What it Takes: Effectively Supporting Children with the Most Challenging Behavior

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The Pyramid Model:
Promoting Social and Emotional Competence and Addressing Challenging Behavior

Universal

Secondary Prevention: Some Children

Tertiary Intervention: Few Children

Effective Environments

Targeted Social Emotional Supports

High Quality Supportive Environments

Nurturing and Respective Relationships

Effective Workforces

Universal
Nurturing and Responsive Relationships

- Foundation of the pyramid
- Essential to healthy social development
- Includes relationships with children, families and team members

High Quality Environments

- Inclusive early care and education environments
- Comprehensive system of curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation
- Environmental design, instructional materials, scheduling, child guidance, and teacher interactions that meet high quality practices as described by NAEYC and DEC

Supportive Home Environments

- Supporting families and other caregivers to promote development within natural routines and environments
- Providing families and other caregivers with information, support, and new skills
Secondary Supports

Targeted Social Emotional Supports

- Self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, problem solving, developing social relationships
- Explicit instruction
- Increased opportunities for instruction, practice, feedback
- Family partnerships
- Progress monitoring and data-based decision-making

Targeted Social Emotional Supports

- The support and coaching of families to enhance their child’s social development within natural environments and activities
- Self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, developing social relationships
Intensive Individualized Interventions

Intensive individualized interventions are used with children who have very persistent and severe challenging behavior who do not respond to the typical preventive practices, child guidance procedures, or social emotional teaching strategies that would work with most children.
Individualized Positive Behavior Support

• An approach for changing a child’s behavior
• Is based on humanistic values and extensive multi-disciplinary research.
  – Including research and principles from applied behavior analysis
• An approach for developing an understanding of why the child has challenging behavior and teaching the child new skills to replace challenging behavior.
• A holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact on a child, family, and the child’s behavior.

Research on I-PBS

• Effective for all ages of individuals with disabilities 20 mos.- 50+ years.
• Effective for diverse groups of individuals with challenges: mental retardation, oppositional defiant disorder, autism, emotional behavioral disorders, children at risk, etc.
• PBS is the only comprehensive and evidence-based approach to address challenging behavior within a variety of natural settings by natural change agents.

Challenging Behavior Communicates

• Communicates a message when a child does not have language.
• Used instead of language by a child who has limited social skills or has learned that challenging behavior will result in meeting his or her needs.
YOU CAN’T NOT COMMUNICATE

Any behavior that the child displays or does not display communicates something.

“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 Hammer (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2

With I-PBS “We Go to the Library!”

SUPPORTS
Social Story
Going to the Library

Written by Mommy for Brendan
2003

I can walk to the library.
No running at the library.
I hold hands with Mommy or Daddy when I walk to the library.

First, I walk pass the sliding doors. Then, it is time to whisper. The library is a quiet place.

Mommy and Daddy are happy when I use my calm, quiet voice. I can whisper and get books at the library.
I like the library!
First, I quietly play with the beads. I can play with the beads for a little while. Then, I stop and get books. I will know it is almost time to get books when Mommy or Daddy say 2 more minutes.

1. Play with beads

2. Choose books

Sometimes it is hard to talk quietly in a whisper and to use walking feet; but I can try to follow the library rules.

The library rules are:

Whisper Walk

I'm all done with the beads.

Wow, look at all those books!

I can find cool books and take them to my house.

Let's show the librarian which books I want to take home.
I wait my turn to show the librarian the books that I want to borrow. When it is my turn, I give the librarian my books and my library card. I can say, “I want to borrow these books please.”

I’m all done at the library. That was fun! It is time to go. Let’s go to the van. I can hold my books and walk to the van.

I love my new books! I can carry my new books to the van. I hold hands with Mommy or Daddy.
"We Go to the Library!"

SUPPORTS
- Social Story
- Cue Cards
- Mini-Schedule

With PBS-Computer Play

SUPPORTS
- My Potty Book
- Visual of Sequenced Step

With PBS-Computer Turn-Taking

SUPPORTS
- Turn Cue Card
With PBS-I’m All Done with the Computer

SUPPORTS

First/Then computer book

Bradford

PBS Application in a Community Preschool

About Bradford

• 2 years, 7 months
• Part C services of speech/language therapy
• Diagnoses of Expressive/Receptive Language Delay, Behavioral Disorder
• Lives with parents, one brother (age 3 1/2 years)
• Strengths - social, likes music, good fine motor skills, strong family support system
• Problem Behaviors - Aggression, Noncompliance, Property Destruction, Self-Injurious Behavior, Elopement
• Significant risk of Preschool Expulsion
Process of Positive Behavior Support

Step 1: Identify Goals
Step 2: Gather Information/ Functional Assessment
Step 3: Develop Hypotheses
Step 4: Design Behavior Support Plan
Step 5: Implement intervention

Hypotheses

• Bradford engaged in challenging behavior:
  – in an attempt to escape from activities that were unpredictable or had unclear expectations
  – in an attempt to escape from activities that were nonpreferred (difficult, boring)
  – in an attempt to escape from activities associated with high levels of noise or people
  – in an attempt to gain peer or teacher attention

Prevention Strategies

• Visual cues/photo schedule/stop signs
• Social stories for routines
• First/Then boards
• Choice chart
• Preferred items
• Manipulatives
• Modified materials
• Remove distractions
• Add quiet area in room
• Add breaks
• Peer buddy
Replacement Skills

- Teach how to verbally initiate/terminate interactions
- Teach how to initiate appropriate physical affection
- Teach how to appropriately ask for "break" or "help"
- Teach how to respond to loud or over-stimulating situations
- Teach how to make and express choice

Teacher Responses

- Clear instructions
- Redirect and ignore
- Specific praise
- Provide choice
- Provide consistent verbal "All done", countdowns
- Promote active participation with modeling
- Encourage verbal communication
- Monitor and anticipate difficult play activities provide option to leave area

Replacement Skills

Verbal Examples:
- "I want to share"
- "Go away"
- "I need help"
- "I want a break"
- "All done"
- "I want a hug/kiss"

Nonverbal Examples:
- Gesture with toy to share
- Gesture for hug/kiss
- Gesture with STOP sign to end or break
- Point to picture to leave area
Process of Positive Behavior Support

Step 1: Establishing a collaborative team and identifying goals
Step 2: Gathering information (functional assessment)
Step 3: Developing hypotheses (best guess)
Step 4: Designing behavior support plans
Step 5: Implementing, monitoring, evaluating outcomes, and refining plan in natural environments

Potential Team Members

- Parents/Family
- Teacher(s)
- Assisting Teacher/Paraprofessional
- Therapists
- Administrative Staff
- Other(s)

Importance and Purpose of Teaming

(1) to establish a unified vision for short and long term goals;
(2) to establish a mutually-supportive group;
(3) to incorporate all relevant perspectives and resources;
(4) to establish a shared commitment
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Functional Assessment

• A process for developing an understanding of a child’s challenging behavior and how the behavior is governed by environmental events.
• A portfolio of information that provides you with data (e.g., observations, information) to understand the behavior
• Results in the identification of the “purpose” or “function” of the challenging behavior.
Hypotheses Statements

- Triggers of the challenging behavior
- Description of the challenging behavior
- Responses that maintain the challenging behavior
- Purpose of the behavior

Hypothesis Statement

Billy will use tantrums to request a social interaction. Billy will initiate a chase game or request to be held by pulling the adult’s hand or positioning the adult. If the adult does not comply, Billy will cry loudly, scream, and bring his hands to his face or ears. Often the adult will comply with his request or pick him up.

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Behavior Support Plan

• **Behavior Hypotheses** - Purpose of the behavior, your best guess about why the behavior occurs
• **Prevention Strategies** - Ways to make events and interactions that trigger challenging behavior easier for the child to manage
• **Replacement Skills** - New skills to teach throughout the day to replace the challenging behavior
• **Responses** - What adults will do when the challenging behavior occurs to ensure that the challenging behavior is not maintained and the new skill is learned

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Implementation

• Action plan for developing supports
• Simply written, clearly articulated plan
• Simple data collection system to track outcomes
  – Decrease in challenging behavior
  – Increase in replacement skill
• Coaching and feedback
• Monitor fidelity
• Regular reviews
Implementation Challenge

• Moving from reactive, simple interventions to proactive, complex interventions
• Understanding that a person’s first impulse is to use what they have learned in the past or what has been internalized and is expected
• Family/Caregiver will need tons of encouragement to become fluent with plan implementation

What it takes?

• A systematic approach
• Posture of understanding versus control
• Collaborative teaming
• Investment or “buy in” to the process
• Support for families and caregivers

Resources

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention
www.challengingbehavior.org
Resources

- Family tools
- Training Modules
- Consultant guides
- Videos and illustrations
- Fact Sheets
- Tool-Kit
- Manuals