

# Breaking “Bad”: Preventing and Addressing Challenging Behaviors Through Promotion of Positive Social Skills.

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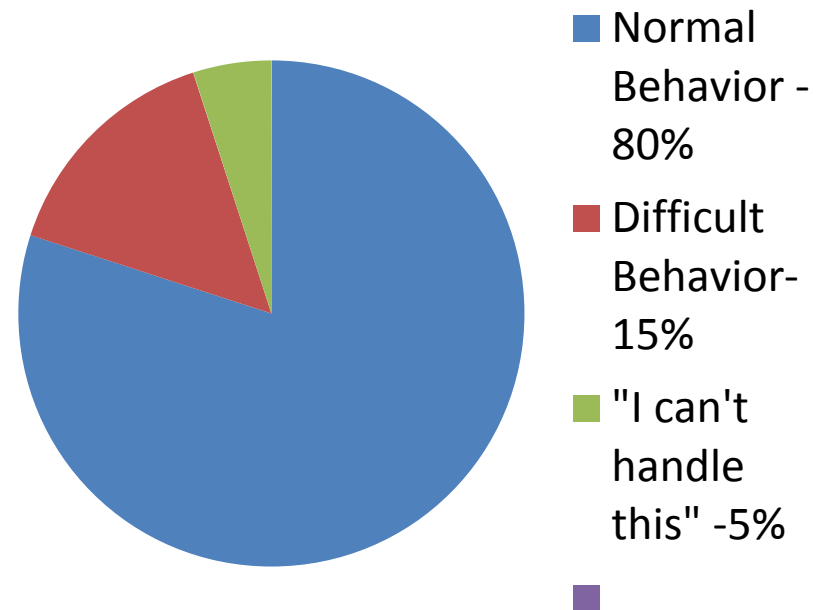
# Just Like Me

- Are a parent of a 0-8 year old
- Are a service provider
- Are both!
- Would like a nap
- Feel like you spend too much time dealing with behavior
- Feel like your “bag of tricks” needs some updating
- Feel like you would like to leave this presentation now
- Wish you wore different clothes/shoes

# Beginning Thoughts

- If your child or classroom meets these percentages, everything is going well!
- If you feel like you are spending more than 20% of your time dealing with behavior, it's time to make some changes

**Expected Percentage of Behavior**



# The Easiest Thing to Change is...

The one thing to remember about  
behavior interventions

# **YOURSELF!**

Sorry, no magic wands for this. I keep  
mine for myself when I come to  
observe in classrooms.

I will not be asking you to do  
anything today that I have not tried  
on my own child

Thus answering the question of why  
my child will need therapy before he  
is 18.

**A FEW EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR  
CONCERNS????**

# Two Parts to Behavior Change

Prevention and Intervention



# Prevention Activities

- “Teaching” Behavior
- The Art and Science of Play
- Use Your Words (but not all of the time)

# First, We Teach...

## What To Do, Not What Not To Do

- You do not teach the letter B by saying this is not an A, C, or D, so what should it be?
- Behavior is the same. Tell the child the answer of what you want/expect.
- Don't run = Walk
  - Lots of alternatives to running

# Just like ABCs and 123s

- Behavior is no different from letters and numbers, children need to be taught.
- Some children may not actually know what appropriate behavior looks like
- This is more than teaching manners, although these also need taught
- So, what behaviors can we teach?

# Model Behavior

- If you expect the children to be still, you must also be still. It sends a clearer message.
- Get attention with brief statement “excuse me”, PAUSE, stand/sit still, breathe deeply
- Keep attention by speaking softly, or slowly dropping the volume of your speech

# Teach Behavior

- Stop whining→
- Don't throw the rocks→
- Sit quietly→
- Be Good→
- Other ideas?
- Look at me, smile, say please.
- Put the rocks on the ground. Watch me.
- Close your mouth. Sit down. Hands on your lap.
- ?

# Teaching Behavior Review

- Instruct on appropriate actions
- Model appropriate actions
- Give child opportunity to practice appropriate behavior (role playing with you or others; something nonthreatening)
- Offer huge praise for practice
- Ask child to tell you what they learned if developmentally appropriate

# Re-Teaching Behavior (Over and Over and Over Again)

- Take time to remind children of expectations/appropriate behaviors before event
  - Every time if necessary
- Give specifics on what should be done
- Talk about each step of unfamiliar event beforehand, and any specific “rules” for behavior
  - Guest and Host game

Arm crossing activity

More complex behavior issues – transitions (visual supports), tantrums (calming techniques)

Practice being still to get attention

# **TEACHING BEHAVIOR ACTIVITY**



# PLAY!!!!

- One of the most effective behavior prevention strategy is playing with your child (or kids in classroom)
- Behaviors are far less likely to happen when adult is close, having fun, modeling behaviors, and there for intervention before escalation
- Adult also builds important relationship for prevention and intervention (increases desire to please, adult time becomes reward)

# Play Recommendations

- 30 to 60 minutes per day of play time with child/children
- This can be inside, outside, sports, games, pretend play, anything with active social engagement
- This does not include videogames, watching television, or anything with a screen or advanced technology

# How Does Play Influence Behavior?

- Your attention becomes the most powerful thing you can give or take away for intervention
- Child wants to please you because you are their playmate
- You are actively modeling appropriate play and social behavior
- Your child practices turn taking, sharing, etc., and takes more social/play “risks” with you than they might with friends, more learning opportunities

How do we find 30 to 60 minutes per day? – Maybe the 30 to 60 minutes we were spending dealing with negative behavior???

## **IDEAS TO INCORPORATE PLAY INTO DAILY ROUTINES**

# Prevention Through “Using Your Words”

- Use 3-Part Directions
  - 1. Say the Child’s Name (make sure to get attn.)
  - 2. Insert “Please”
  - 3. Tell Child What To Do (vs. what not to do)
- Using Praise Effectively
  - Do not use labels like “good boy” “smart girl”
  - Praise the specific action that pleased you so the child knows exactly what was “good” or “smart”
- Using Critique Effectively
  - Critique “sandwich” Positive -teaching moment –positive
    - I like the way you \_\_\_\_.
    - Focus on what needs to be done, not what was done wrong
    - End on another positive in the process

# Delete\*

## Words from Your Vocabulary

- NO
  - Don't
  - Stop
  - Why?
- 
- Especially in combination with You...Don't you...Why do you.... (very judgmental)
  - \*These words are to be used for emergencies only, like stepping in front of a car.

# Instead of.....We can say.....

- No running!
- We're going to work at the tables now, okay?
- Do you want to sit down?
- Now, we don't want to hit our friends at school.
- Well, that obviously went over your head.
- Sit down...Sit down.



# Intervention



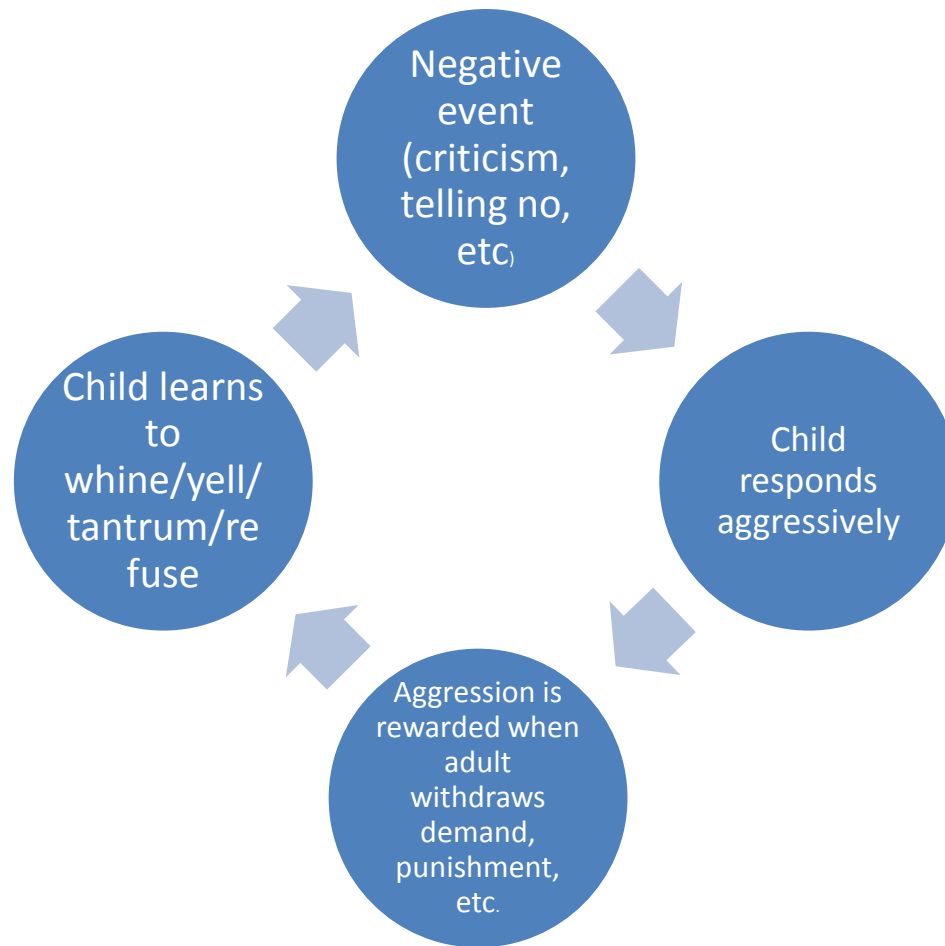
# Psych 101

- Humans show behaviors that result in benefits
  - Bringing something desirable to them
  - Making something undesirable go away
- Benefits of showing new behavior must outweigh benefits of continuing with undesired behavior
  - Must get “more” from new behavior or make undesired behavior too “difficult” to engage in
- New behavior must meet the same need as the undesired behavior
  - Most common “needs” are attention, power/control, and escape

# Breaking the Behavior Cycle

- Think about patterns in the child's behavior
- Are there specific triggers?
  - You saying “no”
  - Other children
  - Sharing toys
- Are there specific times?
- Can you see escalation?
- What is your “role” in the cycle?

# Learned Behavior Cycles



# Break the Cycle (Literally)

- What can you do to break out of your role in the cycle?  
Think creatively
- If you typically yell, speak quietly and calmly.
- If you “give in” to demands, make a demand of your own first (“when you ask nicely/keep hands to self/smile/say “please”, you can\_\_\_\_)
- If you ignore then yell, start with offering hugs, smiles, and attention.
- Agree/empathize with them “I am so sad we can’t go to the park today too. Mommy was looking forward to it. What else fun can we do?”
- Just think of anything different than usual.

Give examples of a behavior cycle-brainstorm ideas to help break cycle

## **IDEAS TO BREAK THE CYCLE**

# Pause the Cycle

- When you behave differently, the child often does not know how to respond, for a few seconds at least
- Take this opportunity to teach new behavior, offer choices, or give positive attention.
- So, how do you know which of these you should do?
  - This depends on why the child showed behavior and started the cycle in the first place

# Figuring out the “Why?”

- In order to understand “why” a child has behavior, set up an “experiment”
- First, pick a time when your child is not in the middle of a meltdown.
  - If there is a specific time of day behavior occurs, try then, but before escalation (i.e. bedtime)
- Trial 1 – Ignore your child for up to five minutes. Does the behavior occur? How many times?
- Trial 2 – Give your child simple demands periodically for five minutes. Does the behavior occur? How many times?

# Attention or Demand/Escape

- If child shows more behaviors when you ignore, child is likely an attention seeker
- If your child shows more behaviors when you make demands, your child is likely an escapee.
- Interventions are different depending on why child is showing unwanted behaviors.
  - If you do not match interventions to behavior type, you will not see reduction in behavior
- Child may be different type in different situations, may need several “experiments”
  - Bedtime may be escape behavior, meltdowns after school may be attention seeking



# Demand or Attention Seeking?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXP5rFAJQek>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeGhCwt4tBE>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u\\_FBqY9VLsl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_FBqY9VLsl)

# Attention Seeker

- If you saw more behavior when you ignored your child, chances are good that your child is seeking attention
- Did your child start by trying to get your attention in more positive ways and then switch to negative?
- Or, did the child go straight to negative behaviors?

# Prevention:

## Increasing Positive Interactions

- Five positive statements for every one corrective statement
- Give positive alternatives for unwanted behavior
- Intermittent Celebrations (handout)
- Frequent Attention Anchors
  - Any positive attention from you that is not contingent on behavior
  - Need to know how long child can go without attention from you and offer it preventatively
  - Can be words, hugs, pats, winks, smiles, waves, thumbs up

# Attention Seeker Intervention

- If child uses some positive ways of getting attention first, IMMEDIATELY acknowledge child and reinforce the positive attention seeking
  - prevents the more negative behaviors from emerging
  - builds skills
- You do not have to comply with what they want, just give brief attention. You can pair this with when you will be able to give them undivided attention. Helps build waiting skills.

# Negative Attention Seekers

- Planned ignoring alone typically does not work, as child will escalate until you have to give attention
- Stay calm, go to child's level and remind child of what behaviors you expect *and* what they will get when they perform behaviors
  - “Little girls who hit their sister do not get to play. When you can share, Mommy and sissy will come play with you.”

# Demand/Escape Behavior Prevention

- Your behavior expectations need to match the developmental age, not chronological age.
- Pick your battles (reduce demands)
- Have a “safe spot” for escape
- Do not set a child up for failure
  - Ex. Your class is mostly 3s—group time should not exceed 10 min.
  - Do not take a hungry or tired child to Wal-Mart or other public places and expect good behavior

# Demand/Escape Behavior Intervention

- Pair unwanted tasks with preferred activities immediately following (incentives)
- Use timers to limit amount of time they have to engage in unwanted activity
- Offer choices (you control the choices-might both be things the child does not love, but child still gets some feeling of control)
- Give your direction and walk away, give child a chance to make the right choice without power struggle

# Demand/Escape Interventions Cont.

- Make requests with gestures, not words (harder to say no to gestures), kids comply without thinking.
- Offer help – we often forget that many kids will refuse to do something rather than admit that they can't, even little kids
- Have a “safe spot” for calming. Teach them how to ask for safe spot appropriately – this is not a “time out”.



# Power vs. Influence

- Using influence will help avoid power struggles
- Technique to “influence” instead of direct
  - Approach from the side
  - Avoid eye contact
  - Use nonverbal cues to manage behavior
  - Keep as much distance as possible

# A Note About Rewards

- Lots of controversy about offering “rewards” for things children should “just do on their own”
- Reality check—A paycheck is a reward
- Rewards should be used to promote new desired behaviors or eliminate unwanted behavior. When behavior is a solid skill, can fade rewards.
  - Rewards do decrease internal motivation when used after a child engages in an activity they have mastered.

# Overview of Common Interventions

- 1-2-3 Magic – Good for Demand/Escape kids
- Time out – Effective punishment for attention seekers, not effective for demand/escape kids
  - Time out can be used in many ways
    - Toy time out (take specific toys away for time period – want to use this if child has not used toys appropriately)
    - Adult time out – removing adult attention from child
    - Typical child time out – placing child away from “action”

# 1-2-3 Magic

- Need to make sure you and the child know what will happen when you get to three.
- Allow a couple of seconds after you get to three for compliance.
- After a few seconds, follow through with consequence immediately.

# If All Else Fails...Timeout

- This should not be used often
- Reserve for severe behaviors such as aggression towards other
- Do not threaten time out unless you are willing to follow through the next time the behavior occurs
- Follow time-out guidelines (handout)

# Tantrums

- Tantrums are a normal part of development but there are five types that are “outside” of normal tantrum behavior
  - Extremely aggressive behavior directed at caregiver or object during most tantrums
  - Intentional self-harm during most tantrums
  - More than 5/day on several consecutive days
  - Tantrum around 25 minutes (10 -11 min. is average)
  - Child is unable to calm after most tantrums

# Responding to Tantrums

- Remain calm
- Prepare children for disappointments
- Distract and redirect before it escalates
- Avoid trying to rationalize or talk
- Set limits and expectations/consequences and follow through
- Empathize and label emotions “You look mad. I’d be mad too” and then model what you would do

# Common “Mis”Behaviors

- Noncompliance
- Work Refusals
- Tantrums
- Aggression
- Running Away
- Over Stimulated
- Failure to join group

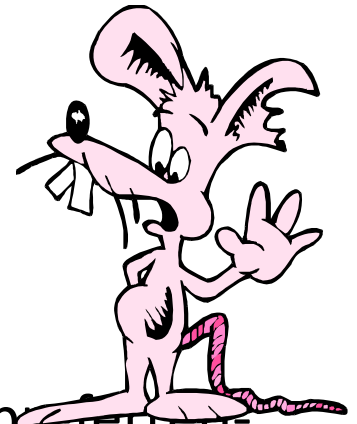


# Noncompliance

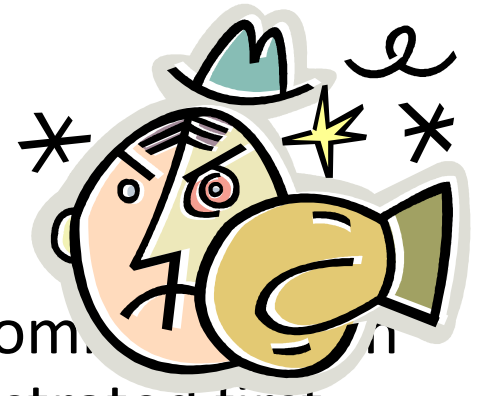
- See “Intervention” section 😊.
- Avoid power struggle- state direction and walk away.
- Give choices
- Do not respond to their “no”. Continue what you were doing as if they said yes, sometimes will “go with the flow”
- Do not make verbal request, harder to argue with actions.
- Proactive Cooperation – get cooperation before naming the task
- Surprise them – act in unexpected manner
- Agree with part of their point
- Salesman technique – get them to agree to three unrelated things then ask about an unwanted task

# Work Refusals

- Use First/Then format with pictures
- Premack principal
  - Organizing daily schedule into nonpreferred-preferred-nonpreferred-preferred style
- Break work into small parts
- Give choice of two activities
- Reward performance with snack/drink/etc.
- Build in frequent breaks
- Assistance - They may simply not be able to do the work



# Aggression



- Remember, aggression is almost always coming from a place of frustration- figure out why they are frustrated first
- Say “NO” calmly and divert attention
- Treat the other child who may have been hurt first
- Remove child from area, toys
- Have child do something to apologize (verbally, making a card, helping in some way)
- Tell child what s/he could have done instead, don’t ask
- Offer other physical outlets
  - Throwing a soft ball at a pillow, going on a walk, tearing paper, getting a cold drink

# Running Away



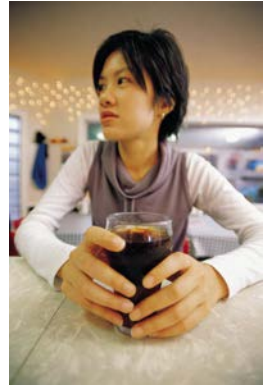
- Have picture or object in room that all students have to give to teacher when they are leaving
- Have quiet space in room they can go to if they need to “escape”.
- Are they running away from something?
- Often overstimulated – Offer calming strategies
- Boundary Setting – visual, tape, stop signs, etc

# Over-Stimulation



- If sensitive to sound, smell, taste, groups of people, etc. try to prepare student if they have to encounter
  - For fire drill, tell student ahead of time and review what they are to do
- Teach them coping skills
- Allow “break” time in quieter areas
- Gradually increase tolerance by exposing to differing levels of stimulus
  - If noise, start with watch timer, then egg timer, then alarm clock, etc.

# Failure to Join Group



- Do activities the student enjoys at first
- Allow them to sit at desk or at chair away from group, gradually move chair closer until they are in group-always give choice of chair or group-never choice of where chair is
- Start with smaller groups of one to two others and then move to class size

# Troubleshooting Through Examples