



*RTI Classroom Teacher Toolkit*

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# RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Audit Your School, Update Your Plan

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Workshop Materials: [http://www.interventioncentral.org/rti\\_mtss\\_behavior](http://www.interventioncentral.org/rti_mtss_behavior)



## RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Tier 1: School-wide and Classroom: Flowchart

**Tier 1: Classroom Individual Behavior Interventions.** Because the teacher is the Tier 1 (classroom) RTI/MTSS ‘first responder’ who can potentially assist any struggling student, schools should prepare necessary resources and define clear guidelines for how to implement Tier 1 behavioral interventions. The classroom teacher:

- accesses consultant support as needed to develop a classroom behavior intervention plan.
- follows a structured process and uses evidence-based interventions when creating a behavior intervention plan.
- tracks student progress formatively during the intervention period.
- records and archives details of the behavior intervention plan accessible as needed to other MTSS stakeholders.



**Tier 1: Class-Wide Management.** Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes teaching behavioral expectations to students and using proactive strategies to manage group behaviors. The classroom teacher:

- provides explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors.
- delivers explicit, motivating instruction that holds learners’ attention and promotes student engagement.
- uses proactive, positive techniques to manage group behaviors.
- works on relationship-building to promote in students a sense of school connection and belonging.
- develops the knowledge and capacity to positively manage challenging individual behaviors as they arise.



**Tier 1: School-Wide Behavioral Expectations.** The school has defined universal behavioral expectations for all students and staff—and trained the school community in those behaviors. The school:

- develops school-wide behavioral expectations.
- translates school-wide expectations into site-specific rules of conduct.
- teaches expected behaviors to students across all settings.
- commits to consistently acknowledge and reinforce positive student behaviors.

# Tier 1: School-Wide Behavioral Expectations



## RTI for Behavior at Tier 1: Establishing a Shared Building-Wide Framework for Positive Behavior in 5 Steps

Schools implementing RTI for behavior teach appropriate behavior explicitly at Tier 1—as its own curriculum. Educators typically refer to these guidelines for conduct as “behavioral expectations”. They are derived from the school community’s larger values and sum up the positive attributes we wish to see displayed by all of our students.

Schools that successfully introduce a positive behavioral approach across all classrooms and settings follow a 5-step process: (1) develop school-wide behavioral expectations; (2) from those expectations, draft specific rules for classrooms and other locations; (3) teach students these behavioral expectations and rules; (4) reinforce students for displaying positive behaviors; and (5) monitor staff buy-in and behavioral outcomes across the building. Those steps are explained below:

**Step 1: Develop School-Wide Behavioral Expectations.** To establish its “behavior curriculum”, the school first develops a general set of universal behavioral expectations that apply in any setting. This set should be:

- brief enough to be easily remembered by both students and adults. Try to limit your list to between 4 and 8 individual expectations.
- broad in focus. Because these expectations must apply across numerous situations and settings, state them in general, student-centered terms (e.g., “I take pride in my work”).
- phrased in positive terms whenever possible. In crafting your expectations, state what the student is expected to do (e.g., “I concentrate on doing my best work.”), rather than actions that the student should *not* do.

In framing these behavioral expectations, then, your school is establishing the foundation for your behavioral curriculum. Here are additional tips for drafting your school-wide expectations for student conduct:

- *Cover the “Big 4”.* Schools can write expectations to cover any kind of behavior. The good news, however, is that expectations can be narrowed to 4 manageable categories that apply to most if not all student behaviors: (1) SCHOOLWORK: self-management and engagement in schoolwork; (2) COMPLIANCE: complying with adult directives; (3) PEER INTERACTIONS: ability to get along with and work productively with peers; and (4) RULE-FOLLOWING: obeying school rules (Farmer, Reinke & Brooks, 2014).
- *Link Expectations in an Acronym.* Since our goal is for both students and adults to easily remember your list of school-wide behavioral expectations, consider turning them into a simple, easy-to-memorize acronym if possible. Here is an example:

S: I support my classmates. [PEER INTERACTIONS]

O: I obey school rules. [RULE-FOLLOWING]

A: I achieve to the best of my ability. [SCHOOLWORK]

R: I respect my teacher and other adults. [COMPLIANCE]

**Step 2: Translate School-Wide Expectations into Site-Specific Rules.** Students encounter constantly changing situations and settings throughout the school day. In these different settings, they will need site-specific rules to guide their conduct. So, in this step, the school (1) identifies the range of different settings in which students are expected to function, (2) determines the adult(s) responsible for managing behavior in each of these settings, and (3) enlists these supervising adults to translate building-wide expectations for behavior into more detailed site-specific rules. Here are details about how this process unfolds:



1. *Identify the Range of Site-Specific Settings.* While each room or area of the school has its own unique properties, there are two main types of settings: classrooms and common areas. The school consults a building map and lists each space appearing on that map. The school then lists the identified spaces as 'classrooms' or 'common areas'. Classrooms are spaces for instruction overseen by one or more teachers. Common areas (e.g., hallways, cafeteria) serve non-academic functions for students across the school.

Occasionally, schools encounter a mixed-use space (e.g., a cafeteria that the science teacher uses in the afternoon for instruction). In such cases, the school categorizes the mixed-use space as a common area for specific times during the day and lists that same space as a classroom for other times during the day.

2. *Determine Who Manages Behavior in Each Setting.* The school next lists the adults responsible for behavior management in each of the classroom or common-area settings. In common areas where supervision changes in shifts, the school can list supervising personnel by shift. In common areas where supervision is fluid (e.g., hallways) the school may identify all staff as potential behavior managers.
3. *Enlist Supervising Adults to Create Specific Rules.* Once identified, those adults responsible for managing students in various settings will be asked to translate the general, building-level behavioral expectations into site-specific rules. For example, if a school-wide expectation is "I respect my teacher and other adults", a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade teacher or cafeteria lunch monitor will translate that statement into specific rules describing what "respect" looks like for their respective settings.

It is recommended that rule-sets for both classrooms and common areas be few in number (e.g., between 4 and 8); stated in simple, clear language; and framed whenever possible as desired behaviors rather than as behaviors to avoid.

To encourage consistency, teachers at each grade level should work together to come up with these classroom rules. Special-area teachers (e.g., physical education, art, music, etc.) will typically generate their own rules to accommodate their unique activities and materials. For common-area spaces such as the cafeteria, support staff and para-professionals who help to maintain order should be enlisted to assist in generating behavioral rules. In areas overseen by *all* adults (e.g., hallways), the school may want to elicit feedback from the entire staff to establish specific rules of conduct.

**Step 3: Teach Expected Behaviors to Students.** With school-wide behavioral expectations completed and rules written for each building location, the school is ready to introduce them to students. Schools are reminded that these rules for conduct make up a sizable and explicit behavioral curriculum. Because students must master behavior-rules for a variety of settings, the initial instruction of rules across the building should be coordinated and completed within a week.

As a kick-off to this behavioral training, the collection of school-wide behavioral expectations can be efficiently presented in a multi-grade assembly.

Site-specific rules will then be presented by the educators overseeing each building location. (Essentially, the educator creates and delivers a behavior-training lesson plan.) For each rule, the educator describes and demonstrates the rule and connects it to the relevant school-wide behavioral expectations. For example, a 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade teacher may present the class rule: "I raise my hand to be recognized before answering a question." The teacher then links that class rule to the school-wide behavioral expectation: "I respect my teachers and other adults."



The educator next reviews examples of student behavior that conform to the site-specific rules, then asks students to give additional examples. The educator reviews these rules on a daily basis until students can clearly and easily identify them.

Both the school-wide and site-specific rules should be posted in every setting for easy reference. After the initial training, the educator reinforces the rule-set by frequently acknowledging and praising students who observe the rules, citing their positive behavior in specific terms.

**Step 4: Reinforce Positive Behaviors.** After students have been taught school-wide behavioral expectations and the related rules that apply to each school location, educators will want to regularly acknowledge and reinforce positive behaviors. While reinforcement of behaviors could be left to individual teachers, schools are likely to see greater behavioral improvement when they coordinate a consistent, building-wide reinforcement system consisting of praise, positive-behavior tickets, and rewards:

- *Praise.* At a minimum, staff should use frequent praise that describes the positive behavior observed and links it to the relevant rule. These praise statements function as a positive coaching tool, as they highlight exemplary student performance. Because students find praise reinforcing, its regular use will accelerate their adoption of positive behavior.
- *Tickets/Rewards.* While optional, schools can increase student investment in a positive-behavior program through use of a school-wide ticket/reward system. Here is a description of how your school might set up such a system:
  1. **Create Positive-Behavior Tickets.** The school designs paper slips ("tickets") to be awarded to students recognized for positive behaviors. The tickets can include blanks for the adult to write in the student name, time, location, and/or an account of the positive behavior that was observed.
  2. **Train Staff to Use Behavior Tickets.** Adults who supervise locations throughout the school receive a supply of tickets, which are to be awarded to students displaying examples of exemplary behavior. When awarding a ticket, the adult is trained to praise the student, explicitly name the positive behavior that earned the ticket, and link that behavior to the rule/behavioral expectation that it supports. Adults are also given a recommended quota of tickets to award within a class period or school day, to encourage their use.
  3. **Link Tickets to Reinforcement.** Each school location supervised by specific educators will have a reinforcement system in place to allow positive-behavior tickets to be redeemed for rewards. Staff are encouraged to be creative, developing reward procedures that fit their circumstances.

For example, a classroom teacher may promise a desirable activity such as extra recess when the class earns a certain number of tickets. Each day, the teacher collects and tallies all tickets earned by students and adds that figure to a publicly displayed cumulative graph, so that students can monitor class progress toward the goal. Once the goal is earned, the teacher selects a new prize activity for the students to work toward.

Or a special-area instructor, such as the art or physical education teacher, may award tickets during their classes, deposit all earned tickets in a jar, and at the end of class draw one or more tickets randomly to award modest prizes or privileges.



Students awarded tickets by adults other than the teacher (e.g., in common areas such as hallways) can turn them in to the classroom instructor to be included in the class ticket total.

4. **Leverage Reinforcement Across the School.** The school can further increase the reinforcing power of positive-behavior tickets by adding building-wide incentives. For example, the school might set a goal for students across all classrooms to earn a certain number of positive-behavior tickets. That goal might be paired with an incentive, such as having a school pizza party or scheduling an entertaining assembly. Each day, classrooms would report their ticket totals to the main office, which would maintain the running tally of earned tickets. The school could strengthen the reinforcing power of behavior tickets by creating a colorful chart in a public area of the school to display the building's cumulative progress toward the ticket goal, announce that progress on morning or afternoon announcements, and honor several randomly chosen students each day for their positive behaviors.

**Step 5: Monitor Program Implementation and Impact.** The defining, teaching, and reinforcing of positive behaviors represents the rolling-out of a "behavioral curriculum". The final step is to evaluate its implementation and positive impact.

- *Staff Implementation.* Success of a building-wide behavioral program is reliant upon those adults who supervise locations across the school to actually carry out the procedures outlined above.

Staff implementation can be measured directly through onsite observations—for example, viewing cafeteria personnel's instructing a group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders in expected lunch-room behaviors. Staff participation in the program can also be monitored by collecting daily tallies from each supervised school location of the number of positive-behavior tickets awarded. If a location is identified as giving out substantially fewer tickets than expected, the educator(s) in charge of that space could be encouraged to increase participation or --if necessary—even be re-trained in reinforcement techniques.

- *Program Impact.* A hoped-for outcome of a positive behavior program that impacts all classrooms is that student academic performance will increase as behavioral interruptions to classroom instruction decrease. If RTI/MTSS academic screenings or state academic assessments show improvement after implementing a behavior program, this can be regarded as indirect evidence of its impact.

More directly, the school can monitor data on Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs) to judge whether the teaching and reinforcement of positive behaviors results in fewer students being removed from the classroom.



**ACTIVITY: Step 1: Develop School-Wide Behavioral Expectations.** PART 1: Review the list of positive ‘values’. Circle those that you feel are MOST important values for your school. PART 2: Draft a set of behavioral expectations to apply across all settings at your school. Consider creating an acronym to make them easier to remember.

SCHOOLWORK: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLIANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

PEER INTERACTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

RULE-FOLLOWING: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavioral Expectations: “Values” Terms. Review the terms below for ideas in phrasing your set of school-wide behavioral expectations.					
Acceptance	Courage	Fortitude	Making a difference	Realism	Sympathy
Accomplishment	Courtesy	Friendship	Mastery	Reason	Synergy
Accountability	Creativity	Generosity	Maturity	Reflection	Teaching
Accuracy	Credibility	Giving	Mindfulness	Reliability	Teamwork
Achievement	Curiosity	Grace	Modesty	Resilience	Thankfulness
Attentiveness	Dependability	Gratitude	Motivation	Resolution	Thoroughness
Awareness	Determination	Growth	Obedience	Resourcefulness	Thoughtfulness
Belonging	Devotion	Guidance	Openness	Respect	Tidiness
Calmness	Dignity	Happiness	Optimism	Responsibility	Tranquility
Camaraderie	Diligence	Harmony	Order	Restraint	Trustworthiness
Candor	Direction	Health	Organization	Reverence	Understanding
Capability	Discipline	Heart	Originality	Rigor	Uniqueness
Care	Discovery	Helpfulness	Partnership	Sacrifice	Unity
Carefulness	Diversity	Honesty	Patience	Sagacity	Utility
Challenge	Drive	Imagination	Passion	Satisfaction	Valor
Change	Duty	Independence	Peace	Self-control	Vigor
Charity	Effectiveness	Individuality	Perceptiveness	Selflessness	Virtue
Commitment	Efficiency	Industry	Perseverance	Self-reliance	Vision
Community	Empathy	Inquisitiveness	Persistence	Self-respect	Volunteering
Compassion	Encouragement	Insightfulness	Pleasantness	Sensitivity	Warmth
Competence	Endurance	Inspiration	Practicality	Serenity	Watchfulness
Composure	Enthusiasm	Integrity	Pragmatism	Service	Willingness
Concentration	Excellence	Inventiveness	Precision	Sharing	Wisdom
Confidence	Excitement	Involvement	Preparedness	Significance	Wonder
Connection	Expertise	Joy	Presence	Silence	Zeal
Consistency	Exploration	Judiciousness	Pride	Sincerity	
Contentment	Expressiveness	Justice	Proactivity	Skillfulness	
Continuity	Fairness	Kindness	Professionalism	Spirit	
Contribution	Fearlessness	Knowledge	Prudence	Stability	
Control	Flexibility	Leadership	Punctuality	Strength	
Cooperation	Fluency	Learning	Rationality	Success	
Cordiality	Focus			Support	







**ACTIVITY: Step 2: Translate School-Wide Expectations into Site-Specific Rules.** Take one or more of the school-wide behavioral expectations you created (Step 1) and translate them below into site-specific rules for a typical classroom in your school.

**School-Wide Expectation 1: Schoolwork:** \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**School-Wide Expectation 2: Compliance:** \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**School-Wide Expectation 3: Peer Interactions:** \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**School-Wide Expectation 4: Rule-Following:** \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Rule 3: \_\_\_\_\_





**ACTIVITY: Create an Action Plan.** Appoint a recorder. Use the organizer below to develop a 5-step action plan for the current school year to establish a shared framework for positive behavior at your school. For an explanation of what each step entails, review the guide *RTI for Behavior at Tier 1: Establishing a Shared Building-Wide Framework for Positive Behavior in 5 Steps*.

RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Tier 1: Teaching Positive Behaviors				
Step 1: Develop School-Wide Behavioral Expectations.				
Task #	Task Description	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date	Resources Needed
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				



RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Tier 1: Teaching Positive Behaviors				
Step 2: Translate School-Wide Expectations into Site-Specific Rules.				
Task #	Task Description	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date	Resources Needed
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
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7				
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9				
10				



RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Tier 1: Teaching Positive Behaviors				
Step 3: Teach Expected Behaviors to Students.				
Task #	Task Description	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date	Resources Needed
1				
2				
3				
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RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Tier 1: Teaching Positive Behaviors Step 4: Reinforce Positive Behaviors.				
Task #	Task Description	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date	Resources Needed
1				
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RTI/MTSS for Behavior: Tier 1: Teaching Positive Behaviors



Step 5: Monitor Program Implementation and Impact.				
Task #	Task Description	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date	Resources Needed
1				
2				
3				
4				
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# Tier 1: Class-Wide Management



# Tier 1: Class-Wide Management: MTSS-Behavior Intervention Pathways

Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes (1) teaching behavioral expectations to students; (2) providing strong instruction; (3) using proactive strategies to manage group behaviors; (4) building connections with students; and (5) responding flexibly and appropriately when individual behavior problems occur.

Teachers can use this checklist to build an 'intervention pathway' that promotes effective classroom management and ensures that they are using the right balance of behavior management practices with their students.

## 1. Behavioral Expectations. Students receive explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors--to include:

[1.1] **Teaching Behavioral Expectations.** Students have been explicitly taught classroom behavioral expectations. Those positive behaviors are acknowledged and reinforced on an ongoing basis (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007).

[1.2] **Posting Positive Classroom Rules.** The classroom has a set of 3-8 rules or behavioral expectations posted. When possible, those rules are stated in positive terms as 'goal' behaviors (e.g. 'Students participate in learning activities without distracting others from learning'). The rules are frequently reviewed (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).

[1.3] **Training Students in Basic Class Routines.** The teacher has clearly established routines to deal with common classroom activities (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). These routines include but are not limited to:

- Engaging students in meaningful academic activities at the start of class (e.g., using bell-ringer activities)
- Assigning and collecting homework and classwork
- Transitioning students efficiently between activities
- Independent seatwork and cooperative learning groups
- Students leaving and reentering the classroom
- Dismissing students at the end of the period

## 2. Instruction That Motivates. Academic instruction holds student attention and promotes engagement--to include:

□ [2.1] **Delivering Effective Instruction.** The teacher's lesson and instructional activities include these components (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008):

- *Instructional match.* Students are placed in work that provides them with an appropriate level of challenge (not too easy and not too difficult).
- *Explicit instruction.* The teacher delivers instruction using modeling, demonstration, supervised student practice, etc.
- *High rate of student responding and engagement.* There are sufficient opportunities during the lesson for students to be actively engaged and 'show what they know'.



— *Timely performance feedback.* Students receive feedback about their performance on independent seatwork, as well as whole-group and small-group activities.

- [2.2] **Maintaining a Brisk Pace of Instruction.** The teacher presents an organized lesson, with instruction moving briskly. There are no significant periods of 'dead time' (e.g., during roll-taking or transitioning between activities) when student misbehavior can start (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Ball, 2008).
- [2.3] **Giving Clear Directions.** When delivering directions to the class, the teacher uses strategies that increase the likelihood that all students hear and clearly understand them (Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001). For large groups, such strategies might include using a general alerting cue (e.g., 'Eyes and ears on me') and ensuring group focus before giving directions. Multi-step directions are posted for later student review. For individual students, the teacher may make eye contact with the student before giving directions and ask the student to repeat those directions before starting the assignment.
- [2.4] **Offering Student Choice.** The teacher provides the class or individual students with appropriate choice-opportunities when completing in-class academic tasks (Jolivette, Wehby, Canale, & Massey, 2001) Offering choice options to students can increase academic motivation and focus while reducing problem behaviors. Examples include allowing students to choose (1) an assignment from among two or more alternative, equivalent offerings; (2) what books or other materials are to be used to complete an assignment; (3) who to work with on a collaborative task.
- [2.5] **Avoiding Instructional 'Dead Time'.** The teacher presents an organized lesson, with instruction moving briskly. There are no significant periods of 'dead time' (e.g., during roll-taking or transitioning between activities) when student misbehavior can start (Gettinger & Ball, 2008).

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### 3. Group Behavior Management. The teacher uses active, positive techniques to manage the classroom--to include:

- [3.1] **Employing Effective Verbal Commands.** The teacher delivers clear directives to students that (1) are delivered calmly, (2) are brief, (3) are stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) use clear, simple language, and (5) are delivered one directive at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Matheson & Shriver, 2005). These directives are positive or neutral in tone, avoiding sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.
- [3.2] **Providing Active Supervision.** The teacher frequently moves through the classroom--strategically recognizing positive behaviors while redirecting students who are off-task (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). As needed, the instructor gives behavioral reminders or prompts, teaches or reteaches expected behaviors, and praises examples of appropriate student behavior.
- [3.3] **Using Group Prompts to Hold Attention.** The teacher gives brief reminders of expected behaviors at the 'point of performance'—the time when students will most benefit from them (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002). To prevent student call-outs, for example, a teacher may use a structured prompt such as: "When I ask this question, I will give the class 10 seconds to think of your best answer. Then I will call on one student."



#### 4. **Student Relationships.** The teacher uses strategies to promote in students a sense of classroom connection and belonging--to include:

- **[4.1] Greeting Students at the Classroom Door.** A personalized greeting at the start of a class period can boost class levels of academic engagement (Allday & Pakurar, 2007). The teacher spends a few moments greeting each student by name at the classroom door at the beginning of class.
- **[4.2] Shaping Behavior Through Praise.** To increase desired behavior, the teacher praises the student in clear, specific terms whenever the student engages in that behavior (Kern & Clemens, 2007). The teacher uses praise statements at a rate sufficient to motivate and guide the student toward the behavioral goal: (1) The teacher selects the specific desired behavior(s) to encourage through praise; (2) The teacher sets a goal for how frequently to deliver praise (e.g., to praise a student at least 3 times per class period for working on in-class assignments). (3) The teacher makes sure that any praise statements given are behavior-specific.
- **[4.3] Maintaining a High Rate of Positive Interactions** Teachers promote a positive relationship with any student by maintaining a ratio of at least three positive teacher-student interactions (e.g., greeting, positive conversation, high-five) for every negative (disciplinary) interaction (e.g., reprimand) (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).

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#### 5. **Individual Behavior Management.** The teacher uses flexible, positive techniques to manage behaviors of particular students--to include:

- **[5.1] Giving Pre-Corrections as Behavioral Reminders.** The teacher heads off a problem behavior by proactively prompting or reminding the student to show appropriate behaviors (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Just before a time, situation or setting when problem behaviors are most likely to occur, the teacher 'pre-corrects' by reminding the student of appropriate behavioral expectations.
- **[5.2] Emphasizing the Positive in Teacher Requests.** Whenever possible, the teacher states requests to individual students in positive terms (e.g., "I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat") rather than with a negative spin (e.g., "I won't help you with your assignment until you return to your seat."). When an instructor's request has a positive 'spin', that teacher is less likely to trigger a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance (Braithwaite, 2001).
- **[5.3] Asking Open-Ended Questions to Understand the Problem.** The teacher asks neutral, open-ended questions to collect more information before responding to a student who is upset or appears confrontational (Lanceley, 1999). The teacher can pose 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', and 'how' questions to more fully understand the problem situation and identify possible solutions (e.g., "What do you think made you angry when you were talking with Billy?"). Teachers should avoid asking 'why' questions because they can imply that the teacher is blaming the student.
- **[5.4] Keeping Responses Calm and Brief.** The teacher responds to provocative or confrontational students in a 'neutral', business-like, calm voice and keeps responses brief (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002; Walker &



Walker, 1991). The teacher avoids getting 'hooked' into a discussion or argument with that student. Instead the teacher repeats the request calmly and—if necessary-- imposes a pre-determined consequence for noncompliance.

- **[5.5] Accessing an Array of Supportive Responses to Problem Behavior.** The teacher employs a continuum of ascending positive-behavior responses when problem student behaviors occur—e.g., (1) give a non-verbal reminder; (2) give a verbal reminder; (3) offer assistance or modify the task; (4) provide a safe space for de-escalation (Leach & Helf, 2016).
- **[5.6] Selecting Behavior Management Strategies Matched to Student Need.** The teacher is able flexibly to match behavior management strategies to the needs of specific students, demonstrating their understanding that one type of intervention strategy cannot be expected to work with all learners. (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).
- **[5.7] Employing Negative Consequences Sparingly.** The teacher makes limited use of 'contingent' (negative) consequences to reduce inappropriate behavior. The instructor accesses negative consequences only after first (a) trying supportive consequences, and (b) ruling out explanations for the misbehavior that lie beyond the student's control (e.g., a skill deficit prevents the student from showing the desired replacement behavior). (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012).
- **[5.8] Documenting Classroom Removals.** Students may be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons or to help them to calm down or deescalate problem behaviors. All classroom removals are recorded, including information such as date and time/duration of the removal and a brief narrative of the event (Noltemeyer & Ward, 2015).
- **[5.9] Holding 'Reentry' Conferences.** Soon after any significant in-class incident of student non-compliance, defiance, or confrontation, the teacher makes a point to meet with the student individually to discuss the behavioral incident, identify the triggers in the classroom environment that may have led to the problem, and brainstorm with the student to create a plan to prevent the reoccurrence of such an incident. Throughout this conference, the teacher maintains a supportive, positive, polite, and respectful tone (Fields, 2004).



**References**

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## Tier 1: Class-Wide Management: Estimate Teacher Implementation

**Directions:** Review the 9 'capacity-building' elements of individual behavior management below. For each item, estimate the **percentage** of classrooms in your school that you believe consistently use it in their behavior management.

1. **Individual Behavior Management.** The teacher uses flexible, positive techniques to manage behaviors of particular students--to include:

**[5.1] Giving Pre-Corrections as Behavioral Reminders.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.2] Emphasizing the Positive in Teacher Requests.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.3] Asking Open-Ended Questions to Understand the Problem.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.4] Keeping Responses Calm and Brief.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.5] Accessing an Array of Supportive Responses to Problem Behavior.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.6] Selecting Behavior Management Strategies Matched to Student Need.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.7] Employing Negative Consequences Sparingly.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.8] Documenting Classroom Removals.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

**[5.9] Holding 'Reentry' Conferences.**

0%.....10%.....20%.....30%.....40%.....50%.....60%.....70%.....80%.....90%.....100%

# Tier 1: Classroom Interventions





# A Toolkit: 38 Classroom Ideas to Help Students to Make Better Behavioral Choices

Behavior intervention plans are highly individualized--because every student displays a unique profile of behaviors. However, teachers will find that their chances of helping a student to engage in positive behaviors increase when they include *each* of these 3 elements in their classroom behavior intervention plans:

1. Antecedents: Strategies to promote positive behaviors and prevent misbehavior
2. Positive consequences: Responses that increase positive/goal behaviors
3. Extinction procedures: Responses that extinguish problem behaviors

Every one of these elements plays a crucial role in promoting the success of a behavior plan. Antecedent strategies prevent the student from engaging in problem behaviors in the first place. Positive consequences motivate the student to show desired behaviors, such as academic engagement. Extinction procedures remove the 'pay-off' to the student for engaging in problem behaviors. While any one of the elements might be inadequate to change the student's behavior, the combination of antecedents, positive consequences, and extinction procedures can result in a strong, flexible plan and successful intervention outcome.

Teachers can use this guide to build their own behavior plans using its research-based ideas for antecedents, positive consequences, and extinction procedures.

## ***1. Antecedents: Strategies to Prevent Misbehavior***

Teachers have the greatest array of options to influence a student to engage in positive behaviors when they focus on *antecedents*: actions they take *before* the student behavior occurs. Proactive antecedent actions to encourage desired behaviors are often quick-acting, can prevent misbehavior and attendant interruption of instruction, and usually require less teacher effort than providing corrective consequences after problem behaviors have occurred. Teacher strategies to elicit positive student behaviors include making instructional adjustments, providing student prompts and reminders, and teaching students to monitor and evaluate their work performance. Here are specific antecedent ideas that teachers can use to 'nudge' students to engage in desired behaviors:

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### *Antecedents That Prevent Problem Behaviors*

- Behaviors: Teach Expectations** (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). Students must be explicitly taught behavioral expectations before they can be held accountable for those behaviors. The teacher should model positive behaviors, give students examples and non-examples of appropriate behaviors to clarify understanding, have students practice those behaviors with instructor feedback; and consistently acknowledge and praise students for successfully displaying positive behaviors.
- Instructional Match: Ensure the Student Can Do the Work** (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008). Student misbehavior frequently arises from an inability to do the academic task. When the student lacks skills necessary for the academic task, the instructor teaches the necessary skill(s). Additional strategies include adjusting the immediate task to the student's current skill(s) and pairing the student with a helping peer.



- ❑ **No: Substitute a Preferred Alternative** (Mace, Pratt, Prager, & Pritchard, 2011). If the student has a pattern of misbehaving when told that he or she cannot access a desired item or engage in a preferred activity, the teacher can use the 'no with preferred alternative' strategy. The teacher prepares by making a list of activities or items preferred by the student that are allowed during the academic situation or setting where problems arise. Then, whenever the student requests an item or activity that is not allowed, the teacher (1) tells the student that he or she cannot access the desired activity or item; (2) provides a brief explanation of why the requested item or activity is off-limits; and (3) immediately offers the student one or more items or activities from the prepared list that *are* allowable in the current situation or setting.
- ❑ **Pre-Session Attention: Provide Antecedent Attention.** If a student appears to misbehave to seek adult attention during an activity such as whole-group instruction, the teacher consistently gives the student a dose (e.g., 3 minutes) of positive individual attention *just before* the session begins (Wood et al., 2018). This pre-session attention can thus reduce that student's immediate attention-seeking behaviors.
- ❑ **Relocate the Student: Remove From Temptation** (US Department of Education, 2004). When the student's problem behaviors are triggered or supported by factors in the environment--such as a talkative peer or difficulty hearing or seeing the instructor--the teacher may choose to move the student to another, less-distracting location in the classroom. A good option is to seat the student within the teacher's 'action zone', close to the instructor and in the region of the room toward which that educator directs most instruction.
- ❑ **Schedule: Increase Predictability** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). When students know the "content, duration, and/or consequences of future events" (Kern & Clemens, 2007; p. 67), their level of engagement rises and problem behaviors decline—a good definition of motivation. A strategy to increase the predictability of events for individual students or an entire classroom is to post or otherwise provide a schedule outlining the day's classroom activities. In simplest form, such a schedule lists a title and brief description for each scheduled activity, along with the start and end times for that activity. Teachers may wish to add information to the schedule, such as helpful reminders of what work materials a student might need for each event. Students who have difficulty interpreting a written schedule may benefit from having their schedules read aloud and/or from having pictorial equivalents included in their schedules.
- ❑ **Work Break: Make It Available on Request** (Majeika et al., 2011). Sometimes misbehavior is an attempt by the student to engineer a break from an academic task. The teacher can choose an alternative method for the student to use to communicate that he or she would like a brief break, such as requesting that break verbally or pulling out a color-coded break card. Of course, the student will also require clear guidelines on how long the requested break will last and what activities are acceptable for the student to engage in during that break.

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### *Antecedents That Encourage Goal Behaviors*

- ❑ **Checklist for Academic Skills: Make the Complicated Simple** (Alter, Wyrick, Brown, & Lingo, 2008). When the student must apply several steps to complete a complex academic task, the teacher can give the student a checklist detailing each step and instructions for completing it. Before the activity, the student is prompted to preview the checklist; after the activity, the student uses the checklist to review the work.
- ❑ **Checklist for Challenging Situations: Script Transition Times** (McCoy, Mathur, & Czoka, 2010). Students often struggle with the complexity of managing multi-step routines such as transitioning between classroom activities or moving to different locations within the school. Teachers can assist by making up step-by-step



checklists that 'walk' the student incrementally through the routine. Instructors can use these checklists as guides to teach and measure student success in navigating transitions. Just as important, the student can use the checklist as a prompt and guide to follow the expected steps.

- ❑ **Check Out: Exit Slips** (Hirn & Park, 2012). As the student transitions from small-group or independent work to another activity, give the student an 'exit slip'. This slip can contain short-answer questions to prompt the student to reflect on the learning just completed. It can also include reminders for putting away materials, turning in completed work, or preparing for the next activity.
- ❑ **Choice-Making: Allow for Student Preference** (Green, Mays, & Jolivet, 2011). Students find it motivating to have opportunities to choose how they structure or carry out their academic tasks. Teachers can allow choice on any of a variety of dimensions of a classroom activity, such as where the activity takes place; who the child works with; what materials to work with (e.g., choosing a book from several options); when to begin or end the activity; or how long to engage in the activity.
- ❑ **Clock It: Time-Based Check-In** (Hirn & Park, 2012). While the student is working independently, the instructor checks in periodically (e.g., at 3- or 5-minute intervals) to ensure that the student remains actively engaged and to offer instructional support, praise, or encouragement.
- ❑ **Fix-Up Skills: Foster Work Independence** (Rosenshine, 2008). During independent work, the student should know procedures to follow if stuck (e.g., cannot complete an item; does not understand a word in a reading passage). The teacher creates a routine for the student in how to apply 'fix-up' skills for independent assignments: e.g., "If I don't understand what I have read, I should (1) reread the paragraph; (2) slow my reading; (3) focus my *full* attention on what I am reading; (4) underline any words that I do not know and try to figure them out from the reading" (McCallum et al., 2010).
- ❑ **Greet Students at the Start of Class** (Allday & Pakurar, 2007). As students arrive at the start of class, the teacher stands at the door and briefly greets each student by name. This modest effort has been shown to substantially increase student attention and focus. Teachers who commit to using student greetings rearrange their start-of-class routine to allow them consistently to be standing just outside or inside the classroom door as the students arrive.
- ❑ **Goal-Setting: Get a Commitment** (Martin et al., 2003). One tool to increase student motivation to perform an academic task is to have that student choose a specific, measurable outcome goal before starting that task. At the end of the work session, the student compares the actual outcome to the previously selected goal to judge success. For example, a student about to begin a writing task may choose the goal of locating 3 primary sources for a term paper. Or a student starting an in-class reading assignment might come up with two questions that he would like to have answered from the reading.
- ❑ **High-Preference Requests: Build Behavioral Momentum** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Use 'behavioral momentum' to increase compliance by first directing the student or class to complete several short, simple, high-preference directives that they readily complete (e.g., "Take out a sheet of paper", "write your name on the paper", "copy the assignment from the board") before presenting the student or class with a low-preference directive that they typically balk at (e.g., "Open your books and begin the assignment").
- ❑ **Maintain a High Ratio of Positive Interactions** (Sprick, Borgmeier & Nolet, 2002). To keep relationships on a positive footing throughout the classroom, the teacher self-monitors encounters with particular students and sets



the goal of having at least 3 positive interactions for each disciplinary interaction. Positive teacher-student interactions can vary in format: for example, greeting, praise, conversation, smile, thumbs-up sign. By maintaining at least a 3:1 ratio between relationship-enhancing vs. disciplinary interactions, the teacher bends the odds in his or her favor that every student in the class will view the instructor as fair and caring.

- **Opportunities to Respond: Let Feedback Be Its Own Reward** (Partin et al., 2010). When students are academically engaged, they are usually also behaving appropriately. The teacher's goal, then, is to capture positive student behaviors by structuring lessons and work assignments to require a high rate of opportunities to respond (OTRs). In a complete OTR cycle, the student has an opportunity to respond (e.g., the teacher asks a question, or the student encounters an item on independent work), produces a response (e.g., the student responds to the teacher question or answers the work item); and receives timely performance feedback (e.g., the teacher says, "Right answer!", or the student uses an answer key to check a response).

An efficient way to boost OTRs classwide is through group responding (Haydon, Borders, Embury, & Clarke, 2009). Strategies for group response include choral responding; show of hands; pre-formatted response cards (e.g., with YES and NO written on opposite faces of the card); and individual white boards.

- **Paraphrasing: Have the Student Repeat Directions or Other Key Information** (Mancil & Maynard, 2007). To ensure that the student understands challenging directions, the instructor has the student repeat those directions in his or her own words before starting the task. This paraphrasing strategy can also be used with any other key information (e.g., fix-up strategies) that the student needs for success on the task.
- **Positive Teacher Requests: It's How You Say It** (Braithwaite, 2000). Non-compliant students have a pattern of ignoring or defying teacher requests. However, instructors can increase the likelihood of student compliance by stating their requests in positive terms (e.g., "John, I can help you just as soon as you are back in your seat") rather than in negative terms (e.g., "John, I can't help you unless you are sitting in your seat").
- **Pre-Correction: Plant a Positive Thought** (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Some students need a timely reminder of expected behaviors just before they transition into situations or settings in which problem behaviors tend to occur. At this 'point of performance', the teacher gives the student a timely reminder of goal behaviors, using such prompting strategies as stating goal behaviors, having the student preview a checklist of goal behaviors, asking the student to describe goal behaviors; or praising another student for demonstrating goal behaviors.
- **Response Effort: Reduce Task Difficulty** (Friman & Poling, 1995; Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). The teacher increases student engagement through any method that reduces the apparent difficulty ('response effort') of an academic task - so long as that method does not hold the student to a lesser academic standard than classmates. Examples of strategies that lower response effort include having students pair off to start homework in class and breaking larger academic tasks into smaller, more manageable 'chunks'.
- **Rewards: Choose Them in Advance** (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Just as the student is about to enter a challenging situation or setting in which he or she will need to show appropriate behaviors, the instructor reminds the student of the behavioral expectations and has the student select a possible reward from a menu. The student is later given that reward if behaviors were appropriate.
- **Setting the Tone: Transition Signal** (Hirn & Park, 2012). When moving from a high-structure learning task (e.g., independent seatwork) to a less-structured situation (e.g., lining up for lunch; preparing for dismissal), the



teacher uses an audible tone or other signal to clearly mark that transition. Such a signal helps all students more quickly and appropriately to match behaviors to the current classroom activity.

- **'Two by Ten': Engage in Brief Positive Chats** (Mendler, 2000). If a teacher has a strained (or nonexistent) relationship with a particular student, that instructor may want to jump-start a more positive pattern of interaction using the 'two-by-ten' intervention. With this time efficient strategy, the teacher commits to having a positive 2-minute conversation with the student at least once per day across 10 consecutive school days. The active ingredient in the intervention is regular and positive teacher attention delivered at times when the student is engaged in appropriate behavior.
- **Verbal Commands: Keep Them Brief and Powerful** (Matheson & Shriver, 2005; Walker & Walker, 1991). Teacher commands are most likely to elicit student compliance when they (1) are delivered calmly, (2) are brief, (3) are stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) use clear, simple language, and (5) are delivered one command at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students. Effective teacher commands avoid both sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.

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## 2. *Positive Consequences*: Responses That Increase Positive/Goal Behaviors

Consequences are those events following a student behavior that make it more or less likely that the behavior will occur in the future. This section looks at positive consequences, ideas that teachers can use to reinforce the student for being on-task and showing appropriate behaviors. Among strategies that promote behaviors are providing timely feedback, praise, and teacher attention; as well as allowing students to take temporary work breaks. To foster specific behaviors, the teacher can use any of the following strategies:

- **Performance Feedback: Information is Rewarding** (Conroy et al., 2009). When students receive timely feedback about their academic performance, this information can reinforce academic behavior and reduce misbehavior. Instructional feedback comes in many forms: e.g., teacher oral or written feedback; class discussion and review of an assignment; oral feedback from class peers; student self-directed completion of a rubric or problem-solving checklist during an independent assignment.
- **Praise: Catch Them Being Good** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Research suggests that teacher praise is one of the most powerful--yet underused-- of classroom management tools. When a student, group, or class displays an appropriate pro-social or pro-academic behavior, the teacher reinforces that behavior with a targeted praise statement containing two elements: (1) a specific description of the praiseworthy behavior, and (2) an expression of teacher approval (e.g., "You worked for the full independent-work period. Nice job!"; "I really appreciate the way that our student groups stayed on-task and completed their entire assignment.").
- **Scheduled Attention: Rechannel Adult Interactions** (Austin & Soeda, 2008). As every educator knows, teacher attention can be a potent motivator for student behavior. One strategy to increase positive behaviors is to 'catch the student being good' with regular doses of 'scheduled attention': (1) The teacher decides on a fixed-interval schedule to provide attention (e.g., every 8 minutes); (2) At each interval, the teacher observes the student; (3) If the student is engaged in appropriate behaviors at that moment, the teacher provides a dose of positive attention (e.g., verbal praise; non-verbal praise such as thumbs-up; brief positive conversation; encouragement). If the student is off-task or not behaving appropriately, the teacher briefly redirects the student to task and returns immediately to instruction until the next scheduled-attention interval.



### 3. *Extinction Procedures*: Responses That Reduce or Eliminate Problem Behaviors

Extinction means discontinuing the reinforcing consequences of behaviors to erase an individual's motivation to engage in those behaviors. In effect, extinction procedures 'cut off the oxygen' to problem behaviors. That is, explicit directions should be written into a behavior intervention plan to guide those working with the student to alter their responses to problem behaviors in a manner designed to remove reinforcement for the misbehavior.

An explicit plan to extinguish problem behaviors is an *essential* part of most student behavior plans (Hester et al., 2009). Without extinction procedures, educators are far too likely accidentally to continue reinforcing the very behaviors they are trying to eliminate. The teacher wishing to extinguish specific behaviors can try one or more of the following strategies:

- **Escape Breaks: Put Escape on a Schedule** (Waller & Higbee, 2010). The teacher can manage a student who uses disruptive behavior to escape or avoid academic work by scheduling 'non-contingent escape breaks'. First the teacher selects a reasonable work interval for the student-- this should be an interval slightly shorter than the average amount of time that student *currently* will work before misbehaving (e.g. 5 minutes). Next, the teacher decides how long the brief 'escape break' will last (e.g., two minutes). Finally, the teacher identifies motivating activities that the student can engage in during escape breaks (e.g., coloring; playing a math application on a computer tablet). When the intervention is in effect, the teacher directs the student to begin work and starts a timer. When the student's work interval is done, the teacher directs that student to take a break and again starts the timer. When the break is up, the student is directed to resume work. This process repeats until the work period is over. As the student's behaviors improve, the teacher can gradually lengthen the work periods until the student is able to remain academically engaged for as long as typical peers; at this point, the intervention is discontinued.
- **Choice Statements in 2 Parts: Frame the Alternative Consequences** (Walker, 1997). The teacher frames a request to an uncooperative student as a two-part 'choice' statement: (1) The teacher presents the negative, or non-compliant, choice and its consequence (e.g., "John, you can choose to stay after school today to finish this in-class assignment."); (2) The teacher next states the positive behavioral choice that the student is encouraged to select (e.g., "Or you can finish your work now and not stay after school. It's your choice."). If the student fails to comply within a reasonable time (e.g. 1 minute), the teacher imposes the disciplinary consequence.
- **Contingent Instructions: Move from 'Stop' to 'Start'** (Curran, 2006; Gable. Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009). When the instructor observes that a student is engaging in problem behavior requiring a response, the teacher delivers contingent instructions in a 3-part format.
  1. *STOP statement*. The teacher directs the student to STOP a specific problem behavior, e.g., "Joshua, put away the magazine."; "Annabelle, return to your seat."
  2. *START statement*. After a brief (1-2 second) pause, the instruction describes the appropriate replacement behavior that the student should START, e.g., "Open your book to page 28 and begin the end-of-chapter questions."; "Work with your partner to solve the math problem on the board."



3. *PRAISE for compliance.* As the student begins to engage in the desired behavior, the teacher concludes by PRAISING the student for compliance. e.g., "Thank you for starting your book assignment, Joshua.", "I see that you and your partner are solving the math problem, Annabelle. Good!"
- **If/Then Statements: Set the Conditions** (Majeika et al., 2011). When the student is engaging in a problem behavior, the teacher can use an 'if/then' statement to prompt that student to engage in the appropriate replacement behavior. For example, if a student is out of seat without permission, the teacher says, "Shelly, if you return to your seat, then I will come over and answer your question." Of course, when the student responds by displaying the positive behavior, the teacher follows through with the promised action and praises that student for compliance.
  - **Planned Ignoring: Turn Off the Attention** (Colvin, 2009). When the student engages in minor misbehavior to attract teacher attention, planned ignoring is a useful strategy. In planned ignoring, the instructor withholds attention when the student engages in the problem behavior. Ignoring problem behavior can remove the source of its reinforcement and thus help to extinguish it. Teachers should remember, though, that planned ignoring alone is seldom successful. Instead, planned ignoring becomes much more powerful when, at the same time, the teacher provides regular attention whenever the student engages in positive, replacement behaviors. In fact, the tandem efforts of (1) removing teacher attention from misbehavior while (2) rechanneling that attention toward positive behaviors is one of the most effective behavior management combinations available.
  - **Praise Peers: Shape Behavior Through Vicarious Reinforcement** (Majeika et al., 2011). Teacher approval can be a powerful motivator. The teacher can capitalize on this fact by publicly praising on-task peers sitting near the target (misbehaving) student. When the target student then engages in academic work, the teacher makes sure to praise that student as well.
  - **Precision Requests: Make Directives and Consequences Clear** (De Martini-Scully, Bray, & Kehle, 2000; Musser, Bray, Kehle, & Jenson, 2001). The *precision request* structures communication with the student in a concise, respectful format that preserves adult authority and increases the likelihood of student compliance. In preparation, the teacher decides on appropriate consequences for non-compliance. Examples of suitable consequences include loss of free time, phone call to a parent, loss of a point or token, or restriction of activities at recess. When making a precision request, the teacher follows these steps:
    1. *Make first request: "Please..."*. The teacher states a brief request that starts with the word 'Please' and -- whenever possible--frames the request as a goal behavior rather than as a behavior to stop (e.g., "Rick, please open your math book and begin the assignment written on the board"). The teacher then waits 5 seconds for the student to comply. If the student complies, the teacher praises the student (e.g., "Thank you for starting your math assignment").
    2. *Make second request: "I Need..."*. If the student fails to comply with the first request within 5 seconds, the teacher repeats that request. This time, the teacher starts the request with the phrase "I need..." (e.g., "Rick, I need you to open your math book and begin the assignment written on the board"). Again, the teacher waits 5 seconds for the student to comply. If the student complies, the teacher praises the student (e.g., "Thank you for starting your math assignment").
    3. *Deliver consequence for non-compliance.* If the student fails to comply to the second request within 5 seconds, the teacher follows through in delivering the pre-determined consequence for non-compliance.



- **Redirect the Student: Get Them Back on Track** (Dhaem, 2012; Simonsen et al., 2008). When the teacher observes the student begin to engage in problem behaviors, the instructor redirects that student back to task, either verbally (e.g., "Tom, stop talking and start your assignment") or non-verbally (e.g., giving that student a significant look and negative head shake). Redirects should be brief and calm in tone. NOTE: Teachers can also redirect without distracting the class by using 'tweets'--brief behavioral reminders written on post-it notes and placed on the student's desk.
  
- **Response Cost: Deduct for Misbehavior** (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002). Response cost is a strategy in which the teacher assigns an incentive (e.g., points, tokens, or classroom privileges such as free time) to the student at the start of the session. Each time that the student misbehaves during the session, that student loses a point, token, or increment of privilege (e.g., losing 5 minutes of free time). At the end of the session, the student is awarded any points, tokens, or privileges that remain. In preparation for response cost, the teacher must establish incentives that the student(s) would value--either setting up a classwide or individual point/token system tied to rewards or making available classroom privileges. The student(s) must also be trained in how the response cost system operates, including a clear understanding of what problem behaviors will result in response-cost deductions and what positive, replacement behaviors they are expected to display.

Response cost, like all punishment strategies, should be used only when it is clear that the problem behavior is fully under the student's control. Before using response cost, the teacher should ensure that the student has the required skills, training, and self-control to avoid the problem behavior and to engage in a positive, replacement behavior.

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# Tier 2: Strategic Interventions



## MTSS-Behavior: Selecting Programs to Provide Tier 2/Strategic Support

Schools implementing MTSS for behavior will want to establish several intervention options at Tier 2 for those students whose emerging behavioral for social/emotional concerns negatively important aspect(s) of their school experience. Students targeted for MTSS Tier 2 interventions show current evidence of problem behaviors and/or negative social/emotional symptoms that impact school success but have manageable mental-health needs that can still be appropriately addressed through efficient 'standard-treatment' approaches such as social-skills training or mentoring. The goal of Tier 2 services is to address students' emotional difficulties to permit them eventually to drop back to Tier 1/school-wide supports— rather than escalating to require Tier 3 resource-intensive, individual treatment plans (Mitchell et al., 2011).

A building-wide system of Tier 2 social-emotional/behavioral assistance offers intervention options that students can access quickly (e.g., within 1-2 weeks of referral), use data periodically to determine which students should enter or exit Tier 2 services, and are able to accommodate up to 10-15 percent of the school population in Tier 2 programming at any one time (Mitchell et al., 2011).

Schools used a variety of sources to identify students who qualify for Tier 2 services, including Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs), attendance, grades, teacher/administrator referrals, and brief norm-referenced behavior-rating questionnaires (Mitchell et al, 2011; Rodriguez et al, 2016).

Below are descriptions of 5 types of support most frequently defined by schools as Tier 2 MTSS-behavioral services. For each of the program options listed, it is expected that students will be taught behavioral expectations and given opportunities to practice desired behaviors with adult performance feedback. Furthermore, parents should receive regular communications about their child's Tier 2 progress (Rodriguez et al, 2016).

### Behavior Education Program/Check In-Check Out

*Description.* The Behavior Education Program/Check In-Check Out (CICO) connects at-risk students to assigned educators. CICO includes individualized student contact, behavior training, data collection, and parent communication (Mitchell et al, 2011). The student starts and ends each day by briefly checking in with their CICO educator contact. During the day, teachers working with the student complete a progress report rating that student's classroom behaviors. A goal of CICO is consistently to teach and reinforce positive student behaviors.

*Considerations.* When selecting educators to serve as CICO contacts, schools should strive to recruit adults who project warmth and caring.

*Resource.* *Responding to Problem Behaviors in Schools: The Behavior Education Program* is an excellent manual written by the BEP/CICO program creators and available through booksellers (ISBN-13: 978-1606236000).

### Mentoring

*Description.* School-based mentoring programs match educators or other adult volunteers with at-risk children or youth. Through the mentoring relationship, the mentor can help the student to avoid risky activities or behaviors and to increase school engagement. In a typical mentoring relationship, the mentor and student meet for about an hour per week, during or after school (Bernstein et al., 2009).

*Considerations.* A mentoring program is most likely to be successful when the school (1) designs it to meet the needs of a specific student risk profile (e.g., academic disengagement), (2) trains mentors in techniques to build effective relationships with their mentees, (3) makes available a welcoming space and activity materials (e.g.,



board games) for mentoring sessions, and (4) provides close supervision of the mentoring program and regularly evaluates program effectiveness (Smith & Stormont, 2011).

*Resource.* The National Mentoring Resource Center: <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php>. This website, sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), contains links to resources for setting up peer and adult mentoring programs.

## Solution-Focused Brief Counseling

*Description.* Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) is a brief-counseling format that school mental-health professionals can use with students whose social/emotional needs are mild-to-moderate but interfere with school or social functioning (Jones et al, 2009). The counselor helps the student to identify a key goal that will be the focus of counseling (e.g., to reduce anxiety during academic activities; to improve peer relationships). Counselor and student formulate a plan to achieve the goal and schedule a fixed number of sessions (e.g. 4-6) to accomplish that goal. Throughout the sessions, the counselor encourages the student to tap into their own past experience to find solutions to attain their counseling goal.

NOTE: Although 1:1 counseling is usually seen as an intensive form of intervention delivery, SFBC can be considered a Tier 2 intervention because it addresses emerging social-emotional concerns, is of short duration, and follows a consistent 'standard protocol'.

*Considerations.* SFBC requires that the student have the cognitive and language ability to reflect, select goals, and self-monitor progress toward those goals. Therefore, it is generally best-suited for students in grades 3 and higher (Jones et al, 2009).

*Resource.* An article (Jones et al., 2009) that provides a helpful introduction to SFBC can be found at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ878370.pdf>

## Social Skills Training

*Description.* Social skills training programs target those competencies necessary for social interactions such as communication, peer relations, and problem-solving (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Typically, social skills are taught in small-group format. Depending on the program, the adult instructor may be a teacher or a counselor, social worker, or school psychologist.

*Considerations.* Social-skills programs are most frequently used in elementary-school settings and—to a lesser extent—in middle schools. They are little-used in high schools. A challenge cited for social-skills programs as a Tier 2 support is that students' often fail to generalize social-skills gains to the classroom setting and to maintain them over time (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

*Resource.* NASP Social Skills Page: [http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/socialskills\\_fs.html](http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/socialskills_fs.html). The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) provides a useful overview of social-skills training in schools.

## Behavior Contracts

*Description.* A behavior contract is developed with the participation of student and educator (e.g., teacher; mental-health professional; administrator) (Rodriguez et al., 2016). It outlines goal behaviors the student will work toward, reinforcers that can be earned for attaining behavior goals, and [optionally] consequences for display of problem behaviors (Downing, 1990).

*Considerations.* Behavior contracts are most likely to be successful when the student has received explicit instruction in the goal or expected behaviors, that student has a voice in the construction of the contract, and the behavior contract is weighted more toward positive than negative consequences.



*Resources.* Below are descriptions for preparing and using behavior contracts from two national educational organizations:

- National Education Association: Behavior Contracts: How to Write Them  
<http://www.nea.org/tools/behavior-contracts-how-to-write-them.htm>
- National Center on Intensive Intervention: Behavior Contracts:  
[https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Behavior\\_Contracts\\_508.pdf](https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Behavior_Contracts_508.pdf)

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# Worksheet: MTSS-B Tier 2 Intervention Resources

School/District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Completing Survey: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Use the form below to survey resources in your school or district that can be used to support behavioral/social-emotional interventions at Tier 2.

## 1. Personnel Resources

**Personnel/Flexible Time.** List the names of any personnel available in your school/district with flexibility in their schedule to allow them—with appropriate training—to support MTSS-B in various ways (e.g., serving as mentors; participating in Check In/Check Out, assisting in a customized intervention plan, etc.) Check the 'Availability/Access?' box next to any name if you are unsure of how to access the person for MTSS support. After completing the survey, follow up to answer any availability or access questions.

Availability/Access?	Name	Position
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

**Personnel/Expert Knowledge.** List the names of those personnel in your school/district with formal training or experience in behavioral or social-emotional interventions, behavioral consultation, or related MTSS topics who can serve as counselors, consultants, coaches, or trainers to other staff. Check the 'Availability/Access?' box next to any name for which you are unsure of the *availability* of that person or of how to *access* the person for MTSS support. After completing the survey, follow up to answer your availability or access questions.

Availability/Access?	Name	Position	Area(s) of Expertise
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____





### 3. Data Sources

**Data to Recruit for Tier 2 MTSS-B Services.** Review the listing of data sources below (archival sources and staff/parent referral) to identify students qualifying for Tier 2 programming. Check off those that your school plans to adopt. For each selected source, discuss (and record) details about contact person, team that will review the data, etc.

Archival Data Source:	Contact Person. Who would be responsible for compiling this data source?	Frequency. How frequently would this data be compiled and reviewed?	Team. Who would review this Tier 2 behavioral data to determine eligibility and placement in Tier 2 services?
<input type="checkbox"/> Grades			
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance			
<input type="checkbox"/> Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs)			

Staff/Parent Referral Source	Contact Person. Who would be the contact person for this referral?	Team. Who would review this Tier 2 referral to determine eligibility and placement in Tier 2 services?
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher		
<input type="checkbox"/> Support Staff (e.g., Counselor)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator		
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent		

# Tier 3: Intensive Interventions

## The RTI/MTSS Problem-Solving Team: Overcoming Tier 3 Challenges to Create Successful Intervention Plans

The RTI/MTSS Problem-Solving Team has a complex job: It must pull together a range of stakeholders to hammer out and implement a customized academic and/or behavior-intervention plan for students with the most intensive needs in the school. Here are common areas of challenge...with suggestions for how the Team can respond to each:

1. **Uphold the non-negotiables in the Team process.** When teachers refer students to the Tier 3 RTI/MTSS Team, they should know these 'non-negotiable' principles that guide the Team:
  - The Team has a single purpose: to create high-quality intervention plans for use in general education. It does NOT screen students to decide which should be 'fast-tracked' to be evaluated for special education services.
  - Any stakeholder connected with the referred student can potentially be written into a Tier 3 plan, including classroom teacher(s), Tier 2 service provider(s), special-area teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals, the student, and parent(s).
  - Compliance with Tier 3 intervention plans is mandatory. Staff creating a plan at an RTI Team meeting certainly have a say in its structure and elements. However, once the Team has developed a finished plan, it is expected that *all* stakeholders written into that plan will carry out their responsibilities. If obstacles arise, staff should immediately seek assistance from the Team to overcome those blockers.
2. **Schedule sufficient meeting time to create effective plans.** Schools sometimes skip on the time allocated for Tier 3 problem-solving meetings. This is a mistake, as a lack of time can result in rushed discussions and incomplete or poorly developed intervention plans. At minimum, a typical initial student referral to the Tier 3 Team requires a meeting of 30-40 minutes. (Remember that only between 1 and 5 % of general-education students in a building should require a Tier 3 meeting in a school year.) The RTI Team should reserve a standing block of time each week to allow it to meet in a timely manner on any individual student.
3. **Establish criteria for accepting Tier 3 referrals.** Your school should develop guidelines for when a student is appropriate to be referred to the Tier 3 RTI Team. For example, many schools expect that a student must have classroom (Tier 1) and supplemental (Tier 2) intervention plans in place before educators can consider referring a student to the Tier 3 Team for academic reasons.

An efficient approach to ensure that Tier 3 referrals are justified is to establish a person in your school who serves as 'gatekeeper' for Tier 3 Team referrals. That contact reviews teacher referrals, applies your school's Tier 3 guidelines, and flags any cases that may need additional Tier 1 or Tier 2 intervention work before coming to the Tier 3 Team. Of course, whenever your school decides to 'kick back' a referral and direct a teacher to carry out additional intervention efforts prior to coming to the Tier 3 RTI Team, an administrator should convey that message.

At the same time, RTI Teams should not be overly rigid in enforcing their Tier 3 referral guidelines. Particularly for students with escalating behavioral or social-emotional needs, your school should be open to scheduling an RTI Team meeting at any time if you judge that this Team might be able to stabilize the situation.

4. **Bring data to the meeting.** Tier 3 RTI Team meetings depend on quality data to accurately identify and prioritize the major presenting student problem(s) to fix and to set goals for improvement. Often, academic or behavioral data that might be useful for the Team has already been collected and stored in classrooms or the school's electronic database. But such valuable data can sometimes be overlooked.

A useful exercise for RTI Teams is to develop a reference list of potentially useful school data sources, by:

- cataloging all data on student academic and behavioral performance stored in electronic databases (e.g., office referrals, attendance, state assessment results) or classrooms (e.g., recently completed learning-preferences inventories, instructional reading assessments),
  - listing a subset of important data sources from this master list that should always be brought to RTI Team meetings, and
  - determining—for each essential data source—who is responsible for bringing it to the meeting.
5. **Accept RTI Team referrals from multiple sources.** Referrals to the Tier 3 RTI Team can come from any stakeholder who works with the student. While the classroom teacher is a frequent source of referrals, a Tier 2 interventionist can also independently refer a student who fails to make progress on supplemental academic interventions. Administrators and mental health staff can initiate Tier 3 referrals. Indirectly, even parents can be a source of RTI Team referrals. In other words, no student with intensive needs should languish without Tier 3 support because a specific educator will not make that referral.

For example, a parent who contacts the school with concerns about their child's academic performance and wishes to explore a special education evaluation may be encouraged to first let the school convene a Tier 3 RTI Team meeting to investigate whether a general-education intervention plan should be explored. Of course, in situations where a Tier 3 meeting is set in motion by a parental concern, the parent(s) would typically be invited to the RTI Team meeting.

6. **Focus on the 'fixable'.** At RTI Team meetings, the discussion can easily veer toward factors contributing to student failure that are outside of the school's direct control—e.g., lack of structure at home, etc. Because the RTI Team is focused on creating a plan to positively address the student's school issue(s), the facilitator and other Team members should be quick to nudge the conversation back to those factors that the school does have influence over. Of course, if a parent contact is warranted to share school concerns, that can be written into the RTI Plan. However, the Team should then move briskly on to discuss fixable factors.
7. **RTI Team discussions are...negotiations.** When the RTI Team meets with stakeholders at a Tier 3 problem-solving meeting to design a customized intervention plan, all members (include invited teachers) should be actively contributing to the document. With few exceptions, however, RTI Team members do not dictate to teachers and support staff what actions they *must* commit to undertake. Rather, the plan is assembled through a process of peer-to-peer negotiation among all attending. This simple fact means that Team members will want to maintain an optimistic, results-centered tone and use their 'soft' communication skills as they negotiate.

When a teacher raises objections to the feasibility of a suggestion, for example, Team members may offer assistance to put it in place: e.g., by completing a student's initial training in a classroom self-management strategy before handing off to the teacher, modeling the strategy for the teacher, helping to create materials for the intervention, etc.

And here is another tip: Suggestions that a reluctant teacher change classroom practices can seem more

reasonable when Team members frame recommendations in terms of *student* need: e.g., "*Rodney is a student who needs to have directions repeated because he is so easily distracted*", or "*Angela is a student who reacts really well when teachers communicate using a calm, friendly voice*".

8. **Develop decision rules to identify intervention 'non-responders'**. Even schools with a high-quality RTI process are going to have students who qualify for IEPs. In fact, RTI can actually make the special-education referral process more rational, as it applies a process and data to decide when the evidence suggests that a student's difficulties are due to 'within-child' issues rather than inadequate instruction.

In almost all cases, a student in an RTI school who is referred to special education for academic reasons will have gone through at least *one* individualized Tier 3 RTI Team intervention. In collaboration with the special education department, schools should develop 'decision rules' that spell out the minimum expectations and quality indicators required to certify that a student shows evidence suggesting that they are RTI 'non-responders'.

## RTI/MTSS for Behavior: What Are Your Expectations of the Teacher as Behavior-Management 'First Responder'?

Teachers routinely (and often successfully) manage mild to moderate problem behaviors that occur in their classrooms.

Listed below are elements of effective classroom behavioral intervention.

Imagine a teacher who has a student with a recurring (but manageable) problem behavior (e.g., inattention; non-compliance; calling out). Next to each item jot down what you think should be the *minimum* expectation for any teacher to follow when they respond to this kind of problem behavior:

Elements of effective classroom intervention	Minimum expectations
1. Describe the student problem behavior clearly and specifically	
2. Find/use effective behavior-management strategies.	
3. Record (write down) intervention efforts.	
4. Collect data on whether the problem behavior improves	
5. Communicate with the student.	
6. Communicate with parent(s).	



## RTI/MTSS for Behavior and Social-Emotional Concerns (RTI/MTSS-B): School / District Needs Assessment

**Directions:** Review these 10 behavioral challenges. Select up to 4 that you believe are of greatest concern in your school/district. Rank your selected challenges in descending order of importance (e.g., great challenge = "1", etc.)

Ranking	Behavioral Challenge	NOTES
	1. <b>Motivation.</b> Limited student motivation interferes significantly with academic performance and learning.	
	2. <b>Bullying.</b> Bullying and related hidden ('covert') student behaviors create an emotionally unsafe atmosphere for substantial number of learners.	
	3. <b>Disruptive Classroom Behavioral Climate.</b> Problem behaviors across classrooms commonly interfere with effective instruction.	
	4. <b>'High-Amplitude' Behaviors.</b> A small number of students with more severe behaviors ties up a large share of school support and intervention resources.	
	5. <b>Vague Descriptions of Student Problems.</b> Educators find it difficult to define a student's primary behavior problem in clear and specific terms: "If you can't name the problem, you can't fix it."	
	6. <b>Limited Data on Behavioral Interventions.</b> Staff lack an understanding of how to set goals and what data to collect when monitoring student progress on behavioral interventions.	
	7. <b>No Decision Rules for Behavioral 'Non-Responders'.</b> The district has no formal guidelines for judging when a general-education student on a behavior-intervention plan is a 'non-responder' and may require more intensive RTI/MTSS or special education services.	
	8. <b>Differing Philosophies about Behavior Management.</b> Staff are divided between 'reactive/punitive' and 'proactive/ positive' viewpoints about how to manage student misbehavior.	
	9. <b>Variability of Behavior-Management Skills.</b> Teachers and other educators (e.g., paraprofessionals) vary in their knowledge of--and/or willingness to implement--positive behavior management practices.	
	10. <b>'System' Breakdowns in Supporting Students with Intensive Needs.</b> For students with more significant challenging behaviors, there are disconnects across staff, problem-solving groups, and time. These disconnects result in lack of coordination, communication, and consistent delivery of behavior-support services.	



## 6 Reasons Why Teachers May Be 'Reluctant' to Move from Punishment to Positive Behavior Management Strategies

**Directions:** Read through each of the possible reasons listed below for why a teacher may be 'reluctant' to move from punitive to positive behavior management strategies. Select the 1-2 reasons that you believe MOST apply to your school.

	1. <b>Teachers lack the skills to use positive behavior strategies</b> (Bear 2013). Instructors lack the training to refocus their management strategies in a positive direction.
	2. <b>Teachers hang on to their current disciplinary procedures as familiar, comfortable</b> (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). Whenever people (including teachers) are asked to change important aspects of their professional behavior, there is a tendency to cling to known and comfortable routines—even when we get mediocre results. This reluctance to give up the familiar and embrace change is universal--and is known as the 'status quo' bias.
	3. <b>Teachers are pulled into confrontational situations because students control the interactions</b> (Conroy et al., 2009). Teachers may have good intentions to adopt positive practices. However, when students are defiant or non-compliant, these educators find themselves 'pulled' into a confrontation. So the student actually controls the interaction.
	4. <b>Teachers are (negatively) reinforced by use of punishment</b> (Maag, 2012). When teachers send students with challenging behaviors to the office, this can be 'negatively reinforcing' to the instructor--thus increasing the likelihood that the teacher will use the strategy repeatedly.
	5. <b>Teachers use punishment because they see that it works—for most</b> (Maag, 2001). In a typical student population, sending a student to the principal's office is quite effective for the 95% who show few behavior problems. The same disciplinary response is ineffective with about 5% of students, who either don't care or wish to escape the classroom. The teacher, however, may assume that these recalcitrant students simply need more of the same punishment for it to be effective--so problem interactions intensify.
	6. <b>Teachers see 'zero tolerance' of misbehavior as an important teaching tool</b> (Skiba et al., 2006). The teacher believes that having the student experience punitive consequences such as class removal or suspension will teach important life lessons about consequences in the 'real world' (Skiba et al., 2006).



# RTI/MTSS for Behavior: District-Wide Planning Tool: 'Next Steps' Activity

**Directions:** Create a plan listing the key next steps that your school or district should take between now and the end of this school year to advance the RTI/MTSS model for behavior and social-emotional support. Be prepared to report out.

	Goal Number(s) from Planning Tool/ Description of Task	Person(s) Responsible	Proposed Completion Date	Additional Resources Needed
E x a m p l e	<i>B.1.1 Teaching Culturally Responsive Behavioral Expectations.</i> Our school will select core values, translate into location-specific behavioral expectations, teach students those positive behaviors.	School Psychologist/ RTI/MTSS Behavior Team	March 2019	Half-Day during Supt Conf Day in February for staff;  2-hr Principal Assemblies to train students
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				