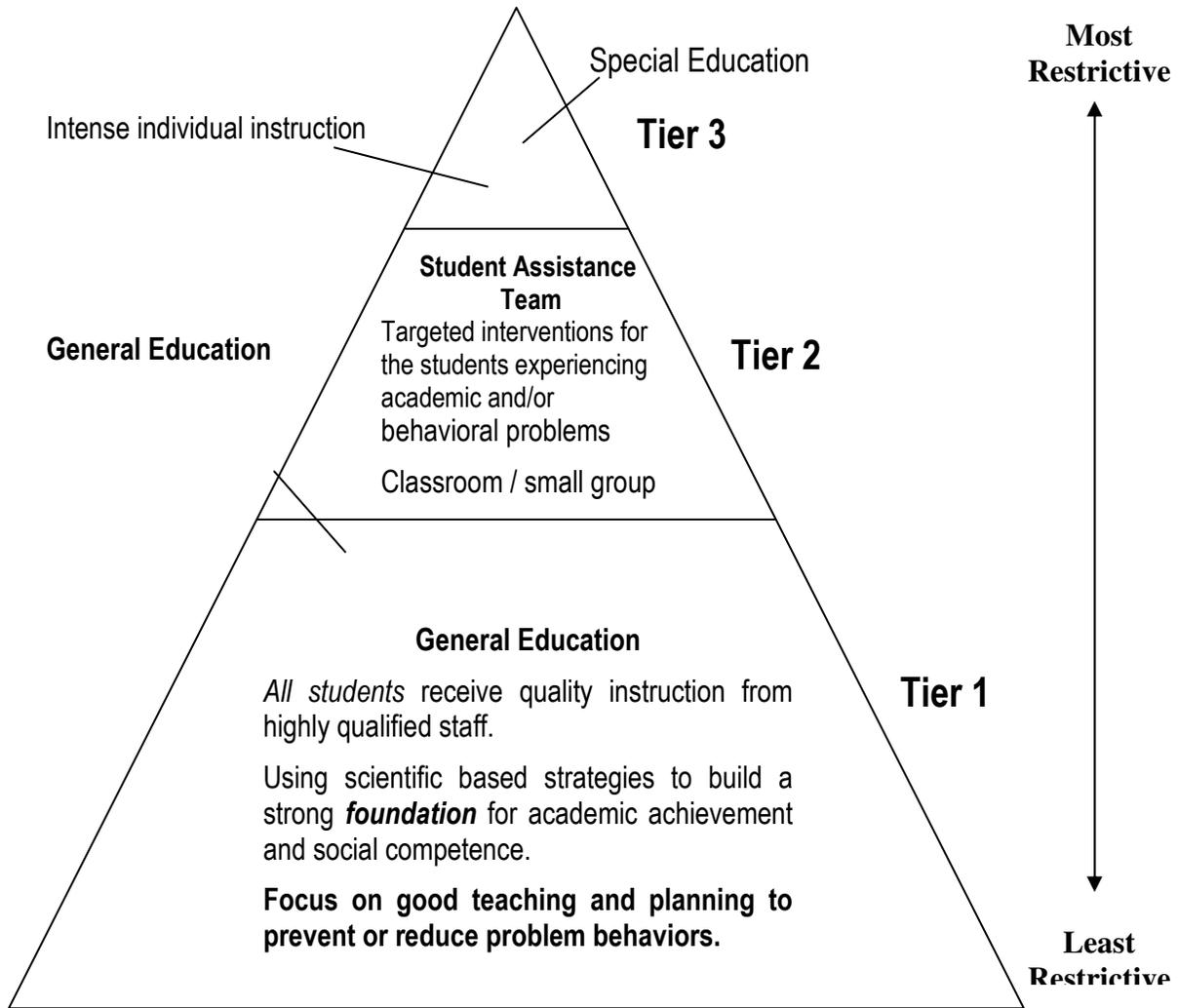
Universal Strategies provide the groundwork for **Targeted Interventions** for 10-15% of the students who are *at-risk* for school failure or show chronic patterns of inappropriate behavior that do not respond to the school-wide interventions. A smaller percentage of students (1-5%) will need **Intense Individual Interventions** and support based upon child-centered behavior in addition to universal strategies or targeted interventions. This three-tiered approach is called **Response to Intervention (RTI)**. The diagram and discussion on page 5-8 will help you get a better picture of RTI.

This *Response to Intervention (RTI)* model guides **Student Assistance Teams (SATs)** in New Mexico to successfully meet the needs of *all students*. This model of student intervention is required in current state regulations NMAC 6.31.2.10 (C)(1)-(3). Student Assistance Team referrals may be made by the classroom teacher or other staff, the child’s family, or generated by general screening results. General and special educators work together to implement and maintain the system. Family involvement and informed decisions by the important adults in our children’s lives will make a difference!

Using the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, when a student struggles with academic tasks or presents challenging or at-risk behaviors, we ask: “Is this child getting the instruction that he or she needs to succeed?” We don’t wait for students to fail. We act immediately to get the student the help needed. The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) publications on Response to Intervention and the Student Assistance Team process may be downloaded from <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/>

## ***Planning for Improved Outcomes for Students***

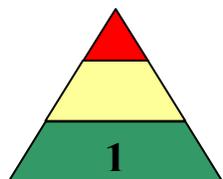
Student success is linked to the academic and behavioral systems that are in place for all students. A well-planned support system based on the 3-tiered model promotes academic achievement and social competence in a safe environment for learning and teaching in our schools. It begins with a strong foundation that is focused on good teaching, high expectations for learning, and the use of scientific practices that foster student success.



*Think about this three-tiered process like the steps we practice for our health care. We might start with practicing good health with rest, exercise, and a proper diet (Tier 1). At times, we might need a physical exam and special medical interventions (Tier 2). Finally, some of us might need individualized treatment, therapy, or surgery (Tier 3).*

# Improving Learning Outcomes for All Students

School-wide Positive Behavior Supports is a natural fit for the three-tiered response to intervention model for student intervention for school-aged students required by the NM Public Education Department. Integrating these models in our schools provides a planned system of interventions with guidance for instruction and/or supports that promote academic and social competence in *all* students.



## ***Tier 1 (Primary Intervention)***

*Research-based practices and quality instruction for all students*  
*Universal preventative behavior interventions for all students*

Tier I provides primary intervention in the form of general screening and quality classroom instruction to *all students*. Positive Behavior Supports schools plan universal interventions that focus on all students and all settings in the school. PBS strategies are proactive and focus on preventing problem behaviors. 80% of school-aged students respond successfully to quality instruction in the regular education classroom and universal school-wide positive behavior interventions at this level.

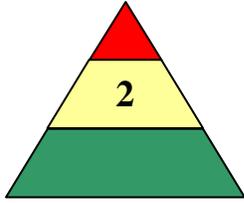
Primary Prevention efforts in PBS schools consists of rules, routines, and physical arrangements that are developed and taught by school staff to prevent initial occurrences of problem behavior.

For example, to prevent injuries to students caused by running in hallways, schools may develop Primary Preventions by:

- 1) establishing and teaching the rule, “walk in the hallways;”
- 2) creating a routine in which staff station themselves in the hallways during transition times to supervise the movement of pupils; or
- 3) altering the physical arrangement, such as making sure that an adult is with any group of students when they are in the hallways.

We want to prevent the major “behavioral earthquakes” that we hear about in the news: violent acts against teachers or other students, theft, bullying, drug use, and the like. Efforts to prevent these serious problems are more successful if the school as a whole supports the adoption and use of evidence-based practices. Strategies include teaching and rewarding students for complying with a small set of basic rules for conduct, such as “be safe,” “be responsible,” and “be respectful.” Students are taught what these expectations mean in various school settings. (Example shown on page 12.)

A student who is either struggling to learn the standard curriculum, working beyond the standard curriculum, having difficulty maintaining appropriate behavior in the classroom, or identified through general screening will be referred to Tier 2 (Student Assistance Team).



## ***Tier 2 (Secondary Intervention)***

*Student Assistance Team*

*Targeted Interventions to Address Learning and Behavior*

*Intervention strategies used in the classroom and small groups*

Tier 2 provides intervention through *early identification* and targeted assistance for a small percentage (5–10%) of students who are performing below standards in academics and/or behavior. Targeted Interventions for these students take place within the regular classroom in one or more areas through a SAT Intervention Plan designed by the **Student Assistance Team (SAT)**. These interventions may also be provided through a specialized school program that includes small group instruction. Tier 2 interventions are provided *in addition* to the quality instruction and universal strategies provided in Tier I. The interventions are designed to prevent or alleviate challenges a student may be facing. Interventions may be short-term or continue for an entire school year.

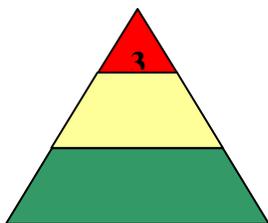
*The goal is to assist the student in succeeding within the regular education setting with the standard curriculum.* The main difference between secondary and other levels of positive behavior support is the focus on *supporting students at risk for more serious problem behavior*. Tier 2 addresses the needs of students who require more support than is available for all students in Tier 1 and less support than is available for individual students who need flexible, focused, personalized interventions (Tier 3).

Tier 2 interventions are more intensive and may involve small groups of students or simple individualized intervention strategies in the classroom or other settings. These interventions are designed to make measurable changes in behavior that will help improve the student's quality of life. Individual Positive Behavior Support plans at the Tier 2 level involve a simple assessment to identify the function a problem behavior serves (Functional Behavioral Assessment or FBA) and a support plan that includes a range of options such as:

- teaching the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviors;
- rearranging the environment so that problems can be prevented and desirable behaviors can be encouraged; and
- monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing this simple plan over time.

Support teams should include people who know the student best, have a vested interest in positive outcomes, represent the range of environments in which the student participates, and have access to resources needed for support.

A few students may not demonstrate a significant and positive response to the targeted intervention in Tier 2. These students may require a multidisciplinary evaluation and the intensive individual interventions, services, and support offered in Tier 3.



### **Tier 3 (Intense Individualized Intervention)**

*Multidisciplinary Individualized Evaluation  
Intensive, Assessment-Based Individual Interventions  
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process*

Students referred to **Tier 3** require a multidisciplinary evaluation to determine their need for services. This level serves a very small percentage of students (1–5%) who demonstrate a need for an individualized program to meet their learning or behavioral needs. Special education teachers, related service providers, and regular education teachers provide Tier 3 interventions that are specially designed instruction with supplementary aids and services. *Interventions are provided to a student through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).* The IEP team develops an individualized Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) based on the Functional Behavior Assessment for students identified with high risk behavior problems. Progress is closely monitored and interventions are adjusted to best meet the student’s needs. The goal of Tier 3 is for the student to be successfully involved in and progress in the general education curriculum, and achieve the goals in his or her IEP.

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is effective in addressing the challenges of behaviors that are dangerous, highly disruptive, and/or impede learning and result in social or educational exclusion. PBS has been used to support the behavioral adaptation of students (and other individuals) with a wide range of characteristics, including developmental disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, and even students with no diagnostic label. Tier 3 interventions are planned to diminish problem behavior and provide strategies to increase the student's adaptive skills with opportunities for an enhanced quality of life. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team has the responsibility to examine the *function* of a child’s behavior and plan strategies to improve both academic and functional outcomes for the child.

Our guide includes sections designed to help teams with the processes for Functional Behavior Assessment and developing individualized Behavior Intervention Plans. Parents Reaching Out has also developed **The Book of IDEAS** as a tool for families and educators to use as they explore possible interventions to improve outcomes for our students. Call Parents Reaching Out (1-800-524-5176) to get a copy of this book. Visit [www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org) to download a copy.

# School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports

No Child Left Behind, IDEA 2004, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, and early literacy programs all focus on successful outcomes for children. School-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports overlap with other school initiatives to create environments in which:

- Learning and teaching are valued, and aggressive, unsafe behavior is discouraged;
- Respect, responsibility, cooperation, and other highly valued character traits are taught and encouraged;
- Individual differences are valued rather than criticized;
- Educating students with disabilities can be supported more effectively and efficiently in the least restrictive environment, and
- Teaching fundamental skills like reading and math can be maximized.



A school-wide system of positive interventions combined with natural consequences can improve the climate for learning for all students, promote family involvement, and provide optimal environments for teaching.

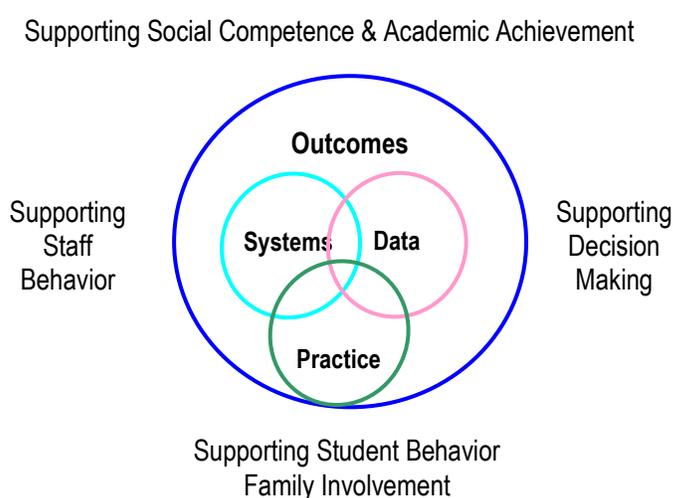
- Students who are clear about expectations and rewarded for developing good behavior habits are better prepared to learn.
- Teachers who have clear guidance about how and when to intervene with behaviors spend more time on instruction.
- Family members are better prepared to engage in partnerships with schools to support successful experiences for their child.

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (PBS) uses strategies with planned interventions to prevent problem behavior and to achieve *social* and *learning* outcomes. Strategies used are scientifically proven and research-based. School-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support improve results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth. Interventions are carefully planned to make problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant. Students are taught skills that make the desired behavior more functional. Families and every member of the school community are involved in the process.

This process requires leadership, collaborative planning, training, active participation, and constant monitoring. Good communication between home and school is a key to great results. The pay off is positive for everyone!

**School-wide Positive Behavior Supports** work as part of on-going school reform efforts to correct and improve four (4) key elements focused on:

- Clearly specified **OUTCOMES** for behavior and student achievement that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators;
- Evidence-based **PRACTICES** and interventions that are effective for staff and students;
- **DATA** gathered by the school to make decisions about improving behavior and learning; and
- **SYSTEMS** that support family involvement, staff buy-in and sustained use of effective practices.



## ***Positive Behavior Support in New Mexico***

The mission of Positive Behavior Supports in New Mexico is to help schools develop, implement, and maintain systems to create a positive climate for learning for all students. New Mexico began a Statewide Behavior Initiative in 2001. The program has grown, with 124 schools from 44 school districts implementing PBS in 2005-2006. There are over fifty PBS coaches and 15 School-Wide Information System facilitators who provide support to the school based-teams. Representatives also collaborate with Parents Reaching Out, New Mexico's Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC), to share information with parents and school staff to promote meaningful family involvement in school-wide practices.

*For more information about PBS in New Mexico contact:*

New Mexico Public Education Department

Special Education Bureau

Telephone: 505-827-1457 Website: [www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/index.html](http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/index.html)

## ***How Will School-Wide PBS Make a Difference For Children?***

- **Involves all school employees and families.** Training in effective behavioral techniques and the school-wide plan is provided to families, administrators, teachers, therapists, educational assistants, and all other school employees.
- **Defines behavioral expectations.** A good plan has three to five (3-5) expectations stated in positive terms - *Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Be Safe.*
- **Promotes a common language among everyone in the “school community.”** Students, educators, families, and support staff use clear, consistent terms to build communication, problem-solving, and shared ownership in the process.
- **Uses a continuous learning cycle to teach and model behavioral expectations.** The expectations are taught in real contexts to all students in the building. Students practice the “right way” until they demonstrate fluent performance.
- **Provides instruction in self-control and social skill strategies for all students.** These skills are recognized as essential life skills for every child.
- **Uses a reward system for all students for engaging in appropriate behaviors.** Once appropriate behaviors have been defined and taught, they need to be acknowledged on a regular basis.
- **Gives immediate feedback on inappropriate behavior and creates limits that make challenging behavior unproductive for students.** The program doesn't do away with consequences; it just emphasizes them less than positive behavior.
- **Provides rapid-response for students at risk for behavior difficulties.** Staff responsibilities are defined. Strategies are designed to provide support.
- **Recognizes that some students have chronic challenging behavior.** A team develops a positive behavioral support plan based on a functional assessment for these students. Each plan is individualized and monitored for effectiveness.
- **Restructures problem settings.** Data-based decisions help identify factors and implement strategies to reduce problem behavior in all school settings.
- **Provides a monitoring system for continuous school-wide improvements.** Research-based decisions identify successful practices and determine the problem areas that need to be improved for positive change.



## Sample Matrix of Expected Behavior

Code of Conduct	Classrooms and All Settings	Hallways	Bus
<b>I am Respectful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Listen politely</li> <li>★ Raise hand to speak</li> <li>★ Speak respectfully</li> <li>★ Use kind words</li> <li>★ Ask permission to use things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Walk silently</li> <li>★ Keep hallways neat and clean</li> <li>★ Keep hands off walls and displays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Use a quiet voice</li> <li>★ Speak nicely to others</li> </ul>
<b>I am Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Follow directions</li> <li>★ Make good choices</li> <li>★ Accept consequences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Follow directions</li> <li>★ Make good choices</li> <li>★ Accept consequences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Follow directions</li> <li>★ Make good choices</li> <li>★ Accept consequences</li> </ul>
<b>I am Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Keep hands and feet to self</li> <li>★ Stay in assigned areas</li> <li>★ Sit in chair safely</li> <li>★ Use furniture and supplies appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Walk in single, straight line</li> <li>★ Keep a reasonable distance between self and others</li> <li>★ Walk safely up and down steps</li> <li>★ Keep hands and feet to self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Stay in your seat</li> <li>★ Keep seat belt buckled</li> <li>★ Keep hands and objects inside the bus</li> <li>★ Keep hands and feet to self</li> </ul>
<b>I am Prepared</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Come prepared</li> <li>★ Work carefully</li> <li>★ Complete your work</li> <li>★ Do your best</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Walk with a purpose</li> <li>★ Face forward with hands at your sides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Be on time outside waiting</li> <li>★ Sit in assigned seat</li> <li>★ Buckle your seat belt</li> </ul>

Note: This matrix was developed by an elementary (K-6) SWPBIS school.

Each School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports school develops expectations that fit the culture and the context of their school community. The expectations are not “just for students”. The expectations are set for everyone: students, staff, parents and others connected with the school. Expectations are modeled by the adults. Instructional lessons including role play are developed and taught for all settings in the school environment. There are many opportunities to practice so that these “skills” become a part of *who we are and what we do!*

# Classroom Management and Student Success

*Planning the classroom environment leads to more effective instruction that improves achievement and social success for students. Well-planned learning environments are important for all students (pre-k through 12). Families are encouraged to keep these ideas in mind as they visit their child's classroom or have conferences with teachers about their child's progress.*

**Physical Environment:** Quality learning environments do not just happen! Classroom environments that promote effective teaching and learning are well planned. Some elements to consider include:

- Seating/furniture arrangement—define “what happens where”
- Traffic patterns
- Materials/supplies
- Student areas (e.g., small group, work stations, access to materials)
- Teacher areas (e.g., desk, materials, access to all students at all times)
- Problem features (e.g., dangerous items/equipment, blocked access)

**Establish a Predictable Environment:** We can not expect our children or young adults to understand and follow classroom routines the moment they walk into a classroom. *It is important to define and teach classroom routines with ample practice opportunities.* Some basic routines may include:

- How to enter class and begin to work
- How to predict the schedule for the day
- What to do if you do not have materials
- What to do if you need help
- What to do if you need to go to the bathroom
- What to do if you are handing in late material
- What to do if someone is bothering you
- Signals for moving through different activities
- “Show me you are listening”
- How to determine if you are doing well in class



## Invest in Appropriate Behavior.

Define and teach 3-5 expectations for your classroom early in the year. Expectations should be positively stated, easy to remember, and posted in the classroom. They should be consistent with school-wide rules and expectations. (See the example on page 12.)

### Basic Rule of Classroom Organization

Design the structure and functions of classrooms to increase predictability and to accommodate the individual and collective needs of students.

## Map School-wide Rules & Expectations to Classroom Routines

Adapted by Anne Todd (2000) from Colvin & Lazar, 1997. *The Effective Elementary Classroom*. Sopris West

School Rule	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
<b>Expected Student Behaviors</b>	Walk facing forward Keep hands, feet & objects to self Get adult help for accidents & spills Use all equipment & materials appropriately	Use kind words & actions Wait for your turn Clean up after self Follow adult directions Be silent when the lights are turned off	Follow school rules Remind others to follow school rules Take proper care of all personal belongings & school equipment Be honest Follow game rules
Classroom Routines			
<b>Starting the Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ put personal belongings in designated areas</li> <li>✓ turn in homework</li> <li>✓ put instructional materials in desks</li> <li>✓ sharpen pencils &amp; gather necessary material for class</li> <li>✓ be seated &amp; ready to start class by 8:30</li> </ul>		
<b>Entering the Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ enter the room quietly</li> <li>✓ use a conversational or 'inside voice'</li> <li>✓ keep hands, feet, objects to self</li> <li>✓ walk</li> <li>✓ move directly to desk or assigned area</li> <li>✓ sit quietly &amp; be ready for class</li> </ul>		
<b>Working Independently</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ select area to work</li> <li>✓ have materials ready</li> <li>✓ work without talking</li> <li>✓ raise hand to ask for help</li> <li>✓ keep working or wait quietly for assistance when the teacher is helping someone else</li> <li>✓ move quietly around the room when necessary</li> <li>✓ put materials away when finished</li> <li>✓ begin next activity when finished</li> </ul>		
<b>Asking for Help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ always try by yourself first</li> <li>✓ use the classroom signal for getting assistance</li> <li>✓ keep working if you can or wait quietly</li> <li>✓ remember the teacher has other students that may also need help</li> </ul>		
<b>Taking Care of Personal Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ follow the class signal for letting the teacher know you have a private concern</li> <li>✓ let the teacher know if you need immediate help or if you can wait a while</li> <li>✓ try to speak to the teacher privately &amp; quietly if you do not want other students involved</li> </ul>		
<b>Completing &amp; Returning Homework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ collect your work to take home</li> <li>✓ complete work, get parent signature when needed</li> <li>✓ bring work back to school</li> <li>✓ return work to homework basket</li> </ul>		

## ***Strategies for the Classroom and Beyond***

### **Characteristics of Effectively Managed Classrooms**

- Active supervision
- High rates of positive reinforcement for expected behavior
- Predictable schedules and routines
- Consistent response to problem behavior
- Utilization of effective instruction and curriculum

### **Stop, Relax, and Think—Problem-Solving Strategy**

Any student's ability to deal with anger is contingent upon having problem-solving skills. Stop, Relax, and Think is a process that helps students gain skills to help them stop the behavior, relax or chill out, decide who owns the problem, and what to do about it. A classroom poster outlining the steps uses a large stop sign as a visual cue to STOP when there is a problem.

Instruction is designed to help students learn that the stop phase gives them time to put a plan into place. Role-play is used to identify situations when an immediate STOP is needed. The next step is to RELAX (take a deep breath or relax the body), so that they can THINK about the problem. This learning process also provides an opportunity for problem solving in small group settings as students to work together to come up with solutions and review the outcomes. It is a strategy that works well for adults, too!

#### **Stop. . . Relax. . . Think**

1. What is the problem?
2. What do I want or need?
3. Is what I'm doing getting me there?
4. What are my choices?
5. Pick the best choice.
6. Try it.
7. Look at the results.



### **Environmental Checking - Strategy for Many Settings**

Some students may have poor impulse control and make decisions without thinking of their impact. *Environmental checking is a strategy to help students notice what or who is in the environment.* This strategy helps them become aware of the expectations so that they are better able to cope and adapt to change. Teaching children to be observant and aware of their surroundings is a skill that goes beyond the classroom. Children will be more apt to learn this skill when they see that the adults in their life practice and use this skill on a daily basis.

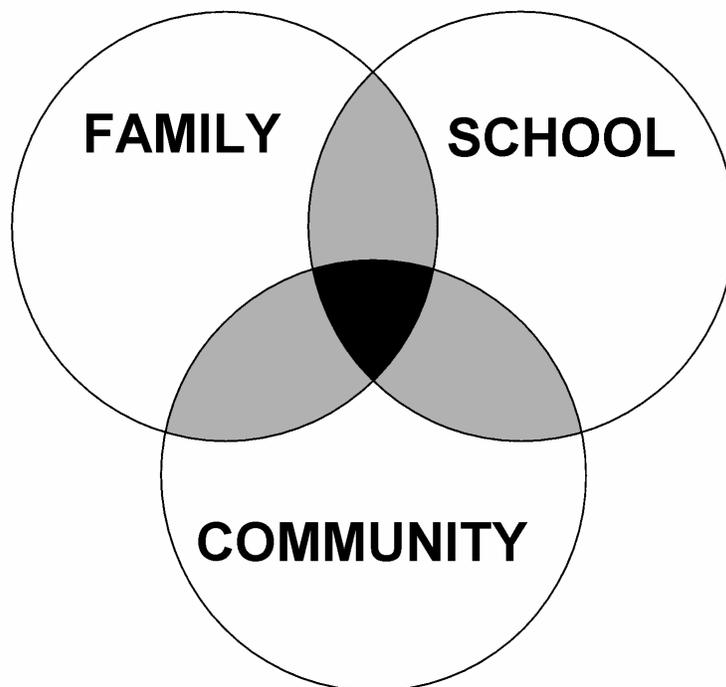
Large increases in instructional minutes will not make up for ineffective instruction.

(Christenson et al, 1989; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986)



## Section 2

# Family Involvement and Positive Behavior Supports



"Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect their children. Partnerships work best when there is mutual respect and each partner can participate in the decision making process. When schools view parents as partners and engage them in the decision making process, they realize higher levels of academic achievement."

(DuFour and Eaker, 1996)

## ***The Right Question Leads to Positive Change***

No Child Left Behind and IDEA 2004 require that families be informed and involved in the decisions that affect the outcomes for their children. We need good information to make informed decisions that will help our children succeed. The best way to get information is to ask questions and listen to the answers. Asking “the right question” will help get specific information and may help to open discussions about possibilities. It is helpful to know when to use close-ended or open-ended questions.

Closed-Ended Questions are answered with a simple "yes" or "no" or with a one word answer.

Open-Ended Questions require more explanation. They cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" or a one-word answer. They often begin with words like who, what, where, why, or how.



Asking the right question can quickly lead to new ideas. Thinking about questions before we ask them may be a shortcut to better results. The process serves as a simple powerful tool to build partnerships in decision-making, develop action plans, explore complex issues, and clarify procedures and responsibilities.

One of the best ways we can help our child be successful at school is to know what goes on at school and what is expected for students. School rules and the supports that are available for our children should not come as a surprise after our child fails or has an incident as the result of problem behavior.

*Connecting with your school to find the answers to these questions will help you become better informed and prepared to work as a partner for positive systems that work for kids.*

- How does our school collect information about student behavior, attendance, and achievement? How is this information used in our school Educational Plan for Student Success to set goals for improvement?
- How are parents involved with setting expectations for behavior at our school?
- How are parents, students, and staff informed of school expectations for behavior?
- How are families involved in evaluating the effectiveness of systems to support student behavior?
- What kind of parent training is offered to help families understand and support the expectations for student behavior and achievement in our school?
- What training is provided to staff members on research-based instruction, positive interventions, and support strategies for students?
- What opportunities do parents have to serve in leadership roles as partners in decision making for our school?

# Engaging Families in Positive Behavior Supports

The link between families and positive behavioral interventions and supports is an important one. When families are meaningfully involved in educational activities their children do better in schools. Families play an important part in their child's education and social development. The presence of parents in schools not only provides additional academic supports but also creates community and cultural connections. School cultures should positively support students, families, and educational staff.

Family participation in the school-wide positive behavior support process is growing. Family members are part of state, district, and school planning teams and participate in school-wide activities in a variety of ways. Family members participate in the assessment and problem solving process to create individualized positive behavior support plans for their children. Behavior Intervention Plans are effective when the school environment is predictable, efficient, and positive. When families are aware of the school-wide expectations and school culture, they can be a true partner in developing prevention-based behavior plans.

*What should families expect in a school setting?* Behavioral supports are not just for crisis situations. Families should expect to be participants in supporting appropriate behavior for all students across all school settings. These expectations include:

- Families should feel welcome and valued at the school. Schools should have an established process for welcoming and including families at all levels. Family involvement is important for interventions for students with intensive behaviors or students experiencing at-risk behaviors.
- Families should be included in development and implementation of school-wide behavior practices and supports.
- Families should be informed of school-wide expectations to reinforce and support expectations at home. Expectations should be limited (3-5) and positively stated.
- Families should be informed of the reward systems in the school and how they support the behavioral expectations of the school.
- Families should be informed of the clearly defined consequences for violations of school expectations.
- Families should be asked to share their opinions as a part of the process for evaluating the effectiveness of the behavioral systems used in the school.



## ***School, Family, and Community Partnerships in PBS***

Families are involved in each step of the PBS process. The information below shows samples of activities that can be planned using Epstein’s Six Keys to Family Involvement which is used in many schools to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Families, schools and communities work together to: 1) Select and define expectations; 2) teach behavior expectations; 3) monitor behavior; 4) acknowledge appropriate behavior; 5) use data to make decisions; and 6) correct behavior errors.

<b>Keys to Family Involvement</b>	<b>Positive Behavior Supports Activities</b>
<b>Parenting</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meetings to obtain input from families on selecting behavioral expectations</li> <li>2. Send school matrix to families; develop home matrix; provide behavior support classes</li> <li>3. Provide info to families on how to monitor behavior at home</li> <li>4. Acknowledge families who participate in partnership activities</li> <li>5. Assist families to gather data at home; provide data sheets and checklists</li> <li>6. Provide workshops for families: “Check &amp; Connect,” FBAs, wrap-around support</li> </ol>
<b>Communication</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Newsletters, websites, videos, bulletin boards, PBS night</li> <li>2. Information provided in native language; demonstration videos</li> <li>3. Family Survey - awareness and impression of PBS</li> <li>4. Good news cards to home; positive phone messages</li> <li>5. Input from families on home data, results of school data shared with families</li> <li>6. Input from families during all phases of targeted and individual interventions</li> </ol>
<b>Volunteering</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bulletin boards, posters, volunteer directory, parent center</li> <li>2. Engage families in PBS kickoffs, boosters, tutors, speakers; volunteer coordinator</li> <li>3. Utilize families to monitor halls, cafeteria, playground, etc.</li> <li>4. Utilize families to assist with acknowledging appropriate student behavior</li> <li>5. Collect data on volunteer programs and contact hours, impact on student outcomes</li> <li>6. Utilize families in re-teaching of behaviors, boosters, and targeted interventions</li> </ol>
<b>Learning at Home</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PBS video, audiotapes, home visits to clearly define expectations</li> <li>2. PBS at home classes; family interactive homework on expectations</li> <li>3. Home and Community matrix with same behavioral expectations</li> <li>4. Acknowledge systems in place at home that reinforce school-wide expectations</li> <li>5. Data collected at home effect of acknowledgement system</li> <li>6. Involve families in “Check and Connect”; reinforcing of desired behaviors at home</li> </ol>
<b>Shared Decision Making</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Families included on school-wide PBS teams</li> <li>2. Utilize families in creating and implementing teaching tools and strategies</li> <li>3. Survey families to determine if they feel they have input on school decisions</li> <li>4. Involve families in the selection of individual and school-wide rewards</li> <li>5. Review surveys to determine if opportunities are available for all families to share in decisions</li> <li>6. Involve families in targeted and individual interventions</li> </ol>
<b>Collaborating with the Community</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bulletin boards, videos, service programs, newspapers, media, museums</li> <li>2. Speakers, mentors, tutors, artists, classroom aides and field trips for workshops</li> <li>3. Monitor behavioral expectations in community settings, service programs</li> <li>4. Assist with search for funding for rewards, in-kind donations, celebrations</li> <li>5. Collect data on all interactions with community and impact on student outcomes</li> <li>6. Utilize natural supports in targeted interventions and individual interventions</li> </ol>

## ***How are Families Involved in Positive Behavior Support?***

Family involvement is a key part of the process to develop individual positive behavior support plans for students with comprehensive needs. School-wide Positive Behavior Support provides opportunities for family members to participate in planning teams and learn how to teach their children the importance of school-wide expectations at home and in the community. Families participate in school celebrations, public relations, and the search for community donations and free resources.

States, schools, and districts that have high levels of family involvement in the school-wide PBS process have developed action plans for including families and communities in all aspects of the process. The chart on page 18 shows many ways that school practices encourage and guide parent involvement. Here's an example of family involvement:

One PBS school included a list of volunteer activities that parents sign up for each year. An activity at this school involved writing form letters to request free samples and resources from sports teams, celebrities, and other business so that these items could be used to reinforce students for positive social behavior throughout the school year. Parents with the highest volunteer hours are presented with recognition awards at school celebrations where school-wide PBS efforts are the major focus of the festivities.

School practices that inform and involve parents provide families with more opportunities to participate in their child's education. Family events are scheduled to introduce the school-wide expectations, show progress on school-wide outcomes, and provide families with access to information about community resources.

## ***How are Families Involved with Planning Individual Positive Behavior Supports for Their Child?***

Families are full team members and educational decision-makers in their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) requires family involvement in planning positive behavioral interventions for IEPs of children whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of other children. (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(3)(B)(i), 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(2)(i))

When a child is referred to the Student Assistance Team for problem behaviors or academic concerns, it is very important that families participate in this process. Involving families in planning targeted interventions for Tier 2 support sets the stage for success. In some schools, family members provide a parent to parent connection with other families facing similar challenges and help create a network of support for families.

Parents Reaching Out offers workshops and resources like our Family to Family network focused on planning positive behavior supports for our children. We invite you to stop by our office, give us a call (1-800-524-5176) or visit our web site: [www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org)

# Positive Behavior Supports at Home

One of the best ways to address a problem behavior is to begin with the positives! After all, you love your child but you don't like their problem behavior. It's the behavior that you want to change! Thinking about answers to these questions may help you develop a positive plan that will lead to more appropriate behavior.

What are the things my child really enjoys?

What are the things my child does really well?

What things does my child find rewarding or motivating?

What are my child's favorites (colors, food, TV shows, books, music, sports, etc.)?



## ***A Dozen Prevention Tips for Parents***

**... to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent risky behaviors**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parents as Nurturers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look directly at your child when he/she talks to you and listen without interruption.</li> <li>• Express your love and respect with your words and actions.</li> <li>• Allow your child to make choices within safe, healthy, and respectful time limits.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parents as Advocates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with your child's teachers and caretakers for your child's safety and success.</li> <li>• Find community resources and information for yourself and your child so you can thrive in a complex, ever-changing world.</li> <li>• Voice your opinions to your local, state, and federal representatives on issues affecting children and youth.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parents as Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach by modeling. Behave as you want your child to behave.</li> <li>• Spend time with your child doing things you both enjoy.</li> <li>• Speak the truth - be willing to admit mistakes and discover new solutions for yourself and your child.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parents as Policy-Makers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain clear, specific, and age-appropriate rules to your child about health, safety, and respect for self and others.</li> <li>• Ensure safe, consistent consequences for broken rules.</li> <li>• Know where your children are at all times.</li> </ul>

Source: Colorado Department of Education Prevention Initiatives

## The Early Years: Use Positive Words!

- Tell a child what to do instead of what not to do.
- Show the child by modeling or using a picture of the action.
- Clearly and simply state what you expect the child to do.
- Remember, young children use inappropriate behavior because they may not understand the social rules yet.
- Talk to young children using language they understand. Young children may not understand words like “don’t” because it is a short word for “do not” and he/she may not know what the “negation” of a word means.
- Encourage the child in a way that lets him/her know that he/she is exhibiting the desired behavior.
- Be enthusiastic and generous with encouragement. Children can never get enough!



Avoid Saying	Instead: Say and Model	Remember
Don't run!	Walk; Use walking feet; Stay with me; Hold my hand.	Way to go! I like how you're walking. Thanks for walking!
Stop climbing!	Keep your feet on the floor.	Wow! You have both feet on the floor!
Don't touch!	Keep your hands down. Look with your eyes.	You are such a good listener; you are looking with hands down!
No yelling!	Use a calm voice; Use an inside voice.	[In a low voice] Now I can listen; you are using a calm (inside) voice.
Stop whining!	Use a calm voice; Talk so that I can understand you; Talk like a big boy/girl.	Now I can hear you; that is so much better. Tell me with your words what's wrong.
Don't <i>stand</i> on the chair!	Sit on the on seat of the chair. This is how you sit on the chair (model good sitting posture).	I like the way you are sitting! Wow you're sitting up big and tall!
Don't hit!	Hands down; Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging; Use your words. (Give appropriate words to use to express emotion)	You are using your words! Good for you!
No coloring on the wall!	Color on the paper.	Look at what you've colored! Pretty picture!
Don't throw your toys!	Play with the toys on the floor.	You're playing nicely. I really like to watch you play!
Stop playing with your food!	Food goes on the spoon and then in your mouth; Say "all done" when finished eating.	Great! You're using your spoon! What nice manners, you said "all done;" you can go play now.
No biting!	We only bite food; Use your words if you're upset. (Give appropriate words to use to express emotion)	You're upset, thanks for telling me!

\*Adapted from: Lentini, R. Vaughn, B.J., & Fox, L. (2005). Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior. University of South Florida.

## ***PBS in Our Daily Routines***

"Getting Behavior in Shape at Home" (Laura Riffel: edited by Ann Turnbull) offers ways that families can include Positive Behavior Supports in their daily routines at home. Highlights are featured in this section. The entire article (in English and Spanish) is available on the Positive Behavior Supports website: [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

Positive behavior support, often called PBS, is not just for schools. Parents can use the same ideas to create a better environment for the entire family. Here are the steps:

1. Decide *what behavior* you want to change
2. Decide *how* you want that behavior to change
3. Use behavior science to change that behavior
  - a. Develop a theory (guess) about why you think the behavior is occurring
  - b. Test your theory (guess)
4. Use supports that have been tested and proven to work
  - a. Teach new skills to get the same results
  - b. Change environments and daily routines
  - c. Reward positive behaviors

Positive behavior support does not mean changing the child. It means creating a new environment that supports the positive behavior you want to achieve. It means creating a plan for who will help and what you will do differently. So how do you do this?

Let's take a young child named Taylor who refuses to eat dinner almost every night. Think about what behavior we want: *We want Taylor to eat a healthy, balanced dinner.*

Let's brainstorm reasons that Taylor may be refusing to eat:

- Taylor doesn't like the food.
- Taylor fills up on other things before dinner.
- Parents give lots of attention when dinner is refused.

Let's test the reasons that Taylor won't eat dinner and *praise positive results*:

- Ask Taylor to help plan the menu with favorite foods.
- Limit Taylor on any snacks prior to dinner
- Give Taylor lots of attention by helping cook dinner, set the table, etc.

Let's assume that Taylor eats more when she plans the menu. For the first few times, you may have to fix macaroni and cheese or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with jellybeans; however, Taylor eats the entire meal.

When this pattern is set, then you can work on a plan for healthy eating choices. Give praise for eating dinner and meal planning. Taylor will be willing to try new foods as taste buds evolve. She has choices and learns about new foods.



*Changing the environment produced more positive results* than demanding that Taylor eat dinner. How many of us remember sitting at the table until it was bedtime because we refused to eat our vegetables? Did this really make us want to eat them again the next time? In the interest of peace and harmony, does it matter if we altered the child's environment to get what we want or do we want him or her to do it because we say so?

Most of us do the things we do because there is a payoff. Would you go to work every day if you did not get paid? We do not have to pay our children to be good, but we do have to alter the environment so there is a payoff for good behavior. Usually the pay off is more attention from parents or a friend.

Sometimes our children misbehave because they want attention and the only way they can think of to get it is to misbehave. Young children cry, grab, scream, and beg because they want to communicate something to you. Teens may pout or give you the silent treatment to get your attention. The only way to change this habit is to teach them what we call "replacement behaviors." These are new behaviors that are socially acceptable.

The most important lesson is to practice, practice, and practice the new behavior. It is important that parents and caregivers are consistent. *Being consistent requires planning, patience, and communication so that everyone knows what to expect.* If you say "no" and give a reason, then don't give in and purchase the item if further begging ensues. If you've said "no" and given a reason, then you should not say "no" again nor give another reason. When your child accepts your answer and your reason, then it is very important for you to compliment him or her on this good behavior.

Plant seeds for success!

Model the behaviors you want a child to learn.

Give them opportunities to practice.

Don't forget to praise their efforts!



## “Behavior Change is a Family Affair”

The Colorado State PBS Leadership Team partners with PEAK Parent Center to engage families and communities in their statewide Positive Behavior Supports program. *Behavior Change is a Family Affair* offers workshops that build family capacity in setting up PBS at home. We have adapted highlights of information about this program presented during the 2007 Region 5 Conference for Parent Centers for this section.

*Behavior Change is a Family Affair* provides tools to help families build a positive behavior support system linked to their daily lives that is a close match to PBS expectations in their child’s school.

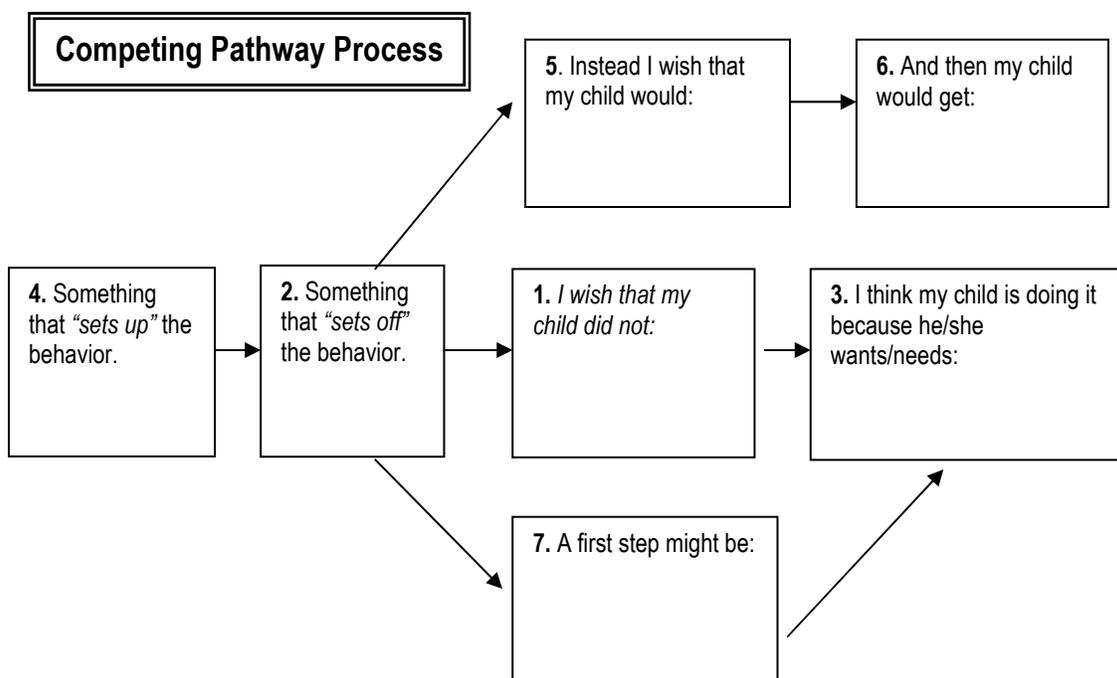
PBS Expectations in My Child’s School	How will Positive Behavior Supports look for our family?
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does respect look like at our dinner table?</li> <li>• How do we positively recognize our children when they demonstrate respect at home?</li> <li>• How will we help our children when they have challenges with respectful behavior at home?</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does responsibility look like when our children do their chores?</li> <li>• How will we teach responsibility for homework and school materials?</li> <li>• What are the consequences for our children when they do not use responsible behavior?</li> <li>• How are we working as a family in the process?</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does safety look like in our community?</li> <li>• How do we teach and reinforce safety in a variety of community settings?</li> <li>• How do we know if there are safety concerns or issues for our children and their friends?</li> </ul>

As families use these questions to build a plan for their home, they are encouraged to learn about the ABC’s of behavior to answer the question: “*Why is my child doing this?*” Just like the school-wide PBS model, families learn to identify and focus on the challenging behavior. They answer these questions:

- **Setting:** What situations “set up” the behavior? (Ex. change in routine, babysitter, etc.)
- **Antecedent:** What situations “set off” the behavior? (Ex. time for bed, asking him to turn off TV, no friends over this weekend, can’t have snacks right now)
- **Behavior:** How does our behavior reinforce this series of “unfortunate events?”
- **Consequence:** What is the “payoff” for this behavior?

## Dealing with Behaviors that Make Life Challenging

Sometimes our children have behaviors that make life challenging. Think about your child's specific behaviors that make your life harder than it needs to be. (Ex: doesn't put clothes away, teases sister, etc.) When we begin looking at our child's behavior in new ways we can see the big picture. Finding things that trigger challenging behavior helps develop plans that set the stage for success. The *Competing Pathway Model* (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer & Haga, 1999) used in PBS schools can also make a difference at home. This pathway helps map out a plan by identifying the behavior you wish to change; the behavior you want to achieve; first steps to teaching this behavior and the steps to positively reinforce the *new* behavior. (KEY: The numbers on the boxes guide you on this path. Begin with box 1.)



***Focus on one behavior. Look for the answers to the BIG 5 to plan positive ways to address a challenging behavior.***

- **WHO** were the people engaging in the problem behavior?
- **WHAT** is the problem behavior? (Be specific.)
- **WHEN** is the problem behavior occurring? How often?
- **WHERE** is the problem behavior occurring?
- **WHY** is the problem behavior occurring? What does the child get or avoid?

Positive Behavior Support is the redesign of environments, *not the redesign of individuals*. Positive Behavior Supports asks us to change our behavior to help our child change theirs.

## Clear Expectations Set the Stage for Success!

We all do a better job when we know what we are expected to do. Clear expectations and consistent routines help children and adults. The Home Matrix is a great way to give your child a step by step guide for the day and be clear about your expectations. Younger children may need picture cues. Your matrix should fit your family.

**PBS Home Matrix**

	Getting up in the morning	Getting to school	Clean-up time	Time to relax	Homework time	Mealtime	Getting ready for bed
<b>H</b> Help Out	Make your bed. Put clothes in hamper.	Have your backpack, lunch, notes, keys ready.	Do your chores.	Clean up after yourself. Play quietly.	Put your things in your backpack when finished	Set the table. Put dishes away.	Brush your teeth. Hang up clothes—dirty clothes to hamper.
<b>O</b> Own Your Behavior	Get up on time. Get cleaned up and dressed on time.	Be ready to leave on time.	Clean up after yourself.	Ask before you borrow. Ask to change TV stations.	Complete homework on time. Do your best!	Use kind words and “I statements”. Recognize mistakes and apologize	Get to bed on time!
<b>M</b> Manners Count	Try a morning SMILE! Thank your parents for helping.	“Thanks for the ride.” “Have a nice day.”	Ask politely for help.	Respect others belongings. Offer to share.	Ask for help respectfully. “Thanks for the help”.	Say please and thank you. Use your napkin.	End the day with nice words and thoughts.
<b>E</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Y</b>

## Tips for Positive Behavior

(Source: Behavior Change is A Family Affair, Colorado State PBS and PEAK Parent Center)

- Remember 5:1 with positives.
- Set the stage for success ...reward the effort.
- Give clear, specific directions.
- Stay calm. Use a calm voice.
- Set reasonable limits.
- Be consistent. YES means YES and No means No.
- Set the example. Actions speak louder than words.
- Proactively anticipate the situation.
- Have patience. A little goes a long way!
- Have fun and enjoy the ride!

## Section 3

# Take a Close Look at “Problem Behavior”



## ***The Misunderstood Child***

I am the child that looks healthy and fine.  
I was born with ten fingers and toes.

But something is different, somewhere in my mind.  
And what it is, nobody knows.

I am the child that struggles in school,  
Though they say that I'm perfectly smart.  
They tell me I'm lazy - can learn if I try -  
But I don't seem to know where to start.

I am the child that won't wear the clothes  
That hurt me or bother my feet.  
I dread sudden noises, can't handle most smells,  
And tastes - there are few foods I'll eat.

I am the child that can't catch the ball  
And runs with an awkward gait.  
I am the one chosen last on the team  
And I cringe as I stand there and wait.



I am the child with whom no one will play -  
The one that gets bullied and teased.  
I try to fit in and I want to be liked,  
But nothing I do seems to please.



I am the child that tantrums and freaks  
Over things that seem petty and trite.  
You'll never know how I panic inside,  
When I'm lost in my anger and fright.

I am the child that fidgets and squirms,  
Though I'm told to sit still and be good.  
Do you think that I choose to be out of control?  
Don't you know that I would if I could?

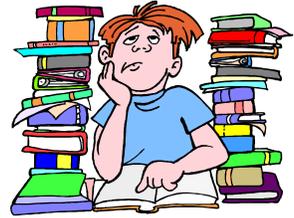
I am the child with the broken heart,  
Though I act like I don't really care.  
Perhaps there's a reason God made me this way -  
Some message he sent me to share.

For, I am the child that needs to be loved and accepted and valued, too.  
I am the child that is misunderstood. I am different - but look just like you.

*Kathy Winters, 2003*

## Eddie's Story

In September 2000, a ninth grader we'll call Eddie Haskell was arrested at Winslow High School (WHS) for having drugs at school. This was Eddie's second offense. His mom, Joan, was called to the school and saw the police arrest him for possession of drugs. This was an eye-opening experience for Joan—a real wake-up call.



Joan wanted her son to get his education and become a citizen who took responsibility for his actions. She and Eddie jumped through the hoops mandated by the court (counseling, probation etc.). The legal system was actually fairly supportive to Eddie and his family. Even though the experience was heartbreaking, Joan did not try to get her son off or make excuses for his action. She wanted him to learn that all actions have consequences.

At Winslow High, a different story was unfolding. During a manifestation hearing, staff determined that Eddie's educational program was appropriate and that his actions were not due to his Learning Disability or his ADD. The IEP team sent Eddie to the Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) for 45 days. Joan objected as she felt the district had never provided Eddie with an educational program to meet his needs. In spite of her objections, Eddie was sent to the IAES.

Joan contacted *Parents Reaching Out*, New Mexico's Parent Training and Information Center. Parents Reaching Out has trained volunteers that work with families in communities throughout the state. Joan was connected with a community-based volunteer, Dennis Mitchell, who knew the school and the school district. As they reviewed information, it appeared that the actions taken by the High School were not consistent with the district's discipline policies for non-disabled students. Joan asked for a copy of the discipline procedures and discussed them with Dennis. As they read the policy, it became clear that Eddie's consequences were much harsher than if he had been a non-disabled student who had committed the same offense. The school's actions had violated Eddie's civil rights and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Joan and Dennis met with Mr. Wilson (WHS principal) and Ms. Haggard (the Special Education Director) to point out that Eddie's civil rights had been violated and that he was being discriminated against because of his disabilities. The District agreed and decided to "fix" the situation by sending Eddie back to the high school. Joan did not trust the personnel at WHS and shared her concern with Dennis. The education program at the high school was not meeting his needs and the environment was unsafe because other students had threatened Eddie. Joan felt that Eddie would be safe in the IAES setting and not under attack by the school administration.

Dennis helped Joan write a proposal to the IEP team requesting a full evaluation and that Eddie remain in the IAES setting until all evaluations were completed. Since Eddie and his parents had made a good faith effort to attend classes offered by the district as a part of their discipline policy, the IEP team agreed to accept Joan's proposal.

Joan requested a full educational evaluation including a psychological evaluation, a Functional Behavioral Assessment and an Assistive Technology evaluation. The results showed nothing new and the only recommendation was to put Eddie on medication. She did not agree and requested an independent neuropsychological evaluation at public expense. *The independent evaluation showed that, even though Eddie had average intelligence, he had not made any progress in his reading since third grade.*

Joan and Dennis reviewed Eddie's past IEPs. Even though the district had bussed Eddie to a specialized reading program for several years, Joan and Dennis found no changes in goals, objectives, or strategies. *Eddie was a ninth grader with third grade reading skills.* The district insisted that they had met their obligation to educate Eddie. After all, Joan had signed the IEPs each year. Dennis pointed out that Joan's reading skills and comprehension levels were comparable to her son's and reminded the district of their obligation to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education, regardless of Joan.

Things did change for Eddie. After six months of effort (two independent evaluations, 14 letters, five IEP meetings and a state level complaint), Eddie returned to WHS with a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan and the supports he needed to be successful in school. Recreation therapy increased Eddie's self-esteem and improved his social skills. Eddie had access to a computer at all times and became more proficient with this technology with each passing day. A scientific research-based reading program that met his assessed needs was implemented. Compensatory Education and Extended School Year (ESY) services focused on reading and social skills goal areas. His IEP included a communication system for Joan that measured Eddie's progress towards the goals.

For the first time in years, Joan felt that her son had an appropriate IEP and was safe at school. Eddie wanted to go to school. His positive Behavior Intervention Plan was based on a comprehensive Functional Behavior Assessment that included information from Joan and Eddie. Teachers received support information and training to implement his plan. As Eddie gained skills, he showed more confidence in his work. During one year with the appropriate reading program, Eddie showed two years of gain in reading skills. Yes, with supports in place, Eddie continued to make progress toward his goals. In 2004, Eddie's family watched with pride as he received his high school diploma.



*This is a true story. The time to get things worked out for Eddie may seem excessive, but the outcomes were worthwhile for this young man.*

Parents Reaching Out believes that a child's success is linked to early intervention. We encourage families and schools to focus on the child's needs. Eddie would have been on a path to success much sooner if his needs had been addressed and his program evaluated for response to instruction from the start. The district and taxpayers could have saved the expense of bussing him to an inappropriate program and directed resources toward positive supports for Eddie and other students.

## A Close Look At Problem Behavior

*We all have bad days every now and then. Children are no different! The picture changes when behaviors continue to interfere with the child's ability to be successful. It is time to look beyond what we see!*



Problem behaviors don't just happen. They may have multiple causes or may be a part of a child's disability. It takes teamwork to identify problem behaviors and the function these behaviors serve for the child. Designing a plan for success involves changing the environments, teaching new skills, and reinforcing appropriate behaviors. *This process involves all of the key people in a child's life.*

Some children have inappropriate behaviors that are part of their disability, such as tics for a child with Tourette syndrome or self-harming behaviors that may occur in children with developmental disabilities. Some children may be sad or anxious about their own lives or those around them or may not have learned positive ways to have their needs met. Problem behaviors may make it difficult for the child to learn, cause harm to the child or others, or isolate a child from peers. *When we understand the function (cause) of problem behaviors, we can plan and support better outcomes for children.*

***Early intervention helps to build a child's capacity to become a productive part of the community.*** The environment may have an effect on what a child does or does not do. The physical size of a classroom, the number of students, the school curriculum, transitions or interactions with teachers or peers may have an effect on behavior. Events outside of the classroom also affect how a child behaves in school. The school Student Assistance Team (SAT) is a resource for assessing problem behavior and early intervention. Check with your school for more information about the SAT process.

Knowing what supports positive behavior and what sets off negative behavior is useful for good program planning. If behaviors can be predicted to occur under specific circumstances, then modifying environments to decrease opportunities for the behavior to occur could be a planned part of a child's program. It is easier to prevent problem behaviors before they occur. **Effective teaching practices that establish structure and routines also support positive behavior development.**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) requires schools to define positive learning environments that include positive interventions and supports for children with disabilities. IDEA 2004 calls for schools to

“provide incentives for whole-school approaches, scientifically based early reading programs, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and early intervening services to reduce the need to label children as disabled in order to address the learning and behavioral needs of such children.” Section 601(c)(5)(F).

## ***Problem Behaviors Serve a Function***

Problem behaviors, like most behaviors, do not keep occurring unless there is a pay off. A child may be escaping or avoiding encounters with a particular person or activity like school or work. They may be seeking someone's attention or approval or reward; they may be trying to control something. If the consequences for problem behaviors are not based on the function, a child may be getting to do what they want by performing the problem behavior.

Getting good grades and skipping school are behaviors that get adult attention.

Very different behaviors often serve the same function.

The outcomes of these behaviors are very different for the child.

## ***Problem Behaviors are Context Related***

Problem behaviors occur in response to environmental or ecological events and may have multiple causes. Sometimes students with problem behaviors are placed in isolated settings with other students who have problem behaviors. The outcome of this approach may actually trigger an increase of problem behaviors because students in these settings lack positive role models.

<b>Classroom Environment</b>	<b>Child-Specific Condition</b>	<b>Setting Events</b>	<b>Instruction or Curriculum Issues</b>
Seating Noise level Disruptions Temperature Lighting	Nature of disability Medication effects Allergies Illness Anxiety Fatigue	Peer issues Teacher interaction New person(s)	Work too difficult Work too easy Assignment length Directions for tasks Transitions

## ***So Whose Problem Is It?***

*The problem is not the child, but in the relationship between the child and the environment.* Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) help us identify events in the environment that contribute to problem behavior (class size, teacher-child interaction, peer relationships, curriculum, etc.). With careful planning, it may be possible to modify those events sufficiently to reduce the target behavior.



If Mary becomes argumentative when she sits next to a particular student because of disagreements outside school, simply separating the two students may solve (or decrease) the problem.

If Mary's arguments with her peer are due to a lack of social skills, providing social skills instruction may give Mary the skills to get along with the student.

# Look at the Function of Problem Behavior!

If we only look on the surface and make general assumptions about a child and the problem behavior, we may jump to the wrong conclusion. We may miss important clues and use consequences that may actually reinforce or increase the behavior. Let's learn more about Eddie.

*Situation: Eddie acts out by refusing to do work, slamming books, and making side comments.*

*Action taken: Substitute orders Eddie to take a time-out. (If the classroom is generally more chaotic when a substitute takes over; the student may actually view time out as a preferred activity. The acting-out behavior may represent the efforts to be placed in a less hectic environment to meet his needs.)*

*Does this mean ...that Eddie actually misbehaves to be sent to Time Out? Yes!* The use of consequences that may appear to improve the behaviors of some students may not work for others. Consequences that fail to address the function of particular behaviors are not adequate for children with complex behaviors.

Using a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), the team considered possible causes of Eddie's problem behavior before they developed the behavior intervention plan. It allowed them to consider the possible functions of his behavior.



- He is bored or wants to show off for friends.
- He likes the regular teacher and is angry when she is not there.
- He is anxious about what to expect with a new teacher.

As they gathered information, the team listened to Eddie's family describe situations that gave clues to the child's reactions to new situations and people. The classroom teacher described how well Eddie does with the normal routine. She shared how his behavior changes when there is a new activity. These details put a new light on Eddie's problem behavior and lead the team to think of ways they could help him transition to new situations. The classroom teacher began thinking about substitute plans. The team suggested visual charts for classroom routines to help Eddie and a substitute teacher.

Without taking time to collect information or create a well thought-out plan, schools may rely on a one-size-fits-all approach to problem behaviors. What are the chances for success, if the "quick fix" does not address the function of the behavior?

When Student Assistance Teams (SAT) or IEP teams gather information through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and develop a positive behavior intervention plan, the student is set up for success. Think of the opportunities!

## ***Investigate the Possibilities***

When a child with disabilities demonstrates problem behaviors that interfere with success in school, the IEP team takes on new responsibilities. In a way, the IEP team becomes a “detective agency” as they investigate the mysteries of a child’s problem behaviors. Every member of the IEP team has a role in targeting the behavior, identifying the cause(s), and developing a positive intervention plan to improve the child’s problem behavior. Families, special educators, general educators, administrators, and others (including the child) look for clues by using a functional assessment of behavior (FBA). This assessment should also include research into the nature of the child’s disability, medical diagnosis, and pertinent information from physicians and/or other providers with written permission from parents. We must become super sleuths.

### ***Check all sources of information! Follow up on all leads!***

Student Assistance Team and IEP team members become detectives as they look at the problem behavior from all perspectives. They must look at the scene (environment) and the motivation or the function the behavior serves to meet the child’s needs. Every clue is important no matter how simple it may seem. Those that know the child best (parents, physicians, other family members or teachers) may hold the key clue to solving the mystery of a problem behavior. When the “detectives” discuss what they have found, they can begin to see a pattern, find out what triggers problem behaviors and plan for positive change.



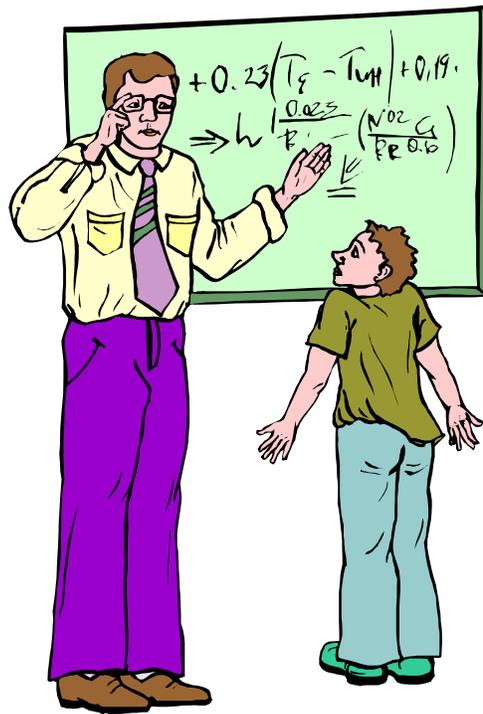
We can teach appropriate behavior skills to children! We need to understand problem behaviors by learning where they occur and what purpose they serve for a child. This process is called a functional behavioral assessment (FBA). Learning about the behaviors helps us develop positive strategies for teaching new behaviors. When we understand the function of problem behaviors, we can teach a child more positive behaviors that serve the same function and the problem behaviors are no longer needed.

Families and educators use the information from the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to develop a positive behavior intervention plan (PBIP). With a well-designed plan and positive supports, a child can learn new skills that lead to productive, long-term behavior changes. Every component of this plan should be focused on the findings of a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to build a path for success for the child or youth.

Every behavior intervention plan must be continually monitored and the results must be honestly evaluated as a work in progress. The questions we must always ask: “Are the interventions working?” “Is the student responsive to interventions?” If not, why not?

# Section 4

## Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)



## **PRO Note**

One of the most important ways that parents (and other members of the IEP team) can prepare for your child's IEP is to make sure that appropriate evaluations have been completed before the IEP meeting. Evaluations are one essential part of gathering information to give a total picture of your child.

Each child with a disability has unique needs. In order to determine the specialized instruction needed for a child, it is important to tailor the evaluation(s) to the child. Just like the Individualized Educational Program, evaluations should not be completed on a “one-size-fits-all” basis.

### **What areas should be covered in an evaluation?**

An evaluation should cover all areas of suspected disability. Identifying a child with a disability is a complex task and requires gathering information from family, teachers, and medical /mental health professionals in addition to using a range of diagnostic tests which are required to determine eligibility.

To identify a child's disability, it is important to get an overall picture of the child and not overlook other considerations. For example: A child may show signs that behavior is significantly interfering with learning. The evaluation for this child should not only focus on the behavior, but also include factors that might be causing the behavior, such as academic performance, especially in the area of reading. When students are evaluated for behavior concerns, it is important to determine whether or not a child's reading skills or the type of reading instruction used may be a contributing factor to the behaviors a child is demonstrating. (Think about Eddie's Story.)

The same approach holds true for a child whose behavior is not an apparent factor such as a child being evaluated for a Specific Learning Disability. *Too often, behavior is overlooked.* When a student is frustrated because he/she can not keep up with their peers, frustration and/or anxiety may show up in the form of undesirable behavior. Appropriate evaluations will provide the IEP team with the information needed to provide supports to address behavior as well as scientifically based instruction to meet academic needs.

There is nothing in the law that says a child has to have a certain label (eligibility) in order to receive a particular set of services. No matter what the disability, all identified areas of concern need to be addressed through the IEP. Parents Reaching Out recommends that each initial evaluation as well as each subsequent re-evaluation include a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).

*The eligibility label required to receive special education is used for reporting purposes to the Federal government to generate IDEA funds. The types of services provided are not limited by eligibility category.*

# Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) looks at *why* a child behaves as he or she does given the nature of the child, and what is happening in the environment. An FBA:



- Can be requested anytime behavior is a concern.
- Guides decision-making about a child’s needs.
- Leads to strategies to help meet the need.
- Is required when a child is to be removed from his or her educational program beyond 10 days or when a student’s behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others (IDEA 300.346).
- Should be considered in any evaluation when behavioral concerns have not responded to standard interventions.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) describes a *process* for collecting data to determine the possible cause of problem behaviors and to identify strategies to address the behaviors. Information is collected through interviews with the child, parents, classmates, and teachers. Direct observations of the child in different environments (cafeteria, playground, classroom, home, etc.) are also part of the assessment. The process also includes careful reviews of records, evaluations, and past IEPs.

## ***A Functional Behavior Assessment looks at these questions:***

- What is the behavior of concern?
- Where does the behavior occur and not occur?
- What happens before the behavior occurs? (Antecedents or “Triggers”)
- What happens after the behavior? (Consequences)
- Is there a consistent pattern?
- Can the behavior be predicted?
- What are some possible reasons for the behavior? (Hypothesis)
- What replacement behaviors can be taught that serve the same function?

It is important to learn as much as possible about the child. This includes information about the child’s personality, temperament, and learning style. (See more information on temperament and learning styles on pages 84-89). Also consider medical conditions (with associated behaviors) and the effects of any medications the child is taking. The results of the process should be an informed hypothesis or *educated guess based on data* about how the child’s environment contributes to behaviors. A functional behavioral assessment should provide the foundation for a *positive* behavior intervention plan that is focused on *teaching new skills*.

## Why Use a Functional Assessment of Behavior?

There is no single cause for problem behaviors. A functional assessment of behavior (FBA) doesn't just look at the behavior. It helps us go beyond what we see at the moment to find the underlying causes for inappropriate or acting-out behavior. It helps us look at meaningful consequences for the behavior instead of punishment to control the problem behavior. An FBA offers everyone an opportunity to take a deep breath and consider what pieces could be missing from the child's educational program.



Remember Eddie? Eddie is a 14-year-old who reads at a third grade level. He feels embarrassed to be seen with an elementary text. He throws his reading book across the room and uses inappropriate language to tell the teacher that he won't complete his homework. Evaluations, including a Functional Behavior Assessment, showed that his classroom outbursts were directly related to self-esteem issues and poor reading skills. With a reading program that met his needs, he read with less frustration and problem behaviors in the classroom decreased.

*Let's meet a few more children.*

- Maria is an eight-year-old who reads Stephen King novels for recreation and finds her reading assignments boring. She shoves her book and papers to the floor when the teacher comments on her lack of progress.
- Simon is a 10-year-old who has difficulty multiplying fractions. He becomes frustrated and throws tantrums when asked to complete worksheets that include fraction multiplication.
- Kerry is a 12-year-old who has problems paying attention. She is so overstimulated by what she sees out of the window and hears in the nearby reading group that she slams her text shut and loudly declares that she cannot work.

If you only look at what appears on the surface, you won't find enough information for effective intervention. The behaviors of these children may look or sound very similar, but the *functions* of the behaviors are very different. Identifying the underlying cause(s) of a student's behavior, (*what the student "gets" or "avoids" through the behavior*), provides the IEP team with the information to develop positive instructional strategies.

**Punishment does not teach new skills.** Reactive procedures, such as suspending each student as a punishment for acting-out, will only address the symptoms of the problem. **If we do not teach a child what to do instead of the problem behavior, the child will probably continue to misbehave.** Punishment will not eliminate Eddie's embarrassment or Maria's boredom. It may overstimulate Kerry or increase Simon's frustration. These behaviors will reoccur, regardless of punishment, unless there is a plan that addresses the underlying causes.

*Functional behavioral assessment leads us beyond the symptom to the student's underlying motivation to "escape," "avoid," or "get" something.* The functions of behavior are not usually considered inappropriate. Usually, it is the behavior itself that is judged appropriate or inappropriate. When we use a Functional Behavior Assessment to find out why a student misbehaves, we can address a range of problem behaviors that keep a student from achieving success in school, at home and in the community.

**Antecedent:** An event, cause, or condition that influences behavior.

**Behavior:** What one does.

**Consequence:** What happens as a result of the behavior?

### ***Gather Information to Give a Total Picture of the Child***

Functional Behavior Assessments provide an opportunity to share information to get a total "picture" of a child that can be used to build positive behavior supports that really work. During this process, it is important for the IEP team to recognize the family as experts and encourage their participation. Each member of the IEP team should understand the process and that every member has something to contribute.

To keep the focus on the child, it is a good idea to spend time on team building and communication so that everyone is on the same page. Families and schools may not always see the problem in the same way. There may be trust issues that need to be addressed to get the process off to a good start. A facilitator may be needed to ensure that each team member participates in a respectful manner. Strategies might include:

- Round-robin discussions that allow each person to contribute ideas and concerns.
- Brainstorm to get all ideas out on the table without judgment by others. Record ideas on flip charts. This builds trust and values each contribution.
- Discuss ideas to find the ones that are the "best fit" or those to revise or eliminate. (Record "off topic" concerns in a parking lot for later discussion.)
- *An effective behavior intervention plan must be implemented with fidelity.* **Fidelity** means to implement a program as it was intended; to ensure that all services are delivered correctly. The team must be able to support the summary statement (hypothesis) about the function of behavior with a high degree of confidence. The PBS process uses a rating scale of 1 to 6 (with 6 meaning highly accurate) and requires team members to rate their confidence in the accuracy of the summary statement. A summary statement that does not have an average of 5 or 6 shows that more facts must be gathered. (See the PBS tools on page 95).
- Value time. Use strategies for keeping discussions focused and timely.

Good things happen, when the team understands their role and has a vision for developing positive outcomes for the child. It is a win-win situation. Information is gathered about the student in a variety of settings, at different times of the day, and includes many sources. The team collaborates and shares information that is focused on building a plan for success.

## Kerry



Think about Kerry's acting out behavior. If you only acted on the problem behavior and assumed that Kerry just didn't want to learn, would you discover that she is easily distracted by noise or activities around her? Probably not!

During a week of observations, the team collects information and finds that most of Kerry's acting out behavior takes place in her reading class. She does not act out in her Social Studies class where the noise level is lower and her desk is away from the activity area.

When Kerry's mom is interviewed, she reports that Kerry likes to do her homework in her room so that she doesn't hear the TV programs or her little brothers playing. Could this information be useful? What might work?

## Simon



Simon's functional behavioral assessment showed that he was seeking attention by acting out. The IEP team developed a plan to teach him more appropriate ways to gain attention. The goal is to fill the student's need for attention with an alternative behavior that serves the same function as the inappropriate behavior.

The plan included goals to teach and support replacement behaviors that serve the same function as the problem behavior.

Simon's plan included strategies to teach him how to calmly tell the teacher when he feels frustrated. It also served as a guide to remind the teacher to make sure that his assignments were at his instructional level. The team found that Simon learns best when he hears instructions and is shown how to do sample problems. The team investigated research-based strategies and included concrete steps and supports to address these needs. Using differentiated instruction that linked directly to his learning style improved his academic performance. Targeted interventions were provided in a small group to teach him appropriate ways to gain attention. His plan helped improve his social competence and reduced the occurrence of acting out behaviors.

# Five Steps to Functional Behavior Assessment

## ***STEP 1: What is the problem behavior?***

Define the problem behavior in concrete terms. Use terms that are easily understood, simple to measure, and easy to record. Vague or general descriptions of behavior do not lead to effective plans for student success. Problem behaviors can be targeted through careful, objective observations of the student in different settings and types of activities.

Interview the student, school staff, parents, and others involved with the student. Many children exhibit complex behaviors that include a combination of actions or responses to serve one or more purposes. Data collected during the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) will be most useful if the team describes the problem behavior(s) in specific terms that are understood by everyone involved with the assessment. **Above all remember: do not “label” the child. Describe the behavior!**

Avoid General Terms	<b>Describe the behavior in concrete terms. Be specific!</b>
<i>Trish is aggressive.</i>	Trish hits and kicks other students during recess when she does not get her way.
<i>Carlos is disruptive.</i>	Carlos makes inappropriate comments during class discussion. Carlos uses foul language in response to questions from the teacher or classmates.
<i>Jan is hyperactive.</i>	Jan leaves her assigned area without permission. She completes small portions of her independent work. She blurts out answers without raising her hand.
<i>Danny is irresponsible.</i>	Danny does not have his supplies ready to start an assignment. He disrupts others around him to borrow a pencil. When he does have a pencil, he spends most of his time at the pencil sharpener across the room by the chalkboard.
<i>Natalie is a liar.</i>	Natalie invents stories and insists that they are true. Her untruths often get other classmates in trouble.
<i>Felipe is a tormenter.</i>	Felipe makes fun of other students. He puts down his peers or calls them unkind names or pokes them in the arm and then he laughs about his actions.
<i>Renee is a busy-body.</i>	Renee talks constantly in class. She interrupts other during study time with conversations that are not related to the assignment or classroom activities. She roams the room to “help” others instead of completing her assigned tasks.

## ***STEP 2: Where does the behavior occur and not occur?***

**Direct assessment** involves observing and recording situational factors surrounding a problem behavior. Formal observations of a student help identify where problem behaviors occur and where they don't. They are carried out over a specified period of time, in a variety of settings or activities.

Even the physical layout of a classroom holds clues to help predict when and where a problem behavior would most likely occur. It is best practice to have a neutral person, someone other than the classroom teacher, conduct a formal observation of the child. A trained, neutral observer will be able to collect useful information. Direct observations are generally timed to add reliability to the data collected. Observations should include these and other factors:

- Environment (seating arrangement, lighting, etc.);
- Activities (independent work, group work, recess, etc.);
- Time (mornings, afternoons, etc.) and
- Number of people in the setting (teacher, students, others).

**Indirect assessment** includes interviews with the child, teachers, families, and other adults who have direct responsibility for the student. The interviews may be in a written format requiring a written response or the questions may be asked in a verbal format with a verbal response that is recorded on paper to be shared with the team. In all cases, the person being interviewed must be given a clear description of the behavior in question with a check for understanding before questions are answered. When the team compares the responses, they will have more reliable information if steps are taken to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Questions might include:

- Where do you observe the behavior?
- Are there any settings where the behavior does not occur?
- Who is present when the behavior occurs?
- What usually happens immediately after the behavior?



*A single source of information does not show an accurate picture. The assessment process should also include careful reviews of previous IEPs, progress reports, medical records, evaluations, and any other information. Parents must provide written consent for release of information from private physicians, psychiatrists, therapists, or counselors.*

### ***STEP 3: What happens before the behavior occurs? (Antecedents)***

Problem behaviors can generally be seen or heard. The trigger or antecedent for the behavior may not be something that anyone else can directly observe. Antecedents are like the spark in the combustion chamber of an engine—something or someone that gets things going. For a child with problem behaviors, this is the “spark” that ignites his or her behavior. It may be noise, something someone says or does, or any number of things that may relate to the child’s disability, health conditions, or environmental factors.

The antecedent is specific to the child. What triggers problem behavior in one child may not trigger problem behavior in another child. Setting events may include: illness; strenuous activity; sleep patterns; negative interactions with others; transitions to other activities; unclear expectations; major life changes (birth of sibling, divorce, moving, death or illness of loved one); and/or any other event significant to the life of the child.

The background information that is usually included in direct observations (time of day, description of the activity, events that took place before the observation, etc.) provides clues about what may trigger the behavior. These clues may not tell the “whole story.” That is why it is important to include indirect assessments such as interviews as part of the process in a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). It’s important to review IEP goals and objectives as well as progress toward goals. A lack of progress is a significant clue to problem behaviors. We often find that students with problem behaviors are really “instructional casualties.”

Example: If Eddie acts out when given a worksheet, it may not be the worksheet that caused the behavior. It may be due to the fact that he does not know what is required or doesn’t have the skill, and he fears failure or ridicule. You wouldn’t know this unless you talked with him.

- How did the assignment make you feel?
- Did you understand the assignment?
- What usually happens after you have had a temper tantrum in class?



The interview with Eddie will not provide all of the answers, but you will have his perspective for the data you are collecting. Remember, this is a process that takes time. *A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) should cover all of the bases.*

Samples of forms used for direct and indirect assessment are available in *Addressing Student Behavior*, a technical assistance document from the New Mexico Department of Public Education Special Education Bureau (<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/index.htm>). The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) offers resources on their website: <http://www.pbis.org/main.htm>

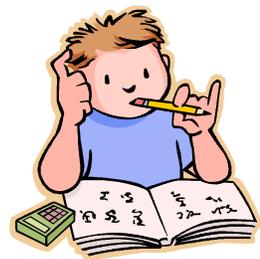
## **STEP 4: Is there a consistent pattern?**

### **Can the behavior be predicted?**

It doesn't do any good to collect information about a child's problem behavior unless you are going to do something with it. Once the IEP team is satisfied that enough data has been collected, they meet to compare and analyze the information. Flip charts might be used to record the information that is shared and discussed by the team. This method allows all partners to be a part of the process.

Questions should be asked during this process to determine if there is a pattern to the behavior. Analyzing the data should not be left up to one person. This is a team process.

**Is the problem behavior linked to a skill deficit? Students who lack the skills to perform tasks may exhibit behaviors that help them avoid or escape those tasks.**



- Does the student understand the behavioral expectations for the situation?
- Does the student realize that he or she is engaging in unacceptable behavior, or has that behavior simply become a “habit”?
- Is the student able to control the behavior, or does he or she need support?
- Does the student have the skills necessary to perform expected, new behaviors?

**Does the student have the skill, but not the desire to modify his or her behavior?**

- Does the student know the relationship between behavior and activity?  
For example: Clapping loudly and yelling during *sporting* events is acceptable. Is this behavior acceptable during an academic game in the classroom?
- Does the student find any value in engaging in appropriate behavior?
- Is the behavior problem related to social or environmental factors?
- Is the student attempting to avoid a “low-interest” or demanding task?

**What current rules, routines, or expectations does the student consider to be unimportant or not relevant?**

- Are rules clearly stated in terms and language that the child understands?
- Does the child have opportunities for options to meet the expectation?
- Is there evidence of fairness and consistency in rules, expectations, and routines?

## **Step 5: What are some possible reasons for the behavior? Using data to develop a hypothesis (educated guess)**

After the IEP team has gathered, discussed, and compared the information about a student's problem behaviors, they are ready to make a hypothesis statement. This hypothesis is an educated guess about why, when, and where the problem behavior occurs and the probable consequences that serve to maintain it.

Before any plan is set in motion, the team needs to formulate a plausible explanation (hypothesis) for the student's behavior. The team may come up with several different hypotheses to consider that is based on the data that has been collected. Remember: Data should be measurable. It should come from several sources and settings.

Using flip charts or a show of hands, team members should be asked to rate their confidence level in each hypothesis based on the function of the behavior. (A simple rating scale of one to five with five describing a high level of confidence may be used for this process.) If there is a high level of confidence for a particular hypothesis, then proceed with the plan. If there is a low level of confidence, then more data may be needed or the team may need more review of existing data.

Example: Teacher reports that Lucia calls out during instruction. The Functional Behavior Assessment (observations, interviews, etc.) shows several possible functions of this behavior:

- Gain attention (e.g., verbal approval of classmates)
- Avoid instruction (e.g., difficult assignment)
- Both to gain attention and avoid a low-interest subject



After reviewing all of the data, team members agreed with a high confidence level that the function of Lucia's behavior was to get the attention of her peers. They will proceed with a plan based on:

*Hypothesis statement: Lucia calls out in class to get the attention of her peers!*

*Children use behaviors to get what they need.* The team should consider more appropriate replacement behaviors that would serve the same function as the problem behavior. The replacement behavior can be a new behavior or a behavior the student uses sometimes, but not on a regular basis. They should be selected with child, family, and educator input including medical information if appropriate. *Consider these questions:*

Will the replacement behavior:

- Work as well as the problem behavior in meeting the child's needs?
- Be considered as an acceptable alternative to the problem behavior?
- Be selected by the child and be supported by the child's family and teachers?
- Help build a positive reputation for the child?



# Section 5

# Behavior Intervention Plan



***Strategies for Positive Change***



# What is a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?

The Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) has been completed and the IEP team has discussed the information. They have formed an “educated guess” (hypothesis) about the cause or causes of the problem behavior. Now it is time for the team to design a positive Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).



## ***A Behavior Intervention Plan:***

- Uses the information collected through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).
- Includes input from families, special educators, general educators, administrators, and others who work with the student. *The plan is built on a student's strengths.*
- Is written in understandable language that specifically defines problem behaviors and is based on the student's needs.
- Describes objectives and supports needed for the student to reach identified, measurable goals.
- Defines expectations of those responsible for implementing the plan.
- Includes a process for data collection to measure and report progress.
- Should be a work in progress that is continually monitored for success. It is revised as needed to ensure positive outcomes for the child or young adult.

All members of the child's IEP team should participate in developing the positive Behavior Intervention Plan. This plan involves consistency and commitment from the adults in a child's life. Families, teachers, and other support staff must be able to understand each step so that supports are in place for the child. A successful plan clearly defines the expectations and responsibilities for the staff, student, and family members.

*Additional training or other resources from the district may be required to implement the plan. A team cannot commit to resources it does not control. A person representing the district who can commit resources is a required member of the IEP team. This person may be the school principal or someone from the district office. Plans fail the child when there are missing pieces such as gaps in services, lack of training, unavailable supports, or poor communication. It's important for everyone to be on the same page.*

A behavior contract is not a Behavior Intervention Plan. These contracts are generally drawn up as punitive measures with little or no thought about the function of problem behavior. They rarely include supports for the child and focus solely on external controls. Intervention plans that teach the skills needed for positive behavior and provide motivation to meet acceptable standards are more effective than those that simply serve to control behavior.

## ***A Behavior Intervention Plan Addresses These Questions***

- Are the school-wide behavioral expectations clearly understood by all in the environment? If not, what measures should be taken to ensure understanding?
- What medical information about the student is relevant to this plan?
- What methods will be used to manipulate the antecedents and/or the consequences of the behavior?
- What strategies will be used to teach more acceptable replacement behaviors that serve the same function as the inappropriate behavior?
- What process and timeline will be used to implement changes in curriculum and instructional strategies?
- What modifications are needed in the physical environment?
- What strategies will be used in a contingency plan to address the function of problem behavior?
- What type of communication system(s) will be used to share information, report progress, identify concerns, etc.?
- What type(s) of evaluation will be used to measure the overall effectiveness of the plan and the student's progress toward identified goals?



A school-wide system of positive interventions combined with natural consequences can improve the climate for learning. Students who are clear about school expectations and who are rewarded for developing good behavior habits are better prepared to learn. Teachers who have clear guidance about how and when to intervene with behaviors spend less time trying to deal with student behaviors and more time on instruction.

## ***Addressing Skill Deficits***

The Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) may indicate that the student has a skill deficit and does not know how to perform desired skills. The inappropriate behavior may be a way to escape or avoid a situation because of a lack of appropriate skills. The child truly believes this behavior is effective in getting what he or she wants or needs.

If the student does not know or understand the behavioral expectations, the plan should be developed to teach the expectations. The plan would include the supports, aids, and/or modifications. Expectations should be explained in concrete terms.

*Expectation: To listen to classroom lectures without making comments that are not related to the topic.*

**Goal:** During classroom lectures, Jim will make only comments related to the topic and ask topic-related questions in 80 percent of the opportunities.

**Objective:** During a large group classroom lecture (40-50 minutes), Jim will ask one appropriate question and make two on-topic comments on each of three (3) consecutive school days.

### **Teacher Responsibility**

- The teacher will model examples and non-examples of a variety of situations when listening is important.
- The teacher will assist Jim in identifying the components of active listening using a visual cue card.
- The teacher will connect Jim with a peer buddy to practice active listening.
- The teacher will provide positive reinforcement for active listening with verbal praise or thumbs up signal.

### **Student Expectations**

- Jim will identify four situations that require active listening and will show or describe the necessary behaviors in each situation.
- Jim will participate in role-play activities to practice active listening.
- Jim will monitor his active listening during lectures with support from a peer buddy.
- Jim will identify and use active listening skills in situations other than class lectures.
- Jim will share his progress during weekly conferences with teacher/ parents.

Instruction may require teaching academic skills as well as behavioral and cognitive skills. Complex skills should be separated into smaller, easily achieved steps using task analysis. Parents and others on the team may provide information about how the child performs similar tasks in other settings.

Visual learners may need cue cards as reminders for the skill being learned. Some students react out of habit and do not realize that they are engaging in a particular problem behavior. In this case, the team may devise a plan to cue students with signals that help them become aware that they're engaging in the problem behavior. *The Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) should always guide the planning process.*

## Addressing Performance Deficits

The functional behavioral assessment may reveal that the child *knows* the skills necessary to perform the behavior, but *does not consistently* perform the skills. The intervention plan would focus on strategies or supports to increase motivation to perform these skills. Student interviews may give clues needed to plan meaningful motivators for the child.

The FBA may show that the child engages in the problem behavior because it is more desirable than the appropriate behavior. *In short, the child gets a bigger payoff from the problem behavior.* Peer approval may mean more than teacher approval. Making rude comments in class to make peers laugh may be worth it to a child who has difficulty making friends. In this case, the plan might include strategies for rewarding appropriate comments as well as social skills activities to teach appropriate ways to gain peer attention. Token economies, counseling, and other interventions that include peer and family support may be necessary in order to change the behavior.

*Sometimes children do not perform the appropriate behavior simply because they see no value in it.* Effective teaching practices that link instruction to real life outcomes may help the child find relevance in learning activities. Motivational strategies for older children are more effective when they are personalized to their life goals.



Example: Andrea wants to be a hairdresser when she graduates. She doesn't see any value in learning about history and rarely completes assignments. Career counseling could be a part of planned strategies to show Andrea that she must pass History in order to graduate and be accepted into the beauty school program at the local community college. Connecting her with someone from the community college or arranging a tour might be considered as a strategy.

*External reinforcement* may be needed to provide motivation to learn a skill or expected behavior. The team should discuss the use of external rewards such as food, toys, activities, or free time to select those that would be most effective. Use caution. Sometimes the reinforcement for positive behavior may actually cause more problem behaviors. External rewards should gradually be replaced with more naturally occurring rewards such as good grades, approval from others, or the pride that comes from success. The Behavior Intervention Plan should include a process to fade out external rewards by pairing with natural reinforcement.

Jennifer is rewarded with popcorn paired with specific verbal praise for homework completed. "Jennifer, you have completed your homework this week. You must be very proud of your hard work!" The long range goal is that Jennifer's personal pride in completing assignments becomes the "payoff".



## ***Addressing Both Skill and Performance Deficits***

IEP teams should consider all positive interventions that avoid punishment as an option. *Punishment often makes behavior worse.* Punishment is a means to control the symptom of the problem and does not address the function of the behavior. Interventions based on control often only suppress the behavior and may even cause problem behaviors to resurface in other inappropriate ways. *The foundation for planning interventions should be a school-wide system of positive interventions combined with clearly defined consequences that are understood by all.*

Problem behaviors may require a combination of techniques and supports that include:

### **Supports:**

- Curricular or environmental modification
- Support from the school counselor or the school psychologist
- Support from a mentor or peer buddy
- External reinforcement for appropriately dealing with anger

### **Skills:**

- Recognize the physical signs of personal anger
- Use relaxation skills
- Apply problem-solving skills
- Practice communication skills



## ***Modifying the Learning Environment***

In addition to factors of skill and motivation, the functional behavioral assessment may reveal conditions within the learning environment that may precipitate problem behavior. Triggers may range from factors in the physical arrangement of the classroom or student seating assignment to academic tasks that are too demanding or too boring.

A simple curricular or environmental modification may be enough to address the specific problem behaviors and should be a part of the written plan. Strategies might include:

- Use schedules that alternate periods of sitting with periods of movement.
- Student work area is re-located away from activity centers or other distractions
- Changing classroom assignment as a better fit for learning style.
- Use day-timers or assignment sheets to organize tasks and provide reinforcement.
- Check seating patterns to reduce negative peer interactions.
- Provide time for child to make transitions to new or different activities.

# Selecting Positive Intervention Strategies

*Intervention strategies must be linked to and supported by the data collected during Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).* The following interventions are not a menu of choices or “one-size-fits-all” solutions. The FBA guides the selection. Suggestions have been adapted from “Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Interventions: What Parents Need to Know” by Dixie Jordon (PACER Center).

Clear routines and expectations for all students provide a solid foundation for selecting more child-specific interventions to address identified problem behaviors. Review classroom rules daily and demonstrate acceptable responses, if necessary. Remind students of rules. “Remember, our rules say: Keep the areas around us clean.” Involve students in role-plays to demonstrate rules. If reminders do not redirect the behavior, then follow-up with established consequences.

- **Specific verbal praise:** Be observant. Look for opportunities to provide verbal praise or token reinforcement. Be specific. Catch them doing something good!
- **Positive phrasing:** Let a child know exactly what behavior is expected not just what is not expected. Include reinforcement for carrying out the desired behavior.
- **Planned ignoring:** Plan to ignore specific behaviors that are directed at gaining the attention of the teacher or others. Do not use this approach for peer problems. Ignoring takes practice--you must plan to do it! Planned ignoring may work for:
  1. Calling out answers in class
  2. Not having materials ready for class
  3. Interrupting the teacher
  4. Whistling or humming
- **Preventative cueing (signal interference):** This is a signaling system that is used as an alert for child who is doing something unacceptable. A raised eyebrow, shake of the head, making eye contact, pointing to a seat for a wandering student, etc., can convey the need to pay attention or to stop behaviors before they escalate. Do not smile or show approval when using preventative cueing.
- **Proximity control:** Teacher or other staff stands closer to the child who is beginning to have a problem with behavior. It is often less effective to move the child closer to the teacher. Proximity control should not be used if the child views this as a threat. This strategy is useful when giving directions or during question-answer periods. It can be effectively paired with preventative cueing.
- **Nonverbal warnings:** Place cue cards inconspicuously on a youth's desk as a reminder to change the behavior or privately call attention to the posted rules.



- **Encourage questions or requests for assistance:** Invite children to ask questions or ask for help. Watch for body language or facial gestures indicating a need for clarification. Never withhold help from those who are too shy or angry to ask.
- **"I" messages:** These are 3-part verbal interventions to help students understand the impact of behavior:
  1. Describe the behavior
  2. Describe its effect on teachers and others
  3. Describe the teacher's feelings about the misbehavior.

*Example:* When you interrupt others, I can't hear their answers. I am unhappy because I would like everyone to have a chance to answer questions.
- **Touch control:** *To use touch control, a teacher must be sensitive to the needs of individual students. Some may perceive any form of touch as aggression! Using touch control involves light, non-aggressive physical contact, such as placing a hand on the shoulder of a student, taking a child's hand to lead him/her back to the desk, etc. Touch control should not be used in the following instances unless supported by medical or psychological recommendation.*
  1. Has a history of violence
  2. Has been physically abused
  3. Has endured maltreatment or suspected of having endured maltreatment
  4. Is experiencing anxiety, episodes of paranoia, auditory or visual hallucinations, or psychotic episodes
- **Behavior shaping:** Reinforce behavior that is close to the desired behavior and gradually increase criteria for reinforcement until reaching desired goal.
- **Service opportunities:** Look for occasions or settings for the child to be of service to others such as: line leader, food drives, senior center activities, or other school/community events as a means of acknowledging self-worth.
- **Smooth transitions:** Provide advance notice of changes in routines or between activities that will allow the child to prepare for these changes.
- **Scheduling:** Place low priority behavior before high priority behavior - such as scheduling spelling just before recess.
- **Self-monitoring:** Teaching a child how to keep track of their own behaviors builds inner control and self-determination. Individual checklists or graphs can be used to teach a child how to record identified behaviors.

Use the least intrusive approach to discipline, whenever possible. Avoid discipline in front of the child's peers. Keep their dignity intact. Students can gain power from daring to "take on" the teacher in a disagreement.

# Providing a Proactive System of Supports

Successful behavior intervention plans include supports that may be necessary to help students use appropriate behavior. Supports should be planned to assist not only the student but also the school staff working with the child as well as the family. Individuals who will play a support role in the intervention plan must be committed to the plan and have clearly defined expectations and responsibilities.

It is not enough just to show the need for support and include it in the written Behavior Intervention Plan. Specific expectations of the plan must be shared with the person who will be providing that support. *It is important to include a communication system for follow-up in the written plan to insure that the supports will be in place.*

IDEA requires that someone from the school district who can commit the district's resources is a member of the IEP team. Beyond this requirement, the support of building level administrators and district leadership are essential for the positive outcome of a Behavior Intervention Plan. Plans may involve scheduling personnel assignments, training, and specialized equipment or materials requiring financial resources.

*The more proactive and inclusive the behavior intervention plan and the more closely it is aligned to the functional behavioral assessment – the more likely that it will succeed.*

- Counselors, social workers, and school psychologists are trained to provide support for social skills or anger management training for the child as well as consultations with family or staff.
- Peers are an untapped resource for academic or behavioral support. Tutoring or conflict-resolution activities with carefully chosen peer buddies may fill the student's need for attention in appropriate ways.
- Families can provide support by setting up a homework center in the home and developing a homework schedule.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals can provide academic supports and curricular modifications to decrease a student's need to avoid academically challenging situations.
- Speech-Language, Occupational, and Physical Therapists have many strategies that may provide the child with alternative ways to respond to situations. These strategies can be used by staff and family to address the child's problem behaviors.



## **Positive De-escalation and Crisis Management Strategies**

Positive de-escalation strategies are the positive interventions used when other planned intervention strategies are not effective or when a student's behavior begins to exceed appropriate limits. These strategies involve the brief use of safe and positive techniques to disrupt a chain of behaviors or to redirect the individual to appropriate behavior. This approach should be considered as a strategy for handling escalating behavior before it reaches a point of requiring an emergency or a conditional intervention.

### **Use Cooling-Off Periods**

Personal down time may de-escalate a situation. If the student's behavior escalates to the point of disruption, a cooling-off period away from triggers causing the problem behavior should be planned. This is explained to the student as a time to gain self-control, not as a punishment. The amount of time and the process will vary with each student. The team should consider settings where problem behavior is likely to escalate and plan from there. Opportunities to make choices that avoid dramatic reactions to behavior are more likely to maximize the student's interest in the classroom.



### **Take Time for Active Listening**

*Active listening* is an effective tool to de-escalate problem behavior. This strategy involves listening to the child's comments, observing behavior when he/she is upset, and letting the child know you are aware that he/she is having a difficult time.

- Acknowledge the student's feelings and try to redirect, such as going for a walk and talking about what's happening.
- Ask the student what is bothering him or her to assist with problem solving. This can lead to opportunities for teaching rules and understanding the needs of others.
- Avoid non-supportive gestures or statements when the student is angry.
- Avoid power struggles. Insisting that the student respond to directions on demand, often leads to more frequent or aggressive episodes of disruptive behavior.
- Find ways to motivate the student to participate in events at their comfort level. Increasing feelings of control helps to gradually shape the behavior.

### **Incident Debriefing Sessions Help Reduce Future Incidents**

Learning from one crisis situation can be an effective crisis management strategy to avoid future incidents. Debriefing meetings following a crisis incident provide an opportunity for the staff, child, and family to discuss their feelings and perceptions of the crisis. They can be used to establish a plan to reduce the need for future emergency safety interventions. Sessions should include: the involved child, the involved staff members, family members, and witnesses.

Achieving Better Outcomes for Children and Families, Child Welfare League of America, Washington, DC 2004

## Contingency Plans for Crisis Situations

A contingency plan is a progression of interventions and supports based on the degree of problem behavior. Plans should begin with the *least* intrusive intervention such as redirecting the student or reducing task demands. If this does not work, then the plan would include the next level of intervention. Using an if-then approach, the team can determine the timing for certain interventions and identify key people as supports. It is important that staff working with the student know the supports available to them as well as the child. *An effective contingency plan would be used when:*

- Communication from the student, parent, or other person shows evidence of a stressor that may affect the student’s responsiveness to an existing effective plan. The parent may report a sleepless night, returning seizure pattern, or other event that may lead to more difficulty in school. Developing a communication system may head off challenging behaviors.
- Sudden changes appear in the child’s behavior that may be early warning signs to challenging behavior that show a need for specific, direct intervention strategies. Information from the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) can guide the team in planning a contingency plan when certain behavior changes begin to occur.



**Meet Sam!** Sam is a capable twelve-year-old who loves to play basketball. His reading and math skills are on grade level but his grades are failing because of incomplete assignments. He has difficulty with written tasks and peer relationships. Sam defies authority at home and in the classroom by refusing to complete tasks. He is argumentative and aggressive with adults and classmates leading to incidents that have resulted in suspension. He has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. The IEP team used Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) data to identify the “triggers” for his behavior. Sam’s mom took an active role in developing a Behavior Intervention Plan with supports and strategies to de-escalate the problem behavior. A contingency plan was also developed for Sam. *When Sam becomes defiant and refuses to do his work...*

- Step 1: Staff uses active listening and rephrases the request. (Monitor body language.) An alternative work space in the room may be provided.
- Step 2: Provide one-on-one instruction in calm tones. (Identified support is available from the teacher in the classroom next door. )
- Step 3: Sam leaves room for assistance with an identified staff person. (Cool down-redirect.) Activity identified as an on-campus “walk & talk”.
- Step 4: Phone conference with mother. (Supports provided as needed by counselor/school psychologist.)
- Step 5: Re-convene an emergency IEP.

## ***Consider Long-term Prevention***

The Behavior Intervention Plan should support both short term and long-range goals. We encourage IEP teams to consider the following:

### **Make Long-Term Adaptations**

Students who have a long history of engaging in challenging behaviors are likely to need ongoing support to maintain newly learned skills. Consider what changes could be made in the student's daily routines to support new skills. Long-term adaptation will help the student maintain desired alternatives. Teaching the student to self-monitor and self-evaluate is a tool that can become a life-long skill. Goals that build skills in problem solving, relaxation, and communication increase a student's ability to become a productive member in the community.

### **Improve Lifestyle Factors Related to Overall Quality of Life**

A student's satisfaction with the daily events in his or her life is essential for intervention success. All students need opportunities to be engaged in meaningful activities and participate in community activities. They need opportunities for choice and control, positive personal relationships with others as well as a safe and healthy environment. Quality of life may be a barrier to successful intervention and contribute directly to the student's challenging behaviors.

Example: A behavior intervention designed to reduce the acting out behaviors of an adolescent working in a vocational program is not likely to be successful if the youth hates the job. In fact, the reason for her acting out might be to get thrown out of a program. An effective behavioral support plan must consider the lifestyle factors that influence challenging behaviors and how they may be improved to ensure long-term success.

### **Facilitate Inclusion**

Many students with persistent behavioral challenges have been excluded from everyday school community activities precisely because of those challenges. Effective behavioral support facilitates the inclusion process. However, inclusion is not an "after program" to be addressed once the student's behavior is under control. It needs to be viewed as an integral part of the program. If students with challenging behaviors are segregated and then inclusion is attempted, failure often occurs because behavioral interventions designed for segregated settings do not match inclusive environments.



Consider strategies for facilitating inclusion at the onset of programming. Determine the steps necessary to facilitate inclusion. *Plan to make behavioral intervention portable and acceptable within inclusive settings.* After all, how do you determine that a plan is successful if it only fits one unique setting?

# Implementing the Behavior Intervention Plan

The IEP team has worked hard to get to this point. They have gathered information, shared ideas, investigated possibilities, and pooled their resources. They have discussed their confidence level with each component of the plan and have *selected strategies with a high level of confidence* to insure that the plan is designed to address the child's specific problem behaviors. The plan describes supports and strategies to teach new skills. It looks terrific on paper!

The plan isn't worth the paper it is printed on if everything stops here. The plan must be put into action in the day-to-day life of the child. The key players must stay involved and informed if the plan is to be successful.

- A Behavior Intervention Plan is a living document based on the Functional Behavior Assessment. It can not just be filed and forgotten. Families and staff working with the child must receive a copy and understand what it means.
- Review and discuss the plan with the child. The child needs to understand that the plan is in place for his/her benefit. It is not something being done to him/her. The child needs ownership of the plan, if it is to be successful.
- Training needs of all adults should be identified and addressed. Implementing the plan may require new skills or refresher training to fine tune existing skills. IDEA funds received by the district can be used for parent and staff training to support the child. Training should take place in a timely manner. A workshop three months down the road will not prepare the staff to address the child's immediate needs. A system of mentoring, monitoring, and coaching should be in place.
- Classroom teachers implementing the plan will need support from the school principal and/or district. Staff collaboration is essential to get the plan started.
- Critical elements of the behavior plan should be included in teacher preparations for a substitute. Many schools have substitute packets containing standard procedures for the classroom. Information that identifies key staff for support and simple de-escalation techniques could make a world of difference when a substitute takes over a classroom.
- It is important to always remember that this plan is a work in progress. Families and schools need to maintain communication to share what is working for the child as well as interventions that were not successful. They must continue to fine-tune the plan to meet the child's needs.
- *The Behavior Intervention Plan must be continually monitored for effectiveness on a scheduled basis.* The monitoring schedule should be written in the plan.

# Evaluating the Behavior Intervention Plan

It is good practice for IEP teams to include two evaluation procedures in an intervention plan. One procedure should be designed to monitor the effectiveness of the plan itself. This will insure that supports are in place and that the plan is being properly implemented. The other evaluation should be designed to measure changes in behavior. The team should specify a method of communication that will keep everyone up-to-date on the plan's success or signal a need for changes.

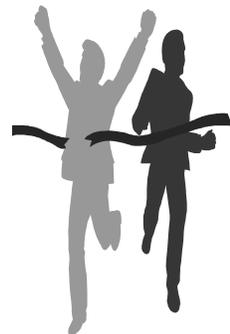
IEP teams must determine a timeline for implementation and reassessment. They should specify the degree of behavior change consistent with the goal of the overall intervention. Initially, teams should be prepared to meet frequently to assess progress and adjust strategies. Sometimes, after a plan is in place a particular target behavior can be addressed by minor changes to the plan. The plan can also provide information to target other behaviors with different interventions. Meaningful plans need to be reviewed at least annually (or more frequently depending on the student's progress) and revised as appropriate. The point is to base all evaluations on student success.

## ***Effective Behavior Intervention Plans Mean TEAMWORK!***

Functional assessment of student behavior allows IEP teams to develop more effective and efficient Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP). The focus should be on increasing the student's capacity to profit from instruction. It takes teamwork and time to plan child-specific interventions that discourage inappropriate behaviors while teaching alternative behaviors that provide the opportunities for success. The long-term results mean that schools can provide educational environments that address the learning needs of all students. Families can see their dreams take flight!

Successful behavioral support focuses on long-term solutions and not quick fixes. Planning efforts must balance positive outcomes in academic and social interactions. We cannot afford to continue practices that remove students from opportunities to learn and achieve as a means of controlling problem behaviors. We can do better. We can break the cycle of failure.

Understanding the nature of challenging behaviors and bringing about durable, significant changes in a child's life cannot be expected to occur quickly. Addressing problem behaviors requires direct intervention, skill building, de-escalation, crisis management, and long-term prevention. The process requires communication, cooperation, and problem solving to build positive outcomes for a child with challenging behaviors. It is a worthwhile investment!



## ***Don't Get Side-Tracked***

A good checklist provides quality assurances for focused efforts to improve outcomes for students with problem behaviors. This checklist guides the processes used in the School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports model developed by George Sugai and Rob Horner.

### **Functional Behavioral Self-Assessment Implementation Checklist**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
<b>1. Collect Information</b>	1. Include key individuals in the initial assessment meetings.	Y N	
	2. Review relevant records.	Y N	
	3. Collect informal direct observation data.	Y N	
	4. Interview the individuals who have direct experience with the student.	Y N	
<b>2. Develop Summary Statement</b>	1. Define problem behavior in observable terms.	Y N	
	2. Identify daily routines that are and are not associated with problem behavior.	Y N	
	3. Identify triggering antecedent events.	Y N	
	4. Identify maintaining consequence events. Select the ONE, most effective, maintaining reinforcer.	Y N	
	5. Identify possible setting events/establishing operations.	Y N	
	6. Develop summary statements based on 1. – 5.	Y N	
	7. Determine level of agreement/confidence individuals have in resulting summary statement.	Y N	If agreement/confidence high (4-6), go to Step 3. If low (<4), go back to Step 1 and collect more direct observation data.
<b>3. Confirm Summary Statement</b>	1. Collect formal direct observation information on behavior, antecedents, & consequences.	Y N	
	2. Determine if direct observation data confirm summary statement.	Y N	If summary statement confirmed, go to Step 4. If not confirmed, go back to Step 2. Consider need to conduct formal functional analysis.
<b>4. Develop Competing Behavior Pathway Summary</b>	1. Identified desired replacement behavior (long term objective).	Y N	
	2. Identify common reinforcing consequences for desired replacement behavior.	Y N	
	3. Identified alternative replacement behavior(s) based on the function of problem behavior (short term objectives).	Y N	
	4. Determine level of agreement/confidence in competing pathway summary.	Y N	If agreement/confidence high, go to Step 5. If low, repeat Step 4.

Step	Activity	Status	Action Plan
<b>5. Identify Strategies for BIP</b>	1. Select strategies &/or environmental manipulations that neutralize impact of setting events.	Y N	
	2. Select strategies &/or environmental manipulations that make triggering antecedents irrelevant.	Y N	
	3. Select strategies &/or environmental manipulations that teach student skills that make problem behavior inefficient.	Y N	
	4. Select strategies &/or environmental manipulations that make consequences for problem behavior ineffective.	Y N	
	5. If necessary, develop additional (beyond current school-wide) crisis prevention & intervention procedures.	Y N	
<b>6. Develop Implementation Scripts for BIP</b>	1. Develop scripts & routines for implementation of BIP.	Y N	
	2. Identify who will implement BIP.	Y N	
	3. Determine if resources & capacity to implement BIP are available.	Y N	If capacity adequate: implement. If resources/capacity inadequate, obtain resources, modify context, &/or adjust implementation requirements.
<b>7. Develop Evaluation &amp; Monitoring Procedures</b>	1. Identify measures to assess impact: (a) target behaviors, (b) social validation, (c) lifestyle, etc.	Y N	
	2. Develop schedule for on-going evaluation of implementation impact.	Y N	
	3. Develop procedures for assessing accuracy of implementation of BIP.	Y N	
	4. Assess progress toward achieving long term objective.	Y N	If adequate progress, continue. If criteria met, develop new objective. If inadequate progress, go back to Step 1.



Sugai & Horner 2003. Adapted from Sugai, G., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Hagan-Burke, S. (1999-2000). Overview of the functional behavioral assessment process. *Exceptionality*, 8, 149-160.

**Remember**

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) must be written in clear, concise statements. An effective plan should be understood by everyone involved with the plan. Filling the pages of a BIP with technical jargon or alphabet soup (acronyms) that the average person may not understand will not help the student.

Use the Stranger Test: If you gave the plan to a stranger, could they understand the plan and be able to carry it out to support the student?



## Section 6

# Discipline and Disabilities: Navigating the System



**PRO NOTE:** When a student is considered for disciplinary action, school policy should be checked first to see if it applies to the situation. A student with a disability cannot receive a harsher consequence for behavior than a non-disabled student who commits the same offense.

*Think about Eddie Haskell.* Eddie was automatically sent to the IAES for 45 days, instead of the lesser consequences that a non-disabled student would have received for the same offense. Every family should receive a copy of the school or district handbook that describes the discipline policy and outlines the expectations for student behavior.

Handbooks are usually distributed at the beginning of each year. When you get your copy, take time to review it with your child. If you do not receive the school handbook by the second week of school, contact the school office and ask for your copy.

If you're unclear about any part of the discipline policy, make an appointment to discuss it with the school principal. The IEP process should include a discussion of whether a child follows the standard discipline policy. If modifications or supports are needed, they must be written in the IEP.



# Discipline and Disabilities— Begin with a Common Sense Approach!

*Discipline: to give life to a child's learning.*

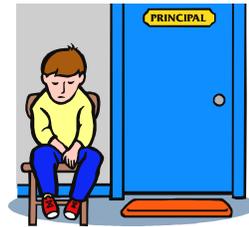
"It means setting limits. When a child goes beyond those limits, discipline shows a child what they did wrong, gives them ownership of the problem, gives them ways to solve it and most importantly, it does what punishment will never do. It leaves the child's dignity intact."

*Kids are Worth It by Barbara Coloroso*

A well thought-out discipline plan creates effective learning environments with a continuum of positive behavior supports and well-defined consequences for all students. A good discipline plan describes the expectations for behavior as part of a teaching and learning process. It guides the steps, or actions, that teachers, administrators, families, and students follow to increase student academic and social behavior success. When we view discipline in this way, we open doors to opportunities instead of slamming doors on the very students that need to be in school.

## **There is a Difference between Discipline and Punishment!**

People often think that discipline means punishment. Unfortunately, "traditional discipline procedures" are often linked to control, with punishment consequences. This approach is not complete unless it is also linked to instruction that will teach socially acceptable behavior. Research shows that punishment by itself does not create a long-term change in problem behavior. Punishment causes resentment and does nothing to teach children about their mistakes.



Today's schools are facing many challenges ranging from increased school violence and increased suspensions to low student achievement and decreased parent involvement. In response to these challenges, schools have used punishment-based and exclusionary strategies. Research shows that these responses actually result in more negative, adversarial, and hostile school environments. Exclusion and punishment to control behavior focus on "bad" students rather than on the function of their behavior. *We need to change the focus. Be positive, not punitive.*

In "School Climate and Discipline: Going to Scale," George Sugai and Robert Horner call on schools to build positive cultures of social competence through a full continuum of behavior support for all students. Schools are not asked to invent new solutions, increase external controls, or ask teachers to do more. Schools are asked to "work smarter by doing less, but harder" in a school-wide approach to Positive Behavior Support (PBS).

## ***Making Discipline Procedures Work for Kids***

The IDEA 2004 describes certain procedures and safeguards regarding discipline for students with disabilities as well as for students who are suspected of having a disability. The intent of Congress was to keep kids in school and ensure that they received a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This law requires school agencies to provide incentives for whole-school approaches, scientifically-based early reading programs, positive behavioral interventions, and supports to improve outcomes for our children. As schools implement early intervening services, the goal is that fewer students (and their families) will have to navigate the discipline system set up by this law.

Let's focus on the "common sense" part of this picture before we dive into the heavy-duty part of the law. We must all learn to take a deep breath and realize that once a student is in the discipline part of the system, there is little that we, as parents and advocates, can do to stop the process as it unfolds. We must look at this as an opportunity, not as if we are at the mercy of the system.

*Did you really say to look at this situation as an opportunity? YES!* Research shows that when students get into a serious discipline situation, there were warning signs and other factors (including learning disabilities) present for a number of years. When a student begins exhibiting serious problem behaviors, take the opportunity to review all of the student's IEPs and records for the past few years. What you find may surprise you. You may find clues to the present situation.

### ***Review the records. Look at the IEP goals and objectives.***

- Yes No 1. Were or are the goals and objectives the same year after year?
- Yes No 2. Did the student make gains towards closing the gap between his/her present level of performance and the expected level of performance? (Example: If Tom was reading at the first grade level in the 3rd grade, did he improve his reading by the expected amount? If not, why not?)
- Yes No 3. If the student did not make appropriate progress each year, were IEP meetings called to learn why appropriate progress was not being made?

If you answered: YES to question 1 and NO to questions 2 and 3, we would suggest that the student's placement over the years may not have been appropriate. As an IEP team, families and school staff should follow the process to investigate the reasons for lack of progress and plan appropriate steps for success.

## **Ask these questions when behavior is the issue ...**

- |                              |                             |   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 1. Were problem behaviors carefully documented?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 2. Were numerous interventions tried to address the problem behavior?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 3. Were extra IEP meetings called to address the student's problem behaviors? (Or did we wait until the annual review?) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 4. Was a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) conducted?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 5. Is there a current Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 6. Is the discipline plan also the behavior modification plan?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 7. If the IEP included appropriate goals, services, and supports, was the IEP followed (services/support delivered)?    |

If you answered YES to #1 and #6 and NO to #2, #3, #4, #5 and #7...we would suggest that the district is out of compliance. An appropriate IEP should be developed that includes a Functional Behavior Assessment that is used by the IEP team to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The plan should provide a program of instruction and supports to address the function of the identified problem behavior.

## **What are the options?**

**If you find that the district is out of compliance, there are several paths you can take. You have three choices:**

- Go back to the beginning and make the process work right.
- Contact NMPED for assistance through a Facilitated IEP or Mediation
- File a letter of complaint.
- Go to due process.

*Parents Reaching Out recommends that you make a good faith effort to make the process work like it was intended. Think about Eddie's mom. Joan did not want to hide behind the law or make excuses for her son. She wanted the process to work!*

If, after you have made a good faith effort, you feel the need to go to due process or file a complaint; your documentation should be in place. Remember, good documentation and records are everything! Keep copies of all correspondence, referrals, incident reports, IEPs, progress reports, and other information you receive or send to school.

## ***Record keeping and documentation are important.***

If you find your child in a situation regarding discipline or inappropriate placement, your documentation can help tell the real story.



- Make all requests in writing.
- Request that the answers be made in writing with reasons given as to why each of your requests was accepted or rejected.
- We recommend that families prepare their own Parent Report to be added to the students file just like a teacher or administrators report would be added. (Samples of Parent Reports and blank forms are included in the Tools section of this guide.)
- Remember that you always need to know what you want and why you want it. What documentation do you have or need to support your position?
- Expect each item that you have brought up to be addressed in writing either through the IEP or Prior Written Notice of Proposal (PWN) (see page 102). A Family Proposal Worksheet can be found on page 92.)

## ***Follow the IEP Process!***

Good things happen for kids when the appropriate evaluations and recommendations are put in place through the IEP process. Yes, it does take time and effort on the part of everyone on the IEP team to focus on the needs of the child. When a child's problem behaviors result in disciplinary action, the first step is to review the child's records. If there is not a Functional Behavior Assessment, one should be completed. If it is outdated or incomplete, request a new FBA. Families should be a part of this process. (*See Functional Behavior Assessment beginning on page 33.*)

An evaluation by a neuro-psychologist or neuro-behaviorist (at public expense) may be needed if a child exhibits complex problem behaviors. These evaluators provide a clear and comprehensive picture of what may be causing or contributing to problem behaviors. Their recommendations can be used by the team to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) that includes modifications, instructional approaches, positive supports, or a change in placement. The school district may want to perform the evaluations and this should be considered as a step in the right direction. If you disagree with the district's evaluation and feel it does not offer the appropriate recommendations you can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at district expense. (*See page 71.*)

The IEP process does not stop when disciplinary actions require placement in an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES). On the contrary, this is a critical time for the adults in the child's life to come together to conduct or reassess the Functional Behavior Assessment, arrange other evaluations, and develop an appropriate IEP with a meaningful Positive Behavior Intervention Plan.

*Remember Eddie? Think about the possibilities! It's not too late to make a positive difference in the life of your child!*

## ***Facilitated IEP Process***

When there is a dispute between the family and the school district, using skilled facilitators to guide IEP meetings can result in win-win solutions for the child. This process is called the **Facilitated IEP (FIEP)**.

The role of an IEP Facilitator is to ensure that the IEP Team does their best thinking, interacts respectfully, hears the perspectives of all participants, and focuses on future action. Thus, an IEP Facilitator serves the whole group rather than an individual, and assists the group with the process of the IEP meeting rather than the content of the IEP. The agenda for a facilitated IEP meeting is the IEP process, and the focus of the meeting is the student and his or her needs.

An IEP Facilitator also has the opportunity to gather issues from, and then exchange issues between, the key participants prior to the IEP meeting. This process provides the participants some private time to consider possible resolutions and options for discussion before the day of the IEP meeting. The IEP Facilitator then supports the group in collaboratively creating solutions for the student. As a result, all members equally share responsibility for the IEP meeting process and the results. Keep in mind that the IEP Facilitator is not the IEP chair, nor is he or she a decision maker. Rather, the IEP Facilitator supports the collaborative process of the meeting and assists the parties to reach consensus where possible. **PRO NOTE: The facilitated process is not complete until the agreement is written in the student's Individual Education Program (IEP).**

“When the Partnership Breaks Down” (page 71) includes more information about informal and formal ways to resolve concerns with your child's IEP or other school issues involving your child. We have also included **Questions and Answers** beginning on page 75 to help you with some of the complicated issues about problem behavior that results in school discipline.

For more information about Facilitated IEPs or other processes to resolve conflicts, please contact Parents Reaching Out to request your free copy of *The Handbook of Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures*. We also invite you to visit our web site: [www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org) to download any of our publications in English or Spanish.

You may also contact the New Mexico Public Education Department Special Education Bureau (NMPED/SEB) at (505) 827-1457 or visit their web site: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/index.htm>

# IDEA 2004 Close Up: Disciplining Students with Disabilities\*

*\*Candace Cortiella contributed to this article from Schwab Learning (www.schwablearning.org) in January, 2007. She is the mother of a young adult with learning disabilities and Director of the nonprofit The Advocacy Institute.*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) — and the newly released federal regulations that provide guidance to states on how to implement the Act — contain important changes to the way schools can discipline students with disabilities. Like all students, those with disabilities can be suspended or expelled for violating the school's code of conduct. However, IDEA provides some additional procedures that schools must follow when disciplining students with disabilities. These procedures were put into IDEA to prevent schools from suspending or expelling students without considering the effects of the child's disability.

These procedures are different depending on:

- the length and type of disciplinary action the school proposes to take;
- the nature of the conduct that led to the disciplinary action; and
- whether the conduct is found to be connected to the student's disability.

This article offers an overview of the discipline provisions of IDEA, including information on some of the important changes from the previous version of the law.

## ***Know Your Child's Code of Student Conduct***

Schools have a responsibility to make sure that all students, including those receiving special education, are familiar with the school's code of student conduct. Parents also have a responsibility to understand the school's code of conduct and to help their child understand the expectations and consequences involved with violating the code.



Your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team should determine any specialized help and instruction the child may need to understand the code and consistently demonstrate appropriate classroom and school behaviors. For example, the team may decide that a functional behavioral assessment and a behavior intervention plan are needed.

**PRO NOTE:** Make sure that you have a copy of the current School Handbook. Review the school's Code of Conduct with your child. Contact your school principal if you did not receive your copy or if you have questions about procedures.

## ***Schools Can Now Make Case-by-Case Determinations***

IDEA 2004 provides school personnel with the authority to consider any unique circumstances on a *case-by-case basis* when making a determination to discipline a student with a disability. This provision provides new flexibility for school personnel who are often operating within a district's "zero-tolerance" policy. A zero-tolerance policy usually requires school personnel to follow a suspension or expulsion policy for any student who violates the code of conduct, regardless of the circumstances.

Now, school personnel may choose not to suspend a student with a disability, if the *unique circumstances* lead school personnel to decide that suspension is not appropriate. Factors such as a student's disciplinary history, ability to understand consequences, expression of remorse, and supports provided to the student prior to the violation of a school code of conduct could be unique circumstances considered by school personnel.

In all cases, the disciplinary action considered for students with disabilities must be the same as for students without disabilities. In other words, school personnel may not increase a student's suspension because of the student's disability. Disciplinary action generally involves removing students from their current educational placement and placing them in some other setting, such as:

- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- An interim alternative educational setting (IAES)

Whenever school personnel decide to discipline a student with a disability by removing the student from the current educational placement, the school must notify the parents on the same day the decision is made and provide the parents with a written copy of the district's Procedural Safeguards Notice.

## ***IDEA 2004 Discipline Rules***

**For disciplinary actions lasting 10 school days or less:**

- A student with a disability who has an IEP in effect can be disciplined like any other student who violates the school code of conduct.
- During the time the student is in the disciplinary setting, the school is not required to provide any educational services (including special education) to the student, unless the school district provides educational services to non-disabled students in the same circumstances.
- Parents may request that the school continue educational services for the student during the time of the disciplinary action or somehow allow the parent to facilitate the student's completion of school work. While the school is not required to grant such requests, many will agree to this so that the student doesn't fall behind.

**For Disciplinary actions resulting in removal of more than 10 school days in the same year (whether or not the days are consecutive):**

- The school must provide special education services that allow the student to:
  - *continue to participate* in the general education curriculum, although in another setting; and
  - *progress* toward meeting the goals outlined in the student’s IEP.
- If the action does not result in exclusion from school for more than 10 consecutive school days and does not constitute a change of placement (i.e., when there is evidence that there is a pattern of exclusions that do not exceed 10 school days), school personnel, in consultation, must determine what services the student should be provided. (Note: A “change of placement” occurs when the student is excluded from his/her current placement for more than 10 consecutive school days in a school year or upon the 11th school day that a child is excluded from his current placement or when there is evidence of a pattern of a “series of removals.”)
- If the disciplinary action results in an exclusion from school that is a change of placement, the student’s IEP team must meet to determine the exact educational services needed while the student is assigned to the Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES).
- Within 10 days from the beginning of a disciplinary action that results in an exclusion that exceeds 10 school days, the school district, the parents, and relevant members of the student’s IEP team must meet to determine if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student’s disability.

The team must also determine if the conduct was the direct result of the school’s failure to implement the student’s IEP, including a behavior intervention plan. If the group decides that the student’s behavior was a direct result of the school’s failure to implement the IEP, the school must take immediate steps to remedy the deficiencies and *return the student to his/her original placement*.

**A Series of Short Removals Can Constitute a “Pattern” and “Change of Placement”**

When frequent disciplinary actions add up to more than 10 school days in a school year, such removals may constitute a “pattern.” A pattern is indicated when the student’s behavior and the length of removal is the same or similar to previous incidents, and the incidents are in close proximity to one another. A pattern of removals of 10 days or less, once they total more than 10 school days, carries the same requirements as a removal of more than 10 days and is considered a change of placement for the student. While the school has the responsibility for making a determination about whether a pattern constitutes a change of placement on a case-by-case basis, parents should be alert to a possible pattern developing when their child’s misconduct is resulting in a series of disciplinary actions.

## **“Manifestation Determination” — How Is Behavior Related to Disability?**

IDEA 2004 made some significant changes to the manner in which a determination is made about the relationship between the student’s behavior that leads to the disciplinary action, and the student’s disability. These changes will make it more difficult than was previously the case to establish a connection between disability and behavior, and to reach a conclusion that the behavior resulted from the disability. The decision reached in the manifestation determination is important because it will influence what can happen to the student’s continued services and placement.

In making the manifestation determination, the team (comprised of school personnel, the student’s parents, and other relevant members of the student’s IEP team) will review: the student’s IEP; the student’s behavior intervention plan; any teacher observations; and any relevant information provided by the parents.

Under IDEA 2004, the presumption of a connection between behavior and disability no longer exists. Now, the team is required to answer these questions:

- (1) Considering the behavior subject to discipline, review the student’s behavior to determine if it was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student’s disability. For example, a student’s low self-esteem, while possibly a by-product of a learning disability, is not alone sufficient to be considered a basis for finding a direct relationship between the student’s disability and behavior.
- (2) Did the school fail to follow a portion of the IEP including a behavior intervention plan in a manner that directly caused the misconduct?

**Finding of Manifestation:** *If the behavior is found to be directly related to the student’s disability*, the IEP team must plan for a functional behavioral assessment and the development of a behavior intervention plan based on the results of that assessment. If the student already had a behavior intervention plan in place, the IEP team must review if the plan was being followed and revise it as needed to address the problem behavior that led to this disciplinary action.

*If the team finds that the student’s behavior was related to the disability or an improperly implemented IEP*, the student is returned to the original education setting unless the parents agree to a new placement as part of the behavior intervention plan.

**Finding of No Manifestation:** *For students whose behavior was not directly related to the disability*, the same disciplinary actions can be imposed as those imposed on a non-disabled student. Such action could include expulsion. However, if the student is expelled from school, the student must continue to receive educational services that allow him or her to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and progress toward meeting the goals set out in the IEP. *For students whose behavior is not determined to be directly associated with their disability*, the IEP team should nonetheless consider the need for a functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan.

**Be on the Alert for the “Special Circumstances.”** Certain offenses can lead to a student being moved to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days even if the conduct is determined to be related to the student’s disability. Removing a student for these offenses does not require parent permission or agreement, nor does it require any involvement by a hearing officer or other impartial third party. These offenses are:

- **Weapons:** If a student carries or possesses a weapon:
  - On the way to or at school
  - On school premises
  - At a school function
- **Drugs:** If the student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of illegal drugs:
  - While at school
  - At a school function
- **Serious bodily injury:** If a student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person:
  - While at school
  - On school premises
  - At a school function

An additional provision allows a school to seek to remove a student for up to 45 school days if the school believes that returning the student to the same educational placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or other students. The school must do this by making a request to a hearing officer, who, among other requirements, is not employed by the state education agency or local school district involved in educating the child; has specialized knowledge and skills related to IDEA; and has no interests that conflict with his objectivity in the hearing process.

**Parent Right to Appeal:** Parents have the right to challenge any decisions made regarding the interim alternative educational setting or the determination regarding the “manifestation determination” by asking for a due process hearing. Schools can also request a hearing if school personnel feel that returning a student to the original educational setting is highly likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

In either case, the hearing must be “expedited” by:

- holding the hearing within 20 school days of the date requested; and
- issuing a decision by the hearing officer within 10 school days after the hearing.

IDEA 2004 made an important change to the placement of students during this appeal process. Before, a student was to remain in his or her current educational placement during the appeal process – often referred to as “stay put.” Now, under IDEA 2004, the student remains in the interim alternative educational setting, unless the parent and the state agree otherwise or the time period for the infraction (e.g., 45 school days for special circumstances or duration applied to non-disabled students) has expired.

## **Students Not Yet Eligible for IDEA**

Under certain circumstances, the protections available to a student with a disability who is already eligible for special education services may also be available to a student who does not have an IEP in effect. These circumstances may apply to any student:

- If the child's parents had expressed concern in writing to school personnel, including the teacher, that their child may be in need of special education prior to the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action
- If the child's parent had requested an evaluation, preferably in writing, as provided for by IDEA
- If the child's teacher or other school personnel had expressed concerns about a pattern of behavior that might call for a referral for evaluation. Such concerns should have been made directly to supervisory personnel at the school building or school district level. For example, a teacher expressing his or her concerns to a parent would not be considered an adequate basis of knowledge.

Certain exceptions apply to the above circumstances. They include:

- If the child's parent had not allowed an evaluation of the child or had refused special education services that had been offered as required by IDEA
- If the child had been evaluated as required by IDEA and was not found eligible for special education

If a request is made to evaluate a student during the time period of the disciplinary action, the school must complete the evaluation as quickly as possible. During the evaluation, the student remains in the interim alternative educational setting.

## ***Special Note***

New provisions in IDEA 2004 allow schools to provide early intervening services to students who are considered "at risk." At-risk students are those who show a need for additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in general education, but who are not identified as needing special education. In addition, IDEA 2004 allows schools to use a "**response-to-intervention**" (RTI) process as part of its procedures for identifying students as having specific learning disabilities and needing special education. A child in either the "at risk" or "RTI" circumstances may not be considered to possibly need special education services unless at least one of the first three bulleted conditions in the section above has been met.

IDEA's provisions regarding the discipline of students with disabilities are complex and often confusing. If your child becomes the focus of a disciplinary action, you should seek information and guidance from expert resources such as your state's Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC). **Parents Reaching Out** is the **Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC)** for New Mexico. Parents Reaching Out is funded through a grant by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

# Students Arrested for School-Related Behavior

We read about students being arrested at school (at alarming rates). In many cases, these students are children with disabilities arrested for behaviors related to their disabilities. If you are a parent of the student, your concern turns to panic when the school claims that once the child is arrested *the situation is out of their hands*. The information below from “When Schools Have Children Arrested for School-Related Behavior Problems” ([www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)) may help you during this challenging time for your family.

**Use the Power of the Juvenile Court.** When a child with a disability is arrested for school-related behavior, this is an excellent opportunity to use the power of the juvenile court to force the school district to implement a good plan for the child - and have the Court monitor the school's progress. If the IEP is not based on current data and does not include present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, the child needs to be re-evaluated. You want current information on the child's academic skills, especially reading. If the child's academic skills are significantly behind the child's peer group, you would expect the child to be frustrated at school - and to develop behavior problems. What has the school done to address these issues? Use this process to develop an appropriate IEP with documentation of the process.

**Did the IEP Team Consider "Special Factors"?** The law requires the IEP team to consider "special factors," including behavior that impedes the child's learning or the learning of other children, when they develop a child's IEP.

- Did the school complete a functional behavioral assessment on the child?
- Did the IEP team develop a behavior intervention plan? Did the IEP team develop positive behavioral interventions and strategies to address the behavior?
- Did school personnel actually implement these positive behavioral interventions and strategies?
- *Did the school revise the child's IEP and behavior plan to address the behavior that led the school staff to have the child arrested? Did the school train the child's teachers to use positive behavior interventions, as required by law? (If the answer is NO, the family has the basis for a State Complaint or a due process hearing.)*

**Working with the Courts and the Juvenile Justice System:** In most cases, Juvenile Probation Officers are valuable allies. It is important to educate the Probation Officer about your child's disability, what your child needs, and what would happen if your child did not receive the necessary services. The attorney appointed by the Court to represent your child can subpoena your child's entire educational file as well as testimony from the principal, special education director, and/or staff responsible for implementing your child's IEP. Testimony in this hearing can be placed into evidence in a due process hearing, if necessary. The Court can enter orders requiring the school to do x, y and z and monitor progress through a follow-up hearing. *PRO NOTE: Feel free to share a copy of this book and our Parent Handbook with the attorney or Probation Officer.*

## When the Partnership Breaks Down

Parents and schools don't always agree about a child's special education eligibility, evaluation, program, or placement. Parents and schools have options when their efforts to solve problems informally have failed. These options include mediation and due process hearings. Parents may also file Administrative and Section 504 complaints.

### ***Make Every Effort to Resolve Differences at the Local Level***

If you have not been able to resolve your problem through personal contact, you can write a letter to the appropriate person at your child's school district, usually the Special Education Director. Send copies to the Public Education Department, Director of Special Education, Parents Reaching Out, and anybody else who might be helpful. This letter will provide documentation of your dissatisfaction, your concerns about issues affecting your child, and your interest in resolving the problem at the local level. This process is informal and can eliminate the need for a formal letter of complaint. Our *Handbook of Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures* includes an entire section on letter writing. A sample letter is also included on page 82 of this guide.

### ***Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)***

Most often when there is a disagreement among members of the IEP team, the disagreement is over a diagnosis or the level of services that an evaluator has recommended. The IDEA regulations have provided us with a very useful tool – the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE), to resolve these disputes. An IEE may be obtained by the parents at public expense (at no cost to the parent) providing that the parents have followed the process outlined in the regulations. Make sure all requests for an IEE are documented in the IEP and the school district makes the arrangements for the IEE so as to avoid any confusion over payment. The district has to maintain a list of independent evaluators in your area. However, if the parents have a person that meets the district criteria, they may select that person.

When making decisions for a student, the IEP team must consider the IEE (whether it is obtained at public or private expense) like all other information used to make informed decisions for the child. However, the IEP team is not required to take every recommendation. If the team rejects a recommendation provided by the independent evaluator, they must provide a Prior Written Notice of Proposal to the parent with an explanation of why the recommendation was rejected.

In the event that the district feels that their evaluation is correct or they do not want to pay for the IEE, the school district is required to file for a due process hearing. Most school districts will not file for a due process hearing that costs several thousand dollars and consumes staff time and energy in order to avoid an evaluation that will cost much less in the long run. NOTE: If a parent chooses to find and pay for an independent evaluation *at his/her own expense*, the IEP team must consider and document that information along with all other information when developing the IEP.

## ***Mediation***

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to establish and implement procedures for parents and the local education agency to resolve special education disputes through a process known as mediation. In New Mexico, this service is administered by the NM Public Education Department Special Education Bureau.

### **What is Mediation?**

Mediation is defined as a meeting that utilizes an independent, state-approved, state-funded, trained mediator to assist parties to bring about a peaceful settlement to disputed matters related to a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or other educational, non-IEP-related issues. A mediator does not make decisions or take sides, but assists the parties in reaching their own mutually agreeable solution. Mediation can be requested at any time if both parties agree. Discussion that occurs during mediation sessions must be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

### **What are the Requirements?**

1. Mediation is voluntary for both parties. As long as both parties agree, mediation can be accessed at any time.
2. Mediation may not be used to delay or deny a parent's right to a due process hearing or to deny other rights guaranteed under the IDEA.
3. Mediation must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator trained in effective mediation techniques. The mediator is appointed by the Public Education Department.

### **What Happens if We Reach Agreement During Mediation?**

The mediator will draft a legally binding written agreement (not an IEP) that describes the settlement reached by the parties. The parent and the representative of the local education agency who has authority to legally bind the agency will be asked to sign the agreement. The agreement is not imposed by the mediator. The parties tend to follow the terms of a mediated agreement because they participated in developing it, but if necessary such an agreement may be examined and enforced in state or U.S. district court.

### **How is Mediation Different from an IEP Meeting?**

Remember, mediation sessions are not IEP meetings and it is not likely the student's full IEP team will be at a mediation session. If the local education agency and the parents reach a written agreement through mediation on any IEP-related matters, it will then be necessary to subsequently convene an IEP meeting to revise the student's IEP or develop an IEP Addendum to inform the student's service providers of their responsibilities under the mediated agreement. This step is required by state education rules. If both the local education agency and the parents agree to mediation, then contact the NMPED Special Education Bureau and ask to speak to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Coordinator to obtain the "Request for Mediation" form.

## ***Formal Letter of Complaint***

If you have not been able to resolve your concerns informally, at the local level, you may wish to send a formal letter of complaint to the NMPED. Once the complaint has been received then it goes to the investigator for review.

When a formal state level complaint is filed with the New Mexico Public Education Department Special Education Bureau, IDEA 2004 and New Mexico State Regulations [6.32.2.12 H(3)(a)] require that the school district offer a Complaint Assistance IEP meeting (CAIEP) This meeting is conducted by the school district and is intended to provide an opportunity to address and resolve the dispute. For more information on this topic, please contact NMPED Special Education Bureau at 505-827-1457 or visit their web site: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/index.htm>

This meeting must take place within fourteen (14) days of the date of the State's written acknowledgement of the formal complaint. The school district must offer (in writing) to convene a CAIEP meeting to address IEP-related issues raised in the complaint. The family may accept this offer or decline and choose not to participate in the meeting.

If the family chooses not to attend this meeting Parents Reaching Out highly recommends using either mediation or the FIEP process to resolve the dispute. If the dispute is resolved to the family's satisfaction, Parents Reaching Out recommends that families either postpone the investigation for about 6 months or withdraw the complaint.

The Public Education Department is required to complete their investigation of your complaint and mail you a copy of their report within 60 days (beginning on the day the PED receives your letter). We encourage families to read the letter writing section in our *Handbook of Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures*. Information and examples are provided to help you prepare your letter.

To send a formal letter of complaint or request a Due Process Hearing, clearly state your concerns and send your letter to:

**State Director**  
**NM PED Special Education Bureau**  
120 South Federal Place, Room 206  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

*A copy of your letter should be sent to:*

**Secretary of Education**  
**NM Public Education Department**  
300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, NM 87501-2786

Be sure to send copies of your letters to the appropriate district staff; for example, the district superintendent and district special education director.

## ***Expedited Due Process Hearing***

**It may be necessary to request an expedited due process hearing in cases involving *weapons or drugs*.**

IDEA 2004 regulations provide for an expedited due process hearing.

1. Parents have the right to challenge any decisions made regarding the interim alternative educational setting or the determination regarding the “manifestation determination” by asking for a due process hearing.
2. Schools can also request a hearing if school personnel feel that returning a student to the original educational setting is highly likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

In either case, the hearing must be “expedited” by:

- holding the hearing within 20 school days of the date requested; and
- issuing a decision by the hearing officer within 10 school days after the hearing.

### **What does “Stay Put” mean?**

IDEA 2004 made an important change to the placement of students during this appeal process. Under IDEA 97, a student was to remain in his or her current educational placement during the appeal process – often referred to as “stay put.”

Now, under IDEA 2004, the student remains in the interim alternative educational setting, unless the parent and the state agree otherwise or the time period for the infraction (e.g., 45 school days for special circumstances or duration applied to non-disabled students) has expired.

# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Problem behavior and discipline issues are complex. Our conversations with families, educators, and others sparked the questions for this part of our book. We hope the answers will provide helpful information.

## General

*What is the parent's role in the educational process?*

Parents have to be given an opportunity to fully and equally participate in all meetings, discussions, or decisions regarding their student. Meetings must be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.

*What elements should a good IEP include for a student who exhibits problem behavior(s)?*

If behavior is a concern for a student, the IEP should include: a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), social skills interventions, goals for the general curriculum, specific supports and services, and a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) statement with how progress will be monitored and reported in each area. A good IEP will address every area of concern or need.

*What if the parent disagrees with the school's evaluations of the student?*

The parent, through the IEP process, may request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense (at no cost to the parents).

*What is the difference between a behavior plan and a discipline plan?*

A behavior plan should help the student learn to compensate for non-typical behavior. A discipline plan should be a natural consequence of the student's actions. A discipline plan should not be punitive in nature. A discipline plan sets standards for behavior.

*Are behavior contracts appropriate for students?*

Generally speaking, behavior contracts are not successful. If a behavior contract is used, it should include rewards as well as consequences. A rule of thumb is: for every one consequence, there should be four rewards. Think about the payoff for positive behavior. A contract should only be implemented as a part of a behavior intervention plan based on a functional assessment of behavior.

*How does Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) fit into the education process?*

Least Restrictive Environment is the most appropriate placement for a child with a disability that most closely approximates where the child, if not disabled, would be educated. This placement includes fulltime participation in regular classes and full participation in school activities with non-disabled students. Other placements are considered more restrictive to the degree that a student is removed from regular classes and full participation in non-curricular and extra-curricular activities with students who are not disabled. (NMPED 4/6/2003)

*Is it appropriate for a student to receive education outside of the general education setting?*

Exclusion from the general education setting is only appropriate if the student has not had success in the general education setting with appropriate supports and services. This must be determined on a case-by-case basis by the (IEP) team.

*Is it appropriate for the school to call the family to pick up their child from school for each incidence of behavior?*

No. Generally, this is not part of a positive behavior intervention plan unless a way to measure the student's progress has been documented in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). If such a plan is not in place, then this action would be a change of placement that requires the parent's consent through the IEP process.

An appropriate strategy would be to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment to address behaviors through the Positive Behavior Intervention Plan that includes supports to keep the child in school. Communication between home and school to report progress and problem areas may signal a need to revise interventions.

Schools districts are required to ensure that a student receives a Free Appropriate Public Education. If a child is sent home, how will the educational services continue to be provided by qualified staff and how will progress be measured? How will the child access the general curriculum to meet standards and benchmarks?

## **Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)**

*When should a Functional Behavior Assessment be considered?*

Best practice would be to complete a FBA and implement a BIP as an early intervention anytime a student's behavior is a concern. IEP teams may want to consider requesting the services of a behavior management specialist as part of the assessment process. A FBA and a BIP should be part of annual reviews whenever behavior may be a concern.

*What should a Functional Behavior Assessment look like?*

The IEP team should review the existing data and then decide what other information is needed. The FBA does not necessarily need to be complicated. It should identify specific behaviors that are causing the concern and possible causes ("triggers") for each behavior. Section 3 provides examples for an FBA.

## **Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**

*Does a student have to be classified as "Emotionally Disturbed" to have a Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan?*

No. Anytime a student has a behavior that is a concern, a Functional Behavior Assessment should be completed and a positive Behavioral Intervention Plan should be implemented. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of 'cure'."

*Does the law indicate how exactly the IEP team should come up with a BIP?*

Not exactly. Regulations make it clear that a BIP is to focus on positive, proactive strategies designed to prevent inappropriate behaviors from occurring in the first place. It is based on target behaviors identified through a Functional Behavior Assessment.

*When should a student have a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?*

There are two situations in which a BIP is required. The first is when a student's suspensions add up to 11 days or more. The second is when a *student's behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others* (IDEA 300.346 "special factors"). Develop a behavior intervention plan whenever there is a concern about a child's behavior. The plan should be developed as soon as possible after completing the assessments required by the IEP using information based on the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).

## **Suspension**

*How long can a student with a disability be short term suspended?*

A student with a disability can be suspended up to 10 days in a school year just like any other student. No services have to be provided for the first 10 days. FAPE has to be provided for any days over 10. (This includes additional removals of up to 10 days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct.)

Suspension is considered a change of placement. When frequent disciplinary actions add up to more than 10 school days in a school year, such removals may constitute a "pattern." A pattern is indicated when the student's behavior and the length of removal is the same or similar to previous incidents, and the incidents are in close proximity to one another. A pattern of removals of 10 days or less, once they total more than 10 school days, carries the same requirements as a removal of more than 10 days and is considered a change of placement for the student.

*Does In School Suspension (ISS) count towards the 10 days of suspension?*

An in-school suspension would not be considered a part of the days of suspension addressed *as long as the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum, continue to receive the services specified on the child's IEP, and continue to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in their current placement.* Portions of a school day that a child had been suspended may be considered as a removal in regard to determining whether there is a pattern of removals as defined in § 300.536."

*Where will a student who has been suspended more than 10 days receive their education?*

The student would receive their education in an appropriate Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES). The IEP team designs the IAES setting on *an individual basis* and provides a positive behavior plan.

*Can a student with a disability be suspended more than 10 days?*

Yes, but on the 11th day the student must begin to receive the services and supports in the IEP. They must show progress in the general education curriculum through the goals identified in the IEP and Behavior Intervention Plan.

*If attendance is a problem for a student, is suspension or expulsion OK?*

No. Ask these questions, "Is the IEP appropriate?" "What will it take for this student to begin attending class on a regular basis?" A Functional Behavior Assessment should be completed and a Behavior Intervention Plan should be implemented.

*What are some reasons the school district might suspect that a student might have a disability?*

Under certain circumstances, the *protections* available to a student with a disability who is already eligible for special education services may *also be available to a student who does not have an IEP in effect*. These circumstances may apply to *any* student:

- If the child's parents had expressed concern in writing to school personnel, including the teacher, that their child may be in need of special education prior to the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action
- If the child's parent had requested an evaluation, preferably in writing, as provided for by IDEA
- If the child's teacher or other school personnel had expressed concerns about a pattern of behavior that might call for a referral for evaluation. Such concerns should have been made directly to supervisory personnel at the school building or school district level. For example, a teacher expressing his or her concerns to a parent would not be considered an adequate basis of knowledge.

If a request is made to evaluate a student during the time period of the disciplinary action, the school must complete the evaluation as quickly as possible. During the evaluation, the student remains in the interim alternative educational setting.

*What about bus suspensions?*

A manifestation IEP team meeting should be held if bus transportation is a service provided through the IEP. If the behavior is related to the disability, then the IEP team should address appropriate supports and services for the student while on the bus. If transportation is a related service of the IEP, the school must provide transportation.

*What happens in the case of weapons or drugs?*

Certain offenses can lead to a student being moved to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days even if the conduct is determined to be related to the student's disability. Removing a student for these offenses does not require parent permission or agreement, nor does it require any involvement by a hearing officer or other impartial third party. (For more information see page 68.) These offenses are:

- **Weapons:** If a student carries or possesses a weapon: On the way to or at school; on school premises ; at a school function
- **Drugs:** If the student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of illegal drugs: while at school; at a school function
- **Serious bodily injury:** If a student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person: while at school; on school premises; at a school function

## **Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES)**

*What does an IAES look like?*

Each IAES is designed on an individual basis in accordance with the student's unique needs. The IAES must address the student's behavioral needs.

*How long should a student be in an Interim Alternative Education Setting?*

Generally speaking, a student is in IAES not longer than 45 days. The only exception would be if the parents and school district agree that this setting is appropriate. If more time is needed to ensure success in a general setting, an extension should be considered.

*Is a homebound placement appropriate as an IEAS?*

No. Homebound should not be considered as an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) and should not be used for disciplinary reasons. Homebound placement should primarily be used for students that are classified as “Medically Fragile.” Homebound would be considered a very restrictive environment and should only be used if the student’s needs with supports and services cannot be met in a school setting.

*Is an abbreviated school day an appropriate placement for a student who may have challenging behavior?*

Only if the IEP can show how it will provide a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), social skills intervention, progress in the General Education Curriculum, and Special Education supports and services. The IEP must show how the progress will be monitored, measured, and reported. Progress should be the same as with a full day schedule.

*Can a school administrator arbitrarily change a student’s placement?*

The IEP team makes placement decisions. Families are equal partners in the process. An exception would be in the case of weapons or drugs.

## **Manifestation Determination**

*What is a manifestation determination?*

A manifestation determination involves a review of the relationship between the student’s disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

*When must a school conduct a manifestation determination and what should be considered?*

A manifestation determination must be held whenever a school proposes to change the student’s placement as a disciplinary consequence including proposed expulsion and proposed placement in disciplinary settings. The team must consider all relevant information, including: information from the families, evaluation and diagnostic results, observations of the child, and the child’s IEP and placement.

*What should a manifestation determination cover?*

The team (comprised of school personnel, the student’s parents, and other relevant members of the student’s IEP team) will review: the student’s IEP; the student’s behavior intervention plan; any teacher observations; and any relevant information provided by the parents. Under IDEA 2004, the presumption of a connection between behavior and disability no longer exists. Now, the team is required to answer these questions:

- (1) Considering the behavior subject to discipline, review the student’s behavior to determine if it was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student’s disability.
- (2) Did the school fail to follow a portion of the IEP, including a behavior intervention plan, in a manner that directly caused the misconduct?

## Miscellaneous

*Does a student have to be diagnosed by a physician as having ADD/ADHD in order to receive supports and services from the school district?*

No. Although a physician's support might be useful, it is not required. If a person suspects a student might have ADD/ADHD that interferes with the student's learning, the district is required to do a full educational diagnostic evaluation and implement an IEP with the supports and services necessary for the student to be successful. A physician's report is only one of the items that should be considered when developing an IEP.

*Is medication a required intervention for students that might have ADD/ADHD?*

No. Decisions about medication are made between the physician and the family. Schools must implement IEP supports and services regardless of medical considerations.

*Should a re-integration plan be a part of a student's IEP?*

Yes. If a student has been suspended or expelled, a good IEP will identify the supports and services needed for the student to successfully re-integrate back into the mainstream. The goal for all IEP teams should be to successfully include all students with disabilities into the mainstream of the school community.

*Is it appropriate for a student with a disability to follow regular district or building discipline policy? How about the school's code of conduct?*

Agreeing that a child will follow the school discipline policy means that you agree that the consequences are appropriate and the student's disabling condition will not prevent him/her from following the regular school policy. This decision should be based on data (information) developed as a part of the IEP. Appropriate staff should be informed.

## Police

*When is it appropriate for the school to refer a student to the police?*

Nothing in the IDEA shall prevent an agency from reporting a crime or law enforcement authorities from exercising their responsibilities in serving the public. Calling the police is very serious. Often, families will designate that only the principal can call the police after he/she reviews the situation. If this is the case, it is important to identify the school personnel who will be responsible for informing staff.

*What if a parent feels the school district is using the police authorities inappropriately?*

If the procedures outlined in this section have not been followed by a school district, the parent should exercise procedural safeguards (Parent Rights) using one of the following:

- File a formal letter of complaint with the Public Education Department.
- File a letter of complaint with the Office for Civil Rights.
- Request a due process hearing.

When students and families are caught in the legal system, their thoughts may not be focused on the school system and the educational program. The procedures listed above hold the system accountable for the education of students in public schools.

# Section 7

## Tools, Tips, and Resources



## **Priorities...**

"A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove....but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

Forest E. Witcraft

# Supporting Your Child's Success

First, understand that your role as a parent is unique. No one knows and loves your child the way that you do. You are the expert on your child. And, while you may not have all the answers, you want your child to be successful in school and in life. It is important to build a partnership with the educators and others at school who work with your child.

The keys to your child's success in school are in your hands. These keys include knowing the educators in your child's life, talking with them, and establishing good communication and a friendly relationship with them. These keys will open many doors. They'll help you to work together and problem solve as a team, to trust and rely on one another, and to ensure that your child is supported and receives the services and instruction that will enable him or her to succeed.

*The amount of time and energy you put into creating good relationships will pay off. Good relationships will limit the need for a more adversarial, and less desirable, relationship with your child's school. They promote cooperation and useful alliances.*

**Building and maintaining relationships is hard work.** We, as families and educators, have a tendency to wait until we see a problem before communicating with each other. We must all learn to communicate and partner effectively before the situation becomes difficult. We all need to build relationships long before there are problems. The first day of school is a good time to begin. Parents who have relationships with the educators in their children's lives before problems arise are more likely to resolve problems smoothly, quickly, and effectively.

Situations that occur at school that are the result of problem behavior may put everyone on the defensive. It's important to take a deep breath. Remember that helping our children succeed takes teamwork and a committed effort from everyone to keep the lines of communication open between home and school. As families and schools work together to address the function of a child's problem behavior and plan strategies for positive change, there will be meetings and phone conversations to keep things on track.

We've included some tips and tools that families can use in supporting their child's success in school. You'll find information about letter writing, ideas for successful meetings with sample forms to create your parent report, share your concerns with proposals, and track your proposals during meetings with school staff. *The Handbook of Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures* developed by Parents Reaching Out offers more information about communication, building relationships, preparing for the IEP, and letter writing. Please contact our office to receive your free copy or visit our website ([www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org)) to download the handbook or any of our other publications.

## ***Communicating Through Letter Writing***

Letters provide a record of ideas, concerns, and suggestions. They are useful ways to document specific questions about your child's education or request information. Letters can give positive feedback to someone who has helped your child. Letter writing is a skill. Each letter differs according to the situation and the issues you are discussing. Our ***Parent Handbook*** has an entire section on letter writing. Here are a few tips.

- Be sure to put a date on your letters.
- Give your child's full name and current class placement.
- Provide your full name, address, and a phone number where you can be reached.
- State your question or concern or suggestion in specific terms.
- Let the person know what type of response you want (meeting, phone call, letter).
- Give the person a timeline for response.

<p>Your Name Street Address, City, State, Zip Daytime Phone Number</p>
<p>Today's Date (month, day, year)</p>
<p>Full Name of Person you are writing to (and his/her title) School or District Street Address City, State, Zip Code</p>
<p>Dear _____, (In most cases address your letter to the teacher or principal.)</p>
<p>In this paragraph explain who you are, your child's name and class placement. Briefly explain why you are writing the letter. (My child has been suspended four times for fights at school. He has special classes, but is failing his classes. I want him to do well in school.)</p>
<p>In this paragraph explain what you would like to have happen or what you want changed. (Example: I would like to request a Functional Behavior Assessment to find out what is happening with my child. I want a plan to help my child.)</p>
<p>Please call me by <u>  (date)  </u> at <u>  (phone number)  </u> to set up a meeting to discuss this in detail. I would like _____ to attend the meeting. Thank you for your time.</p>
<p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>cc: (Send copies to others you feel appropriate.)</p>

## ***Get Off to a Good Start! Ideas for Successful Meetings...***



- Go to the meeting with an open mind. Be specific and know your options. Be prepared to work collaboratively in your child's best interest. Be a team player.
- Ask questions. Get lots of answers. Be a Super Sleuth! Don't be embarrassed about asking for an explanation if there is anything you don't understand.
- When speaking of your child's needs, use "I feel" statements. Nobody can argue with your feelings. "I really feel my son needs occupational therapy because his writing skills need so much improvement."
- Ask for time, if you need it. If the meeting begins to feel out of hand, ask for a break. This can help everybody regroup and refocus on the needs of your child.
- Set your priorities for the meeting. Try not to cloud main issues by raising small ones. Take care of all the little issues after the main issues are covered.
- You can tape record meetings. Be aware that tape recording may be intimidating. Let them know in advance, if you are planning to tape record. NOTE: If the school chooses to record the IEP meeting, the tape becomes part of your child's official record. Your tape does not become part of the record.
- You may want to invite a family member or close friend who knows your child well to attend the meeting with you. No one likes surprises. It is good practice to let the school staff know that you have invited someone to the meeting.
- Never threaten. You will lose all credibility. Remember that the regulations have procedures to follow. By following the process, you will get more for your child.
- Make sure the district representative with the authority to make a decision is invited and will attend any IEP meeting scheduled for your child.
- Make sure that timelines are written in your child's IEP or in the Prior Written Notice (when services must begin; when evaluations must be completed; equipment will be ordered, etc.). Don't leave deadlines or expectations to chance. Each person involved should know what is expected and when it is expected.
- If the team gets stuck, set a date to reconvene. If you have come to some agreement, implement the programming about which you agree and set a date to meet again to mediate problem areas.

Call **Parents Reaching Out** for a copy of *The Handbook of Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures* for more tools and tips to help you prepare for your child's IEP.

## Your Child's Temperament

Each infant comes into the world with a particular style of "being." It is called temperament. An infant begins life with a particular temperamental style that influences the way others treat the child and how he or she reacts to the world. Understanding the differing temperamental styles can help adults respond appropriately to their child's behavior and help the child reach his/her full potential. Temperamental styles can be looked at as developing from a continuum of responses to stimuli.

- **Activity level:** Is the child particularly active or restless? A child who is very active, restless, and fidgety might be considered to be at the difficult level. The child rarely slows down and doesn't like to be confined.
- **Quality of mood:** How would you describe the child's basic disposition? Positive and easygoing? Negative and fussy? At a difficult level this child would generally be cranky or serious. The child might not seem to get much pleasure from life.
- **Approach/withdrawal:** How does the child react to new experiences or unexpected events? Are they approached with enthusiasm or with hesitancy? If considered difficult, this child would usually be shy and clingy. The child may stubbornly refuse to try something new.
- **Biological rhythms:** Does the child have more or less regular eating, sleeping, and bowel habits? Unpredictable rhythms of hunger and resting times might be a difficulty. This could create conflict at mealtimes and bedtime.
- **Adaptability:** What happens during times of transition and change? The difficult level shows up as anxiety and resistance to change in activity, routine, food, or clothing on a regular basis. These children don't like change and may be particular.
- **Sensory threshold:** How does the child react to sensory stimuli? Does the child get easily or over stimulated by light, noise, smells, tastes, pain, weather, touch, wet diapers? Oversensitive children would be at the difficult level.
- **Intensity of reaction:** How does the child react to stimuli? A child that generally responds to both discomfort and pleasure with great intensity could be considered difficult.
- **Distractibility:** Is the child too easily distracted from an activity? At the difficult level the child has great difficulty concentrating and paying attention, daydreams, and tends to forget instruction.
- **Persistence:** Does the child remain focused for extended periods of time? If happily engaged, does the child continue for a long time? When unhappy, does the child persist until needs are met? The child with a high level of persistence would be extremely stubborn and wouldn't give up.

## **Your Unique Child –**

### **Young Children and Temperament Styles:**

Researchers have found that while all children show the same behaviors at some time, some children are more likely to show certain behaviors. They found that about 60% of children fall into one of three groups.

**The Easy Child** – these children have regular eating, sleeping, and bowel habits. They are positive about new situations, adapt easily to changes, and don't get easily frustrated. They usually are in a good mood, smile a lot, and do well in many types of situations.

**The Strong-Willed Child** – these children have irregular eating, sleeping, and bowel habits. They are often negative to new situations, and may cry or throw tantrums when frustrated. They are slow to adapt to change, and need more time to get used to new food or people. If pushed to become immediately involved in a situation, they are more likely to become loud, oppositional, and aggressive.

**The Slow-to-Warm-Up Child** – these children show fairly mild negative responses in new situations at first, but slowly come to accept them over time. They have fairly regular eating, sleeping, and bowel habits. These children are different depending on their activity levels.

1. If the child has a high activity level, he doesn't do well with too little space, rigid schedules, or limited physical movement.
2. If the child is persistent, or likes to stay with an activity until he feels done with it, he will get upset and show "problem behavior" if he is interrupted or disrupted too soon without any warning.
3. The child who is distractible will often get distressed if asked to work for long times or at tasks harder than he can handle. If these kids are pushed to become involved right away in a situation, they may withdraw and cling to the parent, refuse to move into the activity, or retreat to a corner of the room.



## Children's Temperament — Mix & Match

---

Very, Very Active

Very, Very Calm

Very, Very Irregular  
Sleeping and Eating

Very, Very Regular  
Sleeping and Eating

Very Difficult to Distract

Very Easy to Distract

Very, Very Persistent

Not at all Persistent

Very, Very Intense

Very Mellow, Calm

Hates, Hates, Hates  
New Things

Loves, Loves, Loves  
New Things

---

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## **Learning Styles are simply different ways of learning.**

### **Visual Learners: learn through seeing...**

These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expressions to fully understand the content of a lesson or conversation.

They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to see better. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays (diagrams, charts, picture books, overheads, videos, etc.).

### **Auditory Learners: learn through listening...**

They learn best through lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud or using a tape recorder.

### **Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners: learn through moving, doing, and touching...**

These learners do best with a hands-on approach to actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

**What have you noticed about how your child learns?**

**Is your child the kind of learner who watches a long time before getting involved, or does he just jump right in?**

**How do you learn best?**

## Learning Styles Checklist

### What kind of learner are you?

Read each sentence and put a check next to the ones that best describe:

- What you usually do
- How you usually act

#### **A. Visual Strengths**      **Total for Section A** \_\_\_\_\_

- Can put together almost anything with help when using printed or pictured directions.
- Close eyes when memorizing or remembering.
- Notice things around you.
- Good at working with and solving jigsaw puzzles.
- In spare time, prefer to watch television, movies, or play video games.
- Like to see what you are learning.
- Have a great imagination.
- Looking neat wearing color-coordinated clothing is important.
- Can better understand things by reading about them than by listening.
- Is quiet; rarely volunteers answers.
- Think that the best way to remember something is to picture it in your mind.
- Take many notes in school.

#### **B. Auditory Strengths**      **Total for Section B** \_\_\_\_\_

- Love to communicate and talk a lot.
- In spare time, enjoy listening to CDs, tapes, or radio.
- Remember television commercials, jingles, and songs after hearing them once or twice.
- Use rhyming words to remember names or facts.
- Hear spoken directions and follow them quickly.
- Do better in academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes and discussing material than by just reading about it.
- Most likely to read aloud or mumble when reading.

- Have difficulty reading diagrams or maps unless someone explains them to you.
- Very verbal and expressive of feelings.
- Good at picking out sounds: can tell if sounds match when presented in pairs.
- Like to use free time to talk to others in person or on the phone.

**C. Kinesthetic/Tactile Strengths    Total for Section C\_\_\_\_\_**

- Hard to hold your attention, especially when reading, unless the story is full of action.
- Favorite pastimes include sports, active games, and building things.
- High-energy person; rarely sit still.
- As a young child, tried to touch everything you saw; like to feel the textures of things.
- Likes to move with music.
- When angry or upset show feelings more with body language, react physically, like stomping out of room.
- Learn best when you can do something. Have a hard time sitting and listening for long periods of time.
- Often use fingers to count off items or write in the air.
- Have difficulty following and remembering spoken directions.
- Appreciate physical affection and encouragement such as a hug or pat on the back.

**Add up the number of check marks in each section.**

- If you checked more in section A than in the other two sections, you learn well visually. This means you learn best by seeing something.
- If you checked more in section B than in the other two sections, you learn best by hearing something.
- If you checked mostly section C, you have kinesthetic or “active doer” strengths. This means you learn best by doing something.

**What is your Learning Style?**

- Visual                       Auditory                       Kinesthetic    or a  
 combination\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Parent Report***

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Share your hopes, dreams, and goals for your child as an adult (employment, independent living, further education, etc.):**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. List your child's strengths or positive points:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. Share any issues or challenging areas for your child, such as:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. What does your child like to do at home? What does your child dislike to do?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5. Does your child play with other children? (at home, neighborhood, other places)**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6. What kind of positive reinforcement (and rewards) do you use at home?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 7. Communication builds partnerships to improve outcomes for your child. What type of home-school communication works best for you?**

*We request that our Parent Report and the attached Concerns with Proposals be placed in our child's file. Thank You.*

## ***Parent Concerns with Proposals***

(To be added to Prior Written Notice at the IEP Meeting)

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **IEP Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Area:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Academic, Social Skills, Behavior, Home-School Communication, etc.)

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Area:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Academic, Social Skills, Behavior, Home-School Communication, etc.)

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Area:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Academic, Social Skills, Behavior, Home-School Communication, etc.)

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Area:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Academic, Social Skills, Behavior, Home-School Communication, etc.)

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

**Concern:**

**Proposal:**

Note: Attach to Parent Report and request this information be added to your child's file.

# Family Proposal Worksheet (Note taking during IEP meeting)

## Family Proposal Worksheet

The Family Proposals Worksheet is a tracking tool to use during the IEP meeting

IEP meeting for:

Age:

Date:

Proposals		Action		Outcomes		
Concerns/ Discussion Questions	Proposal and Reason	Accept	Reject	Reason for Action	Start Date	Person Responsible



The System for Student Success

### Family Survey

This is used by School Wide PBS schools to assess and insure Family Involvement in all PBS activities. This tool may be a useful strategy as part of the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) required for all schools in our state by the NM Public Education Department

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s) of your child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle response.

1.	Have you heard of PBS (Positive Behavior Support) in your child(ren)'s school?	Yes	No	Unsure
2.	Have you heard about the PBS expectations that have been created at the school for all students?	Yes	No	Unsure
3.	Do you know if your child(ren) have received any praise/acknowledgement at school for using the PBS expectations?	Yes	No	Unsure
4.	Does your child (or children) know the positive behavioral expectations?	Yes	No	Unsure
5.	Have you received enough information to know what the positive behavioral expectations are at your child(ren)'s school?	Yes	No	Unsure
6.	Have you used these positive behavioral expectations at home?	Yes	No	Unsure
7.	Have you received any positive comment(s) about your child(ren) from a teacher or staff member?	Yes	No	Unsure
8.	Have you received any negative comment(s) from a teacher or staff member about your child(ren)?	Yes	No	Unsure
9.	Have you given a positive comment to a teacher or staff member?	Yes	No	Unsure
10.	Have you noticed a change in your child(ren)'s behavior and/or attitude since PBS expectations have been taught?	Yes	No	Unsure
11.	Do you feel that your child (or children) is safe in school during the school day and school activities?	Yes	No	Unsure

## ***Positive Behavior Support Family Survey (Page 2)***

12.	Does your child (or children) feel bullied at school?	Yes	No	Unsure
13.	Do you believe that attempts have been made to make the school safer?	Yes	No	Unsure
14.	Does your child (or children) seem to like school now that PBS is in place?	Yes	No	Unsure
15.	Has the school provided information on community services that may be of help to you or other families in any way?	Yes	No	Unsure
16.	Before this survey, were you aware of a PBS school team that addresses school-wide behavioral supports?	Yes	No	Unsure
17.	Before this survey, were you aware of any family members on that team?	Yes	No	Unsure
18.	As a parent, do you feel you are encouraged to be involved with your child's education?	Yes	No	Unsure
19.	Would you like to be more involved in your child(ren)'s education?	Yes	No	Unsure
20.	Would you like to be more involved in helping to make improvements in the school for your child(ren), other students and families?	Yes	No	Unsure

If you can, please list any or all of the school's positive behavioral expectations? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know if you have any comments about any of the above questions or have other thoughts you would like to share regarding PBS in your children's school. Your help is greatly appreciated. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you once again for helping us to make our school a better place for everyone!

# Early Intervention & Positive Behavior Supports

*Families are the key to successful early intervention when their child begins to show signs of challenging behaviors that interfere with his/her learning or the learning of others. It is important for you to be familiar with the forms and processes used in schools so that you can participate and make informed decisions that will help your child succeed.*

The information shared on pages 95 to 101 is a four-part process used by Positive Behavior Supports schools as a proactive approach to address problem behaviors and plan successful intervention strategies. The process follows the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) model for school-aged students required by the NM Public Education Department. (School Wide Systems for Student Success pages 1-16.)

We thank NM Positive Behavior Supports through the NM Public Education Department Special Education Bureau for sharing this information to include in our booklet.

## Requests for Student Assistance and Developing Behavior Support Plans

### PARTS ONE and TWO

*Purpose:* Information gathered from part one will provide the SAT (Student Assistance Team) leader with information on which to base the initial summary statement of the problem, strategies that have worked (or not), and the student's areas of strengths and preferences. This information is used to make initial summary statements and to jump start the brainstorming process for possible support plan strategies.

Part one is completed by concerned staff or family member requesting student support. *Requesting support based on early concerns is encouraged.* Part two is completed by a designated person who has access to student records.

### PART THREE

*Purpose:* Part three is formatted to be used by the SAT leader for the first team meeting concerning the student. The outcome of the meeting is to (a) summarize the statement of the problem, the predictor situations that set off the problems, and the consequence that is maintaining the problem behavior, (b) establish a team accuracy rating of the problem statement, and (c) determine next steps for behavior support planning.

Part three is completed by the meeting recorder. Part three also serves as an action plan for next steps and a record of the process and decisions.

### PART FOUR

*Purpose:* Part four is formatted to be used by the SAT to develop a behavior support plan based on functional behavioral assessment results. Part four provides a template for behavior support planning and evaluation.

Part four is completed by one of the student support team members.

# Request for Assistance

(Part 1 of 4)

*Completed by concerned staff or family member requesting student support*

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ IEP: Y N

Situations of Concern	Problem Behavior(s)	Expected Behaviors

**1. Check the areas of concern(s):**

Academic	Problem Behaviors	Communication	Personal Care	Health	Contributing factors
reading math spelling writing study skills other _____	aggressive non compliant poor attention work completion withdrawn disruptive poor attendance other	language fluency articulation voice ELL other	dressing hygiene organization glasses other	visual acuity visual tracking hearing physical seizures medication gross/ fine motor other	curriculum trauma personal loss anxiety peers family other

**2. Check the strategies tried so far & circle those that were effective:**

General review	Modify Environment	Modify Presentation	Modify Curriculum/ Homework	Modify Expectations
review cum file talk with parents talk with previous teacher seek peer help classroom assessment other	change seating arrangement provide quiet space provide a larger space encourage work breaks other	pre-teach give extra practice guided practice change pacing give extra feedback provide patterns vary materials increase instructional time planned positive reinforcer other	change task size change color provide computer provide calculator use visuals/ manipulatives change instruction provide a model other	group product individual product make it easier give more time tutor/mentor alternative response emphasize quality over quantity other

3. People I wish to invite to the SAT meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Parent contacted by  phone,  conf,  letter, on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

5. What do you hope to gain from this meeting?

- suggestions/ support   
  check in/ check out   
  behavior plan   
  sped referral  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

**When completed, place this form in the SAT mailbox**

Adapted by A.Todd, 2004 from Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999  
Modified by NM Positive Behavior Support, 2006

*Teacher brings the following to the SAT meeting: Work samples, assessment scores, reading rate/accuracy, anecdotal, incident reports, and other data.*

# Request for Student Support

(Part 2 of 4)

*Completed by designated person who has access to student records*

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ IEP: Y N

1. SAT meeting scheduled for : \_\_\_\_\_ (date/time/place)

## Gather the following information prior to the SAT meeting

2. Front office gathers:

Medication \_\_\_\_\_ Physician \_\_\_\_\_  
(name/dose/time) (name & #)

<p><b>Additional Medical Concerns:</b></p> <p>Vision Hearing Speech Other</p>
---

### Past Year Information

Office Discipline Referrals \_\_\_\_\_ Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ Tardies \_\_\_\_\_ Retention \_\_\_\_\_  
(# of referrals) (# of abs.) (# of tardies) (specify grades)

Reading Scores: \_\_\_\_\_  met benchmark  strategic  intensive  
(Correct words/min)

Math Scores:  met benchmark  strategic  intensive

### Current Year Information

Office Discipline Referrals \_\_\_\_\_ Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ Tardies \_\_\_\_\_  
(# of referrals) (# of abs.) (# of tardies)

IEP \_\_\_\_\_  
(review date)

Reading Scores: \_\_\_\_\_  met benchmark  strategic  intensive  
(Correct words/min)

Math Scores:  met benchmark  strategic  intensive

**Other concerns:**

# Summary of Student Support Team Meeting Minutes

(Part 3 of 4)

*Completed by the meeting recorder  
Also serves as an action plan for next steps and a record of the process and decisions.*

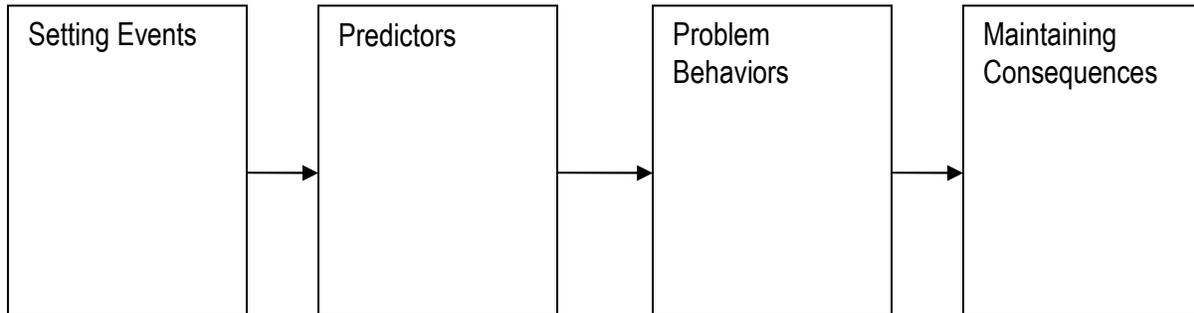
Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ IEP: Y N

Student strengths / preferences in academic work	Student strengths / preferences ins social skills areas

Health Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary Statement of Problem Behaviors



How **accurate** is the team about the summary statement?  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 not \_\_\_\_\_> very  
**Action Planning**      is your accuracy rating a 5 or 6?

- YES**
1. if a safety plan is needed, determine plan
  2. if a targeted intervention is available to support the needs of this student, determine implementation and monitoring plan
  3. if individualized support is necessary, prepare next steps to define competing behavior pathway
  4. determine next steps and meeting date to look at student progress

- NO**
1. if a safety plan is needed, determine plan
  2. determine the steps for getting the information needed for an accuracy rating of 5 or 6. (ie., FACTS, student guided interview, direct observation)

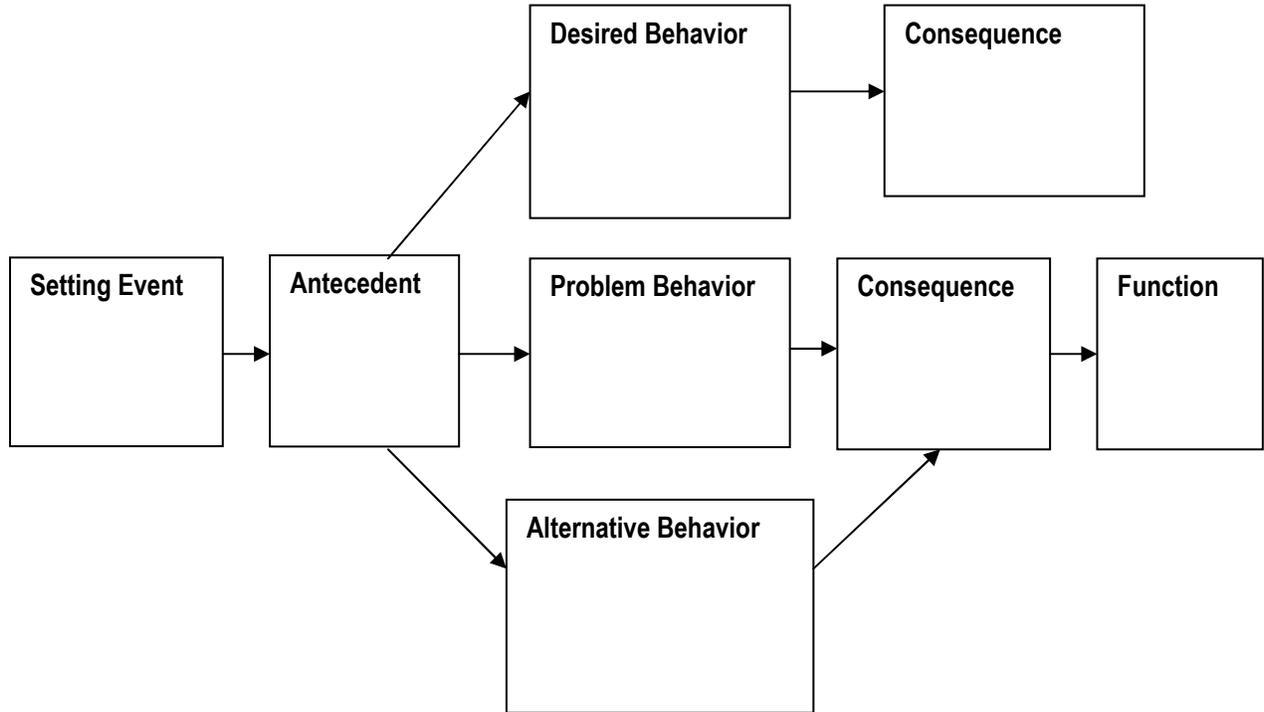
<b>Next steps:</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>Next meeting date:</b> _____			

Adapted by A.Todd, 2004 from Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999  
Modified by NM Positive Behavior Support, 2006

# Behavior Support Plan: Competing Behavior Pathway

(Part 4 of 4)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_



*(Make problem behavior irrelevant)*

*(Make problem behavior inefficient)*

*(Make problem behavior ineffective)*

Setting Event Strategies	Antecedent Strategies	Behavior Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies

Adapted by A.Todd, 2004 from Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999  
 Modified by NM Positive Behavior Support, 2006



# Behavior Support Plan: Evaluate Plan

(Part 4 of 4 continued)

**Behavioral Goal** (Use specific, observable, measurable descriptions of goal)

What is the short-term behavioral goal?

Expected date:

What is the long-term behavioral goal?

Expected date:

---

## Evaluation Procedures

Data to be Collected	Procedures for Data Collection	Person Responsible	Timeline
Is Plan Being Implemented?			
Is Plan Making a Difference?			

**Plan review date:**

Adapted by A.Todd, 2004 from Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999  
Modified by NM Positive Behavior Support, 2006

# Procedural Safeguards



## ***Prior Written Notice (PWN) § IDEA 300.503***

*Prior Written Notice may be the most important of all Procedural Safeguards.* If we, as parents have done a good job of getting all of our issues addressed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) through discussion and/or written reports attached to the IEP record, then each point should be addressed in writing either through the IEP itself or PWN. These written forms (either the IEP or PWN) make good documentation if, at some later time, there is a dispute over what was said or agreed upon.

**Definition:** *Prior Written Notice* must be provided to a parent of a child whenever the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, education placement, or provisions of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) to a student. Some actions also require consent. A single form that meets consent and written notice requirements can be used.

The Prior Written Notice must be in a language understandable to the general public. It must be provided in the native language or other mode of communication used by the parents unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. If the native language or other mode of communication is not a written language, the district must take steps to make sure the following occurs: 1) The notice is translated orally or by other means to a parent in the parents' native language or other mode of communication; 2) A parent understands the content of the notice; and/or 3) There is written evidence that the notice requirements of this section have been met.

*When is Prior Written Notice Required?* A district must provide PWN to a parent in a reasonable amount of time before initiating or changing the following:

1. Identification (eligibility for services, need for services, and/or change of disability category)
2. Evaluation (initial evaluation, re-evaluation)
3. The provision of FAPE to the student (IEP changes) or,
4. Educational placement (graduation, program completion, a placement that changes the degree of interaction with non-disabled peers, placement in an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES), suspension for more than 10 days, or expulsion)

*When is Prior Written Notice Not Required?* Neither PWN nor consent is required in the following situations:

1. Tests which are administered to both regular and special education students in a grade or class.
2. Teacher-made tests or criterion-referenced tests, which are used to determine the student's progress toward IEP goals and objectives.

**Content of Prior Written Notice:** *The PWN must include the following:*

1. A description of the action proposed or refused by the district.
2. An explanation of why the district proposes or refuses the action.
3. A description of any other options the district considered and the reasons why those options were rejected.
4. A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposed or refused action.
5. A description of any other factors relevant to the proposal or refusal.
6. A statement that the parent has protection under procedural safeguards or parental rights and how they can obtain a copy of Parent Rights.
7. Sources for the parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding his or her rights.

**Placement = Services + Location**

When we think of placement, we need to remember that Special Education is a *service* not a place! Placement is a combination of services provided in the Least Restrictive Environment and the location where the services are provided. A change of placement occurs when either the services or the location where services are provided is changed.

***Informed Decisions!***

One of the more important highlights under IDEA 2004 is that parents must make **Informed Decisions** about their child's education. Making an informed decision means that you understand ALL of the options before you make your final decision and that you understand why that particular option was chosen. The description of the proposal and why proposals were accepted or rejected should be written in the IEP and/or the Prior Written Notice document. In other words, there must be written reasons in the IEP document and they should make sense. **We recommend parents sign the IEP under the following conditions:**

1. The parents understand all of the IEP and all of the options that were proposed and why each option was accepted or rejected.
2. All of their concerns or ideas have been addressed either through the IEP or Prior Written Notice of proposal.
3. They agree or are in consensus with the rest of the team.

**When parents disagree with the IEP, we recommend that they sign the IEP “I disagree with the IEP” and tell the district in writing why they disagree.** If you do not make an informed decision and sign the IEP anyway, it is like signing a blank check.



*For more information about the IEP process, contact Parents Reaching Out to request your copy of **The Handbook of Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures**.*

## ***Informed Consent and Signing the IEP***

*The IEP is a legal document. Your signature is very important. There are three times that your signature is required during the IEP process. You must give your informed written consent:*



- (1) when your child is first evaluated;
- (2) before the initial provision of special education and related services; and,
- (3) when your child is reevaluated.

People are under the impression that if parents do not like an IEP, all they have to do is not sign it and it will not take effect. This is not true. Schools are required by law to provide FAPE, (Free Appropriate Public Education) and are required to have a legal IEP for every child covered by IDEA at all times.

If a parent attends a meeting and simply walks out without signing the IEP, schools are required by law to provide FAPE so the new IEP goes into effect. *Not signing an IEP does not cancel that IEP.* If there are unresolved issues, request that the IEP be tabled and reconvened at an agreed upon time. (As a best practice, most school districts will try some type of informal mediation to resolve the dispute prior to implementing the IEP.)

*However, you do not have to sign the IEP at the meeting.* You may request a copy of the IEP to take home so that you can review its content and think about it. Best practice in our state recommends giving the parents 10 days to consider their decision. Otherwise, schools are obligated to go ahead with the new IEP under the IDEA requirements.

### **What if I disagree with my child's IEP?**

You have an obligation to let the district know that you disagree and with what part of the IEP you disagree. **Always put your disagreement in writing and be specific.** Your written disagreement is called a Dissenting Opinion. Request that it be attached to the IEP record. If the parent has written a Dissenting Opinion, the parts of the IEP that the parent has agreed to should go into effect. The parts that are being disputed should be resolved through a process of dispute resolution. The stated objection cannot be used to prevent the district from placing a student in an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES), in cases involving weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury. (See page 68)

Resolve disputes at the lowest possible level. If you disagree with the IEP:

- Do nothing. (*Will this help your child?*)
- Try and resolve the dispute informally.
- File a formal letter of complaint with the State Department of Education.
- File for a due process hearing. The school district has the option of filing for a due process hearing to prove that the program they have recommended is appropriate. If due process is selected, you may request the “stay put” provision to allow the old IEP to stay in effect. Districts may honor “stay put” during a formal complaint or informal processes (unless the situation involves weapons, drugs, or bodily injury) to avoid escalating a situation, but they are not required to do so.

# Resources for Families and School Communities

We have selected information from the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) to offer tips, tools, and other important information about behavior which is designed for families and educators. NICHCY serves the nation as a central source of information on: disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth; IDEA; No Child Left Behind; and research-based information on effective educational practices.

*NICHCY Connections...to Behavior: The Works*  
<http://www.nichcy.org/PAGES/behavassess.aspx>

This NICHCY link connects you with sources of information for helping children who have behavior challenges. Resources are by categories including: Behavior Expertise; Behavior Assessment, Plans, and Positive Supports; Behavior at Home; Behavior at School; and Bullying.

We invite families and others that do not have connections to the internet to use the computers in the Resource Center at Parents Reaching Out. If you live outside the Albuquerque area and would like any of the articles listed, please call Parents Reaching Out (1-800-524-5176). Our Resource Center's coordinator will work with you to get you the information you need.

## ***Using Positive Methods for Change at Home***

*Help your children develop self-control.* [www.aboutourkids.org/articles/discipline.html](http://www.aboutourkids.org/articles/discipline.html)

Using real-life stories, this Web site (New York University Child Study Center) illustrates the warning signs of problem behavior, do's and don'ts of discipline, and other resources.

*How might you address your child's challenging behavior?*

[www.pbs.org/parents/issuesadvice/inclusivecommunities/challenging\\_behavior.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/issuesadvice/inclusivecommunities/challenging_behavior.html)

You'll find this reader-friendly site is well organized. It has facts about all aspects involved in working with children who have challenging behavior. Links to information on assessment and special education are provided. Links to information in Spanish are included.

*More on teaching kids self-control skills.* [www.naspcenter.org/pdf/behavior%20template.pdf](http://www.naspcenter.org/pdf/behavior%20template.pdf)

Learn strategies for teaching kids the techniques for self-control. This 4-page document gives ways to help children identify their feelings and learn to recognize the connection between feelings and behaviors. It also offers specific techniques to teach your child how to handle anger.

*Yet more on teaching children to manage their own behavior.*

<http://csefel.uiuc.edu/briefs/wwb7.html> Practical strategies for helping children learn to manage their own behavior A Spanish version is available

*About-face for stormy preschoolers.*

[www.evidencebasedpractices.org/bottomlines/bottomlines\\_voll\\_no4.pdf](http://www.evidencebasedpractices.org/bottomlines/bottomlines_voll_no4.pdf)

This research-based, easy-to-read summary on Early Childhood Development will tell you about Parent-Child Interaction Therapy and its positive effects on childhood behavior.

*Alternatives to spanking.*

<http://www.nmha.org/children/discipline.pdf>

National Mental Health Association (NMHA) article discusses the difference between discipline and punishment, the negative consequences of physical discipline, and positive alternatives.

*Reinforcing small changes in behavior.*

[www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=631&g=2](http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=631&g=2)

This article talks about how children and adolescents learn, about misbehavior, and small steps that parents can use to help guide their child toward better behavior.

*Get behavior in shape at home.*

[www.pbis.org/English/behaviorshape.htm](http://www.pbis.org/English/behaviorshape.htm)

How do you create a Positive Behavioral Support system in your home? This Web site gives easy-to-implement suggestions. Learn the reasoning behind different techniques and how to use them to achieve your behavior goals. (Also available in Spanish)

*Learn practical solutions to common behavior problems.*

<http://cecp.air.org/familybriefs>

12 different publications on various topics: promoting resilience in children, encouraging good behavior, and how to get your children involved in addressing their own challenging behaviors.

*Your parent-friendly guide to functional assessment and support.*

[www.uoregon.edu/~ttobin/parent.pdf](http://www.uoregon.edu/~ttobin/parent.pdf)

The guide describes a functional assessment and what it can do to help your child. You can use it to help your child at home and to work with school staff to put a plan into place at school.

*Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and positive interventions: What parents need to know.*

[www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c79.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c79.pdf)

This publication will help you find out what is causing your child's problem behaviors. After you find the cause, you can create a game plan to support and encourage the behaviors you do want, and get rid of the behaviors you don't want. (Also available in Spanish)

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## ***Improving Family Life***

*Why does my kid do that?*

[www.beachcenter.org/default.asp?](http://www.beachcenter.org/default.asp?strResource=all&Submit=Go&submitFlag=true&id=9&act=view&type=topic)

[strResource=all&Submit=Go&submitFlag=true&id=9&act=view&type=topic](http://www.beachcenter.org/default.asp?strResource=all&Submit=Go&submitFlag=true&id=9&act=view&type=topic)

Want to know why your child engages in problem behavior? Check out this guide to family-friendly resources from the Beach Center. Find out how to determine why a person with a disability engages in problem behavior and ways to support the individual in learning other ways to act. Read articles, personal stories, tip lists, and other resources on solving behavior problems.

*Fact sheets! Get your fact sheets here!*

[www.nmha.org/infoctr/factsheets/index.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/infoctr/factsheets/index.cfm)

This site is a fact sheet treasure chest. You'll find information on a wide range of topics such as anxiety disorders, bullying, ADHD, and autism. Also, get tips for making transition back to school after vacation go smoothly.

*How to get help for your child.*

[www.uoregon.edu/~ttobin/Finding.htm](http://www.uoregon.edu/~ttobin/Finding.htm)

Having trouble getting what your child needs? This reader-friendly site offers communication tips to use when seeking help. You'll learn techniques for keeping things in perspective, focusing on the problem at hand, and what information you should be prepared to provide when you are asking for help. Includes a print-ready checklist to help keep track of the information you gather.

*How to get help for yourself.*

[www.conductdisorders.com/](http://www.conductdisorders.com/)

A great link to a group of parents who are raising challenging children. They invite you in and offer their site as a "soft place to land for the battle-weary parent."

*Mental Health Fact Sheets!*

[www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/index.htm](http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/index.htm)

This web site has 87 fact sheets on various issues, including ADHD, depression, conduct disorders, oppositional defiance disorder, and violent behavior. (Available in Spanish)

*What's temperament and personality got to do with it?*

[http://familyfun.go.com/raisingkids/child/skills/feature/FGP\\_personality/FGP\\_personality.html](http://familyfun.go.com/raisingkids/child/skills/feature/FGP_personality/FGP_personality.html)

This 4-page excerpt from the Field Guide to Parenting by Shelley Butler and Deb Kratz discusses temperament and behavior. This Web site is rich in links to many parenting tips.

*More about temperament and its affect on behavior.*

[www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=495&g=1](http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=495&g=1)

Let Schwab Learning introduce you to nine temperament traits: activity level, sensitivity, regularity, approach/withdrawal, adaptability, mood, intensity, persistence, and distractibility. Find out how to pinpoint your child's traits and how they can affect behavior.

*Working with your child's temperament*

[www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=494](http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=494)

Get ideas on helping children in ways that match their natural tendencies. This site offers suggestions for managing extreme behaviors. Click on the link to the Parent to Parent message board to read tips from other parents.

## ***Useful Web Sites***

IDEA 2004

<http://idea.ed.gov/>

New Mexico Public Education Department

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/>

New Mexico Public Education Department Special Education Bureau

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/index.htm>

Office for Civil Rights

[www.ed.gov/office/OCR](http://www.ed.gov/office/OCR)

US Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html?src=oc>

Beach Center on Families and Disability

[www.si.ukans.edu/beach/beachhp.htm](http://www.si.ukans.edu/beach/beachhp.htm)

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

<http://cecp.air.org/>

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support

[www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

Council for Exceptional Children

[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

Family and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE)

[www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)

Kids Source

[www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com)

Learning Disabilities Association

[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

New Mexico Positive Behavior Supports

[www.nmpbs.org](http://www.nmpbs.org)

National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities

[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

National Parent Network on Disabilities

[www.NPND.org](http://www.NPND.org)

Pacer Center, Inc.

[www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (Alliance)

[www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

The Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior

<http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/about.html>

Wrights Law

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

## ***Make Every Connection Count***

### **Beach Center on Families and Disability**

University of Kansas  
3111 Haworth Hall, Room 3136  
Lawrence KS 66045  
Voice: 785-864-7600 Web Address: [www.beachcenter.org](http://www.beachcenter.org)

### **Center for Development and Disability**

2300 Menaul Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107  
Voice: 505-272-3000 or 1-800-472-3235  
Web Address: [www.cdd.unm.edu](http://www.cdd.unm.edu)

### **Council for Exceptional Children**

1110 North Glebe Road #300  
Arlington VA 22201  
Voice: 800-224-6830 Web Address: [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

### **Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM) *formerly P & A***

1720 Louisiana Blvd. NE Suite 204  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
505-256-3100 or toll free in NM 1-800-432-4682 Web address: [www.nmpanda.org](http://www.nmpanda.org)

### **Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE)**

FAPE Office - PACER Center, Inc.  
8161 Normandale Boulevard, Minneapolis MN 55437  
Voice: 952-838-9000, 888-248-0822 TTY: 952-838-0190 Web Address: [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)

### **Family Voices, Inc.**

2340 Alamo SE, Suite 102  
Albuquerque, NM 87106  
Voice: 505-872-4774 or 888-835-5669 Fax: (505) 872-4780 Web Address: [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org)

### **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY)**

1825 Connecticut Ave NW Suite 700  
Washington DC 20009  
Voice: 800-695-0285 TTY: 202-884-8200 Web Address: [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

### **Native American Disability Law Center**

3535 E. 30<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 201  
Farmington, NM 87042  
Voice: 505-566-5880/ 1-800-862-7271 FAX: 505-566-5889 Web: <http://www.nativelegalnet.org/>

### **New Mexico Public Education Department**

300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, NM 87501-2786  
Phone: (505) 827-5800 Web Address: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/index.htm>

### **New Mexico Public Education Department –Special Education Bureau**

120 South Federal Place—Room 206  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Voice: 505-827-1457 FAX: 505-954-0001 Web Address: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/index.htm>

**New Mexico Family Network** *(formerly PBDC)*

1101 Cardenas Road NE, # 202 , Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Voice: (505) 265-0430 or Parent Line: 800-273-PBDC (7232)  
Web Address: <http://newmexicofamilynetwork.org>

**New Mexico Government**

*Governor Bill Richardson*  
State Capitol, Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87503  
Voice: 505-827-3000 Web Address: [www.state.nm.us/](http://www.state.nm.us/)

*New Mexico Legislature*

Voice: 505-986-4600 Web Address: <http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs/>

**PACER Center, Inc.**

8161 Normandale Boulevard  
Minneapolis MN 55437  
Voice: 952-838-9000 TTY: 952-838-0190 Web Address: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

**Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers**

8161 Normandale Blvd  
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044  
Voice: 952-838-9000 TTY: 952-838-0190 Nationwide Toll Free: 1-888-248-0822 Web Address:  
<http://www.taalliance.org/>

**The Arc of New Mexico**

3655 Carlisle NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87102-1715  
Voice: 505-883-4630 or 1-800-358-6493 Web Address: <http://www.arcnm.org/index.php>

**U.S. Department of Education**

400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
Voice: 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) TTY: 1-800-437-0833 Web Address: [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

**U.S. Department of Education – Office for Civil Rights**

1244 Speer Blvd. Suite 310  
Denver, CO 80204-3582  
Voice: 303-844-5695 TDD 844-3417 Web Address: [www.ed.gov/office/OCR](http://www.ed.gov/office/OCR)

**U.S. Department of Education – Office of Special Education Programs**

400 Maryland Ave, SW, PCP, Room 4091  
Washington DC 20202-2600  
Voice: (202) 245-7468  
Web Address: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html>

## U.S. Congress – New Mexico Delegation

Parents Reaching Out recommends that you first contact the New Mexico office(s) of our Congressional Representatives, especially if you are writing letters. Their staff will assist you and make sure that your Senator or Representative gets information in a timely manner.

House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/>

Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>

### **Congressman, Martin Heinrich**

<http://heinrich.house.gov/>

*Washington, DC Office*  
1505 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202-225-6316 / Fax: 202-225-4975

*New Mexico District Office (1<sup>st</sup> District)*

20 First Plaza NW Suite 603  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
505-346-6781 / Fax: 505-346-6723

### **Congressman, Ben R. Lujan**

<http://lujan.house.gov/>

*Washington, DC Office*  
502 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202-225-6190 / Fax: 202-226-1528

*New Mexico District Office (3<sup>rd</sup> District)*

811 St. Michael's Drive Suite 104  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505-984-8950 / Fax: 505-986-5047

### **Congressman, Harry Teague**

<http://teague.house.gov/>

*Washington, DC Office*  
1007 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202-225-2365 / Fax: 202-225-9599

*New Mexico District Office (2<sup>nd</sup> District)*

200 E. Broadway, Suite 200  
Hobbs, NM 88240  
575-392-8325 / Fax: 575-433-8325

### **Senator Jeff Bingaman**

<http://bingaman.senate.gov/>

*Washington Office*  
703 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-5521 / Fax: 202-224-2852  
Toll Free (from NM only) 1-800-443-8658

*New Mexico Offices*

- 625 Silver Avenue, SW Suite 130  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
505-346-6601
- 106 B West Main  
Farmington, NM 87401  
505-325-5030
- 148 Loretto Towne Centre  
505 South Main, Las Cruces, NM 88001  
505-523-6561
- 200 East Fourth Street, Suite 300  
Roswell, NM 88201  
505-622-7113
- 119 East Marcy, Suite 101  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505-988-6647

### **Senator, Tom Udall**

[http://tomudall.senate.gov](http://tomudall.senate.gov/)

*Washington Office*  
110 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-3102  
202-224-6621 / Fax: 202-228-3261

*New Mexico Offices*

- 120 South Federal Place, Suite 302  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505-988-6511 / Fax: 505-988-6514
- Albuquerque Plaza, Suite 710  
201 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
505-346-6791 / Fax: 505-346-6720
- Loretto Town Center, Suite 118  
505 South Main  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-526-5475 / Fax: 575-523-6589





# Parents Reaching Out

*Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family*

As a statewide non-profit organization, we connect with parents, caregivers, educators, and other professionals to promote healthy, positive, and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. We have served New Mexico families for over twenty-five years. Our staff and Family Leadership Action Network volunteers reflect the unique diversity of the communities throughout our state.

Children do not come with instructions on how to deal with the difficult circumstances that many families experience. Parents Reaching Out believes that families' needs go beyond the bounds of formal services. *What we can offer to each other is uniquely ours. We have all been there.*

## Our Mission

The mission of Parents Reaching Out is to enhance positive outcomes for families and children in New Mexico through informed decision making, advocacy, education, and resources. Parents Reaching Out provides the networking opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. This mission supports *all families* including those who have children with disabilities, and others who are disenfranchised. Parents Reaching Out achieves this by:

- Developing family leadership
- Connecting families to each other
- Building collaborative partnerships
- Providing families knowledge and tools to enhance their power

## Our Beliefs

- Families need support wherever they are in their journey.
- All families care deeply about their children.
- Families may need tools and support to accomplish their dreams.
- All families are capable of making informed decisions that are right for their family.
- Families in the state benefit from our organization having the staff and materials that meet their diversity.
- Systems that listen carefully to the family perspective improve outcomes for our children.

We invite all families and those serving families and children in New Mexico to make *Parents Reaching Out your one stop resource for a stronger family.* Our publications, workshops, and Resource Center offer tools for informed decision making and building partnerships in communities. Our trained staff and network of volunteers are here to serve you.

*Parents Reaching Out is the home of:*

NM Parent Information and Resource Center (NMPIRC)

NM Parent Training and Information Center (NMPTIC)

NM Family to Family Health Information Center (NMF2FHIC)

## Parents Reaching Out

1920 B Columbia Drive, SE

Albuquerque, NM 87106

1-505-247-0192 ♦ 1-800-524-5176

[www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org)

From I-25—take the Gibson Blvd Exit 222 and go East on Gibson. Turn left at the third stop light (Girard). Turn left on Vail. Go one block to Columbia. Turn left on Columbia. Parents Reaching Out is on the east side of the street. Welcome!

