



# Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI)

A School-Based Behavior Guide for Educators,  
Administrators, and Families

2025 Edition

# Utah State Board of Education

250 E 500 S  
PO Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

**District 1**

Jennie Earl

**District 2**

Joseph Kerry

**District 3**

Rod Hall

**District 4**

LeAnn Wood

**District 5**

Sarah Reale

**District 6**

Carol Barlow Lear

**District 7**

Erin Longacre

**District 8**

Christina Boggess

**District 9**

Amanda Bollinger

**District 10**

Matt Hymas

**District 11**

Cindy Bishop Davis

**District 12**

Cole Kelley

**District 13**

Randy Boothe

**District 14**

Emily Green

**District 15**

Joann Brinton

**State Superintendent of Public**

**Instruction**

Molly Hart

**Board Secretary**

Cybil Prideaux

# Contributors

This version of the Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI) technical assistance manual builds upon the LRBI 2023 Edition. It is the result of the collaborative effort of a dedicated team of contributors and content reviewers. The following list acknowledges those who contributed to the foundational document and those who provided direct input to the 2025 version.

## Content

---

Ashlie Baker	Lauralee Gillespie	Seralina McCormick-Danielson
Holly Bell	Kelsey Gressmen	Muyl Miller
Brittany Bly	Levi Grisenti	Stefie Munk
Terrakay Bodily	Wendy Harris	Becca Rae
Shauntelle Cota	Kelli Hay	Sydney Seager
Lindsey Cunningham	Jeanna Keller	Tanya Semerad
Jordan DeHaan-Magalei	Jaimee Kidder	Amy Steele-Smith
Shelly DeWitt	Brian King	Wayne Trice
Casey Dupart	Toni Lee	Leah Voorhies
Kim Fratto	Krisanne Lewis	Jessica Wilhelm
Mark Gardner	Ashley Lower	

## Editing, Design, and Administrative Support

---

Barbara Fuentes	Angela Toscano	Millie Mortensen
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# Foreword

This edition of the Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI) Technical Assistance Manual provides guidance and information on interventions and best practices for providing behavior supports to students in alignment with the Utah State Board of Education's (USBE) vision and mission.

In that context, this manual is intended as a resource for family and school teams in their support of all students, including each student served in general education classrooms as well as the portion of those students also receiving support through special education.

**Students typically engage in problem behavior when there is a mismatch between their needs and their environment, and/or when they have experienced more reinforcement overall for the problem behavior than for appropriate alternative behaviors.** Effective behavior support acknowledges the many factors that may influence a student's behavior for one of those two reasons. This can help teams determine when a student may need support in ways that might seem unrelated to behavior at first glance, such as hunger, anxiety, or developmental delays.

This edition of the LRBI Technical Assistance Manual is a comprehensive resource for best practice and technical assistance to improve student learning outcomes. Family and school teams can address student needs by engaging in strengths-focused problem-solving, teaching and reinforcing clear behavioral expectations, providing high-quality behavior support, and facilitating better outcomes for all.

# Chapter 1: Introduction to the LRBI Manual

## Purpose of the LRBI Guidelines

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Schools face a growing challenge in meeting both the academic and behavioral needs of all students. To be effective and demonstrate positive educational outcomes with diverse student populations, schools need to implement tiered models of evidence-based academic and behavioral supports and interventions.<sup>1</sup>

The vision of the USBE is “academic and organizational excellence in Utah education.”

- Participate in civic responsibilities
- Uphold and strengthen our constitutional republic
- Provide for themselves and their families
- Engage in post-secondary opportunities
- Pursue personal goals
- Embody strong moral and social values

To support this vision, the USBE has incorporated the LRBI by reference into Utah State Board of Education Administrative Rules (after this referred to as “Board Rules”) R277-609.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the LRBI Technical Assistance Manual is to provide guidance and information in creating successful behavioral systems and supports within Utah's public schools that: (a) promote positive behaviors while preventing negative or risky behaviors; and (b) create a safe learning environment that enhances outcomes for students.

### *Guiding Principles in the LRBI Technical Assistance Manual*

- All students can achieve positive outcomes when provided opportunities to develop skills as a result of effective teaching.

- Student success centers around early prevention and interventions to meet both behavioral and academic needs.
- A comprehensive system of tiered interventions is essential for addressing the full range of student needs.
- Student outcomes improve when ongoing behavioral and academic data collection informs instructional decisions.
- All school personnel share responsibility for evidence-based instructional practices, behavior support practices, and progress monitoring.
- Effective leadership at all levels is crucial for the maximum achievement of student outcomes.

## *Intended Audience*

This manual is written to be accessible to *each person involved in teaching and supporting Utah students*. Students are responsible for engaging in their learning, following expectations, getting along with other students and teachers, and developing functional skills for adulthood. To accomplish these things, our students may be supported by many different adults with different roles. This manual was developed with the following audiences in mind:

- Parents and other family members
- General education and special education teachers
- Paraeducators
- Student support specialists
- School administrators
- Local education agency (LEA) staff
- State education agency (SEA) staff
- Community partners

## **How to Use the Manual**

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This manual discusses student behavior in the context of the various school systems, environments and interactions that influence it. However, this manual is not intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to all school factors that may play a role in student behavior.

Information about specific **evidence-based behavior interventions** (previously made available as a chapter in the body of the manual) are provided in a separate resource. This allows the USBE to provide more frequent updates to this resource as new information about behavior interventions and supporting evidence becomes available.

This manual does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Content in this manual is presented for general information purposes only. Information about some federal and state statutes and rules relevant to school-based behavior support is presented alongside relevant content in each chapter. This allows the reader to understand how these statutes and rules align with best practice in behavior support. However, this manual should not be considered an exhaustive resource for these legal citations. School personnel are responsible for knowing and following the legal requirements associated with school-based behavior support.

# Notes on Chapter 1

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2021). *Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> N.B.: Board Rules are part of the larger Utah Administrative Code and deal with section 277. These rules can be found in two places: the [USBE Administrative Rules webpage](#) or the [Utah Office Administrative Rules webpage](#). Therefore, Board Rule R277-609 refers to the same rule as Utah Admin. Code R277-609. Additionally, it should be noted that the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (SpEd Rules) are part of but distinguished from Board Rules. Though separate, these Rules are incorporated into Board Rule by reference ([see Board Rule r277-750](#)).

# Chapter 2: Behavior Basics

## Why Teach Behavior?

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Academic learning is not the sole benefit that students access in Utah schools. For students to be prepared for life beyond childhood and adolescence, they must develop additional skills to allow them to communicate and collaborate with others, solve problems, and make responsible decisions. Educators are well-prepared to meet students where they are academically by providing personalized learning experiences that take student strengths and needs into account. However, beyond academic content, it is equally important that educators meet students where they are in terms of these additional skills. To do this, it is essential that educators understand the behavioral learning needs of their students.

Some students, for a variety of reasons, may demonstrate problem behavior that inhibits their learning and/or the learning of other students. Just as we would not expect students to teach themselves academic content on their own, we would not leave students to correct their own behavior without support. Without intervention or instruction, many students will continue to engage in problem behavior and may even develop patterns of behavior that increase in frequency and intensity.

Behavior problems often lead to academic challenges, difficulty with relationships, and diminished postsecondary readiness. In addition, student behavior problems that are not addressed can lead to educator burnout.<sup>1</sup> In response, many schools rely on reactive disciplinary measures such as reprimands, zero tolerance policies, suspension, and expulsion as means of correcting student behavior, but they are not generally effective.<sup>2</sup>

Rather than waiting for these negative outcomes to occur, best practice indicates that **educators should proactively prepare to teach behavior in schools**. Being proactive about behavior response means investing time in strategies that involve preventing problem behavior and teaching appropriate behavior. Understanding



key concepts in behavioral science can help school teams select the best ways to teach appropriate behavior to students.

## Key Concepts in Behavior

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All humans engage in learned behavior and follow the same behavioral principles. By understanding these principles, it is possible to understand the behavior of

students within the school system. One of the first steps in helping change student behavior is taking the time to better understand why the problem behavior exists.

### *Applied Behavior Analysis*

**Applied behavior analysis (ABA)** is “the science in which tactics derived from the principles of behavior are applied systematically to improve socially significant behavior and experimentation is used to identify the variables responsible for behavior change.”<sup>3</sup> This means applying what we understand about human behavior to teach students to improve their behavior in ways that are meaningful for those students and their families. Applied behavior analysis is based on the following assumptions:

- Behavior is learned, so appropriate behavior should be taught
- Problem behavior is addressed by preventing those behaviors from occurring, and by reinforcing the behaviors we want to see instead
- Punishment does not teach new behavior
- Behavior improvement efforts must be data-driven to determine effectiveness

Student behavior is often complex, and support efforts may connect to many other areas of practice. This manual maintains a focus on supporting the efforts of school-based teams to provide a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for behavior at the school, classroom, and individual student levels, and provides the

behavioral processes and resources needed to comply with education law and policy.

## *Principles of Reinforcement and Punishment*

Behavioral learning involves finding the most efficient path to the greatest reward. As humans, we excel at identifying behaviors that have a better pay off than others. We develop preferences for many everyday things—the places we shop for groceries, the paths we use to commute to work or school, and the people with whom we spend our time—based on a history of learning which of those things paid off for us in the ways we care about and which did not. This is an example of how behavior is learned based on the **principles of reinforcement and punishment**.

### Reinforcement

The term reinforcement means something that is added to the student's environment or taken away from the environment that strengthens or *increases* the behavior. A misconception about reinforcement is that it is synonymous with the term "reward." **When a problem behavior is increasing or continuing to occur, it is always maintained by some form of "reinforcement" that follows it.**



**Positive reinforcement** refers to situations in which something pleasant is presented after a behavior, and that behavior then increases or stays the same in the future. For example, when Gina makes an inappropriate joke and her friends laugh, and over time the behavior of inappropriate joking increases, we could say that laughter from her friends is positively reinforcing that behavior.

**Negative reinforcement** refers to situations in which something unpleasant is taken away after a behavior, and that behavior then increases or stays the same in the future. If Max throws school supplies at a classmate during an exam and is immediately sent out into the hall, and over time Max's throwing behavior increases, we could conclude that sending Max out into the hall (and away from their exam) negatively reinforced that behavior.

Reinforcement is the way that all humans learn new behaviors and refine existing behaviors.<sup>4</sup> Many things can function as reinforcement for students, and different students will be reinforced by different things. Because of this, it is important to measure behavior and look at whether the behavior is staying the same or increasing over time. If that is the case, then there is some form of reinforcement following that behavior. However, that reinforcement may not be obvious at first glance. For example, Tony is reinforced by attention of any kind, including teacher reprimands—but because Tony's teachers are not likely to view their reprimands as reinforcing, the role of teacher reprimands in maintaining Tony's problem behaviors might go unnoticed.

## Punishment/Consequence

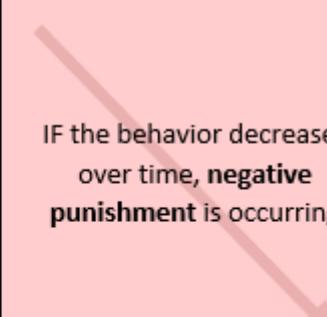
The use of the word “**consequence**” can be both positive and negative, and follow different choices students make accordingly. Most often, it refers to something added or taken away after a behavior occurs that decreases the likelihood of that behavior occurring again. **Positive punishment** refers to situations in which an unpleasant stimulus is administered after a behavior, and that behavior then decreases in the future. For example, each time Blake runs in the hallway he is asked to go back and practice walking appropriately instead, and over time Blake's hallway running decreases; this decrease suggests that asking Blake to practice walking after he runs in the hall functions as positive punishment for that behavior.

**Negative punishment** refers to situations in which a pleasant stimulus is taken away after a behavior occurs, and that behavior then decreases in the future. For instance, if Paola loses a classroom point each time she talks while the teacher is talking, and over time she talks during instruction less frequently, that the loss of points suggests it is acting as negative punishment for the behavior of talking out.

Punishment may feel like the fastest way to stop a student from engaging in problem behavior. However, **punishment cannot teach new behavior** and thus does not lead to positive long-term behavioral change.<sup>5</sup> It's important for all adults engaged in supporting students to understand that the effects of punishment are short-lived. If students are not taught the appropriate behaviors to use instead, and if those appropriate behaviors are not reinforced, student behavior will not improve over the long term.

The term “punishment” should be avoided outside of theoretical discussions. The word “consequence” more positively describes effective actions taken by staff to help shape student behavior. In addition, the use of “consequence” with students helps them understand that they have control over outcomes, rather than feeling that penalties are being imposed upon them.

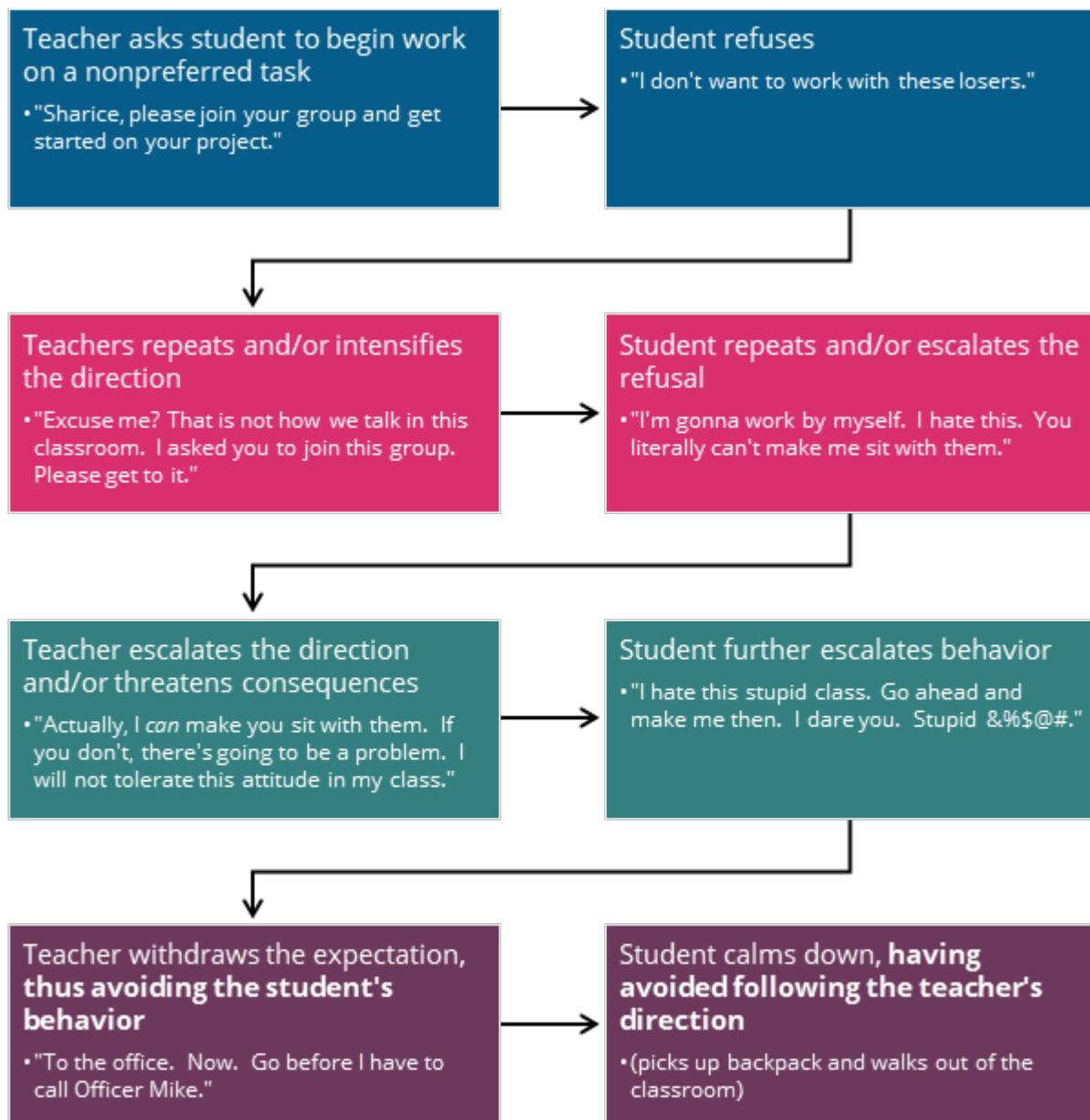
FIGURE 2-1: STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND STIMULUS CHANGE

	The student likes the stimulus	The student dislikes the stimulus
The stimulus is added/given (+) to the student after the behavior	<p>IF the behavior maintains or increases over time, <b>positive reinforcement</b> is occurring</p> 	<p>IF the behavior decreases over time, <b>positive punishment</b> is occurring</p> 
The stimulus is removed (-) from the student after the behavior	<p>IF the behavior decreases over time, <b>negative punishment</b> is occurring</p> 	<p>IF the behavior maintains or increases over time, <b>negative reinforcement</b> is occurring</p> 

## Avoiding Power Struggles

Most parents and teachers are familiar with the concept of *the power struggle*, meaning an escalating dynamic between two people in which neither wants to back down nor relinquish control of the situation. Power struggles can arise when the parent or teacher has not proactively established appropriately firm responses to routine misbehavior and must resort to repeated directions and empty threats. Sometimes the power struggle ends with the parent or teacher giving in and the student getting out of the original request.

FIGURE 2-2: EXAMPLE POWER STRUGGLE



Power struggles operate using negative reinforcement. The student wants to avoid the teacher's request, and the teacher wants the student to follow directions politely. When the student escalates their behavior, the teacher feels the need to escalate their demands as well. Finally, once the student's behavior reaches an unacceptable peak, the teacher throws their hands up and gives up on the demand. Both parties avoid the immediate discomfort facing them. The student avoids the demand, and the teacher avoids the escalating conflict. When this dynamic establishes itself, it is much more likely to occur in the future.

Preventing power struggles involves implementing evidence-based strategies that focus on reducing coercive behaviors and promoting positive interactions. Concrete strategies for preventing and escaping power struggles include:

- Preventing behaviors through proactive support:
  - Developing pre-established consequences that are simple, reasonable, and respectful
  - Referring to pre-established classroom rules
  - Using positive behavior support plans tailored to individual needs
  - Building strong, trusting relationships
  - Proactively scheduling reinforcers, breaks, and preferred tasks to reduce triggers
- Maintaining boundaries:
  - Setting appropriate limits and explaining possible outcomes:
    - “If, then” statements (e.g., “If you finish your work before the bell rings, then you will have time to read your book.”)
    - “When, then” statements (e.g., “When you sit down, then I can help you.”)
  - Providing 2-3 choices that are acceptable and would meet the objective (e.g., “Would you like me to help you get started, or do you want to work on your own.”)
  - Refraining from issuing a demand or consequence that won’t be followed through
- Teaching and modeling emotional regulation:
  - Don’t take it personally; stay calm, composed, and regulated
  - Recognize your own emotional triggers and practice de-escalation strategies (deep breathing, stepping away, getting support)
- Downplaying challenging comments and avoiding engaging in arguments or power struggles
- Using planned ignoring for minor oppositional behaviors while reinforcing compliance
- Using clear and consistent communication:
  - Giving clear, concise instructions without excessive explanation or negotiation

- Using a neutral tone and body language to avoid emotional escalation/dysregulation
- Sticking to a scripted or planned response
- Using positive reinforcement
  - Acknowledging and rewarding small steps toward desired behavior
  - Using specific praise (e.g., "Great job following directions the first time.")
- Implementing time-delayed responses
  - If an individual escalates, avoid reacting immediately. Use wait time or space
  - Re-present the original request calmly after a short delay, if appropriate

Verbal and nonverbal communication is key to avoiding power struggles.

TABLE 2-1: EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO POWER STRUGGLES

Ineffective Approach (reinforces problem behavior)	Effective Approach (reinforces desired behavior)
<p>Staff: "Pick up your book now!"</p> <p>Student: "No!"</p> <p>Staff: "Fine, whatever, I'll do it."</p>	<p>Staff: "You can pick up your book now or in two minutes. Let me know what you decide."</p> <p>(If no compliance: Calmly follow up)</p> <p>Staff: "Since you didn't choose, I'll help you get started."</p>

These strategies aim to create a supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being and autonomy of individuals, ultimately interrupting the power struggle.

## *ABCs of Behavior*

Learned behavior follows a predictable pattern. This is known as the ABC model of behavior. First, something in the environment (the antecedent or "A") creates the conditions for a person to respond in a certain way. Then the person responds (the behavior or "B,"), and that response creates its own impact on the environment (the

consequence or “C”). By breaking this pattern down, educators and parents can gain an increased understanding of student behavior.

## Antecedents

A behavior's *antecedent* is an event or condition that reliably precedes a behavior. Antecedent conditions set the stage for the behaviors we observe and can be found by recording the factors in the individual's environment immediately before that behavior occurs. While it's possible to compare this concept to the notion of “triggers,” it's helpful to remember that antecedents can involve 1) something happening to the student before the behavior, and/or 2) something important that is not happening to the individual before the behavior. For instance, the following could both be antecedents for a particular behavior:

TABLE 2-2: EXAMPLES OF ANTECEDENTS TO A BEHAVIOR

Antecedent (trigger)	Behavior
Katie raised her hand but was not acknowledged by the teacher for a full minute.	Katie stood up, knocked her chair over, said “I don't need this,” and ran out of the classroom.
Another student laughed and said to Katie, “Guess she doesn't care what you have to say.”	

To observe antecedents, ask “What happened immediately before the behavior?” Take note of ongoing factors in the student's environment and then note any that typically occur right before the problem behavior begins.

The following are some common antecedents observed in school settings. While this is not an exhaustive list, it can illustrate what sorts of antecedent conditions to watch for.

- Lack of adult and/or peer attention
- Rude comments from peers to the student (or others)
- Teacher reprimands to the student (or others)

- Being asked to complete certain types of schoolwork (certain content areas, types of activities, etc.)
- Being asked to stop doing something preferred
- Being expected to stay on task for long periods of time, relative to the student's current skill
- Unclear expectations about tasks, activities, and/or behavior expectations
- Long transitions between activities and/or extended wait time

## Behavior

*Behavior* can be defined as “an observable and measurable act of an individual.”<sup>6</sup> In behavior intervention, the “B” in the ABC model is typically the problem behavior. A problem behavior is a behavior that we wish to change. Problem behaviors are generally unhealthy in some way for the person engaging in it. A student’s problem behavior may interfere with the student’s ability to access instruction, engage with classmates, and/or stay safe in their environment.

It’s important for school teams to keep in mind that **not all unusual behaviors are problem behaviors**. For instance, a student with autism may engage in hand flapping to self-regulate during class. While some may view this behavior as atypical, the behavior poses no safety risk and likely aids the person engaging in it to regulate their sensory needs and stay engaged with their environment. It would not be appropriate for a school team to attempt to change this behavior simply because others in the student’s environment find the behavior unusual.

## Consequences

Many people use the word “consequence” to mean “disciplinary action.” However, in behavior terms, a *consequence* is any event or condition that immediately follows the behavior. Consequences can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral for the person experiencing it. The purpose of observing a behavior’s usual consequences is to determine what might be reinforcing the behavior. For instance, consider the consequence of the behavior below. What might be functioning as reinforcement for this student in this incident?

TABLE 2-3: EXAMPLE OF ANTECEDENTS, BEHAVIOR, AND THE CONSEQUENCE

Antecedent (trigger)	Behavior	Consequence (outcome)
Katie raised her hand but was not acknowledged by the teacher for a full minute.	Katie stood up, knocked her chair over, said "I don't need this," and ran out of the classroom.	Katie sat in the hallway for a few seconds alone. Then her teacher came outside, consoled her, and asked her to come back to class.

To observe consequences, ask "What happened immediately after the behavior?" Take note of anything that changed in the student's environment right after the problem behavior occurred. Remember that consequences can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—the purpose is not to just look for disciplinary actions, but to note anything that happened to the student following their behavior.

**Pleasant**

**Unpleasant**

**Neutral**

The following are some common consequences observed in school settings. While this is not an exhaustive list, it can illustrate what sorts of consequences to look for.

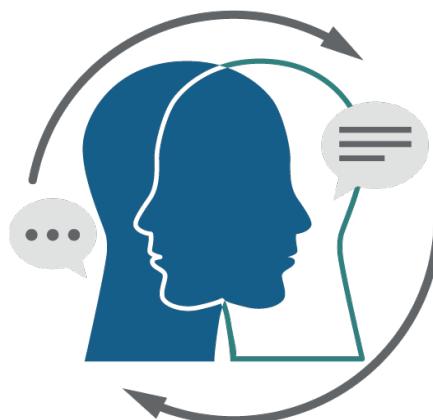
- Reaction (verbal or nonverbal) from peers and/or adults
- Attention or one-on-one time with a particular person
- Delaying or avoiding schoolwork
- Getting away from an overwhelming situation
- Getting access to a desired item or activity
- Getting a basic need met (e.g., food, water, sleep)
- Getting or avoiding a particular type of sensory input

## *Functions of Behavior*

Once we have observed the ABCs of problem behavior (the antecedent, the problem behavior itself, and the consequence) enough times to detect patterns of behavior, we can develop a **hypothesis**—a best guess—about the **function of the behavior**. The behavior's function is the type of underlying need that it meets for the individual.

Behavioral science holds that there are four functions of learned behavior:

1. Escape: The behavior enables the person to delay or avoid doing something they find unpleasant or difficult
2. Attention: The behavior gets an immediate reaction of some kind from others
3. Tangible: The behavior allows the person to access a specific, preferred item or activity
4. Sensory/automatic: The behavior helps the person meet a basic physical need



All behavior, whether perceived as appropriate or inappropriate by others, serves a function. All people have behavioral habits they engage in to get attention, to escape undesired things, to access tangible things they like, and to meet sensory needs. However, as stated previously, some behaviors people engage in may meet those functions in unhealthy ways, and this is when behaviors become problem behaviors. When this

happens, the focus should be on determining the function of the problem behavior to understand what the individual is unconsciously trying to obtain or avoid with their behavior. Only once we understand the function of the problem behavior, can we help them meet that need in a healthier way.

## *Impact of Environment*

When supporting a student with behavior needs, it's important to consider their behavior in the larger context. Usually, problem behavior occurs for two reasons:

- There is a mismatch between the student's needs and the environment
- The student has accumulated learning experiences in which their problem behavior was more heavily reinforced than the appropriate alternative behavior

Behavioral science holds that the environment has impact on the behavior. In school environments, this means that things such as teacher/peer response to behavior, physical features and organization of the classroom, and other factors in the environment can have a large impact on student behavior. In addition, the student's individual needs may be driven by additional factors (like a disability, communication barrier, or poor sleep schedule), leading to a greater risk for problem behavior if the environment isn't set up to respond to their needs. Finally, students' learning experiences play a significant role in shaping behavior before they ever set foot inside a classroom. Understanding each of these factors can enhance educators' understanding of the behavior of their students, and drive efforts to support students to behave their best at school.

## *Impact of Student Experiences on Behavior Support*

Educators set the scene for all students, which includes differentiated instruction and clear behavior expectations. For students with disabilities, inclusion supports student access to a **free appropriate public education (FAPE)**. Principles of **inclusion** also apply to students who engage in problem behavior. In addition, some students may face specific barriers that inclusive learning environments address:

- Students with different experiences, backgrounds, or languages
- Students with disabilities
- Students who have experienced trauma
- Students with mental health concerns

## *Link Between Academics and Behavior*

Behavior concerns and academic concerns are tightly intertwined in a vicious cycle. Students who experience academic difficulties are at greater risk for developing behavior difficulties, and vice versa. It can be extremely difficult to tolerate the distress and discomfort of performing behind one's peers academically. In addition, some students who disrupt are not challenged academically. Some students may escape these negative feelings through problem behavior, especially when that behavior is addressed by removing the student from the situation. Conversely, students who engage in problem behavior for any number of reasons tend to miss academic instruction while their behavior is addressed. That lost instructional time can contribute to the student falling behind academically, leading to further problematic behaviors.

## **Outcomes of Effective Behavior Intervention**

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To establish a safe, healthy school environment, it is essential that school teams support students in learning appropriate and healthy behaviors at school. Some students' learning needs are straightforward, and others are complex; however, educators must be prepared to include all students in their schools and classrooms. For students with individual support needs, it's critical that teams take the time to understand the contexts and reasons for the problem behavior and develop an intervention that addresses those factors. Creating an effective intervention is a process of evaluating, reflecting, and revising (for a detailed description of this process, [see Chapter 6](#)). When behavior interventions are effective, they result in an increase in specific appropriate behavior(s), decreases in identified problem behavior(s), and often social and academic growth overall.

# Notes on Chapter 2

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<sup>1</sup> Kollerová, L., Květon, P., Zábrodská, K., & Janošová, P. (2023). Teacher Exhaustion: The Effects of Disruptive Student Behaviors, Victimization by Workplace Bullying, and Social Support from Colleagues. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal*, 26(4), 885-902.

<sup>2</sup> LiCalsi, C., Osher, D., & Bailey, P. (2021). An Empirical Examination of the Effects of Suspension and Suspension Severity on Behavioral and Academic Outcomes. American Institutes for Research.

<sup>3</sup> Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2020). *Applied Behavior Analysis*. New York: Pearson, p.19.

<sup>4</sup> Cooper, J., et al., *Applied Behavior Analysis*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Freeman, J., Briere, D., & Simonsen, B. (2019). *Module 1: Behavioral Theory I* [PowerPoint slides], Slide 34. National Center on Intensive Intervention: American Institutes for Research.

# Chapter 3: School Systems and Practices that Support Appropriate Behavior

School environments are complex, with many connected and overlapping systems to advance student learning. Schoolwide factors have a significant and powerful impact on the behavior of students overall—and having pre-existing school systems in place can lead to more efficient and effective support for individual students who need it.



The following schoolwide factors are associated with lower rates of student problem behaviors:

- Educators build positive relationships with and hold high expectations for all students
- Students experience school as a safe place where the rules are clear and fairly applied
- Educators focus on preventing student behavior problems rather than reacting to them
- School staff identify and support individual students with needs in academic, social, and emotional learning
- School staff cultivate positive, productive partnerships with families (including families of students at risk for increasing problem behavior)
- Schools utilize accountability practices

- Teachers have access to professional learning opportunities and other support related to student behavior, such as coaching and consultation
- Teachers create positive classroom climates with clear structure, **norms**, and pathways for student recognition

Supportive schoolwide systems can enhance the school's climate for everyone.

School climate reflects the overall experience of those in the school. A positive climate builds strong relationships, boosts engagement, creates a sense of safety, and supports students' physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral health.

Understanding school climate is vital as it influences student behavior. Schools with a positive climate see better student behavior, academic achievement, and teacher satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Teachers with a supportive mindset to discipline notice improved student behavior, stronger relationships, and fewer suspensions compared to punitive mindset.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will briefly discuss a variety of interconnected school systems and practices that can support better outcomes for student behavior.

## School Systems and Practices that Support Positive Student Outcomes

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### *Family Engagement*

Family engagement is a mutually beneficial, two-way relationship between school staff and a student's family members and/or caregivers. Family engagement in school settings involves making positive connections with families, engaging family members with clear communication and a variety of opportunities to get involved at school, and addressing barriers that make it hard for family members to participate.<sup>3</sup> Without intentional work in family engagement, many families are only contacted by the school when there is a problem with their student, which can build a sense of friction between the family and the school. However, family engagement practices can establish a positive and authentic relationship between schools and families, leading to better collaboration in supporting students.

Family engagement practices vary based on the needs of families in the school community. Examples of school-based family engagement efforts include:

- Scheduling flexible parent-teacher conferences with varied options for days, times, and virtual/in-person format
- Hosting parent training events related to the needs/interests of the school community
- Coordinating home visits for families who are interested
- Connecting with families of incoming new students prior to the start of school
- Providing opportunities for parents and other caregivers to volunteer in the classroom
- Designating or hiring qualified staff to serve as outreach liaison(s) to connect with and support families of students from historically underrepresented communities
- Sharing information about the school PTA and how to join
- Collecting parent/caregiver feedback about school decisions and policies
- Encouraging and facilitating family participation in school councils or committees



The benefits of family engagement in schools are enormous for all involved. Family engagement improves individual student outcomes in behavior, academics, school attendance, and participation in healthy activities.<sup>4,5</sup> For students with behavior support needs, increased family engagement can benefit families by establishing

constructive two-way communication, sharing efforts to address similar behaviors at home and at school, and ensuring that any supports that benefit the student at home can be considered for school settings. Schools with strong family engagement efforts see dramatic gains in schoolwide student achievement compared to schools that do not.<sup>6</sup>

## *Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)*

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** is a framework for implementing systemic, evidence-based practices to maximize student achievement in academics and behavior and deliver rapid additional support to students who need it. MTSS is not a specific curriculum or intervention on its own—instead, it is a team-driven process designed to respond quickly to the changing needs of individual students. MTSS activities include implementing accessible schoolwide practices to benefit all students' learning, regularly reviewing, and evaluating student success, and identifying and intervening early with students at risk of poor outcomes.

The MTSS model includes three tiers of support. Tier 1 (Universal) encompasses evidence-based learning supports provided to all students, including:

- High-quality instruction,
- Classroom management practices, and
- Providing a classroom environment that is clean, organized, and conducive to learning.

Tier 2 (Targeted) involves additional support for students who have not adequately responded to the supports provided in Tier 1 and often includes:

- Small group instruction,
- Explicit instruction,
- Increased opportunities for practice, and
- Check-in/check-out systems.

Tier 3 (Intensive/Individualized) includes individually designed supports developed for a student who requires more support than Tier 2 interventions provide.

Examples include:

- Schedule changes,
- Wrap-around services, and
- Assistive Technology.

Tier 1 strategies should be implemented consistently prior to addressing practices for Tiers 2 or 3. Tier 2 and 3 supports are provided in addition to—not instead of—Tier 1 instruction, and do not necessarily equate to special education services. School MTSS teams meet regularly to review student data and determine when a student needs to access a higher tier of support (in addition to Tier 1).

Within the MTSS team, staff should evaluate ways to increase student access and reduce barriers preventing some students from experiencing success in school. MTSS teams are advised to regularly consider school efforts in the prevention of absenteeism, bullying, child abuse, gang affiliation, human trafficking, substance abuse, and suicide. Tier 1 of MTSS is especially helpful in adopting practices that address these areas that may impact students.

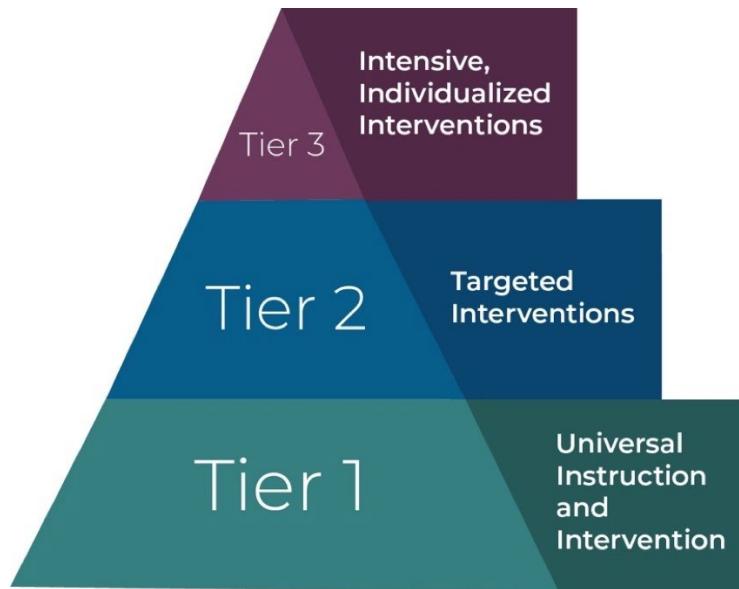
Schools implementing MTSS consistently and correctly see significant improvement in academic and behavioral outcomes for students.<sup>7</sup> Students with behavior support needs are more likely to miss instruction while their behavior needs are addressed and often benefit from the increased academic support that the MTSS framework facilitates. In addition, behavior support efforts within MTSS are referred to as **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**. MTSS and PBIS processes have many overlapping features.

## *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a framework that helps schools to support social and behavioral learning for all students through evidence-based instruction and prevention, with processes built in to efficiently provide extra support to the students who need it. Implementation of a PBIS supports all students in a school to achieve both behavioral, social, and academic success, leading to better outcomes for students and lower stress for teachers.

In the same fashion as the MTSS model, behavior support in PBIS is provided across three tiers of intensity and individualization. All tiers must be designed in such a

way that allows all students to be included. In particular, teams must incorporate the needs of students with disabilities and students participating in remote learning when designing PBIS tiers.



- Tier 1 (Universal): Preventive schoolwide teaching and reinforcement of behavioral expectations provided equally to all students attending the school. A robust Tier 1, implemented with consistency, is the most efficient use of school resources by far. When Tier 1 is insufficient or inconsistent, more students (who would likely have responded to better Tier 1 prevention) may develop patterns of problem behavior and then require the resources and support of a higher tier.
- Tier 2 (Targeted): Rapid, efficient, and minimally individualized behavior interventions delivered to any students who regularly engage in problem behavior and who don't respond to consistent implementation of Tier 1 supports. Students supported in Tier 2 must still participate in Tier 1 to the same extent as all other students.
- Tier 3 (Intensive): Specialized behavior support designed for an individual student who does not respond to Tier 2 intervention. A student may also require Tier 3 support immediately if their behavior presents a safety risk to themselves or others. Best practice at this tier involves completing a

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and using the results to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) (for more on this process, [see Chapter 6](#)). Students supported in Tier 3 must still participate in Tier 1 to the same extent as all other students.

PBIS requires teaming and data monitoring to evaluate student needs within and across tiers, so that students who need more help can get it quickly—before small behavior problems become major concerns.

In schools where PBIS is implemented consistently and correctly, students are excluded from the classroom less frequently,<sup>8</sup> achieve better outcomes in terms of academics and behavior,<sup>9</sup> and are less likely to engage in substance abuse.<sup>10</sup> Teachers in schools that implement PBIS effectively are significantly more likely to feel effective and prepared to meet their students' needs, and less likely to report feelings of burnout.<sup>11, 12</sup> In addition, schools consistently implementing PBIS are following the LEA requirements outlined by USBE.<sup>13</sup>

## *Social and Behavioral Skill Development*



**Social and behavioral skill** development is a way to intentionally support students and prepare them for success in school and beyond. Skills such as communication, teamwork, and self-management provide a foundation for students to thrive in their future work and community environments.

**Social and behavioral skill development works best when reinforced throughout the school day and intentionally designed for all students (including students with disabilities).** For example, social and behavioral skill development could involve:

- Educators providing students opportunities to engage in problem-solving and decision making in the classroom
- School teams integrating learning into school-wide expectations and routines
- School faculty making intentional efforts to build relationships with each other and with students
- Teachers providing explicit instruction on social and behavioral skills
- Student support personnel (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists) leading small groups to teach social and behavioral skill development for academic success
- School personnel building strong connections with families and engaging families in decision making
- School personnel focusing on modeling social and behavioral skill development

Many students with behavior support needs have skill gaps, including skills like communication, emotional awareness, and relationship-building. Providing social and behavioral skill development support in the school setting has consistently shown to significantly improve student mental health, increase prosocial behaviors, reduce conduct problems, and improve academic outcomes such as grades and scores on standardized achievement tests.<sup>14,15</sup>

## *Equal Opportunity in Education*

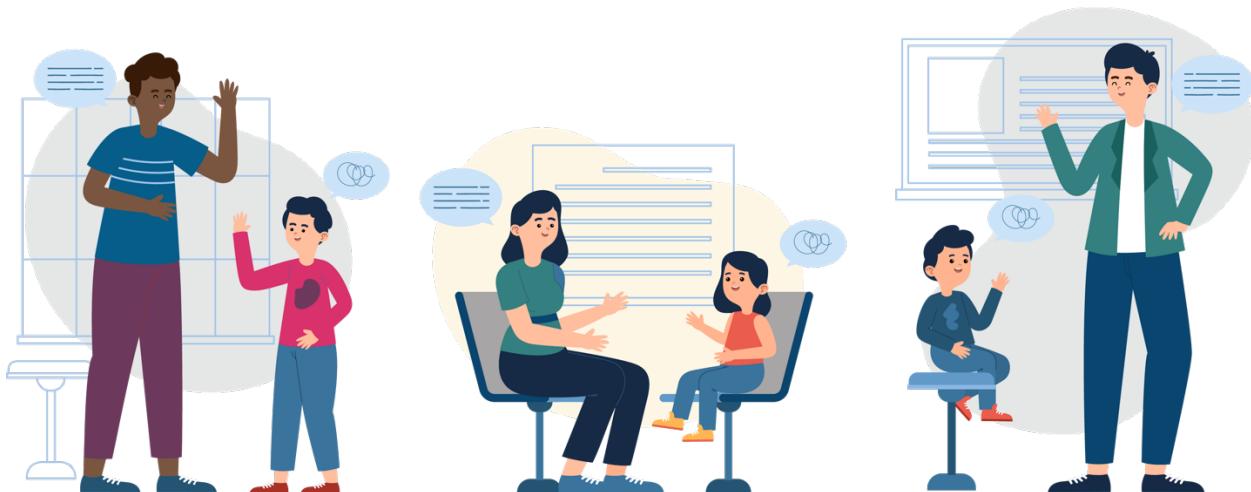
"Equal Opportunity in Education" means acknowledging that all students are capable of learning and may need additional guidance, resources, and support based on their academic needs. This practice encompasses creating a learning

environment that is safe, conducive to the learning process, and free from unnecessary disruptions, in accordance with section 53G-8-202 of the Utah Code.<sup>16</sup>

This statement reflects the idea that each student is capable of achieving at a high level when given the proper supports. Collaborating with families and incorporating knowledge of students' prior experiences, interests, strengths, and backgrounds creates learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and effective.

## *Accountability Practices*

**Accountability Practices** are any evidence-based practice that increases academic outcomes, as well as decreases behavior that disrupts the learning environment and holds students accountable for their actions by requiring them to take responsibility to repair harm and provide restitution when appropriate. Some practices include adaptive instruction to increase engagement, behavior plans, and restorative practices.



To implement accountability practices across a school, staff may need to shift their perspectives on student behavior. When students cause harm, educators guide the student to understand their actions and reactions, accept accountability, and identify ways to repair the harm caused. **Restorative practices** are a type of accountability practice.

Using restorative practices, educators proactively support students to build relationships with adults and peers, increase social awareness and empathy, and strengthen their connection to the school community. Consider the following:

- Misbehavior is an opportunity for student learning, not evidence of a student failing.
- After an incident, it's best for everyone involved to come together to find solutions, instead of singling out the student who misbehaved.
- After an incident, helpful responses include understanding why the behavior occurred, restoring relationships, and repairing harm.
  - It is unhelpful to attempt to control the student's misbehavior through punishment and exclusion.
- While attempting to repair harm, it is important that a victim's physical and emotional safety be protected.

## *The Effects of Childhood Experiences*

Educators play a crucial role in shaping protective factors and positive childhood experiences. There are significant benefits of incorporating protective factors and/or positive childhood experiences for all students. These experiences cultivate connection, positive self-image and self-worth, and healthy coping skills for stress. By fostering positive experiences, educators can cumulatively improve lifelong mental health outcomes and help children build resilience and grow into thriving, healthy adults.

Educators should avoid labeling typical childhood experiences that may pose challenges or difficulties as "trauma". "Trauma" is defined as deeply distressing experiences with lasting negative impacts on a person's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, and often stems from one or multiple life-threatening events that overwhelm coping abilities. Examples of traumatic experiences may include, but are not limited to, experiencing neglect of basic needs; physical or sexual abuse; witnessing violence, serious accidents, or death; natural disasters; being a victim of a serious crime, or sudden loss or unexpected death of a parent or other close family member. Immutable characteristics are not traumatic. Trauma, and/or adverse experiences that happen in childhood, may lead to learning and

behavioral challenges, and therefore “trauma-informed practices” in schools aim to create a safe, positive, and supportive school environment for all students. These practices recognize how trauma can impact learning, and implement strategies to counteract the effect of trauma and promote resilience, safety, and connection.

It is important to note that not all students have experienced trauma. Trauma responses are subjective and deeply influenced by an individual’s perception, interpretation, and beliefs about an event or series of events. What one student perceives as trauma may not cause the same reaction or distress in another. In addition, while some students with trauma exposure may display difficulties with learning and behavior which require higher levels of support, not all trauma exposure leads to difficulty in functioning. The presence of protective factors and/or positive childhood experiences can drive healthy development, mitigate the effects of trauma, and foster student success, despite the presence of challenges and adversity.

Traumatic stress indicators are complex and varied. There is no single indicator or behavior that conclusively demonstrates that a student has experienced traumatic stress. In addition, school dynamics can add to a trauma response or trigger past trauma. Since identifying trauma exposure is challenging, it is crucial to provide a safe, supportive environment for all students. The benefits of incorporating activities to build protective factors and/or help students to have positive childhood experiences in schools are not limited to students that have experienced trauma.

Strategies to accomplish this include:

- Ensuring positive adult connections
- Individually welcoming each student
- Highlighting student strengths
- Providing authentic praise
- Offering choices for success
- Empathetic listening without dismissing feelings or concerns

Educators can also enhance protective experiences by:

- Fostering supportive relationships
- Setting high academic expectations

- Offering meaningful opportunities for participation and contribution

Positive, evidence-based behavior support and discipline are essential for effectively working with students impacted by trauma. It is also important to provide referrals for students to work with counselors, social workers, or psychologists, who are trained and experienced in trauma, when needed.



## School Responses to Behavioral Incidents

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Occasionally, family and school teams need to address incidents of behavior that warrant a team approach. Students with disabilities also have additional considerations under federal law regarding disciplinary removals and other related areas (for more information on this, [see Chapter 8](#)). Schools are responsible for providing learning environments that are safe and that are free from the predictable threat of substantial disruption, serious bodily injury, or repeated sexual harassment (Utah Code § 53E-2-304<sup>17,18</sup>). A predictable threat means a significant risk to the health and safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids and services (28 CFR § 35.104<sup>19</sup>) that can be anticipated or expected based on established patterns or conditions. **Serious bodily injury** means bodily injury that creates or causes serious permanent disfigurement, protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ or creates a substantial risk of death (UCA § 76-1-101.5(17)).<sup>20</sup>

## *Disciplinary Removals: General Requirements*



Disciplinary removals, such as suspension and expulsion, are at one end of a continuum of responses to behavior incidents in schools. Some schools may also conduct disciplinary removals which staff refer to using terms other than suspension and expulsion. Schools must follow state requirements related to school discipline. Some of those requirements are outlined below. However, this list is not exhaustive and may change as the law does. Schools are also required to adhere to additional

disciplinary protections and processes for students with disabilities ([see Chapter 8](#)). School administrators have a responsibility to be aware of current legal requirements related to school disciplinary removals. It is important to note that schools may not establish policies that prevent disciplinary removals.

- The Utah State Board of Education has established requirements for all Utah LEAs to “develop and implement a board approved LEA policy for school discipline,” and specifies requirements in detail
- The Utah legislature has established laws<sup>21</sup> related to disciplinary removals, including but not limited to:
  - The authority of school boards to delegate the ability to issue suspensions up to 10 days to certain school administrators, including principals and assistant principals
  - The authority of school boards to issue suspensions exceeding 10 days and expulsions for fixed or indefinite periods
  - The types of incidents that may result in suspension or expulsion as well as those that shall result in suspension or expulsion
  - Specific penalties for certain incidents
  - Required procedures for suspensions, expulsions, and readmission

- Requirement for LEAs to create remedial discipline plans for students “prior to suspending or expelling a student for repeated acts of willful disobedience, defiance of authority, or disruptive behavior which are not of such a violent or extreme nature that immediate removal is required”<sup>22</sup>
- Requirement for LEAs to establish alternatives to suspension and expulsion
- Options for moving students who demonstrate significant behaviors to more supportive settings

When a school administrator decides to select removal as a disciplinary response to an incident, the following conditions should be met:

- The LEA has developed and implemented a policy for school discipline and related plans that is compliant with all state requirements<sup>23</sup>
- That plan or policy is implemented at the school, and the student in question has access to the supports/interventions outlined in the plan or policy
- If applicable, the school has implemented a remedial discipline plan for the student in question<sup>24</sup>
- The LEA has established alternatives to suspension, which have been given full consideration for the student in question
- Removal from school is the appropriate action for the incident
- The penalty is consistent with LEA policy and is similar to what has been issued for other students in the past
- Any mitigating circumstances surrounding the incident have been considered

When a student demonstrates a pattern of significant problem behaviors, they may be moved to a more supportive setting. Schools have a responsibility to provide education to all students in the **least restrictive environment** possible that does not predictably threaten serious bodily injury, does not result in a pattern of behavior that interferes substantially and materially with the instruction of other students in the classroom, and that does not allow for repeated sexual harassment or sexual assault (Utah Code § 53E-7-207<sup>25</sup>). Prior to moving a student, schools should consider conducting a threat assessment utilizing an evidence-based threat assessment program, such as **Comprehensive School Threat Assessment**

**Guidelines (CSTAG).** For more information related to threat assessments, [see the “Threat Assessment” section](#).

Prior to moving a student, schools should consider least restrictive environment requirements and additional protections for students with disabilities ([see Chapter 8](#) and [USBE SpEd Rules](#)). Prior to determining that a student should be removed from the classroom, an action plan should be developed with the child's team, including parents, and the student when appropriate, according to the LEA's policy that could include:

- Conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Developing a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), or revising the BIP if one is already in place
- Reviewing academic, special education/Section 504 (if applicable), and disciplinary records
- A plan to complete additional assessments, if needed
- Additional support needs (personnel, accommodations, etc.)
- Immediate safety measures
- Process for data collection, review, and progress monitoring of the action plan
- Review of the IEP or Section 504 Plan, if applicable
- Timely follow up with the team (including parents) that includes a reintegration plan

School administrators are obligated to uphold the rights of all students they serve, including the rights of students involved in behavior-related incidents or other forms of misconduct. Consistent with state law, all students have the right to due process.<sup>26</sup>

If a student is suspended the parent shall be notified immediately:

- (a) “that the student has been suspended;
- (b) the grounds for the suspension;
- (c) the period of time for which the student is suspended; and
- (d) the time and place for the parent to meet with a designated school official to review the suspension.”<sup>27</sup>

If the suspension extends beyond 10 days, in addition to the latter, the student and the parent must be given a reasonable opportunity to meet with a designated school official and respond to the allegations and proposed disciplinary action.

As noted above, LEAs are required to establish alternatives to suspension. Evidence-based alternatives to suspension have been discussed in this chapter, including:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework and prevention lens to decrease the likelihood of disruptive or unhealthy behaviors and teach/reward expected behaviors ([see “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports” section of this chapter](#))

## *“Informal” Disciplinary Removals*

Some LEAs may have a practice of addressing problematic student behavior through less formal methods of removal than suspension or expulsion. These methods might include a pattern of office referrals, extended time excluded from instruction (e.g., time out), extended restrictions in privileges, or repeatedly giving a student a “day off” or **shortened school day**. According to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), “informal removals are subject to IDEA’s requirements to the same extent as disciplinary removals by school personnel using the school’s disciplinary procedures.”<sup>28</sup> When implemented repeatedly or as part of a pattern of responses to a student’s problem behavior, these exclusionary discipline practices may constitute suspension and be subject to the same requirements under the law.<sup>29</sup> In addition, if a student’s behavior is impacting their ability to learn, the team may have cause to suspect the student may have a disability.

For further information on school discipline for students with disabilities, [see Chapter 8](#).

## *Disciplinary Removals: A Note of Caution*

**Disciplinary removals are not generally effective at changing a student’s behavior**, and so they should not be viewed as a substitute for an evidence-based

behavior intervention. For some students, disciplinary removals may lead to continued behavior problems and other poor outcomes.<sup>30</sup>

Exclusionary discipline prevents students from accessing learning, limits access to opportunities that prepare them for life after high school, and can inhibit students' academic, social, and emotional growth.<sup>31</sup> Utah law reflects best practice and directs LEAs to create a support plan for a student prior to suspending or expelling them for repeated misbehavior.



Disciplinary removals may also be implemented in disproportionate ways across student populations. In Utah, male students and students of color continue to be suspended and expelled from schools in disproportionate numbers compared to other students who engage in the same behaviors, and schools are far more likely to involve law enforcement in disciplinary actions for male students and students of color. In addition, Utah students with disabilities are twice as likely to be suspended for behavior concerns compared to their peers without disabilities. These trends mirror the national data. Overall, students with disabilities, black students, and boys are suspended, expelled, referred to law enforcement, and subjected to **physical restraint and seclusion** many times more often than other students relative to enrollment. To avoid unfairly excluding students (particularly boys, students with disabilities, and students of color), educators and administrators must be aware of the many factors that influence student behavior in school settings, as well as the diverse and developmentally appropriate ways that behavior can be expected to differ from one student to the next.

## *Threat Assessment*

In a school environment, moments of friction amongst adults and students at the school—such as ultimatums, warnings, and demands—occur regularly. However,

occasionally these moments escalate into a threat to harm others. When a student makes a threat, school staff must be able to objectively evaluate the threat and determine the likelihood that it will be carried out.

A **behavioral threat assessment** “is a problem-solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and intervention with students who have threatened violence in some way.”<sup>32</sup> By gathering information about the intent of the student and the context of the behavior and maintaining a focus on connecting the student with the help they need; threat assessment provides an evidence-based alternative to ineffective zero tolerance policies. Schools with threat assessment teams and processes can prevent students from acting on their threats.

The Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) process is an evidence-based process that is recognized in Utah as the model threat assessment process. When employing CSTAG, a **multidisciplinary team** uses a decision tree to determine the seriousness of the threat and what steps need to be taken to prevent the threat from being carried out. This process emphasizes mitigating threats and connecting the person who made the threat to the support they need, rather than punishing the person who made the threat. The unambiguous decision-making that CSTAG facilitates helps teams respond appropriately to threats and prevents both over- and underreactions to threats that have been made.

Schools using the CSTAG model see reductions in disciplinary referrals for students who have made threats in the past,<sup>33</sup> and the longer schools utilize CSTAG, the lower their reported rates of student aggressive behavior.<sup>34</sup> Schools using this model are also far less likely to use disciplinary removals or request law enforcement involvement with students who have made a threat.<sup>35</sup>

For further information on CSTAG or training on CSTAG, contact the USBE School Safety Center at [theschoolsafetycenter@schools.utah.gov](mailto:theschoolsafetycenter@schools.utah.gov).

# Notes on Chapter 3

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2019). *Parent and Educator Guide to School Climate Resources*. Retrieved October 8, 2022, from:

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# Chapter 4: Classrooms That Support Appropriate Student Behavior

## Introduction

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The term “**classroom management**” means the use of planned strategies that establish an organized and successful learning environment, promote academic excellence, teach social and behavioral skills, to all students, and prevent a pattern of behavior that interferes substantially with the instruction of other students in the classroom. Social and behavioral skills involve “how students interact, feel, and act” and “are critical components of overall well-being.”<sup>1</sup> These skills are necessary for students to be able to set goals, work with others, communicate effectively, and manage stress—all critical parts of academic learning.

Effective classroom management involves the overlap of two dimensions of teaching interactions: high expectations of students and high emotional warmth and responsiveness to student need. Research indicates that these two dimensions are associated with increased student success.<sup>2</sup> Classroom management should not be synonymous with “ruling with an iron fist” or maintaining rigid control over student behavior. Instead, effective classroom management follows the same core principles of behavior, such as reinforcement and **antecedent strategies**, discussed in Chapter 2. **Teachers who excel at classroom management intentionally teach the social and behavioral skills they want to cultivate in their students, rather than merely reacting to the behaviors they want to discourage.**

The classroom management practices in this chapter, adapted in part from the practices recommended by the Center on PBIS,<sup>3</sup> represent the most current evidence-based strategies to teach students the skills necessary to succeed in school and grow into adults who contribute positively to their communities. These teaching practices can be adapted for any grade level or student need. Most importantly, *all* teachers can learn the planning and skills needed to practice effective classroom management.

# Plan and Create a Positive Learning Space

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## *Establish the Learning Environment*

The design of a classroom can significantly influence the behavior of students and adults in the space. Well-designed classrooms are intentionally designed to promote focus and participation in learning activities, support the sensory needs of students, facilitate smooth transitions between activities and movement through the space, support academic learning and build a sense of community in the classroom. **Students learn best in environments that are clean, organized, and clutter-free.**



## Managing the Physical Space

- Furniture and classroom areas are arranged to create a smooth flow of traffic
- Expectations for classroom areas (e.g., art area, homework center, calming corner) are planned and defined
- Student areas and materials are equally accessible for all, including students with mobility devices, service dogs, or other accommodations

- The teacher can see and move around the entire classroom easily, allowing for visual and proximity-based supervision and behavior support
- Classroom bulletin boards and other visual elements are easy for students to see, support academic content within the curriculum and may reflect student contributions, interests, communities, and cultures
- Clutter and distraction are minimized in all areas of the classroom, including bulletin boards, surfaces, floors/corners, and storage
- Students have a regular place to store belongings and materials when not in use
- Some spaces in the classroom allow for quiet activities
- The classroom has a designated break space in the classroom (away from busy/loud areas of the room) where any student can take a brief break as needed

## Managing Time

- Unstructured time (e.g., transitions between activities, free time) is planned and purposeful
- Transitions between activities and/or locations are practiced and efficient
- Expectations for free time (e.g., lunch, recess) have been clearly established with supervision to support students in meeting expectations
- Independent classroom time is intentionally designed to support students in meeting learning objectives and practicing appropriate behavior



## *Expectations, Rules, Procedures, and Norms*

Defined schoolwide expectations, rules, procedures, and norms set the stage for learning. When designed well, they work together to create a cohesive, organized, and stable environment in which students understand how to succeed. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they have some important differences.

*Schoolwide expectations* describe desired characteristics of students, staff, and the school environment. Expectations are usually broad terms such as “responsibility” or “safety.”

*Rules* connect schoolwide expectations to specific behaviors appropriate for a specific setting. *Classroom rules* are the set of rules that link schoolwide expectations to specific student behaviors in the classroom. Teams can create sets of rules for a variety of school settings, including the bus, cafeteria, and hallway. This can be helpful in teaching students that some behaviors are context dependent. For instance, while a student might be expected to raise their hand before speaking in a classroom, it would be unusual to do so in the cafeteria.

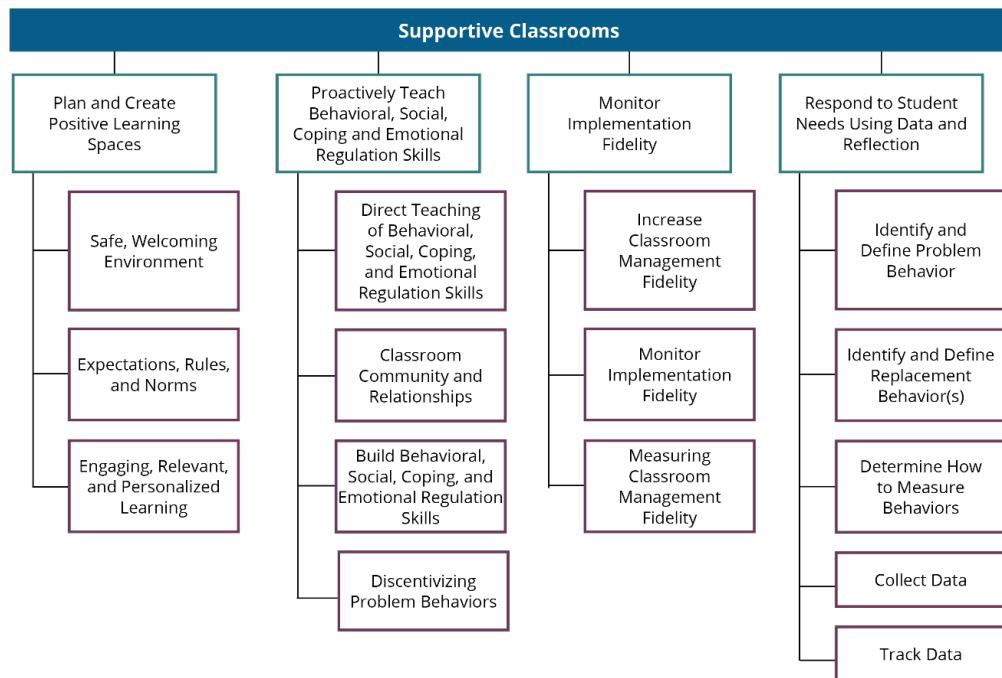
*Procedures* are the expected steps to follow to complete common classroom tasks, particularly during activities involving multiple steps, independent work completion, or transitions between locations. Procedures help clarify classroom rules in common circumstances, such as how to turn in homework, move to different places in the classroom or building, maintain voice volume in different activities, and meet personal needs. **Educators who teach rules and procedures in their classrooms are equipping their students with the skills to navigate each school day seamlessly.**

Finally, *norms* are the habits that become the usual behaviors of a setting. Norms might differ from posted rules if those rules aren’t taught and reinforced. For example, the rules might state “Raise your hand and wait to speak,” but unless that’s intentionally taught with clear follow-through, a norm might develop in which students blurt out answers without raising their hands.

There are many benefits to teaching expectations, rules, and procedures. They help build student independence and disincentivize problem behavior, increasing the amount of time available for instruction and other fun activities. When teachers and students can work together to set goals and reflect on progress, students feel a sense of shared responsibility for the classroom. To achieve these positive results, expectations, rules, and procedures must be taught and re-taught throughout the year. While visibly posting expectations, rules, and procedures is very helpful, that alone is not enough for students to internalize them—it’s important to dedicate time to the explicit instruction of rules and procedures. Similarly, consequences for

following or violating rules should be discussed, agreed upon, and consistently followed by all students.

When teaching schoolwide expectations, rules, and procedures, it can be helpful to use a systematic approach. The first step is to establish expectations, which are the foundation of the behavioral core curriculum, and rules, which build on these expectations. Both rules and expectations should be explicitly taught. This explicit teaching helps support positive behavior and reduces behavioral errors. Once students understand classroom expectations and rules, they should be consistently reinforced. Reinforcement systems should be aligned with expectations and rules and should be of sufficient intensity to build/maintain desired behavior. The final step is to develop a system to correct behavioral errors and re-teach behavioral skills. The direct re-teaching of skills is critical and should be consistent across settings and staff members. Strategies for selecting and teaching classroom rules and expectations are outlined below.



## Characteristics of Effective and Proactive Classroom Rules

- Design rules to align with schoolwide expectations
- Ensure students can recall each rule by not exceeding 3-5 overall classroom rules
- State expected behaviors clearly, using grade-appropriate language to avoid misunderstandings
- Phrase each rule as a description of what students should do, rather than what they should not do
- Ensure each classroom rule corresponds to measurable and observable student behavior ([see Table 4-1](#))
- Seek out feedback from all families and students to ensure that rules are relevant and appropriate for all students
- Choose rules that relate to behaviors that will build student skills and contribute to learning, and avoid rules that are arbitrary or for adult convenience only
- Establish clear consequences related to classroom rules
- Ensure posted rules are accessible for all students by including accommodations such as visual aids, translated text, and/or braille
- Place posted rules at student eye level in a visible part of the classroom
- Teach and refer to classroom rules regularly and frequently

TABLE 4-1: EXAMPLE OF SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS ALIGNED WITH CLASSROOM RULES

School-Wide Expectations	Classroom Rules
Be <b>SAFE</b>	We are <b>SAFE</b> by... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staying in personal space</li><li>• Keeping the classroom clean and uncluttered</li></ul>
Be <b>RESPECTFUL</b>	We are <b>RESPECTFUL</b> by... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being seated when bell rings</li><li>• Relating discussion to current topic</li><li>• Listening when others are talking</li></ul>
Be <b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	We are <b>RESPONSIBLE</b> by... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Following directions quickly</li><li>• Being prepared with materials</li><li>• Turning assignments in on time</li></ul>

## Suggested Procedures to Teach

- Steps to follow during arrival (including late arrivals) and dismissal
- Storage of personal items and materials
- Expected use of classroom areas (e.g., art area, homework center, calming corner)
- Picking up and/or paying for breakfast or lunch
- Responding to attention signals, school bells, and other regular cues
- Accessing classroom items (such as a pencil sharpener) during instruction
- Engaging in independent work
- Participating in group work
- Turning in completed work
- Attending assemblies
- Using a hall pass
- Accessing the school nurse, counselor, or other student support staff
- Participating in emergency drills (e.g., fire drills)
- Using computers, iPads, and other technology
- Using facilities associated with a specific class (e.g., locker room, weights, kitchen)

## Strategies for Teaching Rules and Procedures

- Teach and re-teach rules and procedures regularly
  - At the beginning of the year
  - When new students join
  - After breaks
  - On a regular schedule, preferably monthly
  - Any time students are having difficulty remembering the rules and/or procedures
- Ensure all students know each rule/procedure and understand its rationale
- Reward students for following the rules/procedures several times a day
  - Incorporate reinforcement during predictable routines (e.g., group work)
  - “Catch” students following the rules/procedures when they aren’t expecting it

- Plan ahead to provide temporarily higher levels of reinforcement at the beginning of the school year and after breaks
- Maintain a steady level of reinforcement throughout the school year
- Respond matter-of-factly to students who do not follow a rule/procedure with a planned mild consequence (e.g., a reminder, a lost point)
  - Consider creative ways to teach rules/procedures
  - Developing a classroom video or book together
  - Playing games involving the classroom rules
  - Asking students to teach a procedure or rule to others
  - Engaging in discussion or journaling about how classroom rules mirror expectations in the workplace
- Share information with families about the classroom rules and expectations



## *Engaging, Relevant, and Personalized Learning*

Well-designed instruction is a necessary component of effective classroom management. Students who are deeply engaged in learning are less likely to misbehave and more likely to learn social and behavioral skills (such as collaboration and problem-solving) that support learning. This sort of instruction is relevant, challenging, contextualized, and designed for students' individual needs, strengths, and interests. **Teachers who deliver engaging and relevant instruction understand individual learner differences and hold high expectations of students.** They also help students meet those high expectations

by providing learning supports that are available just-in-time and in multiple formats.

## Instructional Strategies That Promote Student Engagement

- Students are given frequent opportunities to respond, question, and explain thinking<sup>4</sup>
- Important concepts are taught using multiple methods<sup>5</sup>
- Small groups are utilized strategically to intensify instruction<sup>6</sup>
- Various strategies are used to elicit student responses (e.g., raise hand, thumbs up, choral responses, individual white boards)
- Classroom or assignment instructions provided through additional means beyond verbal instructions (e.g., written on board)
- The teacher uses a variety of methods to engage students in learning (e.g., collaborate, retrieval practice, explicit instruction, memory strategies)

## Proactively Teaching Social and Behavioral Skills

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As discussed above, classroom management involves teaching students the social and behavioral skills needed to navigate school settings and prepare for life beyond public education. The strategies in this section are effective ways to support each of these student characteristics in the classroom. To reflect on the effective use of classroom management strategies used to teach social and behavioral skills, educators can use the Classroom Management Self-Assessment tool provided in Appendix B.

### *Proactively Teach Appropriate Behaviors*

The development of social and behavioral skills should not be left to chance, especially since gaps in these skills can lead to behavior problems. Many students haven't learned these skills when they arrive in the classroom, and even for those who have, more teaching may be needed over time as learning expectations increase. Effective educators provide intentional instruction to support student

development of social and behavioral skills, leading to improved classroom behavior and student wellbeing.

## *Classroom Community and Relationships*

Developing relationships with students and encouraging supportive relationships between students should be a foundational effort of every educator. Student behavior is often tied to their perception of whether a teacher cares about them.<sup>7</sup> Students are more likely to be engaged and successful in their learning if they feel connected to the school and at least one trusted adult. **Making intentional efforts to build positive relationships leads to a sense of belonging and a safe and supportive classroom community.** Providing students with clear expectations and consequences improves their trust in adults as they know adults are going to create a supportive environment for them. Positive classroom communities and relationships can resolve many classroom management concerns and encourage desired student behavior.

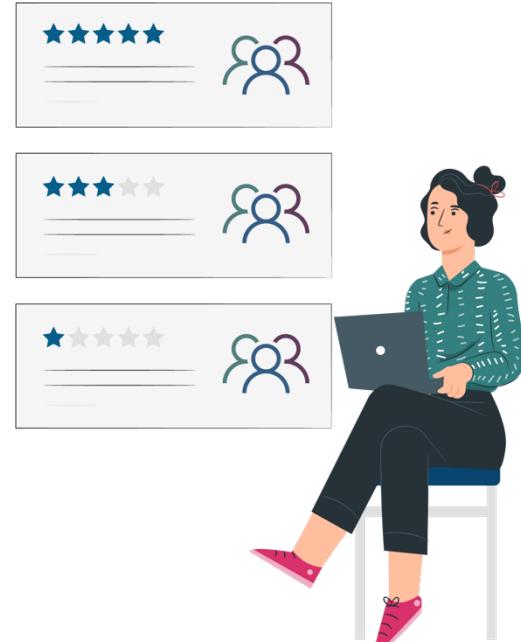
### Strategies That Promote Relationships and Community

- Welcome students into the classroom at the beginning of the year and each morning when they arrive in the classroom
- Learn each student's name and correct pronunciation of their name
- Engage in purposeful communication with each student
- Engage students in activities to learn more about each other
- Show interest in the interests of students
- Consider preferences, interests, and experiences of students in planning
- Maintain high expectations for all adults and students who enter the classroom
- Invite parents to be part of the school and classroom environments through email, phone calls, and home visits
- Provide opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning and behaviors in the classroom
- Provide students opportunities to make decisions in the classroom (e.g., co-create classroom rules and routines)

- Take opportunities to celebrate the successes of students and provide compliments as often as possible

## *Effective and Encouraging Feedback*

As students are learning new appropriate behaviors, it's important to reinforce these skills by positively acknowledging them as much as possible. Just like with any other areas of learning, like reading and math, behavioral learning errors are likely to occur, and students may use problem behaviors from time to time. The right feedback can help students correct these errors and continue to learn and grow. Providing timely positive and corrective feedback to students should be done in such a way that allows students to understand classroom expectations and develop their skills without embarrassment.



## Ways to Provide Student Feedback

- Provide specific praise to reinforce the use of appropriate behavior, including naming the skill or behavior and providing sincere positive feedback (e.g., "Nice work using a quiet voice while working with your partner")
- Teach students the elements of specific praise and allow opportunities for them to provide specific praise to one another
- Provide specific correction in a calm, neutral voice to redirect students to use appropriate behavior (e.g., "Remember to walk when you're headed out to recess")
- When a behavioral error occurs, re-teach the expected behavior instead of just telling a student what they did wrong
- Provide feedback regarding a behavioral error quietly and away from other students

- Deliver five specific praise statements for every one specific correction statement
- For students who frequently engage in problem behavior, consider increasing this ratio
- Deliver all feedback in a timely manner (as soon as possible)
- Understand how students prefer to receive feedback (e.g., public, private, written, verbal) and provide feedback in that manner as often as possible

## *Other Strategies to Build Skills and Celebrate Successes*

Humans innately have the desire to do well and be successful. Students show up to school every day with a desire to be successful and feel positive accomplishment. A powerful way to help cultivate success in students is to ensure that the student recognizes when they have been successful, allowing them to replicate it. Educators who take the time to get to know each student will have more opportunities to establish this type of classroom culture. The following actions can help cultivate this:

- Plan ahead to recognize both academic and non-academic milestones (e.g., grades, attendance, student effort and persistence, acts of kindness towards others)
- Identify meaningful ways to recognize students' accomplishments (e.g., homework pass, certificate of recognition, coupons to listen to music or other special privileges)
- Make time for class-wide celebrations (e.g., pizza party, 3-minute dance party, extra recess, free time)
- Set up group contingencies to support students in working together towards a group or classroom goal ([see "Evidence-Based Interventions for Student Behavior Support" guide](#)).
- Make sure parent(s) know about their student's success (e.g., text, call, note home)

## Instructional Strategies That Promote Appropriate Behaviors

- Provide explicit instruction on appropriate behavior with examples and non-examples of each skill (e.g., demonstrating self-awareness and self-advocacy by asking to take a break)
- Help students understand appropriate behavior in relation to context (skill use in different settings)
- Model appropriate behavior for students (e.g., demonstrating taking a deep breath to calm oneself)
- Monitor students' use of appropriate behavior using proximity as a reminder of behavioral expectations (e.g., reduce the distance between the teacher and student when providing directions and/or when problem behavior begins to occur)
- Teach students how to monitor their own behavior
- Allow students opportunities to practice appropriate behavior and provide effective feedback on skill use
- Use attention signals and/or scripts to help students know when to use a certain skill (e.g., using a clapping signal that students echo as a signal that it is time for quiet voices, or using precision directions to support students in following directions)
- Give directions to students in ways that maximize the likelihood that they will follow them ([see Table 4-2](#)).
- Remind students of expected behavior at the beginning of the day and prior to routine transitions throughout the day
- Provide reinforcement for expected behaviors

TABLE 4-2: PRACTICES THAT HELP STUDENTS FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Practice	Rationale
State the student's name	Using the student's name before a direction helps to get their attention just before the direction is given.

Practice	Rationale
<b>Avoid phrasing directions like questions</b>	<p>Questions like “Isn’t it time to do your work?” or “Wouldn’t you like to start to work?” are ineffective directions. Instead, use a pleasant but firm tone and a clear statement describing the behavior you expect, such as, “Please open your book and start reading the chapter to your partner.”</p>
<b>Limit directions to 1-2 specific steps</b>	<p>Give only one or two directions at a time and avoid stringing many directions together. Make sure your directions describe the specific behavior you want to see.</p>
<b>Give start directions, not stop directions</b>	<p>Most directions should be about what you want the student to do. If most directions are focused on what you want the student to stop doing, then some classroom management strategies might need to be added or revised. Consider using the self-assessment tool in Appendix B to identify any needs.</p>
<b>Stand close enough to use a speaking voice</b>	<p>Give directions in an indoor speaking voice. If you are too far away to use this volume, you are too far away to give an effective direction. The optimal distance is approximately three feet. Do not give directions from great distances or from behind your desk.</p>
<b>Look at the student’s eyes</b>	<p>Look at the student’s eyes when giving a direction. Don’t insist that the student make eye contact with you.</p>
<b>Use wait time</b>	<p>When giving a direction to a student, give them a full 10 seconds to begin to respond before repeating the direction.</p>
<b>Avoid nagging</b>	<p>Give a direction only twice. After that, if the student does not respond, follow through with the planned consequence. Repeating directions more than this reduces the chance that the student will respond. Ask the student to verbally state the direction and consequence.</p>
<b>Use a mild planned consequence for not followed directions</b>	<p>Decide <i>in advance</i> how to respond when a student does not follow a direction. Responses might include a lost classroom point, missing 1-2 minutes of the next preferred activity, or an appropriate mild consequence from the schoolwide PBIS program.</p>

Practice	Rationale
<b>Be calm and in charge</b>	Demonstrate that you are in charge of the situation by maintaining a calm and unruffled presence. Avoid pleading with or threatening the student. (If you have already determined your planned consequence for not followed directions, this will be easy.)
<b>Thank students for following directions</b>	Be sure to regularly give students your authentic thanks for following directions. This includes students who nearly always follow your directions. If you provide no reinforcement for students who follow directions, they may eventually stop.

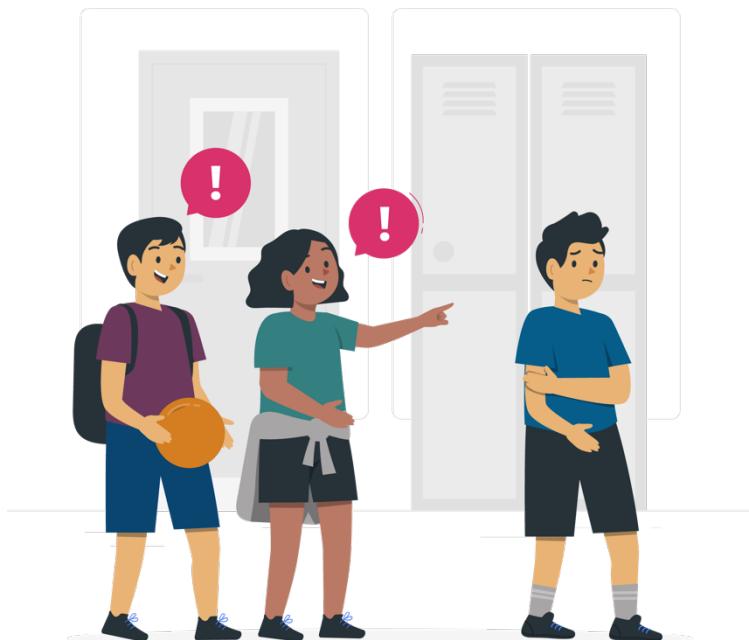
## *Disincentivizing Problem Behaviors*

Problem behaviors typically arise in school when students have not mastered the behaviors expected and are getting their needs met in other ways. Because all behavior occurs to meet a need, changing behavior requires the removal of the reinforcement that the behavior produces. It is important to recognize what reinforcement might be occurring for problem behaviors and consider whether expected behaviors have equally appealing reinforcement. For instance, if a student rarely gets noticed by the teacher for appropriate behavior, but can quickly obtain attention for rude behavior, it's more likely that the rude behavior will increase. By ensuring that the best "payoff" is available only from appropriate behaviors, educators can reduce problem behaviors while teaching better behaviors instead.

The previous sections focusing on the classroom environment, climate, and teaching strategies contain the best "bang for your buck" to reduce problem behavior in a classroom. Some additional ways to disincentivize problem behaviors in the classroom are:

- Respond neutrally to problem attention-seeking behavior
- Ensure that students receive more recognition and attention for their appropriate behavior relative to what they receive for problem behavior
- Be timely with recognition of appropriate behaviors
- Use clear, frequent, and exciting rewards for behavior that follows classroom rules

- Ensure that students notice when rewards are available/handed out for appropriate behavior
- Vary rewards available to keep student motivation high
- Use student input to define classroom behavior goals and rewards
- Identify lagging skills in students and work to improve those skills
- Plan corrective consequences for mild problem behavior (e.g., a lost point, temporary removal of a privilege) to ease the stress of determining a response in the moment



Several ineffective practices to respond to student behavior are still in widespread use in many schools. Some of these practices may even worsen student behavior. Avoid the following:

- Excessive use of reprimands, reminders, or other corrective statements that occur so frequently that students learn to tune them out
- Shaming or belittling a student for problem behavior
- Making sarcastic comments about a student's behavior (e.g., "Looks like someone's having a hard day!")
- Discussing the student's behavior where the student (or others) may hear
- Engaging in one-sided conversations directed at a student about their behavior

Finally, under Utah law, “a school employee may not inflict or cause the infliction of corporal punishment upon a student.”<sup>8</sup> Corporal punishment is defined as “the intentional infliction of physical pain upon the body of a student as a disciplinary measure.”<sup>9</sup>

## Monitor Implementation Fidelity

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The term *fidelity* refers to how well a given practice or intervention is implemented as intended. A practice implemented with high fidelity is performed consistently, accurately, and skillfully. Measuring fidelity is important to understanding why a given classroom management practice is (or is not) effective. This can help educators troubleshoot practices that don’t seem to be working (e.g., is this practice ineffective because it’s not a good fit for this group of students or is it ineffective because it’s not being implemented consistently?). Because of this, measuring fidelity *before* changing an intervention or practice is the best use of educators’ limited time.

### *Strategies to Increase Classroom Management Fidelity*

- Ensure that all adults in the classroom use a common language for expectations, rules, and procedures
- Create a classroom management plan:
  - Write down each strategy used as part of the classroom management plan
  - For each strategy, describe the steps or procedures to follow as though an unfamiliar person (e.g., a substitute teacher) will need to implement them
  - Update the plan whenever classroom management strategies are changed
- Invite a peer or mentor to observe the use of classroom management strategies in the classroom setting, and encourage them to provide feedback on the use of those strategies

- Build in prompts and visual cues to remember to use the strategy (e.g., a recurring timer to provide reminders to reinforce students for following classroom rules)
- Tell students about changes to classroom management strategies (e.g., a new reward for completing the independent work procedure)
- Provide opportunities for students to give feedback

## Measuring Classroom Management Fidelity

- Determine *who* (e.g., a coach, administrator, peer, or yourself via video recording) will measure fidelity
- Determine *how frequently* to measure fidelity
- Determine *what strategy* will be observed and measured
- Determine *how* fidelity will be measured
  - Examples:
    - Checklist of steps in a particular classroom management strategy
    - Rubric of implementation effectiveness
    - Count of specific praise statements to correction statements
- Decide *how* to use fidelity data to troubleshoot any classroom needs, reflect on practice, and identify next steps



For more information about fidelity measurement, [see “Team Implementation and Fidelity”](#) in Chapter 6.

# Respond to Student Needs Using Data and Reflection

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When students struggle with behavior in the classroom, classroom management strategies can help accomplish two important goals: reduce the problem behavior, and teach the skills students need to make that problem behavior unnecessary in the future. Using data and reflection is a key step in evaluating whether these support efforts are working. Because behavior problems can be stressful to manage, it's critical that progress monitoring is as objective as possible. Teams that rely on subjective measures of behavior may not be able to quickly detect when efforts are starting to pay off.

Consider the following steps for data collection and reflection when responding to student behavior needs using classroom management:

- Identify and define the problem behavior to decrease
- Identify and define at least one desired behavior to teach/increase instead
- For more accuracy, define these behaviors as specifically as possible
  - For example, measuring “calling out” is simpler and less subjective than measuring “rudeness”
- Determine how to measure both behaviors:
  - Frequency counts / tally marks
  - Duration measures / timers
  - Rating scales
  - ABC data (see [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 6](#))
- Decide on regular and planned opportunities to collect data on both behaviors
  - Measure the appropriate behavior(s) to be taught/increased to ensure that teaching and reinforcement strategies are working
  - Measure the problem behavior to ensure that student behavior is no longer interfering with learning
- Track data over time using a visual method (such as a line graph)

It's important that data collection isn't done for its own sake—rather, it's best when data is used to help answer questions about instructional practices and

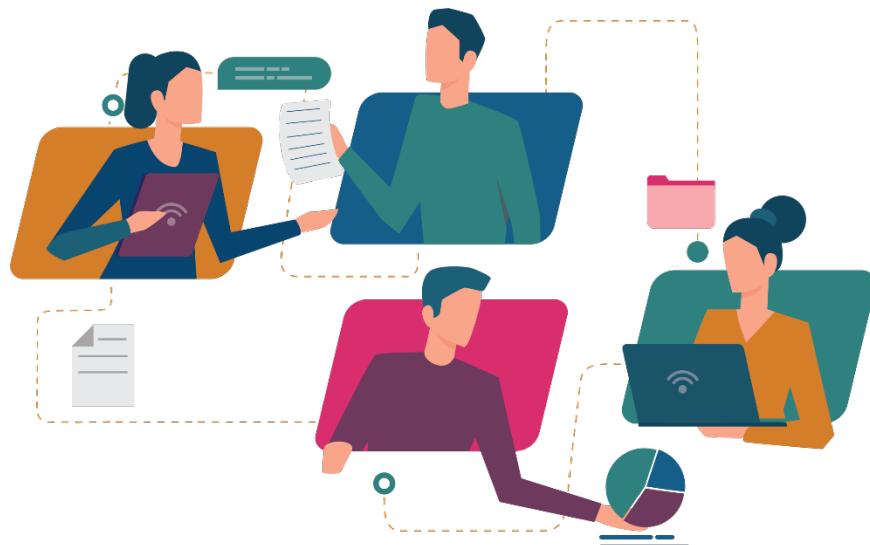
interventions. Data can be used to guide decisions about the intensity and delivery of classroom management strategies like the ones discussed in this chapter.

For more information and resources on team-based approaches to evaluating student needs using data, [see Chapter 5](#).

## Considerations for Remote Learning

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When students participate in learning remotely, the home environment becomes a classroom. It's natural for students and families to find this disruptive to their ordinary routines. To reduce the effects of this disruption, parents and families can use behavioral strategies to establish an effective learning environment at home.



### *Linking Classroom Management Activities to the Home*

Prior to remote learning opportunities, educators and administrators should be engaged in creating partnerships with parents. This partnership and shared responsibility will help to lessen the disruption when learning environments shift. This partnership can be created by:

- Practicing a weekly appropriate behavior or skill in the classroom and sending home information about that skill to practice at home

- Creating a bulletin board of the appropriate behavior or skill of the month and allowing families the opportunity to share pictures of their student engaging in the behavior or skill outside of the classroom
- Asking family volunteers to support in the classroom with teaching and reinforcing rules
- Creating a grade level or classroom newsletter where school expectations are introduced, and sharing ways to link those expectations to the home
- Inviting families to discuss and ask questions about appropriate behavior in the classroom so that they can be discussed at home
- Hosting a family night to share strategies for linking classroom management strategies with behaviors outside the classroom as well as those that help with completing homework

## *Creating Remote Learning Routines and Procedures*

Homes and classrooms can be positive extensions of each other where students feel a continuity of safety and consistency. The classroom management strategies in this chapter can be adapted for home learning as well. These supports in the home might look like:



- Having consistent routines (e.g., meals, study, free time, bedtime)
- Establishing a consistent place in the home for school activities
- Setting age-appropriate rules and boundaries
- Consider adapting schoolwide expectations to the home learning environment
- Setting aside time to engage with the student
- Supporting the student in working through problems on their own
- Giving frequent specific praise to the student
- Following through on positive and negative consequences
- Allowing for choice when appropriate

- Celebrating success

For best results, parent(s) can establish these supports even if their student is not currently participating in remote learning. It's easier and less stressful to establish these routines and procedures before they're needed most—and having them already in place and familiar can lead to a smooth transition to remote learning.

# Notes on Chapter 4

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<sup>1</sup> Center on PBIS. (2022). *Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators*, (Version 2). Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Bondy, E., & Ross, D. D. (2008). The Teacher as Warm Demander. *Educational Leadership*, 66(1), 54-58.

<sup>3</sup> Center on PBIS. (2022). *Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators* (Version 2). OSEP Technical Assistance Center.

<sup>4</sup> Utah State Board of Education. (2020). *Specially Designed Instruction Guidelines*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/\\_specialeducation/\\_instructioninclusion/\\_resources/\\_handbook/EffectiveSpeciallyDesignedInstruction.pdf](https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/_specialeducation/_instructioninclusion/_resources/_handbook/EffectiveSpeciallyDesignedInstruction.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Weinstein, C. S., Tomlinson-Clarke, S., & Curran, M. (2004). Toward a Conception of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55(1), 25-38.

<sup>8</sup> Utah Code § 53G-8-302. Retrieved from:

[https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-P3.html?v=C53G-8-P3\\_2018012420180124](https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-P3.html?v=C53G-8-P3_2018012420180124)

<sup>9</sup> Utah Code § 53G-8-301. Retrieved from:

[https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html?v=C53G-8-S301\\_2018012420180124](https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html?v=C53G-8-S301_2018012420180124)

# Chapter 5: Tiered Supports and Problem Solving

## Understanding Tiered Supports

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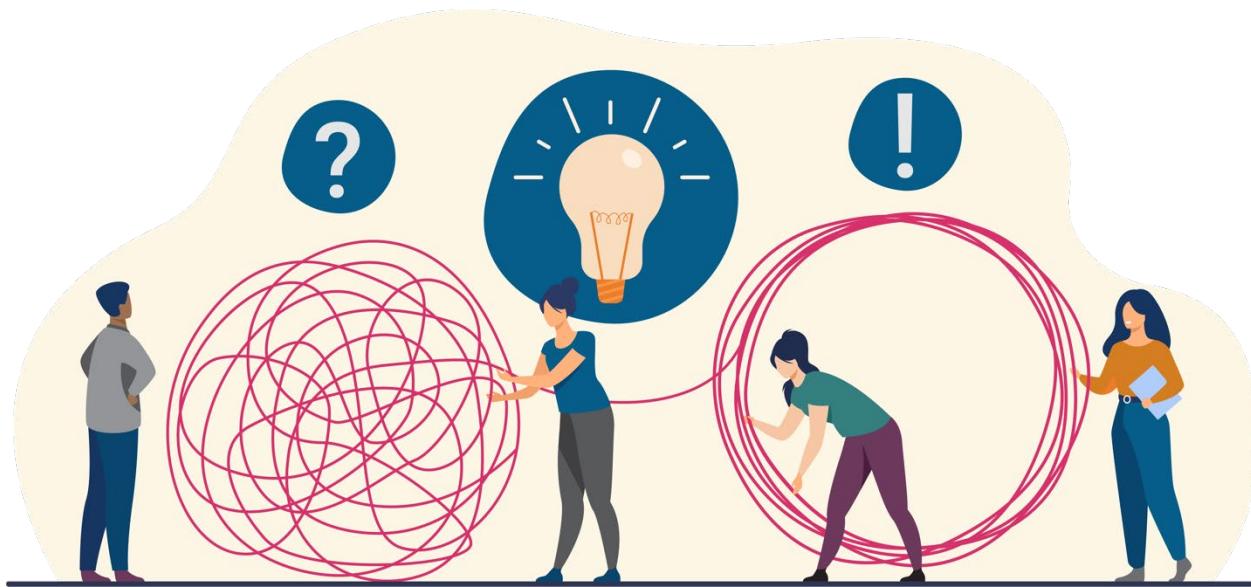
This chapter outlines a **problem-solving process**, designed with the framework of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in mind, for parent and school teams to follow to implement effective evidence-based interventions for students. Because behavior is complex, educators and multidisciplinary teams are encouraged to use the problem-solving process described in this chapter when identifying student needs, selecting appropriate interventions, and collecting progress monitoring data to support students. Although this chapter focuses on developing successful evidence-based interventions for students, the classroom environment, interactions, and relationships play a large role in student behavior. In other words, **behavior intervention is not about “fixing” students but about creating a safe and supportive environment where each student can succeed academically.**

### *Overview of Tiered Supports*

As discussed in Chapter 3, the MTSS framework has three tiers of intervention. Tier 1 represents the foundational support provided to every student. These are proactive class-wide and school-wide practices focused on teaching social and behavioral skills and preventing minor problem behaviors. Tier 2 focuses on supporting a smaller group of students with more specific skill needs. Tier 3 is the most personalized behavior support that can be offered by a school and may involve wraparound services provided by community agencies. Schools usually rely on information provided by a functional behavior assessment (FBA) to develop these interventions. For more about FBAs, [see Chapter 6](#).

The three tiers represent a hierarchy, with Tier 1 being the least intense and Tier 3 being the most intense. Schools should focus first on creating the foundation for their Tier 1 school and classroom strategies and interventions. Implementing evidence-based Tier 1 practices can singlehandedly decrease the number of

students who need Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Because Tier 1 is a universal support, a student who is receiving behavior support through Tier 2 or Tier 3 will continue to be supported through Tier 1 practices used in their classroom and school.



The problem-solving process described in this chapter is especially compatible with the three tiers of interventions of the MTSS framework discussed in Chapter 3. While it's not necessary to have a robust MTSS process established in a school to use the problem-solving process, it does help. Without the intentional structure of MTSS and the emphasis on high-quality universal supports, teams may find that they have a disproportionately large number of students who appear to need individual behavior plans. Teams that have incorporated the PBIS framework typically have regular team meetings to review student data, discuss progress, and determine next steps for support. This allows teams to proactively address student needs before larger problems develop. These steps are embedded in the problem-solving process described in this chapter.

## *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities Across Tiers*

Students with disabilities participate fully in the tiered supports and problem-solving process described in this chapter. Special education services are not

synonymous with Tier 3 interventions and increasing a student's support tier is not equivalent to an evaluation for special education.<sup>1</sup> In other words, **special education and MTSS are unique and complementary systems that provide support to all students in distinct ways.** All students with disabilities should have equal access to Tier 1 universal supports, and teams should take care to ensure that their Tier 1 materials, practices, and instruction are evidence-based and apply to all students. Students with disabilities may also have access to Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior support as needed (just like their classmates without disabilities). These tiered supports are provided *in addition* to what must be provided to the student in accordance with their **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** or Section 504 Plan.



## *Multidisciplinary Teaming in Behavior*

Throughout this chapter (and in preceding chapters), we will use **“multidisciplinary team”** as an inclusive term to refer to school teams which meet regularly to discuss student needs across the whole school. Schools may refer to these teams in a variety of ways (e.g., Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team, Response to Intervention [RTI] team, Student Success Team [SST]). No matter the name, multidisciplinary teams should engage in a variety of actions and processes to problem solve student needs, including:

- Defining student behavior
- Collecting and reviewing data
- Developing an appropriate and evidence-based intervention
- Preparing intervention materials and training involved staff members in its use

- Reflecting on the outcome of the intervention using data
- Coordinating team meetings, managing the team's agenda, and modeling the problem-solving process

The specific individuals who comprise a school's multidisciplinary team can vary. The success of this team depends more on whether the individuals on the team are prepared for the different responsibilities of the team (and less on having specific individuals with specific job titles available to participate). While a small district or charter school may not employ a behavior specialist or school social worker, they should still have staff prepared to discuss and address student behavior who can participate in a multidisciplinary team.

In most situations, a typical multidisciplinary team focused on behavior could include the following:

- The student's teacher(s), including:
  - Classroom teacher(s)
  - Special education teacher (if applicable)
  - Other teachers working with the student, as needed
- Principal or assistant principal
- Student support specialists (e.g., interventionist, behavior specialist, school psychologist, school social worker, school counselor)

It's helpful for someone on the team to act as the team's coordinator. This person should be well-versed in a tiered problem-solving process like the one outlined in this chapter so that they can facilitate the process with the rest of the team. They can also schedule recurring meetings, organize data and other needed materials, and ensure that any next steps agreed upon in the meeting are completed.

Finally, the team should encourage parent involvement in the problem-solving process. This may vary based on the tier of support the student is receiving.

## *Data Collection and Tiered Supports*

**Data collection is an essential and nonnegotiable component that teams must incorporate for interventions to be successful.**

For more information about data collection for behavior intervention, [see Chapter 6](#).

## Problem-Solving Process Across Tiers

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This section outlines a problem-solving process for behavior instruction and support that can be used by individual school staff and multidisciplinary teams across each MTSS tier. This problem-solving process should not be reserved for specialists—it should be used by general and special education teachers, administrators, support staff, and any other school staff who work with students. Included in this process are questions to guide work at each step. Problem-solving at each tier should consider the context in which the behavior is occurring as well as the available resources within the school. The resources and time needed to thoughtfully complete the problem-solving process will vary depending on the complexity and intensity of the problem behavior.

### *Step 1: Define the Problem Behavior and Collect Baseline Data*

In Step 1, the team works together to identify the problem behavior so it can be measured. Many students with behavior support needs may engage in multiple undesired behaviors, so it's important that team members reach a consensus about which behavior to focus on. The term "problem behavior" is purposefully used throughout this document to emphasize that not all "behaviors" interfere with learning or disrupt the learning of others. Teams should prioritize behaviors that, if changed, would result in a positive difference in the student's quality of life and educational/social environment. **Teams are advised not to prioritize behaviors that are of concern primarily due to staff convenience, individual pet peeves, or expressions of the student's disability that do not disrupt learning or present a safety risk.**

Once a behavior is selected, it should be defined in measurable and observable terms so a person unfamiliar with the student could measure the behavior. The team should then plan for a short period of baseline data collection to measure this

behavior. Baseline should be planned over a sufficient time period to capture a representative picture of the behavior.

For more information about measurement and data collection, see ["Data-Based Decision Making"](#) section of this chapter.

## *Step 2: Analyze the Problem Behavior*

In Step 2, the team reviews the baseline data to develop their understanding of why the behavior is occurring. This is a critical step that helps the team identify any patterns of behavior and develop a hypothesis that explains why the student is engaging in the problematic behavior. If the team does observe reliable patterns in the behavior (e.g., rates of the behavior are higher in the morning and lower in the afternoon), those patterns should be discussed thoughtfully to identify possible explanations (e.g., the student does not have breakfast in the morning and behavior improves after lunchtime).

## *Step 3: Choose a Replacement Behavior to Teach*

After team members have reviewed the student's baseline data, they can discuss what behavior to teach the student as a replacement to the problem behavior. This behavior should be defined in a measurable and observable way. In this discussion, it's helpful for team members to share their observations about the student's strengths and needs. For instance, if the team would like to provide instruction for the student related to asking for help when the student is frustrated, and writing is identified as a student strength, the team might incorporate written communication as part of the replacement behavior they will teach the student to do to request help.

**Replacement behaviors** should help the student meet their needs in a strengths-based way that can generalize to other similar situations. When selecting a replacement behavior, teams should choose a behavior that is something the student actively does, rather than a statement about what they will refrain from doing (e.g., "sit quietly" or "not bother others"). In addition, teams should choose a behavior that is both socially appropriate and age appropriate. The replacement behavior should not be embarrassing or unpleasant for the student in any way.

If the team has information from a functional behavior assessment (FBA) about the function of the student's behavior, or if the team has other insight into the possible function of the behavior, that information should be considered so that the replacement behavior matches the function of the problem behavior. In other words, it's important that the replacement behavior meets the same need for the student as the problem behavior has. For example, if a student is making rude comments to get a reaction from others, then an appropriate replacement behavior should also get the student attention in some way.

## *Step 4: Plan and Prepare Intervention*

In Step 4, the team takes the information from previous steps to plan a behavior intervention. The intervention should be matched to the support tier the student(s) receives. For instance, a team supporting a student in Tier 3 should design an intensive, individualized intervention for that student; however, if the team is evaluating Tier 1 supports instead, the intervention may be focused on making changes to classroom management practices for the needs of the entire group of students. **Interventions provided above Tier 1 should be selected/developed in collaboration with the student's parent whenever possible, particularly in Tier 3. The student may also be able to provide input or answer questions about preferences for their intervention plan.**

For further information about additional considerations for developing appropriate and function-based Tier 3 interventions, [see Chapter 6](#).



An important part of this step that teams may overlook is discussion of time, resources, and staff responsibilities to prepare the intervention. It's important to include meeting times to make these determinations. Teams are advised to discuss all parts of the intervention needed to begin implementation, set a planned start date when materials will be completed, and create staff assignments as needed to prepare the intervention. This ensures that the intervention is ready to begin as planned so that students can fully buy into the intervention right away. Teams that skip this step run the risk of, for example, beginning a class-wide reward system with students before purchasing reinforcers which may decrease student excitement and motivation in the critical first few days of the intervention.

## *Step 5: Implement Intervention and Collect Intervention Data*

Once the intervention is planned and prepared, the team is nearly ready for implementation. First, all team members involved must be trained in the intervention. Without this crucial step, the intervention may be run improperly, which could result in student confusion and the school staff's diminished interest in participating. The team should refer to their intervention start date, identify all staff who may be involved in implementation, and arrange a time for training prior to the start date. Teams may also wish to plan for a period of coaching so that staff can get feedback on their use of the intervention. This could involve modeling of the actual intervention, practice opportunities for staff to demonstrate their learning, and feedback. This can also help team members troubleshoot practical issues with the intervention that could hinder implementation.

Once everyone on the team is trained, the intervention can begin. Teams must remember that behavior intervention involves student learning, and all learning takes time and practice. It's essential to continue data collection in this phase to be able to detect small indicators that the student is responding (or, alternatively, signs that the student is *not* responding) to the intervention and learning new patterns of behavior. Data collection should be graphed frequently to assist with progress



monitoring, and there should be a clear separation between baseline and intervention data.

Consistency, patience, and persistence are required for any intervention to succeed. Teams should plan for periodic fidelity checks in which one person on the team observes another person implementing the intervention (for more information, [see “Data-Based Decision Making” section](#) of this

chapter). Staff involved in implementation should be proactive by bringing up any unforeseen barriers to implementation with the rest of the team. Often those barriers can be addressed with small changes to the intervention. Planning ahead to measure intervention fidelity is necessary for the team to make necessary changes if the student’s behavior doesn’t improve. This allows the team to understand why the intervention failed, such as 1) the intervention wasn’t appropriate, 2) didn’t motivate the student enough, or 3) wasn’t used consistently.

In some cases, shortly after the intervention starts, the student’s problem behavior may sharply increase for a few days before decreasing. Data collection can help the team identify when this pattern of behavior (referred to as an “extinction burst”) might be occurring. In an extinction burst, staff may be surprised by the student’s unwanted change in behavior and might be tempted to modify or discontinue the plan. However, when this occurs, it is even more critical that all staff remain consistent with the intervention plan and refrain from making changes until well after the extinction burst is over.

## *Step 6: Analyze Data and Reflect on Student Needs*

Team members should input and graph data regularly enough to paint a preliminary picture of the student’s behavior during intervention. Once the intervention has been implemented for approximately 4-6 weeks, the team should

reconvene to review progress data and determine how well the intervention is working. If any team members have concerns about the intervention, require additional training, or need help addressing barriers to implementation, those needs should have been proactively raised and addressed before this meeting.



If the student's behavior has improved since the intervention began, the team can discuss any factors that seemed to be related to the student's success. This can be helpful to identify any future support needs the student may have. If the student's behavior has not improved sufficiently, there may be patterns in the data that can assist the team in making any necessary changes. When reviewing graphed progress data, the team may wish to consider the following questions:

- *Did the student's behavior improve, but not to the degree desired?*
  - How can we increase the dose of the intervention to improve the student's response?
- *Did the intervention work in some situations and not in others?*
  - What can we learn about the situations in which the student's behavior improved, so that we can replicate those conditions in other situations?
  - Are there certain situations in which the intervention isn't currently being implemented, but should be?
  - Are there certain situations in which the student particularly struggles despite the intervention being implemented consistently? Does the student need additional support or an increased dose of the intervention in those situations?
- *Did the intervention initially appear to be successful but then the student's behavior worsened again?*

- Did staff implementation grow less consistent after the student's behavior initially improved? How can that be addressed to ensure consistency even when the student's behavior improves?
- Did the student run out of reinforcers?
- Are the student's reinforcers uninteresting or repetitive?
- *Is there no noticeable change in the level (high or low) or trend (upward or downward) of the student's behavior within 4-6 weeks of the intervention's start?*
  - Was the intervention implemented as planned?
  - Were team members trained to implement the intervention?
  - Are there any unaddressed barriers to implementation? If so, how can these be prevented or addressed for the next intervention?
  - Is the intervention a poor fit for the student's needs in some way? If so, what needs to change for the next intervention?
  - Does the student need the additional support of a higher tier of intervention?

## *Step 7: Continue or Adapt Intervention*

Once the team is finished reviewing the student's progress data, they must determine what to do next. If the intervention has been initially successful, it would be appropriate to continue the intervention. Once an intervention has been successful for a longer period of time and the behavior has improved sufficiently, the team could decide at this stage to begin to fade the intervention. **Fading must be done gradually to ensure the student can maintain improvement without reverting to the previous pattern of problem behavior.** If the intervention was not effective (or was less effective than the team anticipated), the team should first identify the reason(s) for the lack of effectiveness in Step 6. After this, the team should make changes to address why the intervention was not successful.

Data collection should continue if any intervention is in place—even when that intervention is slowly being faded—so the team can monitor the student's progress and make changes to the plan as appropriate. The team should denote any changes to the intervention on the graph to aid in ongoing progress monitoring.

For examples, [see "Data-Based Decision Making" section](#) of this chapter.

TABLE 5-1: PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS FOR BEHAVIOR INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT

Step	Activities	Questions to Consider
<b>Step 1: Define the Problem Behavior</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Define the problem behavior in measurable and observable terms</li> <li>b. If multiple behaviors are a concern, reach agreement about which behavior to prioritize</li> <li>c. Decide how to collect data on the problem behavior</li> <li>d. Collect baseline data</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the problem behavior look like?</li> <li>• What is the student expected to do, and what is the student actually doing?</li> <li>• What specific, observable behavior are we targeting for change?</li> <li>• How will we measure this behavior?</li> </ul>

Step	Activities	Questions to Consider
<b>Step 2: Analyze the Problem Behavior</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="512 304 1002 409">a. Identify any patterns to the context in which the problem behavior occurs</li> <li data-bbox="512 418 1002 523">b. Hypothesize why the problem behavior is occurring</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1083 304 1410 705">● Where, when, and how often does the problem behavior occur?</li> <li data-bbox="1083 713 1410 1144">● Is the behavior a skill problem (can't do) or a performance problem (won't do)?</li> <li data-bbox="1083 747 1410 937">● Is the behavior more likely to occur in particular situations or with certain people?</li> <li data-bbox="1083 946 1410 1144">● What purpose (i.e., function) is the behavior serving for the student?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3: Choose a Replacement Behavior to Teach</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="512 1165 1002 1271">a. Identify what the team would like the student to do instead of the problem behavior</li> <li data-bbox="512 1279 1002 1491">b. Consider the student's individual strengths, needs, and probable function of the behavior when determining a replacement behavior</li> <li data-bbox="512 1499 1002 1605">c. Set a goal for the student based on their use of the replacement behavior</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1083 1165 1410 1355">● What does the replacement behavior look like, and how will it be measured?</li> <li data-bbox="1083 1364 1410 1469">● What is the goal for improvement?</li> </ul>

Step	Activities	Questions to Consider
<b>Step 4: Plan and Prepare Intervention</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Generate a list of possible solutions and choose one intervention to implement</li> <li>b. Match the intensity of the intervention to the student's support tier</li> <li>c. Set a start date for the intervention</li> <li>d. Assign team members to prepare each part of the intervention prior to the start date</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What changes can be made in the classroom environment to help prevent the problem from occurring (antecedent strategy)?</li> <li>● What skills can be taught to the student to help replace the problem behavior with a positive alternative behavior (teaching strategy)?</li> <li>● What consequences, if any, can be put in place to reduce the occurrence of the problem behavior (consequence strategy)?</li> </ul>

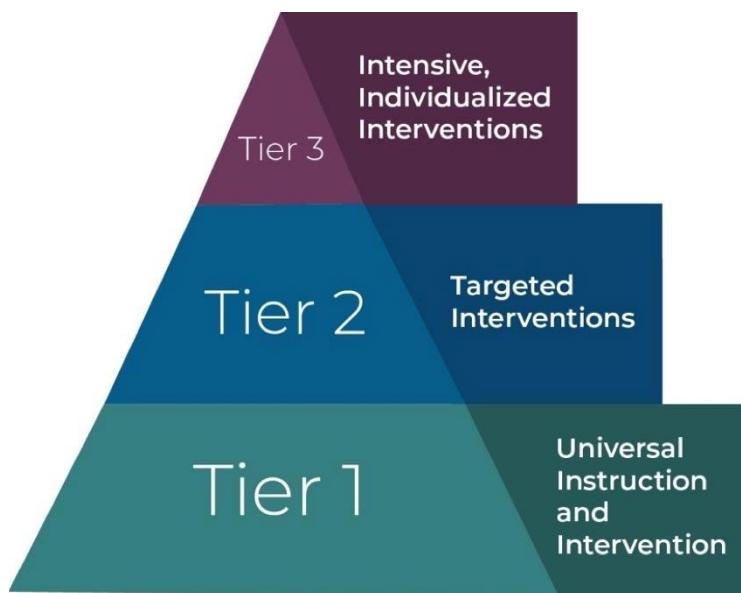
Step	Activities	Questions to Consider
<b>Step 5: Implement Intervention and Collect Intervention Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Train all staff involved on their responsibilities for implementation and/or data collection</li> <li>b. Ensure student understands the intervention</li> <li>c. Collect intervention data and enter/graph it regularly to monitor implementation</li> <li>d. Check implementation fidelity often</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the intervention being implemented as intended?</li> <li>• Are there any factors that may be influencing the effectiveness of the intervention?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6: Analyze Data &amp; Reflect on Student Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue entering and graphing data regularly and frequently</li> <li>b. Meet after 4-6 weeks to review progress</li> <li>c. Determine whether the intervention is working as desired (and if not, determine why)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the behavior changed since the intervention started?</li> <li>• If so, are the changes adequate?</li> <li>• What is the discrepancy between what the student is doing now and what the student is expected to do?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7: Continue or Adapt Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Adjust the intervention, as needed, based on the team's analysis of data</li> <li>b. Document any adjustments made to the intervention</li> <li>c. Highlight any intervention changes/dates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the data reveal about the effectiveness of the intervention?</li> <li>• After reflecting on the data, what adjustments to the intervention needed to be made?</li> </ul>

Sprick, Coughlin, Garrison, and Sprick<sup>2</sup> suggest the continual use of a problem-solving process until the student's behavior meets the behavioral expectations that have been defined. As the intensity of tiered support needed for a student increases, the number of adults involved in the problem-solving process will also increase. The interventions selected will be more time intensive and the data collected may be more complex.

## Applying the Problem-Solving Process Within Tiers

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The problem-solving process outlined in this chapter can be used within and across tiers of MTSS. In addition, there are some issues specific to each tier that teams are advised to keep in mind, such as parent notification when a student moves to a higher tier of support and parent consent necessary for an individual student assessment. This section will discuss additional considerations for each MTSS tier within the problem-solving process described above. It's helpful to remember that the type of intervention isn't dictated by the student's MTSS tier; instead, the student's tier guides the degree of individualization and intensity of the intervention itself.



## *Tier 1: Universal Support*

Tier 1 supports are meant to teach behaviors that adhere to school/classroom expectations and prevent problem behaviors from occurring. Tier 1 includes universal practices, teaching strategies to address skills via classroom management and schoolwide teaching of appropriate expectations. When Tier 1 practices are working smoothly, they feel less like “interventions” and more like “the way we do things in this class.” By having strong, foundational Tier 1 supports for students, the number of students needing more intensive services will be reduced.

### Team Considerations for Tier 1

- Address overall classroom management practices first when multiple students in the classroom misbehave
- Evaluate how skills are taught and reinforced, including improving strategies used to engage and motivate students
- Intentionally design classroom management plans to reflect teaching style and students’ needs
- Teach students to take responsibility for their learning and behaviors
- Ensure the primary adult support is from the classroom teacher
- Ensure interventions are easy for the teacher to use and require minimal paperwork
- Provide training to teachers on effective classroom management implementation
- Ensure the classroom environment is clean, organized, and conducive to learning
- Use Tier 1 interventions prior to more time-intensive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions
- Use Tier 1 interventions school-wide and/or class-wide

### Problem-Solving at Tier 1

The problem-solving process in this chapter can be used while developing Tier 1 interventions and strategies. Since Tier 1 interventions are universal, problem-solving should be conducted with the entire group in mind. The process at this tier

should be simple, and practices should be easy, efficient, and feasible for both general and special education teachers to implement.<sup>3</sup> All teachers within a school building should be familiar with and know how to implement several Tier 1 strategies and interventions.

## *Tier 2: Targeted Strategies*

Tier 2 practices are intended to reduce the intensity, duration, and/or frequency of problem behavior, and should be implemented as a supplement to the Tier 1 support already in place. Teams should reach out to the parent when considering moving a student to Tier 2 and should follow any policies or procedures at their school for involving parents when considering a change to a student's support tier.

### Team Considerations for Tier 2 Interventions

The following considerations were adapted from the Center on PBIS.<sup>4</sup>

- Provide students with additional support for appropriate behaviors, social connections with peers, and/or academic learning, as needed
- Ensure students receiving support at this tier have more adult supervision and opportunities for positive feedback than are available at Tier 1
- Seek out opportunities to build relationships with students and use interventions where relationship building is an essential part
- Fade out Tier 2 supports once the student is successful, but be sure the student's connections with school staff are preserved
- Focus on improving Tier 1 practices before connecting multiple students with Tier 2 supports if *many* students are having difficulty in Tier 1 (particularly within a single classroom)

### Problem-Solving at Tier 2

The problem-solving process within this tier should be collaborative, meaning the teacher should involve at least one other person in the process. Schools that follow an MTSS model can use their multidisciplinary team for collaboration and problem-solving as outlined above. For staff in schools not implementing MTSS, teachers can collaborate with one or more colleagues knowledgeable about behavior, such as

another teacher, a school social worker, a school psychologist, a board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA), and/or a school administrator.<sup>5</sup> The problem-solving process above can be followed just as easily by a pair of colleagues or an entire team.

## *Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Interventions*

Tier 3 interventions are intensive and may involve additional time and resources to implement. If not developed and implemented carefully, the additional support provided to a student with a Tier 3 plan can sometimes create additional barriers that must be addressed later (e.g., social stigma from others). However, Tier 3 supports offer the highest level of assessment and insight into the student's behavior needs, and the highest level of individualization to create an effective plan. This tier should be reserved for students who continue to engage in problem behavior after receiving both Tier 1 and Tier 2 support, or for students already engaging in problem behavior that poses a significant, imminent safety risk to themselves or others.

### Team Considerations for Tier 3

Interventions at Tier 3 should be individualized to meet the needs of the specific student for which they are being used.

For more information on processes and considerations specific to behavior support at Tier 3, such as Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), [see Chapter 6](#).

### Problem-Solving at Tier 3

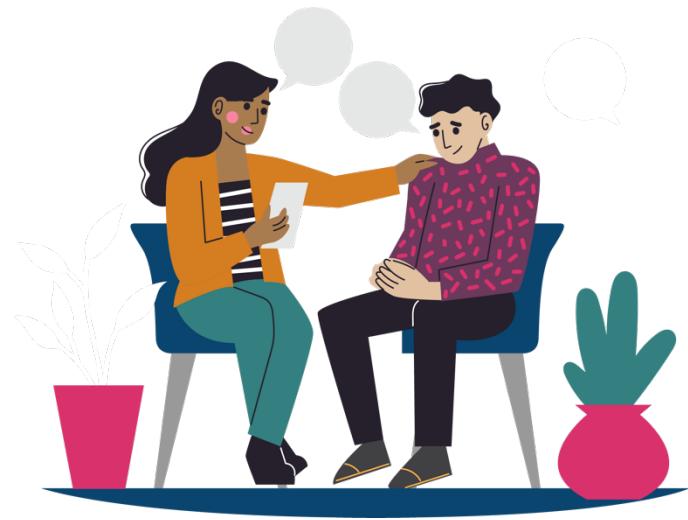
Problem-solving at this tier involves more time and resources from multiple school personnel, including a behavior expert within the LEA and the student's parent. This process may include conducting an FBA and collaboratively developing a BIP. Following policies and procedures within an LEA, an FBA can be completed and a BIP created for any student in need of this intensive support. This process is not reserved solely for students with disabilities; however, **parent consent must be**

obtained prior to conducting an FBA. Problem-solving may also include collaboration with community service providers.

## Data-Based Decision Making

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Behavior support and problem solving cannot proceed without data collection and review. Without accurate and reliable data, educators cannot make informed decisions about the effectiveness of interventions and may invest effort into practices that are a poor fit for student needs. Data collection within the problem-solving process described earlier in this chapter is an ongoing practice for the student's team—no matter whether the student's behaviors improve, worsen, or continue unchanged, data collection is required to monitor progress and understand what changes are necessary for the student to be successful.



When designed correctly, data collection can help the team understand important questions about the student and their behavior. It should not be burdensome or tedious for team members. This section will discuss the usefulness of data collection for teams supporting students with behavior learning, including the following questions:

- How do we collect behavior data for progress monitoring?
- What can behavior data do for us?
- How do we collect behavior data?

It's important to keep in mind that the intensity and individualization of data collection can parallel the student's support tier. This means that progress monitoring for Tier 2 interventions should be much simpler than progress monitoring might be for a Tier 3 plan.

Examples of behavior data collection methods will appear throughout the rest of this chapter. Please note that all blank model datasheet forms are included in full page size in Appendix C.

## *What Problems Can Behavior Data Help Us Solve*

High-quality behavior data can help teams answer key questions that are essential to any problem-solving process for behavior support.

### **Is Intervention Warranted?**

Is the student engaging in problem behavior to a degree that warrants the intervention (and tier) that the team is considering? If not, the team should consider increasing the quality of the supports available at a lower tier. This question is often asked in the **baseline phase** but might also be appropriate in the **intervention phase** once the student has made significant progress. Teams should take note that this question can be especially difficult to answer if the student's behavior poses a significant safety risk but occurs infrequently.

### **Is the Intervention Working?**

Has the intervention led to the desired change in the student's behavior? High-quality data can show small early changes in the student's behavior that can indicate to the team that the intervention is working. Problem behaviors are not learned overnight, and new behavior patterns will also take time to establish. However, it's usually possible to see initial signs of the desired change—if the intervention is appropriate—within 1-2 weeks.

If the intervention isn't working, the team should reconvene to discuss the intervention, determine if it is being implemented as planned or if staff need additional training, and consider making changes to the student's current supports.

### **Does the Student Need More Support?**

Is the student making less progress than the team anticipated? One possible solution is to increase the "dose" of the intervention. This is often a more

lightweight change than revising the entire plan, so it should be considered prior to changing the plan in most cases. For instance, if the team is implementing a token economy system in which the student can earn a token twice a day for appropriate behavior, the team could increase the dosage by modifying the token system so that the student can earn a token once an hour for meeting the same behavior expectation.

For more information about evaluating patterns of student data to make changes to the intervention, [see "Step 6: Analyze Data and Reflect on Student Needs" section of this chapter.](#)

## Does Anyone On the Team Need Additional Resources or Training?

Is the student making little progress despite the team's efforts to create an engaging and appropriate plan? It's important to consider whether the plan is being implemented with fidelity. If the plan isn't being implemented, teams must determine why. Certain implementers may require additional training or support to address any unexpected barriers to implementation. In some cases, the plan may not be sufficiently practical to implement, and/or data may be too cumbersome to record. The intensity and individualization of the plan should reflect the tier of support the student is receiving. Teams should take that into consideration and avoid creating plans that are not a good match for the student's support tier (e.g., needlessly complex Tier 2 plans, minimal or generic Tier 3 plans).



## *How Do We Measure Behavior*

There are a variety of ways to measure a student's behavior. Behavior measurement methods fall into one of two broad categories: direct measurement and indirect measurement. Within each of those categories, there are a variety of specific methods to measure behavior depending on how frequently the behavior occurs and whether the behavior is discrete or non-discrete. Discrete behaviors have a clear start and stop (for example, a student raising their hand to ask a question). Off-task behavior, on the other hand, is an example of a non-discrete behavior. It can be difficult to see a clear start or stop to being "off-task" since the student may be engaged in multiple behaviors that are off task (e.g., out of seat, talking to neighbors, looking off into space, sleeping during instruction, working on things not related to the task). Different measurement types may be better suited to measure discrete or non-discrete behaviors, and those distinctions are included in the sections below. Whatever method of data collection the team uses, that method should be the same across baseline and intervention phases to allow for accurate comparisons between phases.

## Direct Measurement

Direct measurement, also known as event recording, refers to any method of data collection that measures a particular dimension of a behavior exactly. For instance, if the team is interested in knowing how many times a behavior occurs each day frequency data will provide that information. Direct measurement can often be the most simple and efficient way of measuring certain behaviors. Examples of direct measurement include:

- Frequency
- Duration
- Latency
- Controlled presentation
- Permanent product data

### Frequency

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**Frequency** data collection answers the question, “How often does this behavior occur?” To collect frequency data, record a tally mark each time the behavior occurs during data collection. This method is appropriate for discrete behaviors with a clear start and stop, and for behaviors with low to moderate frequency. Behaviors that occur with extremely high frequency (e.g., many times per minute) are usually not practical to record with frequency data. Supplies needed to record frequency data are a pencil and datasheet (or blank paper).

For an example of frequency recording using a datasheet, [see Figure 5-1](#). Please note that these data correspond to a portion of the graphed data depicted in Figure 5-8 and Figure 5-10. Clickable lap counters are a good alternative when pencil/paper data collection is not practical ([see Figure 5-2](#)).

FIGURE 5-1: EXAMPLE FREQUENCY RECORDING DATASHEET

Behavior: Verbal aggression			
Definition: Insulting comments; verbal threats to harm others or wishing harm upon others. Each sentence is counted as 1.			
Day	Date	Phase	Frequency
Mon	9/5/22	Intervention	— (no school - holiday)
Tue	9/6/22	Intervention	
Wed	9/7/22	Intervention	
Thu	9/8/22	Intervention	
Fri	9/9/22	Intervention	Ø
Weekly total: 15			

FIGURE 5-2: LAP COUNTER FOR FREQUENCY RECORDING



## Duration

Duration data collection answers the question, "How long does this behavior last?" To collect duration data, write down the start time and end time for each instance of the behavior. After that, subtract the earlier time from the later time to measure the duration. Be sure to note whether the duration measure is in seconds, minutes, or hours. Duration data is appropriate for behaviors that are non-discrete. Supplies

needed are a clock, pencil, and datasheet (or blank paper). A stopwatch (or equivalent app) may also be helpful as long as the data collector writes down each behavior's duration and clears the stopwatch *before* measuring another occurrence.

For an example of duration recording, [see Figure 5-3](#). Please note that these data correspond to a portion of the graphed data depicted in [Figure 5-9](#).

FIGURE 5-3: EXAMPLE DURATION RECORDING DATASHEET

Behavior: Avoiding class														
Definition: Sitting in the hall or outside the counselor's office during class time. Duration is counted in minutes.														
Mon:	8/29/22		Tue:	8/30/22		Wed:	8/31/22		Thu:	9/1/22		Fri:	9/2/22	
Phase:	Baseline		Phase:	Baseline		Phase:	Baseline		Phase:	Baseline		Phase:	Baseline	
Start time	End time	Start time	End time	Start time	End time	Start time	End time	Start time	End time	Start time	End time	Start time	End time	
9:10	9:27	8:25	8:45	9:15	9:23	8:20	9:05	10:21	10:30					
10:31	10:39	12:20	3:00	9:40	9:50	1:10	1:35	10:40	10:51					
				10:25	10:50	1:43	2:03							
				1:35	2:10									
Total time: 25 min		Total time: 180 min		Total time: 78 min		Total time: 90 min		Total time: 20 min						

## Latency

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Latency data collection answers the question, "How long between an antecedent and a behavior?" **Latency recording** involves measuring the time between the presentation of an antecedent (e.g., the teacher giving a direction) and the beginning of a desired behavior (e.g., the student beginning to follow the direction). This requires careful observation during specific moments. The team may also wish to record information about the antecedent, such as a specific level of prompt, that was presented to the student before latency was measured. This can support the team in addressing needs like prompt dependency. Supplies needed are a clock, pencil, and datasheet (or blank paper). A stopwatch (or equivalent app) may also be helpful as long as the data collector writes down each behavior's latency and clears the stopwatch *before* measuring another occurrence.

For an example of latency recording, [see Figure 5-4](#).

FIGURE 5-4: EXAMPLE OF LATENCY RECORDING DATASHEET

Behavior: Starting assigned work									
Definition: Beginning independent work in the general education setting in a timely manner when asked. Latency from the request to the time the student begins the expected task is counted in seconds/minutes as measured by a stopwatch.									
Error correction: If latency reaches 2min, log the data and give a new prompt one step to the left of the prev. prompt (see key below). For instance, if the student does not respond in 2min to an indirect verbal prompt, give a direct verbal prompt and restart the stopwatch. Record the latency to that prompt on a new line. Omit the higher-level prompt data from total and avg. latency for the day.									
Mon: 11/7/22	Tue: 11/8/22	Wed: 11/9/22	Thu: 11/10/22	Fri: 11/11/22					
Phase: Intervention	Phase: Intervention	Phase: Intervention	Phase: Intervention	Phase: Intervention					
Prompt	Latency	Prompt	Latency	Prompt	Latency	Prompt	Latency	Prompt	Latency
DV	1min 50sec	DV	1min 21sec	DV	57sec	IV	2min	IV	20sec
DV	1m 41s	DV	55sec	DV	49sec	DV	15 sec	IV	22sec
DV	1m 30s	DV	48sec	DV	1m 10sec	IV	1min 10s	IV	15sec
DV	1m 5s	DV	1min 1sec	DV	22sec	IV	45 sec	IV	43sec
DV	1m 22s	DV	32sec	DV	19sec	IV	29sec	IV	32sec
DV	1m 30s	DV	42 sec	DV	10sec	IV	14 sec	IV	26 sec
Total time: 8m 58s	Total time: 5m 19s	Total time: 3m 47s	Total time: 4m 38s	Total time: 2m 40s					
Avg. time: 1m 30s	Avg. time: 53 sec	Avg. time: 38 sec	Avg. time: 56sec	Avg. time: 27 sec					
Key – Prompts (from most to least intrusive) and their abbreviations:									
DV	IV	G	WGV						
Direct Verbal (individuals)	Indirect verbal (individual)	Gesture (individual)	Whole Group Verbal (group)						

## Controlled Presentation

**Controlled presentation** data collection can answer questions about the percent of opportunities the student engaged in a specific behavior when given the opportunity, such as “What percentage of teacher directions did the student follow?” It’s more accurate to answer these sorts of questions using this measurement (rather than frequency data) because the number of opportunities presented to the student can vary from day to day.

To measure a behavior using controlled presentation data, record two sets of tally marks: the number of opportunities the student should engage in a behavior (e.g., number of teacher directions given), and the number of times the student actually engages in that behavior (e.g., the number of teacher directions the student followed). Supplies needed to record controlled presentation data are a pencil and datasheet (or blank paper) with columns for both measurements described above.

For an example of controlled presentation recording, [see Figure 5-5](#).

FIGURE 5-5: EXAMPLE CONTROLLED PRESENTATION RECORDING DATASHEET

Behavior: Following teacher directions					
Definition: Complying with a teacher's direction within 30 seconds. Any direction followed within 30 seconds is tallied under "directions followed;" otherwise, it is tallied under "directions not followed." Each direction should result in a tally mark in one of these two columns.					
Day	Date	Phase	Directions followed	Directions not followed	Percent of dir. followed
Mon	10/10/22	Baseline	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">6</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">11</span>	6/17 = 35%
Tue	10/11/22	Baseline	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">8</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">6</span>	8/14 = 57%
Wed	10/12/22	Baseline	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">4</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">14</span>	4/18 = 22%
Thu	10/13/22	Baseline	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">6</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">18</span>	6/24 = 25%
Fri	10/14/22	Baseline	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">9</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">10</span>	9/19 = 47%
Weekly totals:			33	59	33/92 = 36%

## Permanent Product

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**Permanent product recording** involves measuring artifacts left behind by the behavior. For example, if the team wants to measure the problem behavior of ripping up books, then permanent product recording would involve collecting any book(s) that were damaged during the day and counting them. This is a very easy and efficient method of data collection, but its use is limited to behaviors that produce permanent products. Specific data collection strategies vary based on the specific behavior and the permanent product being measured, but may involve measures similar to frequency or controlled presentation described above.

## Indirect Measurement

Indirect measurement refers to methods of behavior data collection that yield estimates of an aspect of the behavior. When considering indirect measurement, it's helpful to remember that indirect measures can never be converted to direct measures. If it's important to the team to collect information about the behavior's frequency, for example, then an indirect measure can never provide precise information about that dimension of behavior. However, indirect measurement can

sometimes be more practical and efficient than direct measurement. Two common types of indirect measurement are:

- Interval recording
- Behavior rating scales

## Interval Recording Overview

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Interval-based methods of data collection involve dividing a predetermined timeframe into equal intervals of time, continuously observing the student, and marking whether a behavior was present (+) or absent (-) during each interval. Like all indirect measures, this type of data collection provides an estimate of the behavior and cannot give information about a behavior's frequency or duration. For example, it's inaccurate to describe results of a 10-minute interval-based observation in which the student was off task for 6 out of 10 one-minute intervals by saying "The student was off task for 6 minutes." **Interval recording** only yields the percent of intervals in which the behavior was observed. This is calculated by dividing the number of intervals scored with a plus (+) into the total number of intervals observed.

It can be difficult to determine the best interval length—shorter intervals are far more precise but can be harder on the observer. In most cases, interval lengths longer than 60 seconds are not advisable due to a loss of accuracy. If the team is interested in recording ongoing data about a behavior that continues for many minutes or hours at a time, duration data collection is a more efficient and precise alternative.

Supplies needed to collect interval data are an interval data sheet ([see Figure 5-6](#)) and a timer/app for timing intervals. There are three types of interval recording methods:

- Whole interval
- Partial interval
- Momentary time sampling

Interval recording types should never be mixed within one observation. Also, results from one type of interval observation cannot be compared to results from a different type of observation (this is an apples-to-oranges comparison).

For an example of whole interval recording, [see Figure 5-6](#).

FIGURE 5-6: EXAMPLE OF INTERVAL RECORDING DATASHEET

Behavior: On-task behavior						
Definition: Being appropriately seated and within personal space, quietly attending to the teacher's instruction, raising a hand before speaking, talking with classmates only when permitted, limiting conversations to the assigned task, and engaging in the assigned task as directed by the teacher.						
Directions: Observe the student continuously and score one box every 10 seconds. Mark (+) if the student engaged in the specified behavior <i>for the entire interval</i> ; otherwise, mark (-).						
	Date	Time	Observer	Activity	Interval length	Interval type
	10/28/22	10:15 a.m.	JK	solar system project	10 seconds	Whole
Minute	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50
1	—	+	—	—	+	+
2	+	—	+	—	—	—
3	—	+	—	+	+	—
4	+	+	+	+	—	—
5	+	+	—	+	—	+
6	+	—	—	—	+	—
7	—	+	—	—	+	—
8	—	+	—	—	—	+
9	—	—	—	+	—	—
10	—	—	+	—	+	+
Percent of intervals scored (+): $26/60 = 43\%$						

### Whole Interval Recording

**Whole interval** data collection involves scoring the interval with a (+) if the behavior of interest occurred *for the entire interval*. For example:

- A teacher is measuring screaming behavior using intervals that are 15 seconds long. The student screamed for the entire 15 second interval, so the teacher marks that interval with a (+).
- A school social worker is measuring on-task behavior using intervals that are 30 seconds long. The student was on task for the entire 30 second interval, so the school social worker marks that interval with a (+).

- A paraeducator is measuring out of seat behavior using intervals that are 60 seconds long. The student was out of her seat for the first 55 seconds and seated for the last 5 seconds of the interval, so the paraeducator marks that interval with a (-).

This method of interval recording can be appropriate when measuring non-discrete behaviors with a long duration. Whole interval recording is not usually appropriate for behaviors best measured with frequency data (e.g., hitting, swearing). In addition, whole interval recording tends to underestimate behavior since the interval is only scored if the behavior occurs for the entire time. To address this, select a shorter interval length, or consider a different measure (such as duration recording or momentary time sampling).

### *Partial Interval Recording*

**Partial interval** data collection involves scoring the interval with a (+) if the behavior of interest occurred *at any time during the interval*. For example:

- A teacher is measuring screaming behavior using intervals that are 15 seconds long. The student screamed once during the interval, so the teacher marks it with a (+).
- A school social worker is measuring on-task behavior using intervals that are 30 seconds long. The student is briefly on task for one second at the start of the interval, so the school social worker marks that interval with a (+).
- A paraeducator is measuring out of seat behavior using intervals that are 60 seconds long. The student is seated for most of the interval, but stands up once for a couple seconds, so the paraeducator marks that interval with a (+).

This method can be appropriate with behaviors that occur at a low frequency or that are hard to anticipate. It tends to overestimate behavior since the interval must be scored if the behavior occurs at all during the interval. To address this, select a shorter interval length, or consider a different measure (such as frequency recording or momentary time sampling).

## *Momentary Time Sampling*

**Momentary time sampling** involves scoring the interval with a (+) if the behavior of interest is occurring *at the moment the interval ends*. For best results, the observer should look away from the student until the last moment of the interval, then look at the student to determine if the behavior is occurring. This allows for the most accurate measurement without allowing the rest of the student's actions leading up to that moment to influence data collection.

For example:

- A teacher is measuring screaming behavior using intervals that are 15 seconds long. The student screams twice during the interval, but neither time was at the 15-second mark, so the teacher marks the interval with a (-).
- A school social worker is measuring on-task behavior using intervals that are 30 seconds long. When the school social worker glances up at the end of 30 seconds, the student is on task, so she marks that interval with a (+).
- A paraeducator is measuring out of seat behavior using intervals that are 60 seconds long. The student is seated when the paraeducator looks up at the 60-second mark, so he marks that interval with a (-).

This method balances some of the disadvantages of whole interval and partial interval recording. It is appropriate for a variety of behaviors but still carries the risk of underestimating behavior if intervals are inappropriately long.

## Behavior Rating Scales

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**Behavior rating scales** developed for the specific situation are another way to provide an estimate of the behavior for progress monitoring purposes. Using this method, teams can create a simple scale based on their knowledge of the student and behavior. Rating scale data for progress monitoring should be collected frequently enough that it can inform decision making. For example:

- A team wants to collect baseline data for a student's behavior using a 3-point rating scale. Using this scale, the teacher will circle the appropriate rating on a datasheet at the top of each hour. The points on the scale are defined as follows in Table 5-2:

TABLE 5-2: EXAMPLE OF 3-POINT BEHAVIOR RATING SCALE

Point	Definition
1	The student followed all classroom rules with 0-1 reminders and continued to follow the rules for at least 10 minutes without further reminders.
2	The student needed 2 reminders to follow the rules and continued to follow the rules for at least 10 minutes without further reminders.
3	The student refused to follow the rules even after receiving 2 reminders.
N/A	The student was absent or not in class during this hour (e.g., in the nurse's office)

If the team prefers to use a pre-existing scale, one research-based option is the Direct Behavior Rating (DBR)<sup>6</sup> scale. Using this scale, teachers can estimate occurrence of a behavior using a 0-10 scale. A rating of 0 estimates that the behavior occurred 0% of the time, while a rating of 5 estimates the behavior occurred 50% of the time, and so forth. DBR is likely a better option for showing behavior progress over time measured by the same person, rather than comparing ratings across people on the student's team.<sup>7</sup> In other words, teachers may disagree on their subjective rating using DBR, so it works best for showing differences in a single teacher's ratings over time.

A rating scale is often the most feasible measure for many teachers. It can be appropriate when the student engages in many different problem behaviors (as an alternative to collecting multiple measures). It's important to predefine the points on the rating scale using definitions that are as measurable and observable as possible. All team members should have a shared understanding of which end of the scale corresponds to the desired behavior. Teams should also plan ahead for when and how often a rating should be recorded.

For an example of rating scale recording using a DBR scale, [see Figure 5-7](#).

FIGURE 5-7: EXAMPLE DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING (DBR) SCALE DATASHEET

Behavior: Disrupting class													
Definition: Calling out, making jokes during instruction, making inappropriate noises (e.g., burping loudly), or playing music/videos loudly enough to be audible to others.													
Date	Phase	Teacher / Class:	0% of the time				50% of the time				100% of the time		
9/23/22	Baseline	Jones/ELA	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9/23/22	Baseline	Smith/Math	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9/23/22	Baseline	Ramirez/Science	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9/23/22	Baseline	Morgan/Health	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## How To Collect Behavior Data for Progress Monitoring

To evaluate a student's response to behavior intervention at any tier, the team must collect high-quality behavior data. Behavior data collection involves small reliable measurements of a given behavior and *must be graphed to show progress over time*. Progress monitoring data for behavior does not involve pie charts, teacher survey results, or anecdotal notes—it must be quantitative and graphed using a line or bar chart.

Behavior data are measured over two main phases: a baseline phase and an intervention phase. Separating graphed data by phase allows the team to determine if the intervention resulted in the desired change to the student's behavior when compared to their behavior during baseline. This is the best way for teams to determine if the intervention is working. Including a trend line can help with this determination; however, it is important to generate a separate trend line for each phase (baseline and intervention).

For an example, [see Figure 5-8](#). Please note that this graph also corresponds to the example data collected and depicted in [Figure 5-1](#) and the example spreadsheet in [Figure 5-10](#).

FIGURE 5-8: GRAPHED DATA IN BASELINE AND INTERVENTION PHASES WITH TREND LINES FOR EACH PHASE

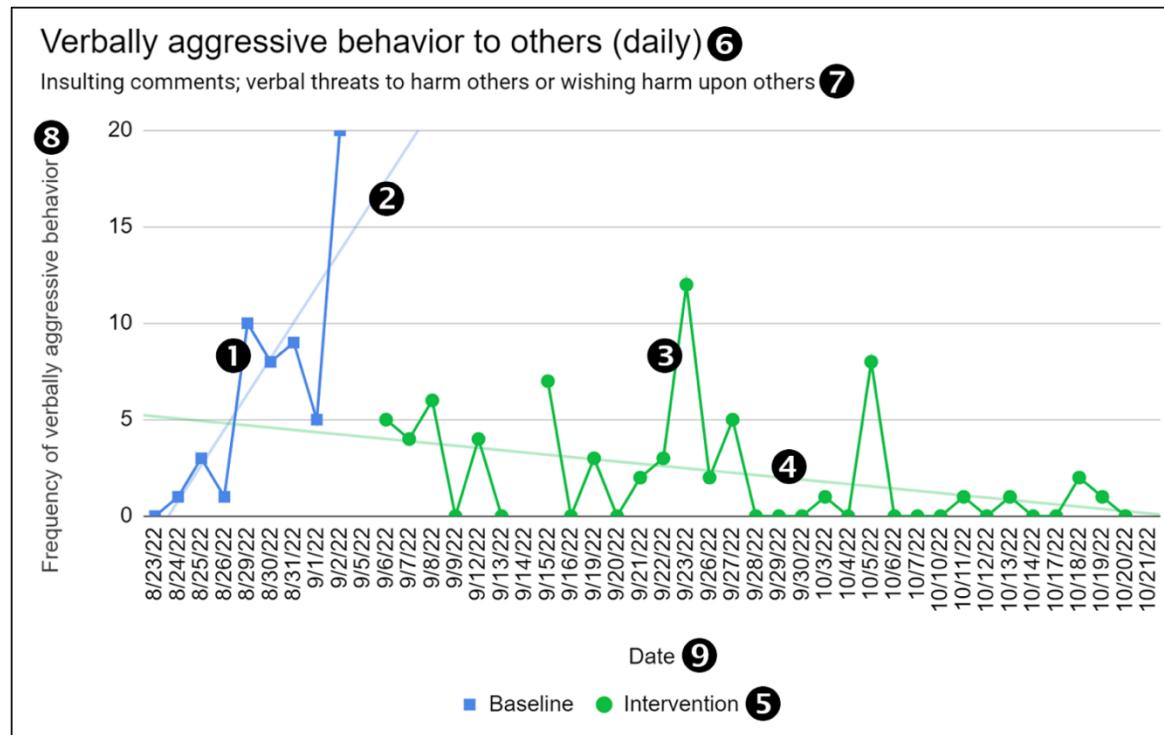


TABLE 5-3: KEY FOR FIGURE 5-9

Item	Description
1	Baseline data path (shown in blue)
2	Trend line showing the trajectory of graphed baseline data
3	Intervention data path (shown in green)
4	Trend line showing the trajectory of graphed intervention data
5	Key that denotes data taken during different phases (baseline and intervention)
6	Title of the graph describing the behavior and measurement timeframe
7	Subtitle with the operational definition of this student's behavior
8	Vertical axis label including the dimension of the behavior being measured (e.g., frequency)
9	Horizontal axis label indicating measurement dates

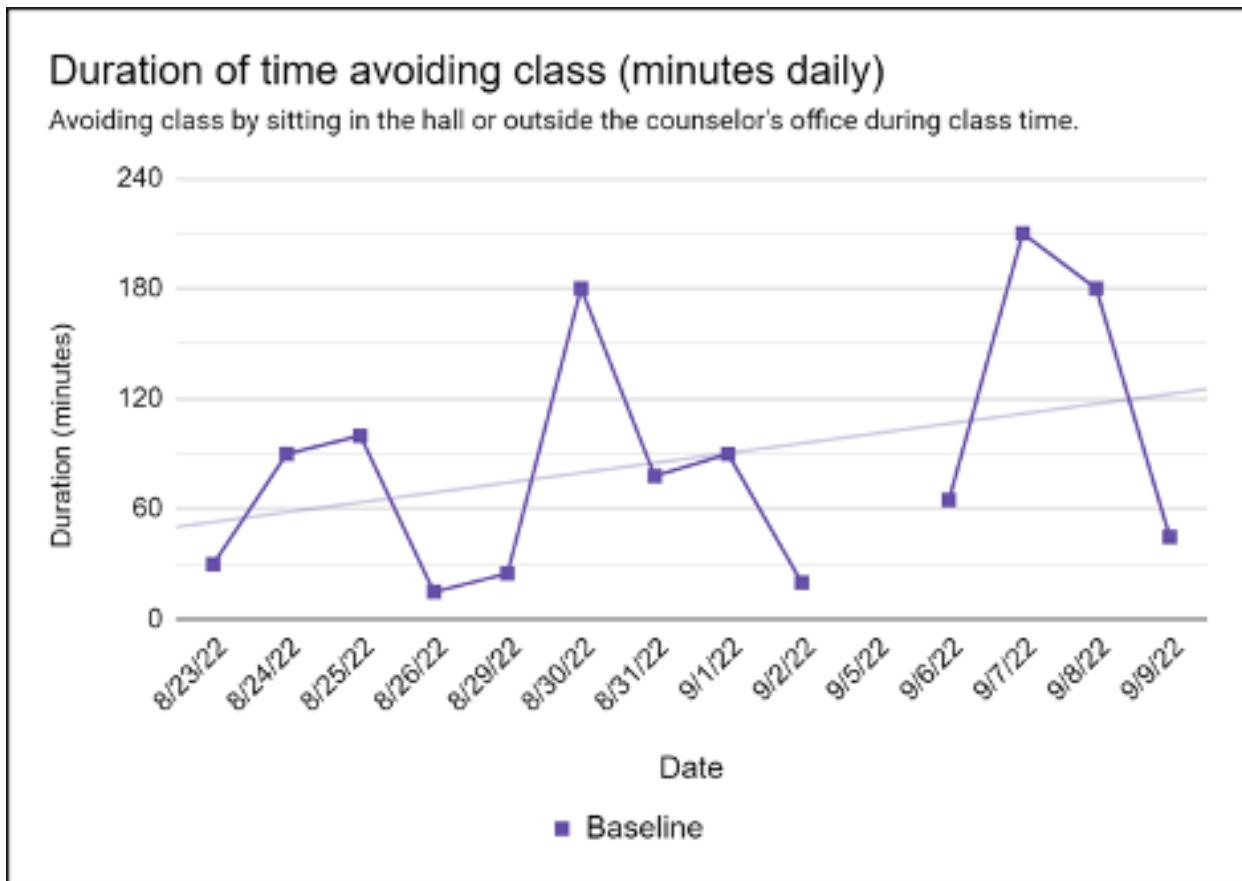
The team should first determine which behavior(s) to select for data collection. If the team is following the problem-solving process outlined earlier in this chapter, then the problem behavior was defined in Step 1 and should be selected for data collection. In addition, if the team is planning to teach the student a replacement behavior, they may wish to measure that behavior as well. Chapter 2 describes basic information about replacement behaviors, and Chapter 6 provides information about selecting an appropriate replacement behavior to teach.

Next, the team must determine how often to collect behavior data. In general, it's best to collect data every day (and regularly throughout the day) to facilitate meaningful problem-solving. However, this can sometimes be adjusted if the team has identified predictable patterns in the behavior's occurrence. For example, if a student on a block schedule only engages in problem behavior in one class, it might be appropriate to collect data only on the days when the student attends that class (and perhaps limit data collection to that class period). Teams must determine this in advance. It is not appropriate to conduct data collection on an "as needed" basis or allow for informal changes to how often data is collected, as these practices can produce serious errors in data interpretation.

Next, the team should plan for the baseline phase of data collection. This is typically a short phase of pre-intervention data collection that establishes how often the behavior occurs, whether it is trending up or down, and whether any other patterns can be identified. Teams are advised *not* to skip the baseline phase, as it allows teams to make comparisons between baseline and intervention data. This can help teams evaluate whether the intervention led to improvement in the behavior, produced no change, or made things worse. Once the team has collected baseline data, they can use that information to analyze the behavior, choose a replacement behavior to teach, and plan and prepare an intervention.

For an example of graphed baseline data, [see Figure 5-9](#). Please note that this graph corresponds to the example data collected and depicted in [Figure 5-3](#).

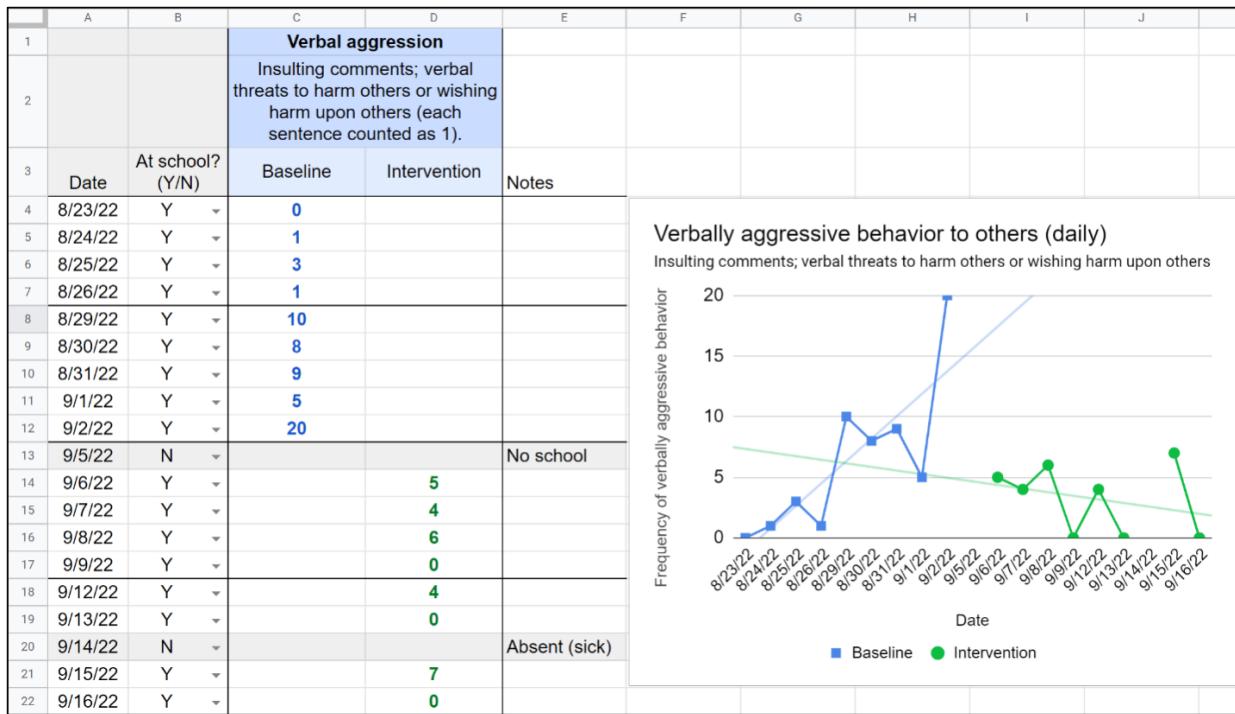
FIGURE 5-9: GRAPHED BASELINE BEHAVIOR DATA



When the team is ready to implement their intervention, data collection moves to the intervention phase as well. This should be collected in the same way as baseline data so that the two phases of data can accurately be compared. On the behavior graph, the intervention phase should be separated from the baseline phase to allow for a visual comparison across phases.

For an example of how to set up a graph showing the difference between phases, [see Figure 5-10](#). Please note that this figure also corresponds to the example data collected and depicted in [Figure 5-1](#) and the example graph in [Figure 5-8](#). Teams should use graphed data to analyze data, reflect on student needs, and make decisions about continuing or adapting the intervention.

FIGURE 5-10: SIMPLE SPREADSHEET SET UP TO GRAPH BEHAVIOR DATA ACROSS BASELINE AND INTERVENTION PHASES



## How To Evaluate Student Progress with Behavior Data

To evaluate student progress using graphed behavior data, the team should compare data between phases to determine if the desired change in the level (high or low) and/or trend (upward or downward) has occurred.

In most cases, the team will be comparing data between the baseline and intervention phases; however, if the intervention has been modified and that modification has been denoted on the graph, the team can also compare data between the initial intervention phase and the modified intervention phase. In a successful intervention, the change in data from one phase to the next should be clearly visible on the graph. At the same time, even highly successful interventions may require several weeks of data before a change is apparent. In addition, if the student's data in baseline showed a high degree of variability from one day to the next, it can take longer to distinguish a change.

For more information about evaluating patterns of student data to make changes to the intervention, [see "Step 6: Analyze Data and Reflect on Student Needs" section of this chapter.](#)

## How to Get Started

With a clear understanding of how to collect progress monitoring data for behavior, team members may wonder where to get started. When planning interventions, it's important to ensure the following steps are followed so that a team's data collection practice is sustainable, organized, and designed to facilitate effective problem-solving.



First, the team develops a brief plan for collecting accurate data for the student's behavior. This should include information about which team members will participate in data collection and training to ensure consistency in data collection. To address concerns about a new team member's accuracy, the team may wish to have a trained person collect data at the same time as the new person so the two staff can compare how they measured the behavior. This allows the trained person to give the new person feedback about recording the behavior according to the team's definition and practices.

Next, the team determines who will be responsible for data entry. If this responsibility will be shared, all team members should use the same spreadsheet or other location to enter data. It's helpful to establish norms for when data entry should occur. Establishing a daily habit of data entry can ensure that this important step is not overlooked. Once team members are trained, data entry should take no more than 2-5 minutes at the end of each day.

Finally, the team ensures that data collection materials are organized and accessible to team members who need them. Each person involved in data collection should have all necessary materials available and know where to find additional materials if needed (e.g., blank copies of datasheets). Team members should also know where to file completed copies of datasheets once they have been graphed.

## Conclusion

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The tiered problem-solving approach to behavior support described in this chapter allows teams to efficiently implement and monitor behavior supports across all three tiers of the MTSS framework. Data-based decision making is necessary for this approach to function correctly and promote student success across the tiers. By using this approach, teams can prevent most student problem behaviors from occurring and will be ready to respond quickly and effectively as soon as a student needs support.

# Notes on Chapter 5

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<sup>1</sup> School teams must always consider their child find obligation when supporting students at any tier of MTSS. [See Chapter 8](#) for more information about child find.

<sup>2</sup> Sprick, R., Coughlin, C., Garrison, M., and Sprick, J. (2019). *Interventions: Support for Individual Students with Behavior Challenges*, Third Edition. Eugene, OR: Ancora Publishing.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> University of Connecticut (n.d.). *Direct Behavior Ratings*. Retrieved on March 7, 2022, from <https://dbr.education.uconn.edu/>

<sup>7</sup> Briesch, A. M., Chafouleas, S. M., & Riley-Tillman, T. C. (2010). Generalizability and Dependability of Behavior Assessment Methods to Estimate Academic Engagement: A Comparison of Systematic Direct Observation and Direct Behavior Rating. *School Psychology Review*, 39(3), 408-412.

# Chapter 6: Supporting Students with Extensive Behavior Needs

## Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)

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Most students can be successful behaviorally with universal (Tier 1) supports. Some students may also need targeted (Tier 2) practices to learn appropriate behavior. However, what happens when those practices are not enough to support a student's behavior needs? The intensive, individualized behavior support available at Tier 3 typically involves two steps for the team—completion of a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and subsequent development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

The FBA is a process of structured information gathering about a problem behavior that poses a significant barrier to the student's learning, safety, and/or social relationships. **Through the FBA, the school team can determine** why the student is engaging in **problem behavior and what underlying need (or function)** that behavior currently meets for the student. This information is used to design a cohesive set of function-based interventions, otherwise referred to as the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP must provide behavioral instruction and support to the student so they can learn a more appropriate way of meeting that underlying need, or *function*, that was previously met by the problem behavior.

# FBA vs. BIP

## At a Glance

FBA is the Functional Behavior Assessment

BIP is the Behavior Intervention Plan

A systemic process used to collect information about a problem behavior and determine its function.

A formal written document developed following the completion of an FBA.

Data is collected via direct (observation/data collection) and indirect measures (rating scales/interviews).

Outlines the interventions that will be used to reduce, replace, or reinforce behaviors.

The results are used to hypothesize a function (determine why) a problem behavior is occurring.

The BIP provides staff with the most up-to-date behavioral interventions in place for a student.

The FBA and BIP are separate parts of the same process and should be developed together. (for sample forms of both the FBA and BIP process, see Appendix D)

Consider following this process when a student demonstrates a pattern of serious or chronic problem behavior that does not improve with Tier 1 and 2 behavior supports, even if the student has not yet received disciplinary action for the behavior.

Teams must remember that many students with extensive behavior needs require support in more areas than just behavior. Behavior problems are often symptoms of larger support needs that the team must address. A BIP is *not* a substitute for:

- A welcoming and supportive school climate
- Effective classroom management that addresses student learning, safety, and social relationships ([see Chapter 4](#))

- Mental health services
- Counseling
- Social work services
- Substance use prevention
- Absenteeism and dropout prevention
- Bullying prevention
- Gang prevention
- Suicide prevention

For many students, the FBA is developed as part of the evaluation (or re-evaluation) process involved in determining eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504. In addition, it is often the case that a student's need for an FBA and BIP may cause the school team or the student's parent(s) to suspect that the student has a disability. However, both an FBA and a BIP can be developed for a student without a disability as well. This chapter discusses general principles and requirements for conducting FBAs, developing BIPs, and teaming to support each student served in Tier 3 of MTSS for behavior (regardless of whether they are currently identified as a student with a disability or not). While content in this chapter incorporates the requirements outlined in the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (SpEd Rules) for FBAs and BIPs, it is important to remember that these resources are available to any student (with or without a disability).

For information about further considerations and requirements relating to behavior support for students with disabilities, [see Chapter 8](#).

## *Completing the Functional Behavior Assessment*

Completing an FBA will help the team identify the function of the student's problem behavior. The behavior's function is the type of underlying need that it meets for the individual (for more on this concept, [see Chapter 2](#)).

### FBA Requirements

According to SpEd Rules, an FBA:

"is a systematic process used to understand the function and purpose of a student's specific, interfering behavior and factors that contribute to the behavior's occurrence and non-occurrence for the purpose of developing effective positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies to mitigate or eliminate the interfering behavior.

- a. An FBA must involve direct observation of the student engaging in the problem behavior, with descriptive information recorded about the behavior, its antecedents, and its consequences. An FBA may also involve methods of indirect assessment, including:
  - (1) Interview measures designed to yield information about the function of the student's problem behavior conducted with the parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher(s), related service providers, other school staff familiar with the student's behaviors, and/or the student;
  - (2) Checklist measures designed to yield information about the function of the student's problem behavior conducted with the parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher(s), related service providers, other school staff familiar with the student's behaviors, and/or the student; and
  - (3) Review of relevant student records regarding patterns of behavior, previous interventions, and/or other information which may be analyzed to develop a hypothesis about the function of the problem behavior.
- b. An FBA should produce four main results:
  - (1) Baseline data on the problem behavior's occurrence using an appropriate quantitative measure such as frequency, duration, latency, percent of opportunities, and/or rating scale.
  - (2) Data gathered from direct observation (and, if applicable, indirect assessment) that includes:
    - (a) An operational definition of the problem behavior, written clearly enough for an unfamiliar person to reliably measure the behavior's occurrence,
    - (b) Descriptions of the antecedent events that reliably precede the problem behavior,

- (c) Descriptions of the consequent events that reliably follow the behavior.
- (3) Description of the possible function(s) of the problem behavior determined by analyzing all information obtained during the assessment
- (4) A hypothesis statement summarizing the following features of the problem behavior: 1) antecedents, 2) operational definition of the problem behavior, 3) reinforcing consequences, and 4) the function(s) maintaining the behavior.

c. An FBA should facilitate the development of a BIP."

For more information about writing a hypothesis statement as well as an example that meets the above requirements, [see "Hypothesis Statement" section](#) of this chapter.

For a sample FBA report form that addresses all areas required in the FBA, see Appendix D.

LEAs are required to follow all relevant state and federal regulations for obtaining parental consent for individual student evaluations, including an FBA.

## Gathering Information for the FBA

There are a variety of information sources that can be valuable in completing an FBA. When planning for what information to gather, teams should consider both direct and indirect measures to develop the most accurate picture of the student's behavior needs.

### Direct Measurement

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Direct measurement in the FBA involves observing the problem behavior as it occurs in the natural environment and identifying patterns of events that occur before, during, and after the problem behavior. Recommended practice for FBA involves at least one direct measure of the problem behavior.

*ABC (antecedent-behavior-consequence) recording*, sometimes also called *descriptive assessment*, involves observing the student during their usual routines/activities

and taking descriptive notes about problem behavior observed (B), the antecedents (A) that come before the problem behaviors, and the consequences (C) that follow problem behaviors. This process allows the observer to capture information about each problem behavior (rather than all the behaviors that may comprise an “incident” of behavior). **ABC recording** observations should be conducted multiple times across multiple contexts to develop a representative picture of the student’s behavior.

For a sample ABC recording form, see Appendix D.

For a fictional example of ABC recording during a classroom observation, [see Table 6-1](#).

TABLE 6-1: EXAMPLE OF ABC RECORDING

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Possible Function
Erick was in the classroom alone at his table staring at a worksheet. He seemed overwhelmed. Ms. Jones (classroom teacher) approached and said “Erick, just start. Don’t think too hard—just tell me the first answer. Look at my eyes.”	Erick pushed his chair back and started yelling, “Aw, I can’t do this! I give up!” He hit the desk with his ruler, got up, and ran out of the room.	Ms. Richards (special education teacher) got up to follow him. He was standing outside the door and seemed to be waiting to be followed. Ms. Richards returned to the classroom to wait for him. He hovered there looking at her.	Attention and/or Escape
Erick was hanging out in the doorway looking at Ms. Richards. No one attended to him.	Erick yelled “I’m starting to get mad!”	Erick was ignored.	Attention
Previous verbal outburst was ignored.	Erick yelled “I don’t like you!”	Ms. Richards beckoned him over.	Attention

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Possible Function
Ms. Richards beckoned to Erick.	Erick yelled "This is a bad class with bad guys!"	Ms. Jones went to him and said "When you're ready, I want you to come back to get your point. What do you need to do to get your point?"	Attention and/or Escape
Ms. Jones approached Erick and reminded him about earning his point.	Erick ran away from the door and down the hall.	Ms. Richards ran after Erick.	Escape
Ms. Richards caught up to Erick in the hall. She said, "How are you feeling?"	Erick said "I'm angry 'cause of that test! Sometimes friends get angry!"	Ms. Richards prompted him to ask for a break. ("What do you need when you're angry? Sometimes you need a...")	Attention and/or Escape
Prompt from Ms. Richards.	Erick ignored the prompt and continued talking about the worksheet and how he was frustrated. He told Ms. Richards he wanted to be in the hall.	Ms. Richards quietly walked to the door of her classroom and waited expectantly for him to enter.	Attention and/or Escape

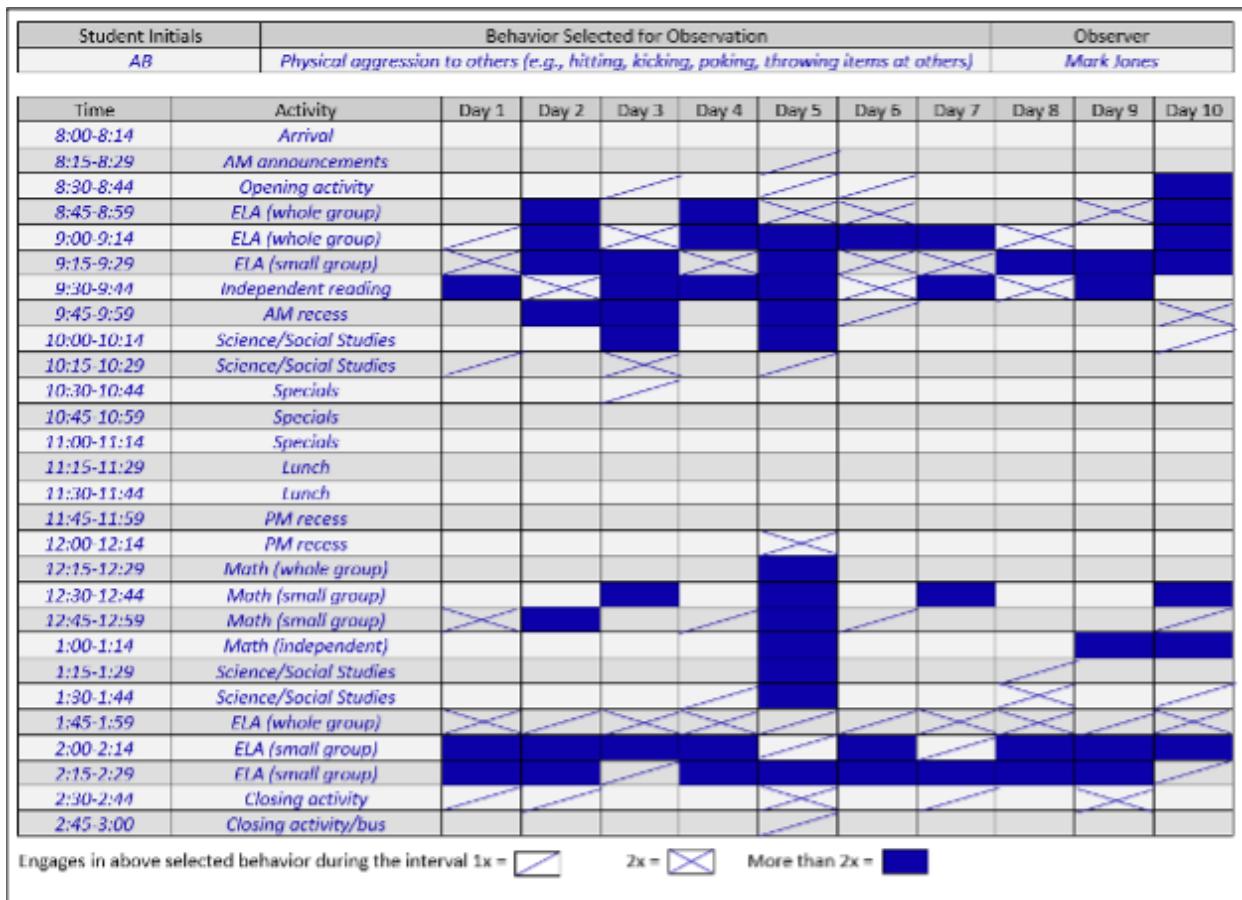
Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Possible Function
Ms. Richards walked away from Erick to the door.	Erick hesitated, then ran into Ms. Richards' classroom. He crumpled up his worksheet and yelled, "I will throw this in the trash and never see it again!" He kicked the filing cabinet a few times and then crawled under Ms. Richards' desk.	Erick had no demands presented and was given no attention. He was able to access the items in Ms. Richards' desk drawer (which had items for the prize box inside).	Escape and/or Tangible

***Scatterplot recording*** is a lightweight method of identifying patterns of behavior that relate to specific situations or activities. A scatterplot is a visual grid designed to show relative frequency of specific behaviors across different days, times, and activities. In a typical scatterplot, activities and times are listed down one side of the grid and observation days are listed across the top. Observed behaviors are noted on the grid space corresponding to the current day and time. Typically, behaviors are recorded with some visual system to separate low, medium, and high rates of behavior. This allows team members to quickly identify any patterns in the behavior's frequency and escalation across activities.

For a sample scatterplot recording form, see Appendix D.

For a fictional example of scatterplot recording using 15-minute time intervals across a 10-day period, [see Figure 6-1](#).

FIGURE 6-1: EXAMPLE OF SCATTERPLOT RECORDING



Both ABC and scatterplot recording procedures are useful ways to identify the factors that may trigger or reinforce the student's behavior. Team members may wish to pre-identify specific routines or activities in which the student is most likely to demonstrate the specific problem behavior of concern. This allows observations to be scheduled during times when the student is most likely to engage in the problem behavior.

It is also helpful to observe activities in which the student's behavior is usually appropriate, or which represent particular strengths for the student. This allows the team to compare these conditions and incorporate factors that are already shown to support the student's appropriate behavior in the BIP. For instance, say the team observes that a student is likely to pester her classmates when she's disengaged from schoolwork, and that she is far more engaged and on-task when her schoolwork is appropriately challenging. This comparison allows the team to

support this student's behavior by providing her with more challenging work—a great outcome for everyone involved.

## Indirect Measurement

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Indirect measurement in the FBA involves gathering information based on others' recall or reporting. While indirect measures do not involve firsthand observations of the problem behavior, they should still capture information to allow the assessor to identify patterns of events that occur before, during, and after the problematic behavior. Indirect assessment methods include the following:

- Structured interview with an individual who knows the student and their behavior well, such as the parent or a school team member (e.g., Open-Ended Functional Assessment Interview<sup>1</sup>)
- Structured interview with the student referred for the FBA
- Rating scales or checklists
- Questionnaires (e.g., Problem Behavior Questionnaire,<sup>2</sup> Questions about Behavioral Function,<sup>3</sup> Motivation Assessment Scale<sup>4</sup>)
- Records reviews
- Data reviews

Indirect measures are not a substitute for direct measures. While indirect measures often provide valuable information, they are also more susceptible to error and thus should not be the sole source of information in the FBA. Interviews, checklists, and questionnaires may yield very different results from one person to the next depending on that person's specific experiences and responses to the student's behavior. For more accurate results, it's best to plan ahead to conduct these measures with multiple team members.

## Four Main Results of the FBA

### Baseline Data on the Problem Behavior's Occurrence

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A complete FBA includes baseline data on the occurrence of the problem behavior. For information and resources on collecting baseline data, [see Chapter 5](#).

## Results of Observation of the Problem Behavior

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### *Operational Definition of the Problem Behavior*

The **operational definition** of the problem behavior is a measurable and observable description of exactly what that behavior looks like when the student engages in it. It is individualized to the student and their specific patterns of behavior. The operational definition should provide additional context beyond just a short-hand descriptor of the behavior that might be ambiguous and shouldn't include assumptions about the student's motivations or anything else that the team can't observe directly.

For examples and non-examples that illustrate how to write operational definitions, [see Table 6-2](#).

TABLE 6-2: EXAMPLES AND NONEXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Examples	Nonexamples
“Refusal to follow directions, defined as verbally refusing a teacher’s direction (e.g., ‘No!’ or ‘I won’t!’) or physically refusing by falling to the floor when given a direction”	“Noncompliance”
“Calling out, defined as blurting out questions, jokes, exclamations, or sarcastic comments during instruction”	“Any behaviors that disrupt the classroom”
“Intruding into others’ personal space, defined as poking others, blowing on others, pushing nearby objects at others, squeezing others’ arms without permission, or colliding with others.”	“Trying to bother classmates”

### *Antecedents That Predict Problem Behavior*

The behavior’s antecedent is an event or condition that reliably precedes the behavior. Antecedent conditions can be found by recording the factors in the student’s environment immediately before that behavior occurs. The FBA has

multiple methods for capturing information about the behavior's antecedents and analyzing them to identify consistent patterns.

For more information and examples of common antecedents that may influence behavior in school settings, [see Chapter 2](#).

### *Consequences That Maintain the Problem Behavior*



Many people use the word "consequence" as another word for "disciplinary action." However, in an FBA, the behavior's consequence is any event or condition that immediately follows the behavior. Consequences can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral for the person experiencing it. The purpose of observing a behavior's usual consequences is to determine what might be reinforcing the behavior. Examples of consequences and how to identify them in the FBA can be found throughout this portion of the chapter.

### **Possible Function of the Problem Behavior**

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After all information has been gathered for the FBA, the assessor should analyze the collected information about the behavior's antecedents, consequences, and the behavior itself. During this analysis, the assessor should look for patterns that may indicate the function of the behavior. This requires training and experience to do accurately. Table 6-3 provides a fictional example of information gathered by direct and indirect assessment; this information is first categorized by antecedent, behavior, and consequence, and then analyzed to determine the possible function.

TABLE 6-3: EXAMPLE ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION GATHERED DURING AN FBA

Antecedents	Behaviors	Consequences	Possible Function
<b>Presented with work with multiple complex steps</b>	Running out of the classroom  Running outside the school building	Offered breaks after engaging in problem behavior  Allowed to hide under the teacher's desk	Escape
<b>Presented with independent work that may be difficult</b>	Crying or screaming  Verbally refusing	Avoided or delayed schoolwork by refusing, arguing, or running from the room	
<b>Pressured to respond quickly</b>	Arguing about the task		
<b>Pressure to get the right answer</b>			

## Hypothesis Statement

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After the analysis is complete, the assessor should write a *hypothesis statement* (often referred to as a *summary statement*) that summarizes the “best guess” regarding the reason(s) for the problem behavior. The hypothesis statement contains a description of the antecedent conditions that may trigger problem behavior, a description of the problem behavior, and the consequence and maintaining function of the problem behavior.

A hypothesis statement for the information in Table 6-3 might read as follows: “When Erick is presented with difficult or complex schoolwork and/or pressured to respond quickly or correctly, he may refuse, argue, and/or run out of his classroom in order to escape the task and/or the adult placing demands on him.”

## Additional Considerations for FBA Content

To develop a well-rounded FBA that analyzes the student’s behavior, consider including information from the following additional areas.

## Student Strengths

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Understanding the student's strengths can give the team insight into their behavior needs. For instance, noting that the student thrives during outdoor recess and other physical activities may shed light on a possible reason they might struggle after extended periods of time at their desk. Identifying the situations in which a student feels "happy, relaxed, and engaged" (a term coined by researcher and behaviorist Dr. Greg Hanley<sup>5</sup>) can help teams bridge the skills gap between situations in which the student

feels confident versus when they feel stressed. Capturing information about the student's strengths also allows the team the chance to discuss the student as a whole person first, rather than as a person defined by the struggles they are currently experiencing.

## Social Connections and Interactions

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Many students who engage in frequent problem behavior become increasingly isolated at school, and their lack of healthy social connections can contribute to a variety of negative patterns of behavior. Some students may also lack certain social skills and may be perceived negatively by their classmates and teachers as a result. In some cases, problem behaviors may develop because of social skills difficulties. For example, a student who hasn't learned socially expected ways to initiate social interactions may learn that making provocative or odd comments is an effective way to get attention from others in the short-term. It can be helpful for the team to collect this sort of information about the student's interactions with others to determine how best to support the student.

## Basic Needs and Communication Skills

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Physical, mental, and emotional needs can all contribute to problem or problem behavior. However, these factors may be difficult to observe when completing an

FBA for a student. In addition, many students use problem behavior when they have difficulty communicating their needs. As part of the FBA, the team should consider asking questions about the student's health (e.g., sleep, diet, medication, and other medical needs) and how the student communicates their needs to others. Including this information in the FBA can help the team support the student to get their needs met and communicate those needs in a healthy way.



## Precursor Behaviors

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While it may sometimes feel like a student's problem behavior comes out of the blue, it is often the case that other behaviors (called **"precursor behaviors"**) can signal an incoming outburst. When teams can spot precursor behaviors, they can learn a lot about the antecedents that precede behavior problems—and, more importantly, they can then develop a BIP that allows them to intervene before the behavior escalates.

While every student's behavior is different, here are a few examples of precursor behaviors:

- Josie usually gets more giggly and silly a few minutes before running around her preschool classroom crashing into her classmates
- When Matthias, a 6th grader, is off-task (problem behavior) with his head down on his desk, it's usually after arriving in class unprepared and making rude comments about school

- Damian's high school life skills teacher can tell when his stress is escalating towards a behavioral outburst when he starts humming, then bouncing in his seat, and then shouting lines from *Star Wars*

## Reinforcer Preferences

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While conducting the FBA, consider identifying the student's interests and preferences. This is especially helpful if members of the team have expressed a belief that the student "doesn't care about reinforcement." Effective reinforcement systems are designed by considering both the student's interests and the function of their problem behavior. Are there particular topics the student is interested in, or activities they return to in their free time? Does the student have hobbies that aren't part of their life at school? Information about these things can refresh the team's perspectives about rewards that are exciting and relevant to the student's interests, which can lead to a more effective BIP.

## *Developing the Behavior Intervention Plan*

Once the FBA is complete, the team should use the data collected and analyzed in the FBA as the foundation for the BIP. The purpose of the BIP is to identify a replacement behavior, specify how that replacement behavior will be taught to the student, and outline strategies that change adult responses to behavior and the learning environment to help the student learn the replacement behavior.

## BIP Requirements and Recommended Practices

According to the Utah State Board of Education, a BIP:<sup>6</sup>

"means a component of a student's educational program or IEP designed to address behaviors that interfere with the student's learning or that of others and behaviors that are inconsistent with school expectations, based on the results of an FBA. A BIP includes:

- a. A description of the student's strengths, interests, and reinforcer preferences;

- b. An operational definition of the problem behavior, written clearly enough for an unfamiliar person to reliably measure the behavior's occurrence;
- c. A replacement behavior the team will teach the student which matches the function of the problem behavior as determined by a functional behavior assessment (FBA);
- d. Descriptions of antecedent strategies used to reduce the occurrence of the problem behavior and/or increase the occurrence of the replacement behavior;
- e. Descriptions of reinforcing consequence strategies used to reward occurrences of the replacement behavior and/or other appropriate alternative behavior(s);
- f. Description of intervention effectiveness data to be used to monitor the student's progress, including the type of data that will be collected and a schedule for ongoing collection and analysis of progress data;
- g. The date the team will reconvene to review progress data;
- h. The effective start date for the BIP and description of any necessary training and/or materials needed to implement the plan with fidelity by the start date;
- i. Descriptions of reductive consequence strategies used in response to occurrences of the problem behavior; and
- j. If applicable, any safety protocols necessary to protect the student and/or others. Safety protocols must be immediately communicated to all team members including substitute teachers (e.g., additional supervision in specific routines, modified or alternative materials needed for safety)."

For a sample BIP form that addresses all required areas of the BIP, see Appendix D.

## Problem Behavior and Replacement Behavior

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The BIP must include information about the problem behavior. This should include the problem behavior's operational definition (as developed in the FBA) and information on how the problem behavior will be measured and monitored over time.

The BIP must also include information about the **replacement behavior** the team will plan to teach. This behavior should be carefully selected to **align with the function of the problem behavior**. For example, in developing a BIP for Erick, a student who may run out of the classroom and hide when presented with difficult tasks, the team should carefully consider the escape function when developing a replacement behavior to teach Erick. An appropriate replacement behavior for Erick would involve a more socially appropriate way to escape, such as asking for a five-minute break. In addition, the replacement behavior should be socially acceptable and should not stigmatize or embarrass the student.

Once the replacement behavior is identified, the BIP should also include behavioral teaching strategies that the team can use to teach the student to engage in the replacement behavior. Even with the best possible BIP, behavior change does not occur overnight. Teaching a new behavior requires sustained support and planned learning opportunities with just enough support for the student to be successful.

For more information about methods of behavior data collection, [see Chapter 5](#). For behavioral teaching strategies, [see the USBE “Evidence-Based Interventions for Student Behavior Support” guide](#).

## Antecedent Strategies

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Antecedent strategies are changes to the learning environment that happen *before* a given behavior occurs. With the information in the FBA in mind, the team can develop appropriate antecedent strategies for the BIP. Antecedent strategies can accomplish two important things—they can reduce the likelihood of the problem behavior occurring, and/or they can increase the likelihood of the student engaging in the selected

replacement behavior. For best results, both types of antecedent strategies should be included in the BIP.

## Consequence Strategies

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**Consequence strategies** are immediate responses to a given behavior. The FBA can help the team identify two types of consequence strategies to include in the BIP. First, the team must determine how they will respond when the student engages in the replacement behavior. This response must involve reinforcement of some kind. Second, the team can also specify how they will respond if the student engages in the problem behavior. Typically, this response would involve a mild punishment strategy appropriate for school use.

In developing consequence strategies, it's important for the team to remember the function of the problematic behavior as identified in the FBA. A student who is motivated to escape unpleasant tasks might find extra free time (contingent on engaging in the replacement behavior) to be very rewarding. Likewise, if the student's behavior is already thought to be motivated by escape, then punishment strategies that provide an escape from schoolwork (e.g., going to the principal's office) will likely be ineffective.

Teams are required to include reinforcement strategies in any BIP. Teams may also choose to include reductive consequence strategies as a response to problem behavior.



## Collection and Review of Intervention Effectiveness Data

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The team must include information about the type of data team members will collect on the student's problem behavior and/or replacement behavior once the BIP is implemented to monitor the student's learning and progress. For best results, data collected once the intervention is in place should be the same type of data collected in baseline. This will allow the team to easily compare the student's behavior before and after the BIP and determine if the BIP made a positive difference for the student.

Once the team has agreed on how the problem behavior and/or replacement behavior will be measured and monitored, the team **must schedule time in the**

future to review that data. The BIP must include a date for the team to review progress monitoring data and determine if the plan has been effective. This is typically a date within 4-6 weeks of the intervention's effective start date (see ["Start Date, Training, and Materials" section](#) below). It's best for the team to agree on the review date before the BIP is finalized and signed. This ensures that all parties, including the parent(s), can plan ahead to attend the review meeting.

In addition to intervention outcome data, the team is encouraged to include data on the intervention's consistent implementation. For more information on this topic, [see "Team Implementation and Fidelity" section](#) of this chapter.

## Start Date, Training, and Materials

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A thorough BIP includes information about the next steps required to begin implementation. While this is not a required component of a BIP, it is extremely helpful to have expectations clarified for all team members up front. This portion of the BIP could include:

- Additional resources needed to implement the plan (e.g., preparing materials, ordering reinforcers, modifying schedules)
  - Team member(s) responsible for each resource
  - How and when the resource will be available
- Additional training needed to implement the plan
  - Team member(s) responsible for training
  - How and when training will be provided

Teams are also required to include an effective start date in the BIP. The start date is the date that all specified resources and training will be completed, and all team members are fully prepared to implement the BIP consistently and accurately.

## Safety Protocol

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As a component of the BIP, teams may wish to include a **safety protocol**.<sup>7</sup> A safety protocol outlines any requirements the student needs to safely navigate their day, such as supervised drop-off and pick-up, an assigned seat on the bus, or alternative materials (e.g., safety scissors). It may also include specific steps for responding to

emergency situations (e.g., a student attempting to run out of the building). Any modifications along these lines should be included in the BIP regardless, but there are some advantages to highlighting safety requirements and practices in this way. This allows the safety protocol to be shared with school staff who might have a role to play in ensuring the student's safety but who are not otherwise involved in implementing the BIP.



In addition, if the student's behavior necessitates the inclusion of physical restraint or seclusion (referred to as **emergency safety interventions** or ESIs) to maintain safety in emergency situations, those procedures are appropriate to include in this section. Teams should remember that ESIs are *not* behavior interventions and their use as a means of discipline or punishment is explicitly prohibited.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, they should not be considered an intervention for problem behavior and must not be included in the interventions portion of a BIP. ESIs are only appropriate to consider in highly specific circumstances that should rarely occur in an LEA.

Whether an LEA includes a practice of including a safety protocol in its own section of the BIP or not, it's important to know and follow LEA policy in all areas regarding school safety.

For more information about ESIs and legal requirements governing their use, as well as additional information about handling crisis situations, [see Chapter 7](#).

## Indicators of Quality in the BIP

In addition to the areas required for the BIP, there are a variety of quality indicators that, when followed, can result in more complete and effective plans overall. Some key quality indicators are:

1. Plan to develop and revise the BIP as a team
2. Consider individual student needs
3. Develop an individualized, function-based plan
4. Consider feasibility

These are described in more detail below.

## Principle 1: Plan to Develop and Revise the BIP as a Team

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As the team comes together to develop an initial BIP, team members should include the student, their parent(s), and the individuals who will be implementing the plan in the development of the BIP. For a plan to have the best outcomes, these individuals must find the plan acceptable and feasible. It's important for team members involved in implementation to feel confident that they can implement the plan and have adequate support and training to do so. Some team members may be inexperienced with behavior intervention or may feel that they don't have ideas to contribute; however, including all parties ensures that the team develops a BIP that reflects all voices and is not impractical for the team or inappropriate for the student's needs.

The BIP is a working document, not a "set it and forget it" support for the student. Its effectiveness comes from small changes driven by ongoing review. When the team finalizes the initial BIP together, they must look ahead and schedule the next meeting to review the student's progress. The team must collect ongoing data to monitor the student's progress.

## Principle 2: Consider the Individual Student Needs

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When writing a BIP, it is important for the team to consider the individual student. In this context, that means considering a variety of factors when determining how to support the student. The school team may want to ask the following questions:

- How can student strengths be reflected in this plan?
- Does this student have any health or mental health concerns that need to be considered?

- How may a student's culture influence what strategies and interventions are selected?
- Does the student have accommodations or modifications on a Section 504 plan or IEP that must be factored into the BIP?

### Principle 3: Develop an Individualized, Function-Based Plan

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The BIP should provide intensive, individualized support. This means that it must reflect a different arrangement of preventive and responsive strategies than the team has used with the student in the past. Interventions specified in the BIP should not be a recycled set of practices that have already been found to be ineffective for the student and should not be copied and pasted from one student to the next. The team should also consider the function of the problem behavior when determining what replacement behavior to teach and how to teach it. The purpose of completing an FBA prior to writing the BIP is to allow for this high level of individualization and function-based instruction.



Individualized Plans

### Principle 4: Consider Feasibility

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The team developing a BIP may be inclined to create a complex or time-intensive plan to support the student, particularly if the student's behavior needs are significant. However, elaborate plans should not be written for their own sake. Needlessly complex plans may create frustration for team members and inconsistencies in implementation. The team should allow the data to drive their

planning and intervention development. In many cases, carefully factoring in the function of the student's behavior at all points in the BIP can allow the team to craft a more streamlined plan. Additional intervention components may be added to the BIP as the plan is deemed necessary as the team reviews the plan on a continual basis.

When considering supports to include in the BIP, team members may wish to consider existing resources appropriately adapted/modified to suit the student's individual needs. The team can also examine their existing Tier 1 and 2 strategies and identify ways to create connections to those supports from within the student's BIP.

## Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes of the BIP

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### *Team Implementation and Fidelity*

While the team should always be optimistic that a brand-new BIP will succeed, it's important to plan for a possible scenario in which it doesn't. One of the most common reasons an intervention might not succeed is inconsistent use. Even a well-designed and evidence-based intervention plan is likely to fail if team members are inconsistent. Worse, if the inconsistency is not addressed, any changes to the plan are likely to end in failure in the same way—resulting in lost time, frustrated team members, and no clear course of action.

Measuring an intervention's consistency helps teams confidently answer the question, "Why didn't this intervention work?" An intervention has **high implementation fidelity** when it's carried out **similarly across team members** following the **agreed-upon plan**. When a BIP has **low implementation fidelity**, **different team members** might be holding the student to different expectations, **changing or omitting different parts** of the BIP, or adding new parts to the BIP without first discussing with the team. When the **team measures implementation fidelity** as an initial part of the BIP, the team can respond much more quickly to

problems with the BIP. It also ensures that all staff are **sufficiently trained** to implement the BIP and helps teams identify staff who need **more support**.

Measuring the implementation fidelity of a BIP takes thoughtful planning. Most BIPs have more than one intervention component. Even a simple intervention like a sticker chart for hand raising might have several components:

- Was a sticker given for the correct behavior, or a different behavior?
- Was a sticker given as frequently as indicated in the plan? (for every hand raise, for every other hand raise, etc.)
- Did the student receive a reward when the sticker chart was completed?

A well-written BIP should spell out each of these parameters so there is no confusion in day-to-day implementation. If all these details are included in the BIP, planning for implementation fidelity measurement is straightforward.

Implementation fidelity can be measured in several ways. The most common method is a fidelity checklist (for an example, [see Figure 6-2](#)). A fidelity checklist lists each component of the plan and includes checkboxes for whether that component was observed being used correctly or not. It's also helpful to include a "not applicable" checkbox in case there wasn't an opportunity for the person to use the intervention component during the observation.

FIGURE 6-2: EXAMPLE FIDELITY CHECKLIST FOR BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Behavior Support Fidelity Checklist: Structured Breaks			
During the observation, the staff member...	Yes	No	N/A
Honored appropriate student requests for breaks within the predefined limits in the plan (e.g., number of breaks permitted, length of breaks)	✓		
Positively acknowledged the student for requesting breaks appropriately ("Thanks for using your break card!")		✗	
Provided any materials needed for the student to request a break if specified in the plan (e.g., break cards)	✓		
Provided a location for breaks to take place as specified in the plan	✓		
Allowed the student access to certain items/activities/materials as specified in the plan	✓		
Prevented access to certain items/activities/materials as specified in the plan	✓		
Assisted the student in returning from breaks on time		✗	
	Total Yes	Total No	Fidelity %
Overall fidelity	5	2	71%

An alternative method of measuring fidelity involves using a rating scale to rate how well a person implemented each component or how many reminders were needed for the person to use the component during the observation (for an example, [see Figure 6-3](#)). For teachers who are accustomed to standards-based grading, this method of fidelity measurement may feel more familiar and comfortable than a simple yes/no checklist. This method has the advantage of providing an additional role for the person observing. If the observer is expected to step in with reminders or coaching when an intervention component isn't used, that allows additional training to take place during the fidelity observation without affecting how fidelity is measured.

Regardless of the format, all team members should have access to fidelity measurement materials ahead of time.

FIGURE 6-3: EXAMPLE FIDELITY COACHING RUBRIC

Standards-Based Fidelity Rubric for Behavior Intervention Plans				
4	3	2	1	
Used the intervention component correctly and at appropriate times with no prompting from the observer.	Needed 1 prompt to use the intervention component correctly and/or at appropriate times. Missed opportunities to use the intervention were due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g., being called away unexpectedly).	Needed 2-3 prompts to use the intervention component correctly and/or at appropriate times. Missed opportunities to use the intervention suggested additional support needed to remember to use the intervention and/or to fit the intervention into routine practice.	Needed 4+ prompts to use the intervention component correctly and/or at appropriate times. Record additional support and training needs, as well as specific plans for follow-up, in the Notes section.	
Staff	Role	Availability to observe		
Amelia	Paraeducator	Mornings on M-W-F; afternoons on T-Th		
Date	Start time	End time	Duration	Observer
1/11/22	12:45 PM	1:30 PM	45 minutes	Bernard
Context	Overall	Token economy	Neutrality	Visual schedule
Room 4 and Resource	2.25	3	2	3
Precision commands	Time out			
1	N/A			

To measure fidelity across team members, it can be helpful for team members to schedule times to observe one another implementing the BIP. This allows team members to coach one another, discuss shared questions, or raise concerns about aspects of the BIP that are not feasible in practice. Staff in support roles, such as an interventionist or school social worker, can also participate in fidelity observations. It's also advisable, as noted above, for school leaders to be trained to implement the BIP so they can also support with fidelity observations. Any team member who completes a fidelity observation should check in with the person being observed before and after the observation to put the person at ease and share what they observed. Team members may also be able to record themselves implementing the BIP for later fidelity self-review.

Fidelity measurement does not need to be carried out continuously. It should be conducted at the start of the BIP to ensure that all team members are fully trained. Once it's clear that each implementer can run the BIP consistently, fidelity observations can be decreased and/or discontinued when no longer needed. However, if a previously effective BIP becomes less effective over time, teams are advised to conduct another round of fidelity observations to determine whether implementers have inadvertently drifted from the BIP.

## *Progress Monitoring and Evaluating the BIP*

The true potential of a BIP can be achieved when the team makes changes to the plan that are driven by intentional and steady progress monitoring. If changes are made impulsively or out of frustration, the BIP can become ineffective. Similarly, if the team presumes that the student will never be able to be successful without the BIP, the plan can become stagnant and limiting. Instead, the team should rely on well-designed progress monitoring data to reveal when and how the plan needs to change.

When a team first determines that a student needs the intensive services a BIP provides, they must keep in mind the long-term goal of the student accessing their educational setting independently without the need of a BIP. In the spirit of this long-term goal, the BIP must be thought of as a working document that the student's team can shape through deliberate monitoring and evaluation of progress data. Over time, as the student makes progress, the BIP should fade gradually.

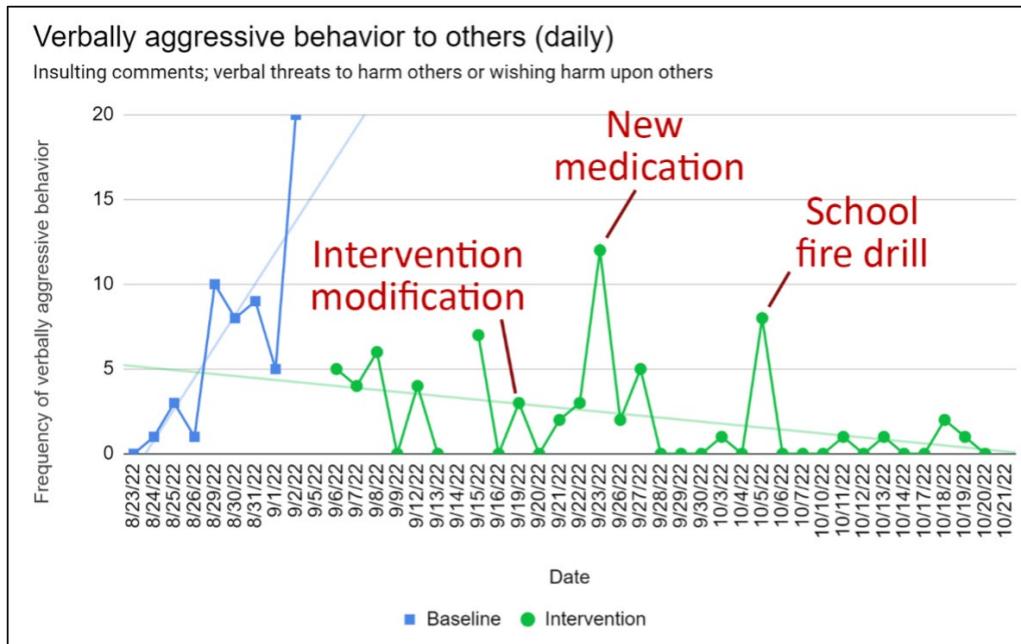
For more extensive information about progress monitoring and data-based decision making, [see Chapter 5](#).

Graphed behavior data, collected in phases (as described in Chapter 5), can provide the team with very important visual information that can illustrate patterns in how the student is responding to the BIP. Graphed data is a useful way to denote and visually represent specific factors that may contribute to changes in the student's behavior. This can help the team consider all of the student's needs and prevent possible misinterpretations of the data. Important things to highlight on a student's graph are illustrated in [Figure 6-4](#), and might include:

- When the intervention began
- When the intervention was modified
- Changes to medication and other significant health events
- Significant life events, custodial changes, and other changes in the home/family
- Long absences

- Other events known to be associated with significant increases/decreases in the problem behavior for the individual student

FIGURE 6-4: REPRESENTING STUDENT FACTORS IN GRAPHED BEHAVIOR DATA



As previously discussed, the team should meet at regular intervals to ensure that the BIP is being implemented with fidelity, monitor the student's progress, and identify appropriate changes to the plan (including fading supports when indicated by progress monitoring data). Meeting regularly helps to build an effectual team by building trust through sharing data regularly, collaboration, understanding and appreciation of roles. Convening these meetings every four to six weeks is an appropriate initial target. The team may elect to meet more frequently depending on the student's needs and intensity of interventions required. If the BIP involves restrictive interventions, the team should prioritize meeting frequently to allow for small changes to the plan as appropriate; this reduces the likelihood that the team will continue the use of a restrictive intervention for longer than necessary for the student. As the BIP becomes effective, team meetings may occur less frequently. However, it is still necessary to meet about a plan that is effective, as that allows the team to discuss fading elements of the BIP as appropriate.

# Multidisciplinary Teaming for Students with Extensive Behavior Needs

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Supporting student behavior through the FBA and BIP can sometimes feel complex and overwhelming. Team members may have additional responsibilities for planning, implementation, and review, as well as the possibility of additional stress in responding to student problem behavior. In some cases, the team members responsible for behavior support in a school may feel isolated or believe their work is poorly understood by others. The best outcomes can be achieved when school staff work together to ensure that all adults and students feel supported.

## *Supporting Teams to Support Students with Extensive Behavior Needs*

Effective behavior support starts with the culture of learning established by school leaders. When school administrators include behavior as an expected part of teaching and learning, and support school staff accordingly, all adults in the school can be well-prepared to support students in this important area without undue stress. Unfortunately, in many schools, behavior support may still be viewed as something only certain staff are expected to address. In some cases, there may only be one teacher or paraeducator who is expected to manage problematic student behaviors across all classrooms in the building. This lopsided dynamic often results in burnout and high turnover in the one/few behavior support position(s) and low behavior management skill amongst the rest of the school staff. The far better approach is to build the behavior support skills of all staff—and that starts by making behavior support a visible priority.

To support a team intervening at Tier 3 with a student, school leaders:

- Understand that problem behavior is learned and can be changed through specific teaching strategies
- Adopt a tiered approach to problem-solving student behavior needs ([see Chapter 5](#))
- Lead efforts to develop authentic positive relationships with the student

- Know the student's BIP well enough to support with fidelity monitoring and help implement when needed
- Check in regularly with staff responsible for implementation
- Debrief with staff after any incident involving crisis de-escalation ([see Chapter 7](#))
- Establish norms of communication about student behavior support needs
- Celebrate the team's efforts and successes (no matter how small) in supporting the student
- Create space to recognize and thank staff for their hard work in behavior support
- Challenge other staff to emulate their peers who are successful with these students
- Build the capacity of *all* teachers to support students with behavior needs, rather than overloading the few teachers especially skilled in behavior management

School staff also have a role to play in supporting one another to support students with significant needs. Regardless of the level of involvement with any particular student, all school staff can contribute to a culture of effective behavior support in their school. Table 6-4 illustrates key responsibilities all staff share to improve the effectiveness of behavior support at Tier 3.

TABLE 6-4: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL SCHOOL STAFF TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND TEAM AT TIER 3

Responsibility	Description
<b>Creating a climate of support</b>	Create a school environment that is welcoming, supportive, and kind. This helps the student find a place in the school community which can improve their behavior on its own. Maintain a calm demeanor and relaxed body language to create a comfortable atmosphere. Limit comments or discussion about the student's behavior to confidential spaces.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Limit conversations about the student and behavior to what is needed for safe implementation and teamwork. Refer questions from curious or concerned parents to a designated person on the team. Do not discuss the student's behavior with other parents or staff outside the student's team. Use professional language and conduct, and avoid gossip or speculation about the student, situation, or the team's efforts.
<b>Relationship-building with the student</b>	Find opportunities to build rapport with the student. If necessary, talk with the student's support team in advance to help identify times/situations when these interactions can take place (or when they should not). Take care that relationship-building interactions are positive, enjoyable, and not centered on their behavior for the day. Be mindful of body language.
<b>Supporting the team's efforts</b>	Take opportunities to encourage staff involved in implementation. Point out student successes or things you have learned from them about effective behavior support. Provide a listening ear when appropriate.

## *Responsibilities for School Team Members Supporting the Student with an FBA and BIP*

Members of the team involved in completion of the FBA and development/implementation of the BIP have further responsibilities (in addition to the items illustrated in Table 6-4). Some of these responsibilities may be ongoing, and others may only occur at certain points over the course of implementation of the BIP. To support teams in developing a streamlined process, general responsibilities are outlined in Table 6-5. As specific team members and roles may vary from one LEA to the next, specific roles are not highlighted in this table—however, it is important that team member(s) complete these responsibilities when needed.

TABLE 6-5: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEAM MEMBERS SUPPORTING A STUDENT AT TIER 3

Responsibility	Description
<b>Collaborative development of the FBA</b>	Designated team member(s) should be responsible for coordinating the completion of each portion of the FBA, as well as preparing the results report and scheduling a meeting to review with the whole team. Other team members may support by completing ABC recording and/or scheduling times for others to conduct ABC observations in their classrooms, participating in interviews, completing checklists, etc. Parent(s) should be involved throughout the process by providing information for the FBA and participating meaningfully in the review of FBA results.

Responsibility	Description
<b>Collaborative development of the BIP</b>	<p>Designated team member(s) should be responsible for coordinating the completion of the BIP and scheduling a meeting to review with the whole team. Other team members should collaborate in developing a draft or ideas for possible interventions prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Parent(s) should be involved in this collaboration and the development of the completed initial BIP.</p> <p>A member of the team should take minutes to document the team's discussion.</p>
<b>Team member training and fidelity</b>	<p>Designated team member(s) should schedule time to train all team members involved in implementation and complete fidelity observations/coaching to verify that implementation is occurring as specified in the BIP. Any additional staff needed solely for support with the safety protocol should be trained on that portion of the BIP. Training should be documented.</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>All team members involved in teaching/supporting the student should be involved to some degree with implementing the BIP and should be familiar with the BIP in its entirety. Specific roles should be discussed during BIP development and training.</p>

Responsibility	Description
<b>Data collection, entry, graphing, and review</b>	Designated team members involved in implementation should record data on the student's behavior as specified in the plan. At least one team member should be responsible for entering behavior data so it can be graphed. The school team must schedule time to review graphed data after 4-6 weeks of implementation. Parent(s) should be involved in this review.
<b>Modifying BIP in response to data; communicating changes to team</b>	During the progress review meeting, team member(s) should carefully analyze the available data to determine what (if any) changes are needed. If changes are made, a designated team member should communicate those changes with any team members who were not present at the review and arrange for additional training, if needed. A member of the team should take minutes to document the team's discussion and changes to the plan.
<b>Documentation and notification related to emergency safety interventions (ESIs)</b>	Team member(s) involved in the use of an ESI must document its use and notify parent(s). All team members who may be involved in ESI use must be trained to do so safely and in compliance with Board Rule r277-608.

# Conclusion

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The FBA and BIP processes are vital tools in an educator's toolbox when supporting students with behavior learning needs. This chapter described requirements and best practices for completing an FBA, developing a BIP based on the FBA's findings, and monitoring implementation and outcomes of a BIP using data. In addition, this chapter outlined positive and effective strategies to support the needs of team members involved in the implementation of a BIP. Following the processes as described in this chapter will build school teams' capacity to develop and implement successful BIPs that are well-suited to a student's strengths, preferences, and behavior learning needs.

# Notes on Chapter 6

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<sup>1</sup> Hanley, G. (2009). Open-Ended Functional Assessment Interview. Retrieved from: <https://www.abainternational.org/media/46721/hanleyfainterview.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, T.J., Scott, T.M., & Sugai, G. (1994). The Inappropriate or Problem Behavior Questionnaire: A Teacher-Based Instrument to Develop Functional Hypotheses of Inappropriate or Problem Behavior in General Education Settings. *Diagnostique*, 19(2-3), 103-115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073724779401900207>

<sup>3</sup> Paclawskyj, T., Matson, J., Rush, K., Smalls, Y., & Vollmer, T. (2000). Questions About Behavioral Function (QABF): A Behavioral Checklist for Functional Assessment of Aberrant Behavior. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 21(3), 223-9. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0891-4222\(00\)00036-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0891-4222(00)00036-6)

<sup>4</sup> Durand, V. M., & Crimmins, D. B. (1988). Identifying the Variables Maintaining Self-Injurious Behavior. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 18(1), 99-117. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02211821>; Haim, A. (2002). *The Analysis and Validation of the Motivation Assessment Scale-II Test Version: A Structural Equation model*. State University of New York at Albany; for a template see Motivation Assessment Scale II. (2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.carepatron.com/templates/motivation-assessment-scale/#app-chapter-one>

<sup>5</sup> Hanley, G. (2020, January 24). *Practical Functional Assessment and Treatment of Severe Inappropriate or problem behavior* [PowerPoint presentation]. Presentation at the Melisa Nellesen Center for Autism, Utah Valley University.

<sup>6</sup> USBE Special Education Rule I.E.6.

<sup>7</sup> Note that a safety protocol is not the same as a safety plan. "Safety plan" is a term used to mean a prioritized list of coping strategies and sources of support that a person can use during or preceding a crisis.

<sup>8</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

# Chapter 7: Behavioral/Emotional Crisis Prevention and Management



One of the most challenging situations related to student behavior is that of the **behavioral/emotional crisis**. Even with comprehensive efforts to prevent problem behavior and teach prosocial, appropriate behavior, **all schools can realistically expect this sort of crisis to occur occasionally**. While these situations typically occur infrequently, it's essential to be prepared to ensure the best possible outcome for all involved.

The response of school personnel to a student in crisis—particularly with respect to the use of the emergency safety interventions (ESIs) of physical restraint and seclusion—can create significant additional safety risks for all involved and may have lasting negative impact on the student. This chapter will cover core concepts in behavioral/emotional crisis prevention and management, preparation of schools and teams for **crisis de-escalation**, and the use of ESIs.

## Core Concepts

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### *Behavioral/Emotional Crisis*

A behavioral/emotional crisis is a situation in which a person's repertoire of coping skills and/or capacity is overwhelmed, leading to less control of their actions and escalation to a state in which their behavior poses a significant safety risk to themselves and/or others. Behavioral/emotional crises are different from other types of emergency situations, such as an environmental hazard, natural disaster, medical emergency, or school shooting. One element that distinguishes these crises from other emergencies is a concept known as the ***crisis cycle***—distinct and

observable phases of escalation and de-escalation that provide specific opportunities to intervene for safety.

Behavioral/emotional crises are, by their nature, hard to predict. No student is immune to experiencing this type of crisis at school; it may be brought about by stress, trauma, pressure to perform well, unmet mental health needs, social conflict, or even as an adverse reaction to an ordinary medication or supplement. **The ideal outcome of any behavioral/emotional crisis is safe de-escalation**, and this outcome is only possible through preparation. LEAs should not make the mistake of dismissing this type of crisis as something “only certain students experience” or that “doesn’t happen at our school.” Instead, LEAs should plan ahead for the eventuality that a crisis will occur at some point and be prepared to provide compassionate support to the student in crisis so they can return to their classroom ready to learn.

## *Crisis Cycle*

The crisis cycle is a model of how an individual responds to acute distress. Acute distress may be caused by many different sorts of circumstances, such as one highly stressful event, one or more moderately stressful events, one or more ongoing stressful events, or some combination of these circumstances. Each phase in the crisis cycle is distinct and predictable, although the exact behaviors present in each phase will vary from one individual to the next. **The appropriate response from staff will change based on the individual’s phase, so it’s critical that staff involved in supporting a student in a crisis are all trained in the crisis cycle** and can recognize each phase when it occurs.

The crisis cycle is depicted in Figure 7-1 below. It involves phases of escalation (shown on the left side), a peak, and phases of de-escalation (shown on the right side). **Escalation can be successfully interrupted with the right response from staff**, causing the individual to move across to the de-escalation side of the cycle. Interfering with the process of de-escalation can cause the individual to move back to the escalation side of the cycle and begin re-escalating. The crisis cycle does not end until the individual has fully de-escalated—a process which takes time and patience even under ideal circumstances. An individual in the crisis cycle should

never be pressured to de-escalate quickly as this will lead to re-escalation. More information about each phase of the crisis cycle, as well as recommended adult responses in each phase, is included in Table 7-1 below.

FIGURE 7-1: PHASES OF THE CRISIS CYCLE



TABLE 7-1: DESCRIPTION OF CRISIS CYCLE PHASES AND ADULT RESPONSES

Phase	Intensity	Description	Adult Responses
1	<b>Baseline</b>	The student behaves and responds to others in a way that shows they are comfortable and content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue classroom management plan.</li> <li>Remember to maintain engaging and positive interactions with the student.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Catalyst</b>	Something has occurred to generate distress and/or anxiety for the student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge the stressor.</li> <li>Remove or minimize the stressor if possible/beneficial for the student.</li> </ul>

Phase	Intensity	Description	Adult Responses
3	<b>Escalation Begins</b>	The student begins to show signs of distress through increased internalizing behavior (e.g., withdrawing or appearing to shut down) or externalizing behavior (e.g., arguing or engaging in what appears to be attention-seeking or conflict-seeking behavior, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the student in problem-solving to address the stressor.</li> <li>• Provide the student with two to three concrete choices to manage or move away from the stressor.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Escalation Intensifies</b>	The student's behaviors and/or emotional response continues to escalate in frequency and intensity. The student may begin to direct their behaviors towards others or self or appear to try to provoke a response from others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutrally set and hold expectations for the student.</li> <li>• Use language that is concrete rather than emotional.</li> <li>• Avoid being drawn into a negotiation or argument with the student.</li> </ul>

Phase	Intensity	Description	Adult Responses
5	<b>Crisis Peak</b>	The student's behaviors and/or emotional responses have reached their peak. The student has far less control over their behavior than in other phases. Injury to the student or another person is more likely during this phase than any other. Safety is the highest priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with the student only as needed to maintain safety and refrain from unnecessary interactions.</li> <li>• Keep any interactions as brief as possible.</li> <li>• Ensure enough staff are present to maintain safety and all staff know their roles.</li> </ul>
6	<b>De-Escalation</b>	The student begins the slow process of calming down and regaining control over their behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the student the space and support needed for de-escalation to progress safely.</li> <li>• A student can easily re-escalate from this phase. Avoid making demands, discussing the incident, or asking the student to take any actions to repair harm until they have fully de-escalated.</li> </ul>

Phase	Intensity	Description	Adult Responses
7	<b>Exhaustion</b>	The student is physically, mentally, and emotionally drained from their crisis experience and may need time and/or rest before they return to their baseline state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be understanding of the student's need for rest.</li> <li>• Invite the student to return to the expectations of their day when they are ready.</li> </ul>
8	<b>Recovery</b>	The student has finished the process of de-escalating and is at reduced risk of re-escalating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the student in re-entering their daily routine.</li> <li>• If the student will be expected to take actions to repair harm or otherwise address their behavior following the crisis, determine when they will be expected to do those things.</li> <li>• Expectations may be presented during this phase or after this phase has ended.</li> <li>• Present any such expectations in a matter-of-fact manner without shame or guilt.</li> </ul>

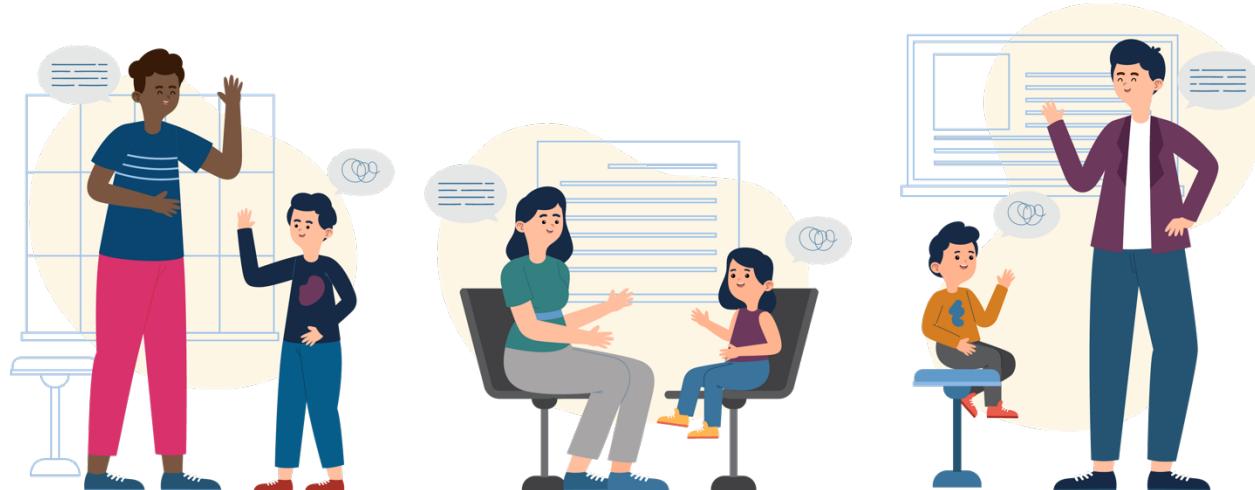
To support a student who enters the crisis cycle frequently, it may be helpful for school teams to develop a shared understanding of what each phase of the crisis

cycle looks like for that student. For a sample planning form to capture this information, see “Form F: Crisis Cycle Worksheet” in Appendix D. (The school team should also consider developing a behavior intervention plan (BIP) to teach this student healthier patterns of behavior.)

The crisis cycle is a response to stress that all people experience to different degrees and in different ways. As school staff work to support a student through the crisis cycle, it’s important to remember that each person involved is also in a phase of the crisis cycle themselves. **The most effective staff response incorporates intentional self-awareness and self-management of one’s own stress response.**

## *Principles for Safe De-Escalation*

The ideal outcome of any behavioral/emotional crisis is safe de-escalation. When a student experiences this sort of crisis at school, their immediate environment—including staff and other students—can determine whether the crisis escalates or de-escalates. Staff who understand the crisis cycle can respond more appropriately to the student and increase the likelihood of de-escalation. The following principles support safety and de-escalation across all points of the crisis cycle.



## Principle 1: Understand Students' Baseline

When things are going smoothly, it's easy to pay less attention to students' behavior. However, engaging with students and learning their usual patterns of behavior is an important aspect of crisis prevention. Understanding a student's baseline behavior allows for quick recognition when the student's behavior begins to escalate. This is important because intervening early may prevent the student from progressing further into the crisis cycle. Getting to know each student can also help educators identify antecedents that may lead a student to escalate and can help staff redirect a student away from the source of their frustration and towards something that may help them de-escalate. This can allow staff to limit the student's exposure to the antecedent or prepare the student for when the antecedent occurs, reducing the likelihood of escalating behavior.

## Principle 2: Honor Students' Need for Safety, Dignity, and Respect

Staff who establish positive relationships with students provide a foundation to prevent behavioral/emotional crises and support de-escalation. During a crisis, staff who project a sense of compassion and patience may help create a space of safety and alleviate some of the student's stress. As paradoxical as it may seem, many students in crisis feel an intense lack of physical and/or emotional safety during the situation. De-escalation involves honoring the student's need for safety by actively listening to the student, seeking to understand what the student's behavior might be communicating, responding in ways that fit the current phase of the crisis cycle, and refraining from discussing the student's behavior in front of them or other students.

## Principle 3: Manage One's Own Emotions and Stress in Response to the Student

When engaging with a student in crisis, staff must keep in mind that the crisis state temporarily changes the student's abilities to reason, communicate, and comprehend. Staff interacting with a familiar student in a crisis for the first time

may be alarmed to see how differently the student behaves in certain respects (or how their behavior appears unchanged in other respects). It's important to understand that this is not the student's "true nature" revealing itself, but rather a temporary change in behavior due to physiological responses to acute distress. If a student says or does hurtful things in a crisis state, staff should be mindful not to personalize those behaviors. In many cases, the student may not be fully aware of their actions and may not clearly recall them once the crisis has ended. Broadcasting a sense of calm unhurriedness (instead of shock, dismay, tension, or urgency) can support the student in de-escalating, so staff must maintain self-awareness and self-control over their own emotional responses to the situation.

## Principle 4: Less is Often More

In the stress of a crisis, staff may feel pressure to be seen taking action. However, **there are many moments in a crisis in which less action results in more effective de-escalation.** Staff must be trained to recognize when the situation calls for minimal (or no) interaction with the student. A trained school team can often help a student de-escalate without ever physically engaging with the student or placing a team member or student at risk of injury. Since the student's reasoning is increasingly inhibited the closer they are to the peak of the crisis, communication with the student should also be limited as the student moves through the crisis cycle. At the peak of the crisis, communication should be limited to only to what is essential for safety. A student in crisis can be quickly re-escalated by a well-intentioned team member pressuring or prompting the student. Staff members must keep in mind that the ideal outcome of any behavioral/emotional crisis is safe de-escalation—not compliance or adherence to a behavior plan. Once the crisis has resolved, those expectations can resume.

## Principle 5: Emergency Safety Interventions are a Last Resort

The use of physical restraint and seclusion is limited to situations in which a student's behavior poses an **immediate and significant threat** to themselves and/or others. Teams should remember that, **in many circumstances, it is safer to wait and allow the student to de-escalate in place than to initiate physical**

**restraint or seclusion.** These measures should only be used as a last resort when other measures to establish safety are not possible or have not been successful.

For more information about the use of ESIs, [see the “Emergency Safety Interventions” section](#) of this chapter.



## Preparing Schools and Teams for Safe Crisis De-Escalation

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### *Crisis Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery*

Maintaining school safety during a behavioral/emotional crisis involves a four-stage continuum: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Not all parts of the school will be in the same stage at the same time. This continuum should enable school staff and systems to provide a stable environment with the capacity to respond quickly and effectively when needed. Each stage of the continuum contributes to reducing the likelihood of a crisis occurring and/or reducing the impact of a crisis on those directly and indirectly involved.

## Prevention

Effective prevention work involves **building the skills of students and staff to create the sort of learning environment in which a crisis is unlikely**. Previous chapters have discussed several important preventive strategies that reduce the likelihood of a crisis, including consistent policies, clear expectations throughout the school, teaching and reinforcing behavioral expectations, appropriate academic supports that promote learning, relationship building, etc. To build students' skills, teachers should use awareness of student characteristics (e.g., strengths, needs, behavioral antecedents, home environment) to design instruction and other elements of classroom management; to build staff skills, administrators should use awareness of staff needs to inform professional learning. Teachers should also consider proactively teaching students skills they may benefit from using in a stressful situation (e.g., deep breathing). This allows teachers to remind students to use their skills during times of stress, which may prevent a student from escalating to higher phases of the crisis cycle or even prevent them from entering the crisis cycle in the first place.

Classroom management is also a vital part of crisis prevention. Teaching and reteaching expectations, rules, and procedures can help students feel a sense of safety and mastery in their learning environment.

## Preparedness

Preparation for a behavioral/emotional crisis must begin long before the crisis does. For a school to maintain safety during a crisis, the entire school team should share an understanding of how to respond to behavior support needs and crisis situations. This can ensure that, in the event of a crisis, staff know their role and the procedures to follow in order to manage the situation safely. In contrast, the situation is more likely to become unsafe if the team is unprepared and does not clearly understand what to do.

One often-overlooked aspect of crisis preparation is supporting educators and students in continuing their daily routine while a behavioral/emotional crisis is occurring nearby. This is especially important if the school team is aware of a

particular student who is likely to experience a behavioral/emotional crisis at some point during the school year. Teachers can ensure their students experience minimal disruption to their learning by preparing them in advance for what they might see or hear, teaching them what to expect for continuing with their routines and classroom work, reassuring them that school staff will be working hard to make sure that everyone involved is safe, and demonstrating compassion for the student in crisis. Establishing procedures for this in advance will help these students quickly and confidently move on with their day if a crisis does occur nearby.

## Response

A safe and successful crisis response is one that is thoughtful, predictable, and emotionally steady. Staff responding to a behavioral/emotional crisis should project the same sense of safety and calm as they do when responding to a student injury or medical need. It's important that staff are able to set aside emotions or stress from past experiences with a student when responding to a crisis with that student. **The crisis response should allow the student to maintain and build trust in the adults at their school, and should never cause harm, shame, embarrassment, or loss of dignity for the student.**

Staff who are not directly involved in the crisis response have important roles to play as well. Continuing to follow classroom procedures can signal to students that the situation is under control. Staff can also ensure they are actively setting an example of compassion and respect for students to follow. It's critical that staff refrain from passively spectating or making negative comments about the student experiencing the crisis. Instead, staff responses should reflect empathy, patience, and understanding. This helps support the student in crisis and the staff managing the crisis. It also provides critical information for other students about the level of emotional safety and empathy created by the adults in the school environment.

## Recovery

Effective prevention efforts should continue past the end of the behavioral/emotional crisis. School leaders should consider adopting a post-crisis debriefing process that all staff are aware of and expect will occur. Staff debriefing

is an important process involving emotionally processing the event, reflecting on what went well, and considering what to do differently in the future. Staff debriefing has been shown to be an effective way to use a crisis to create learning and improve practice.<sup>1</sup> In addition, staff debriefing is a critical component of self-care and an important strategy used to reduce secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout, and post-traumatic stress. For incidents involving seclusion, debriefing must happen with all witnesses, involved staff members, the student, and parents.<sup>2</sup>

Students should also be able to debrief with a trusted and trained adult. All students should be made aware of the adults in the building who they can approach to talk with about the crisis and process their feelings about what they heard, saw, and/or experienced. Student debriefing should be available to any student, including the student who experienced the behavioral/emotional crisis. The purpose of student debriefing is for the student to share their perspective on what happened during the crisis, what they expected to happen, and what concerns they still have. The process should feel neutral rather than adult-directed, and it should focus on the student's experience rather than the adult's reaction to their experience. Allowing students to process what may be a traumatic event for them may help to reduce stress caused by the event and reduce any long-term negative impact.

## *Foundational Behavior Support Training Needs*



Sometimes adult responses to a behavioral/emotional crisis inadvertently lead to behavior escalation. Training in behavioral/emotional crisis management, including nonphysical de-escalation strategies, can lead to better management and response to behavioral crises. Although the USBE does not prescribe specific

**foundational behavior support training**, it does require that all school employees who supervise students, or who may be asked to assist in managing a student's

behavior are trained. The training should be based on research- and evidence-based practices. The school employees must be trained within two months, or 30 days if working with students with disabilities, of employment and bi-annually, thereafter.

An **evidence-based program or practice** is defined by the Utah Code<sup>3</sup> as one that has:

- “(i) had multiple randomized control studies or a meta-analysis demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for a specific population;
- (ii) been rated as effective by a standardized program evaluation tool; or
- (ii) been approved by the state board.”

In addition to the above requirements, it is important that the training is aligned with Board Rule r277-608,<sup>4</sup> SpEd Rules,<sup>5</sup> and the information provided in this manual. LEAs seeking a training on foundational behavior support should evaluate its coverage of the following topics:

- Behavioral/Emotional Crisis Prevention
  - Strategies to create a safe, positive school climate
  - Understanding the brain’s response to traumatic events
  - Understanding behaviors associated with behavioral/emotional crises, including factors that might influence behavior
  - Behavioral/emotional crisis cycle, including adult responses
  - Proactive and preventative behavior supports
  - Considerations for students with disabilities
- Behavioral/Emotional Crisis Preparedness
  - Team roles in behavioral/emotional crisis situations
  - Environmental considerations to reduce behavioral/emotional crisis impact
  - Principles for safe de-escalation
- Behavioral/Emotional Crisis Response
  - Research- and evidence-based de-escalation strategies

- Communication skills, including problem solving and conflict resolution
- Effective, evidence-based interventions matched to student needs
- Balancing physical and emotional safety to avoid overly restrictive measures
- ESIs as a last resort, only if appropriately trained
- Behavioral/emotional crisis recovery
  - Post-crisis debriefing
  - Protocols for self-harm and suicidal ideation behaviors
- LEA Policies related to ESI

## *Comprehensive Emergency Safety Intervention (ESI) Training Needs*

In addition to foundational behavior support training, LEAs are required to provide **comprehensive emergency safety intervention (ESI) training** for key identified school employees. LEAs are responsible for defining who the key identified school employees are within their LEA. The evidence-based (see Utah Code reference above) comprehensive ESI training must be completed before a school employee is authorized to use an emergency safety intervention with a student, and annually thereafter. It should cover the following topics, in addition to the topics covered in the foundational behavior support training:

1. The appropriate, safe, and effective use of ESIs
2. Physical restraint including appropriate use, prohibited practices, and timing
3. Risks associated with using ESIs
4. Federal, state, and local requirements related to appropriate use of physical restraint and seclusion, and possible consequences of inappropriate use
5. Monitoring, documentation, reporting, and parental and school administration notification after the use of an ESI

School leadership should consider having multiple multidisciplinary team members complete a comprehensive ESI training and certification. This improves the response to crisis situations and alleviates the pressure on a single individual to respond. Additional information about training requirements for the use of ESIs

(physical restraint and seclusion) can be found on in the ["Emergency Safety Interventions" section of this chapter](#). Staff must be trained and certified to implement physical restraint or seclusion. **Under no circumstances should an untrained staff member be expected or asked to implement physical restraint or seclusion with a student.**

## *Roles in Crisis Situations*

In a behavioral/emotional crisis, there are many responsibilities that require more than one person to address. In some cases, this can create confusion about how many school staff are needed to respond to the crisis or what they should do to help. It's important that each person present knows why they are involved and what their role is. When each person intervenes individually rather than cohesively, the likelihood of a poor outcome increases dramatically. It's also important that the number of staff present is carefully managed. A disproportionately large response (and/or any number of onlookers) can escalate a situation unnecessarily, so it is essential that the size of the team responding to the student in crisis is well-matched to the student's present phase of the crisis cycle, and that any onlookers are asked to move along.



To support a coordinated response to the student in crisis, staff should understand the actions involved in crisis response and share a common language for the roles engaged in those actions. The most typical roles in a crisis are listed below. Staff involved will likely play multiple roles and may switch or share roles as the crisis

unfolds. Additionally, the closer the crisis is to its peak, the more important it is to coordinate the roles below.

## Leader

The leader is often the individual with the most experience handling crisis situations. This person coordinates the immediate crisis response and may direct others to take on roles as needed. The leader should set an example of calmness and presence of mind for others.

## Communicator

The person in the communicator role is the only one who should interact with the student in crisis. While not always possible, it is best if this person is trained in crisis de-escalation practices related to verbal communication and body language. A crisis will typically escalate if a staff member is unaware of these practices and engages in inappropriate communication for the situation (e.g., giving reminders, lecturing, and/or placing demands on the student), or if multiple people interact with the student in crisis simultaneously. Designating one person as the communicator can prevent these mistakes and support the student in safe de-escalation. As with all other roles, the individual in the communicator role can change depending on the needs of the student and situation.

## Observer

The observer supports multiple aspects of the crisis situation. First, the observer monitors the student for indicators of physical distress. Second, the observer monitors the adults interacting with the student to determine if another role needs help or backup. If someone appears too stressed or overwhelmed to continue in their role safely, the observer can switch roles with them so they can regroup. Finally, the observer can support the leader in ensuring that policies and procedures are followed during the crisis. This role is especially important if an emergency safety intervention is used, as the risks to the student and adults involved increase during these procedures ([see "Emergency Safety Interventions"](#) section below).

## Traffic Controller

The traffic controller manages the physical space in which the crisis is occurring. If the crisis occurs in a classroom, the traffic controller may help other students exit the area or classroom if needed. If the crisis occurs in a common area, the traffic controller can help students and staff take a different route if possible or walk safely around the student if not.

## Documenter

The documenter records all necessary details about the crisis situation. This may occur during or after the situation. If physical restraint and/or seclusion are used, additional documentation is required and documentation must be submitted to the LEA's Emergency Safety Interventions Committee ([see "Requirements for Documentation" section](#)).

## Notifier

The notifier is responsible for notifying others (e.g., parent, school administrator) about the situation as required by LEA policy. Notification procedures may also be described in the safety protocol section of the student's BIP. If physical restraint and/or seclusion are used, additional notification requirements apply ([see "Requirements for Notification" section](#)).

## Indirect Supporter

In some situations, additional support is needed to ensure safety while the crisis is occurring. The responsibilities of indirect supporters will vary and may be specified in the safety protocol of the student's BIP. Examples of these responsibilities include monitoring a building exit or reassuring concerned students that the situation is being handled safely.

## *Crisis De-Escalation and the School Resource Officer (SRO)*

When a student experiences a behavioral/emotional crisis, the team may consider requesting support from their school resource officer (SRO). As a member of the team responding to the student in crisis, an SRO trained in the LEA's de-escalation practices is an invaluable resource. However, the SRO's support does not replace the need for a team response. Expecting or asking the SRO (or any other team member) to manage the crisis situation on their own will not promote safe de-escalation. Likewise, **the presence of the SRO does not negate the team's responsibility to follow the guidelines described in this chapter and in the LEA's comprehensive ESI training.**



Whenever possible, the SRO responding to a student in crisis should be made aware if the student has a disability and/or BIP.<sup>6</sup> In these situations, the SRO is advised to communicate with and follow the lead of the special education teacher (or other member of the student's team with knowledge of the student's needs and individual plan) to consider the student's individual needs. For example, a student with a disability impacting auditory processing might have difficulty understanding or responding to verbal directions, especially in a high-stress situation. Team members, including the SRO, should be advised of the student's communication needs to avoid misunderstanding, to approach interactions with the student with their needs in mind, and to ensure continued safe de-escalation.

School staff should have a clear and shared understanding of when it is appropriate to request support from the SRO and when it is not. For instance, while an SRO may be able to provide support during a behavioral/emotional crisis, it would not be appropriate to ask the SRO to intervene in routine discipline concerns or other aspects of classroom management. An LEA may develop a memorandum of

understanding or other guidance to outline the responsibilities and training requirements of SROs employed by (or contracted with to support) the LEA. Any staff expectations regarding crisis de-escalation practices, professional learning, and LEA policy should be communicated to the SRO to ensure a seamless response in the event of a crisis.

Regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion by SROs, LEAs are responsible for the safe and nondiscriminatory use of these practices regardless of whether they are implemented by a teacher or an SRO. “Schools cannot divest themselves of responsibility for the nondiscriminatory administration of school policies, including restraint, by relying on SROs, school district police officers, contract or private security companies, security guards or other contractors, or other law enforcement personnel to administer school policies.”<sup>7</sup> LEAs must establish policies in compliance with state requirements regarding the use of emergency safety interventions in the LEA. These requirements are covered at length in the “Emergency Safety Interventions” section of this chapter.

## Emergency Safety Interventions

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As discussed throughout this manual, the USBE supports a proactive and teaching-focused approach to behavior to create safe learning environments and evidence-based de-escalation practices to be used in the event of a behavioral/emotional crisis. The USBE also recognizes the rare occasion in which, despite these efforts, a student’s behavior may escalate to a degree that poses immediate and significant threat to the student and/or others.

Both the USBE<sup>8</sup> and Utah legislature<sup>9</sup> have addressed these extraordinary circumstances with requirements concerning the use of emergency safety interventions (ESIs; physical restraint and/or seclusion) with students, including limiting the use of these practices to situations in which a student’s behavior poses

an immediate and significant threat to the student and/or others. This portion of the chapter will discuss practices LEAs and educators must follow to protect the safety of students and staff, maintain compliance with relevant Utah rule and statute, and follow professional standards and evidence-based practices related to ESIs.

## *Definitions*

### Emergency Safety Intervention (ESI)

The use of seclusion or physical restraint when a student presents an immediate danger to self or others. An ESI is not used for disciplinary purposes.<sup>10</sup>

### Immediate and Significant Threat

The imminent risk of physical violence toward self or others, or other physical behaviors which are likely to cause imminent risk of substantial or serious bodily injury.<sup>11</sup>

### Immediate and Significant Threat and the Use of Physical Restraint

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Physical restraint is permitted to be used in several types of situations that fall slightly outside the definition of *immediate and significant threat*—for example, to ensure the safety of a student about to run into a busy street. [Utah Code § 53G-8-301](#) permits the use of physical restraint by Utah school employees under the following circumstances:

(2)

(a) *A school employee shall first use the least restrictive intervention available to the school employee, including physical escort, to address circumstances described in Subsection (4).*

*(b) Nothing in this section prohibits a school employee from subsequently using less restrictive means to address circumstances described in Subsection (4)*

*(4) A school employee may use reasonable and necessary physical restraint only:*

- (a) In self-defense;*
- (b) To obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object in the possession or under the control of a student;*
- (c) To protect a student or another individual from physical injury;*
- (d) To remove from a situation a student who is violent; or*
- (e) To protect property from being damaged, when physical safety is at risk.*

## Physical Restraint

A personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move the student's torso, arms, legs, or head freely.<sup>12</sup>

## Seclusion

Seclusion means the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or areas from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, including placing a student in a locked room or placing a student in a room where the door is blocked by furniture or held closed by staff. The safe enclosed area must comply with the requirements described below in ["Preparing an Area for Seclusion."](#)

## Physical Escort

A temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of guiding a student to another location. A **physical escort** is less intrusive than a physical restraint and is not considered an ESI. It is defined here solely to clarify the difference between a physical escort and physical restraint.<sup>13</sup>

## Physical Prompt

Physically guiding a student through the proper motions to complete a task or demonstrate a skill. **Physical prompting** may be delivered as part of special education (e.g., provision of **specially designed instruction or related services**) and does not restrict, immobilize, or reduce the ability of the student to freely move their torso, arms, legs, or head. Physical prompting is not considered an ESI. It is defined here solely to clarify the difference between a physical prompt and physical restraint.



## *Understanding Emergency Safety Interventions*

Neither seclusion nor physical restraint are effective in reducing the long-term occurrence of behaviors that pose immediate and significant threat to the student or others—and that is not their purpose. **ESIs are emergency measures of last resort to prevent imminent serious harm to an individual in a school setting, not teaching strategies or behavior interventions.** ESIs are highly intrusive and carry the risk of significant harm to the student and staff involved (including trauma, injury, and death). They may be used only by trained personnel who have demonstrated competency in their use.

ESIs may only be used in response to emergency situations in which the student's behavior presents an immediate and significant threat to self or others. Even in these circumstances, ESIs should be avoided if less restrictive means of managing the student's behavior and ensuring safety are available.

ESIs are prohibited for use for any non-dangerous or non-emergency reasons, such as non-compliance, disrespect, disobedience, or misuse or destruction of property. A student's behavior may present a serious concern for a school team (and may even require Tier 2 or Tier 3 behavior support) without meeting the threshold for an immediate and significant threat defined earlier in this document. Examples of concerning behaviors that, on their own, would likely never pose an immediate and significant threat to the student and/or others (and thus should not be responded to with an ESI) include:

- Not following teacher directions
- Refusing to complete schoolwork
- Skipping class
- Using disrespectful or profane language
- Ripping student projects off a bulletin board
- Destruction of property (unless done so in a fashion that presents an immediate and significant threat to self or others)

ESIs are also prohibited for use as a disciplinary response contingent on a particular type of behavior. ESIs must not be identified in a student's BIP as a planned consequence that the student "earns" based on a particular behavior, although they may be included in the safety protocol as described in Chapter 6. The decision to use an ESI should occur during the behavioral incident involving an immediate and significant threat to the student or others. The educator making the decision to use an ESI must have a clear reason to believe the student's behavior presents an immediate and significant threat to the student or others that cannot be managed safely with less restrictive interventions.

Key principles related to the appropriate use of ESIs in Utah are summarized in Table 7-2. These principles also align in part with the U.S. Department of Education's 2012 publication, "Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document."<sup>14</sup>

TABLE 7-2: FIFTEEN PRINCIPLES FOR USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN UTAH

Principle	Description
1	Unless otherwise stated, the USBE's requirements for and restrictions on use of restraint and seclusion apply to all students, not only students with disabilities or students without disabilities. Seclusion is prohibited for students below first grade.
2	Restraint and seclusion are measures of last resort. They are not behavior interventions and do not lead to improved student behavior. Every effort should be made to prevent the need for restraint and seclusion for any student, including the use of less restrictive strategies and de-escalation practices.
3	The USBE prohibits the use of restraint and seclusion except in situations where the student's behavior poses immediate and significant threat to self or others. Restraint and seclusion must be discontinued as soon as the immediate and significant threat has ceased.
4	The USBE prohibits the use of restraint or seclusion as punishment or discipline, as a means of coercion or retaliation, or as a convenience.
5	Restraint and seclusion may only be implemented in a safe manner that does not endanger the student. Any practices that obstruct or compress the student's airway or adversely affect the student's primary mode of communication are prohibited by the USBE.
6	Each use of restraint or seclusion must be continuously monitored (visually/auditorily for the duration of use) to ensure the appropriateness of its use and safety of the student, other students, teachers, and other personnel.
7	The USBE prohibits most uses of mechanical as well as chemical restraint or prone or supine physical restraint in Utah schools.
8	Behavioral interventions must be evidence-based, ethical, free from abuse, and must honor the student's dignity. Corporal punishment in Utah schools is prohibited by law.
9	Any use of restraint or seclusion for a student should prompt the team to review the student's individual needs, ensure behavioral supports are appropriate, and consider additional/revised supports.
10	For a student with a disability, the USBE requires the completion of a functional behavior assessment (FBA) and corresponding behavior intervention plan (BIP) prior to incorporating restraint and/or seclusion into any part of the student's IEP.

Principle	Description
11	Educators must participate regularly in professional learning on preventive behavior practices that prevent the need for restraint and/or seclusion, on crisis de-escalation practices, and on the safe and lawful use of restraint and seclusion.
12	The student's parent and school administration must be notified immediately, and within 15 minutes after the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
13	Each use of restraint or seclusion must be documented. Documentation must include information about the specific incident as well as each individual use of restraint or seclusion during the incident. Parents have the right to request this and any other information about the use of restraint or seclusion with their student and must be notified of this right within 48 hours of the use of restraint or seclusion with their student. Parents may request a meeting with school staff and administration to discuss the use of restraint or seclusion with their student.
14	Each LEA must establish an ESI Committee to review documentation of restraint and seclusion, ensure its accurate submission to the USBE, and address any related policy and professional learning needs. The LEA should ensure that incident documentation allows the LEA's ESI Committee to review and make decisions related to each of these fifteen principles in the LEA.
15	Each LEA must establish policies and procedures regarding the use of restraint and seclusion, including the requirements specified in these fifteen principles. Schools are advised to inform parents of these policies and procedures regularly.

## *Physical Restraint*

### Definition of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is defined<sup>15</sup> as a personal restriction that immobilizes or significantly reduces the ability of a student to move the student's arms, legs, body, or head freely. The term "physical restraint" does not include a physical escort. "Physical escort" means a temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.

## Conditions for Use

Physical restraint may *never* be used as a means of discipline or punishment.

According to Utah Code:<sup>16</sup>

"A school employee may use reasonable and necessary physical restraint only:

- in self-defense
- to obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object in the possession or under the control of a student;
- to protect a student or another individual from physical injury;
- to remove from a situation a student who is violent; or
- to protect property from being damaged, when physical safety is at risk."<sup>17</sup>

This does not mean that physical restraint is required to be used in the situations described above. A school employee can always use less intrusive means, including a physical escort, to address these situations.

## Implementation of Physical Restraint

Any use of physical restraint must be consistent with the LEA's policy described in Board Rule r277-608-3.<sup>18</sup>

## Training/Certifying Staff

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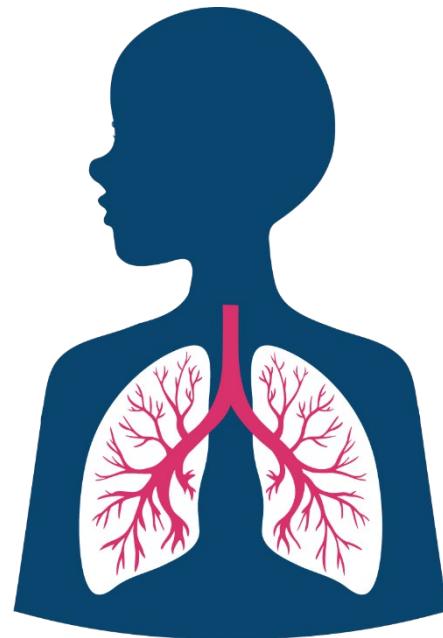
Safe implementation of physical restraint requires specific training/certification for any staff member who may be expected to participate in its use. LEAs are required to provide training for key identified school employees in comprehensive ESI training, which includes physical restraint.<sup>19</sup> LEAs are also responsible for ensuring that those employees renew their physical restraint certification as often as necessary based on the requirements of the certifying program, but at least annually. Improperly performed physical restraints may result in trauma or serious injury for the student or staff member involved. Physical restraint must never be attempted by untrained staff. Under no circumstances should an untrained staff member be expected or asked to physically restrain a student. **No staff member, regardless of training, should invent their own form of physical restraint.** Staff

implementing physical restraint may only use the restraint(s) they are certified to perform.

## Safeguarding the Student's Well-Being

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Physical restraint must never interfere with the student's ability to breathe easily and naturally.<sup>20</sup> Appropriate and safe physical restraint techniques (e.g., those provided by evidence-based de-escalation training providers) are designed so that no pressure is ever placed on a student's face, throat, chest, or stomach occur during the restraint. Restraint of a student in a prone (lying down facing down) or supine (lying down facing up) position is prohibited. The student's face must remain uncovered and visible to ensure monitoring of the student and situation can occur ([see "Monitoring Implementation of the Physical Restraint"](#)).



For more information about specific physical restraint procedures which are prohibited by the USBE, as well as general physical restraint practices which are widely considered to be dangerous and should not be used when following the guidelines provided in this manual, [see the "Prohibited Practices" section](#) of this chapter.

## Monitoring Implementation of the Physical Restraint

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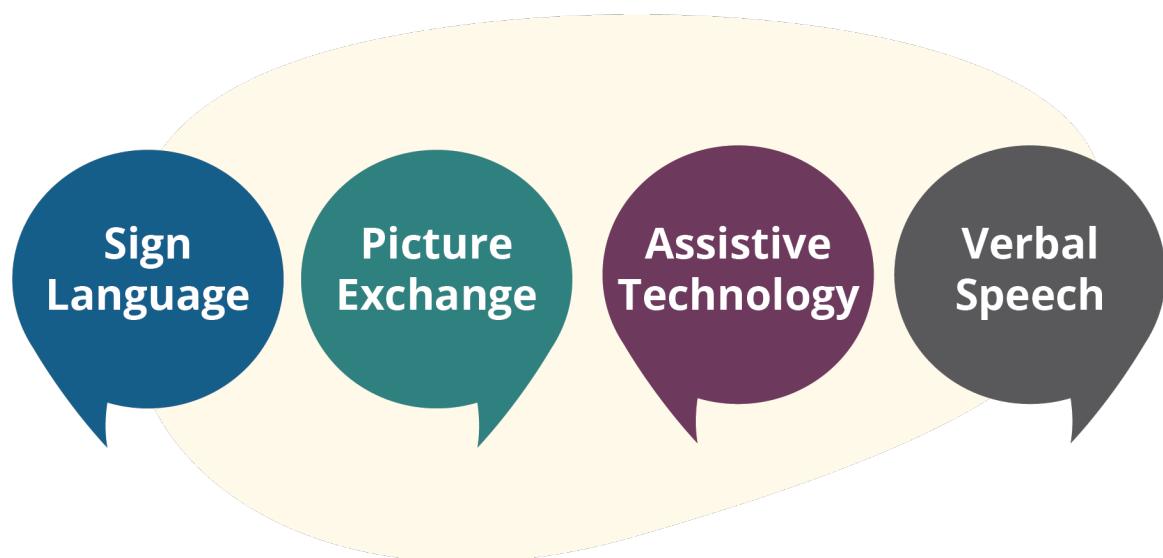
If the need for physical restraint is anticipated, the LEA should ensure at least one additional staff who has been appropriately trained/certified in the use of the physical restraint can be present to monitor the restraint. Implementing physical restraint alone is dangerous for both the student and staff member, and it does not allow for appropriate monitoring due to the positioning involved in most physical restraints (e.g., the student facing away from the staff member(s) applying the restraint). The individual monitoring can provide feedback to ensure the restraint is performed correctly and safely, relieve the staff engaged in the restraint if needed,

and observe the student for any indication of physical distress (e.g., flushed face, blue lips, changes in breathing or consciousness). The restraint must be immediately terminated if the student shows any such signs of severe distress.

## Ensuring the Student Can Communicate

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School staff must ensure that a student placed in a physical restraint can communicate freely using their primary mode of communication.<sup>21</sup> A student with a disability affecting verbal communication must be able to communicate in whatever method they primarily use (e.g., sign language, picture exchange, assistive technology). This may necessitate the selection of a physical restraint that does not immobilize the student's hands. Teams are advised to plan ahead to ensure a student who uses augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) has both the ability and vocabulary to communicate discomfort or distress if needed. If a student communicates discomfort, adjustment should be made to the restraint as needed. The restraint must be immediately terminated if the student is in severe distress.



## Transitioning From Physical Restraint to Seclusion

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In some cases, it may be necessary or advisable to move the student from a physical restraint to seclusion (e.g., if the team determines seclusion will better allow the student to safely de-escalate). An LEA's comprehensive ESI training may include content specific to safely moving a student in a physical restraint. Unless

certified to do so safely using a designated carry procedure included in the LEA's comprehensive ESI training, school staff should never pick up a student to move them during a restraint.

## Terminating the Physical Restraint

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Physical restraint must be *immediately* terminated as soon as the student no longer presents an immediate and significant threat to self or others, or if the student is in severe distress. Physical restraint must not exceed the minimum time necessary to ensure safety, as reasonably understood by the school employee.

The maximum duration of a single instance of physical restraint is the *shortest* of the following:<sup>22</sup>

- “a) the amount of time described in the LEA's emergency intervention training program;
- b) 30 minutes; or
- c) when law enforcement intervenes.”

LEAs must outline release criteria in compliance with the above requirements in their ESI policies. LEAs are not permitted to establish a minimum or maximum length of time a student will be restrained in excess of the above requirements.

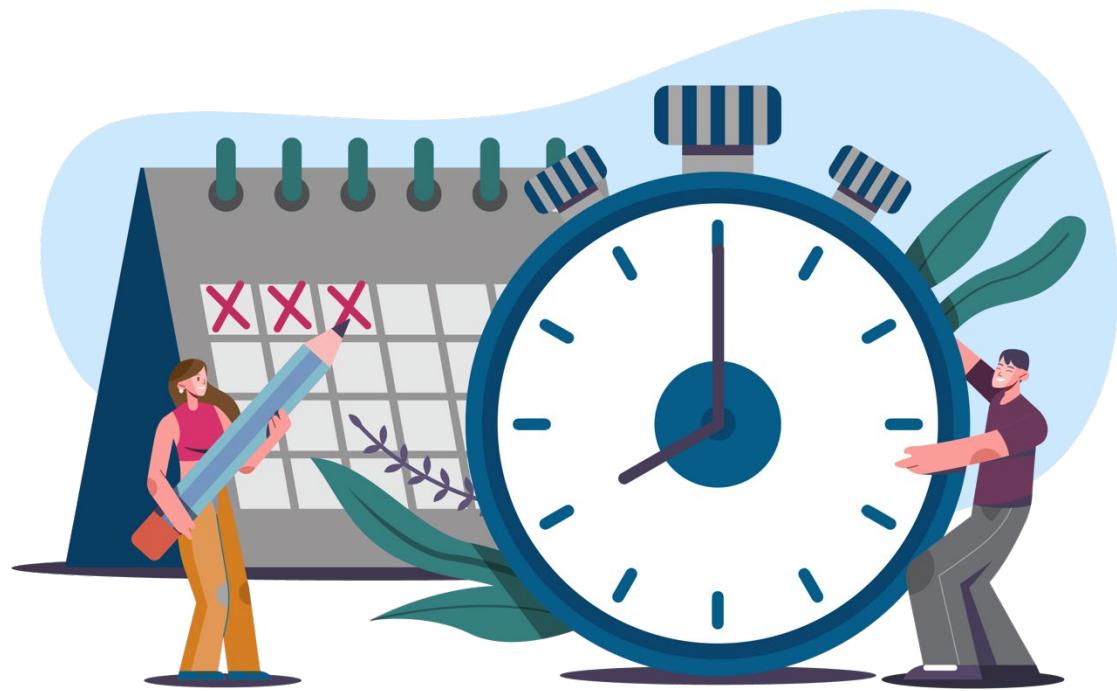
## Assessing the Student After Physical Restraint Ends

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If, at any point during or after the use of physical restraint, the student was in physical distress or otherwise appeared unwell, then school health personnel must assess the student immediately. Any injuries or other health concerns should be addressed and documented, and this information should be communicated to the parent when they are notified of the use of the physical restraint. As part of their ESI policy, LEAs are required to include procedures for post-ESI assessment and monitoring of students.

# *Seclusion*

## Definition of Seclusion



"Seclusion" means is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or areas from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, including:

- Placing a student in a locked room; or
- Placing a student in a room where the door is blocked by furniture or held closed by staff

An LEA may have adopted their own terminology (e.g., sending a student to the "calming room"). However, this does not excuse the LEA from knowing this definition of seclusion. **If all of the above conditions occur for any amount of time, the LEA has implemented seclusion and must adhere to all corresponding requirements described in this chapter.**

## Conditions for Use

Seclusion may *never* be used as an intervention or disciplinary practice, for coercion, retaliation, or humiliation; or due to inadequate staffing or for the staff member's convenience. It may only be used as an ESI under certain conditions.

**Seclusion may only be used for a student in grade 1 or higher, when the student presents an *immediate and significant threat* to self or others.** School staff should exercise the utmost caution when considering seclusion for a student who is engaging in, or who has a history of, self-injurious behavior, as the risk that the behavior may increase for some students in that setting.

In addition to the conditions above, a school employee may use seclusion only when:

- The LEA has developed and implemented written policies and procedures as described in Utah Code § 53G-8-301(10)(b)(i);
- Less restrictive interventions have failed;
- A staff member who is familiar to the student is actively supervising the student for the duration of the seclusion; and
- The use is time-limited to a maximum time of 30 minutes and monitored.

## Implementation of Seclusion

Any use of seclusion must be consistent with the LEA's policy described in Board Rule r277-608-3.<sup>23</sup>

## Training Staff

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Safe implementation of seclusion requires specific training/certification for any staff member who may be expected to participate in its use. LEAs are required to provide training for key identified school employees in comprehensive ESI training, including seclusion.<sup>24</sup> Seclusion must never be attempted by untrained staff. Under no circumstances should an untrained staff member be expected or asked to implement seclusion with a student.

## Preparing an Area for Seclusion

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The space selected for seclusion should be inspected and prepared prior to use. It must be a safe, clean, well-maintained space that meets the fire and public safety requirements described in sections r392-200 and r710-4 of the Utah Administrative Code (Utah Admin. Code).<sup>25</sup> Objects in the room that are not necessary for safety or for the student's communication should be removed *prior* to the use of seclusion. The space must facilitate continuous monitoring as described below. It should have a window that permits monitoring from outside the room. Any door must remain unlocked consistent with the fire and public safety requirements described in Utah Admin. Code r392-200 and r710-4.<sup>26</sup> A door on an enclosed area designated solely for the purpose of seclusion may not be fitted with a lock unless it is a self-releasing latch that releases automatically if not physically held in the locked position by an individual on the outside of the door.<sup>27</sup>

While building an enclosed area for the sole purpose of seclusion is allowable, it is not required or even recommended. Each LEA policy will include whether this is allowable within the LEA. It is important to note, however, that **makeshift spaces (e.g., a cardboard box, a classroom cupboard, or a barricade assembled from school materials) are prohibited for use for seclusion**. LEAs must use a school space that complies with all relevant building requirements under the Utah Admin. Code, including those described in this section.

## Monitoring the Student During Seclusion

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If a student is placed in seclusion, the student must be monitored continuously by a staff member who has been trained in the use of ESI and is familiar to the student. The monitoring staff must **maintain line of sight to the student at all times**.<sup>28</sup> Monitoring the student once every few minutes is not acceptable. If the student moves out of view, the monitoring staff must reposition themselves so they can see the student. The monitoring staff should also be able to hear the student. If the student appears to be in physical distress, engages in self-injurious behavior, or appears in any other way to be at risk of harm, seclusion must be *immediately* terminated.

## Ensuring the Student Can Communicate

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School staff should ensure that a student placed in seclusion can communicate freely using their primary mode of communication. A student with a disability affecting verbal communication must be able to communicate in whatever method they primarily use (e.g., sign language, picture exchange, assistive technology). Teams are advised to plan ahead to ensure a student who uses augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) has both the ability and vocabulary to communicate discomfort or distress if needed.

## Terminating Seclusion

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Seclusion must be *immediately* terminated as soon as the student no longer presents an immediate and significant threat to self or others, or if the student is in physical distress, engages in self-injurious behavior, or appears in any other way to be at risk of harm. Seclusion must not exceed the minimum time necessary to ensure safety, as reasonably understood by the school employee.<sup>29</sup> The maximum duration of a single instance of seclusion is 30 minutes.

LEAs must outline release criteria in compliance with the above requirements in their ESI policies. LEAs are not permitted to establish a minimum or maximum length of time for seclusion in excess of the above requirements.

## Assessing the Student After Seclusion Ends

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If, at any point during or after the use of seclusion, the student was in physical distress or otherwise appeared unwell, then school health personnel must assess the student immediately. Any injuries or other health concerns should be addressed and documented, and this information should be communicated to the parent when they are notified of the use of seclusion. As part of their ESI policy, LEAs are required to have procedures for post-ESI assessment and monitoring of students.

## *Prohibited Practices*

This section summarizes practices which are prohibited for use in Utah schools related to punishment and management of emergency situations. In addition, the sections above describe prohibited practices related to physical restraint and seclusion. For reference, all prohibited practices are listed in brief in Figure 7-2.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Utah Code § 53G-8-301 prohibits the use of corporal punishment in public schools, and states, “A school employee may not inflict or cause the infliction of corporal punishment upon a student.”<sup>30</sup> Corporal punishment is defined in Utah Code § 53G-8-301 as “the intentional infliction of physical pain upon the body of a student as a disciplinary measure.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Chemical Restraint**

**Chemical restraints are prohibited by the USBE for use in LEAs.** Chemical restraint refers to the use of medication administered to a student (including medications prescribed by the student’s physician or other qualified health professional) on an as-needed basis for the sole purpose of involuntarily limiting the student’s freedom of movement. Chemical restraint does not include:

- Prescription medication that is regularly administered to the student for medical reasons other than involuntarily limiting the student’s freedom of movement
- Administration of medication for voluntary or life-saving medical procedures

### **Mechanical Restraint**

**Mechanical restraint**<sup>32</sup> refers to the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student’s freedom of movement. The term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel or utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional and are used for the specific and approved purposes for which such devices were designed, such as:

- Adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports;
- Vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle;
- Restraints for medical immobilization; or
- Orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

Mechanical restraints are prohibited by the USBE for use in LEAs, with the following exemptions:<sup>33</sup>

- “(A) protective or stabilizing restraints as prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional
- (B) restraints required by law, including seatbelts or any other safety equipment when used to secure students during transportation
- (C) any device used by a law enforcement officer in carrying out law enforcement duties”.

FIGURE 7-2: PROHIBITED PRACTICES RELATED TO EMERGENCY SAFETY INTERVENTIONS

Prohibited Practices
Corporal punishment
Use of physical restraint as a means of discipline or punishment
Use of seclusion as a means of discipline or punishment
Chemical restraint
Mechanical restraint (with the exceptions described in R277-608-3(2)(a)(iv))
Prone physical restraint
Supine physical restraint
Secluding a student behind a locked door unless it meets the criteria in R710-4

## Prohibited Practices

The use of seclusion with students below first grade

## Other Dangerous Practices in Physical Restraint

The following practices are prohibited by many reputable and evidence-based de-escalation training programs due to heightened risk of injury or death to the individual being restrained:

- Applying pressure to the student's chest, neck, or throat (including any practices that could be described as choke holds)
- Applying pressure to the student's back or upper abdomen (including forcibly holding the student against a wall or piece of furniture)
- Sitting on or straddling any part of the student's body, or any other practices which obstruct the student's circulation
- Putting the student off balance and/or engaging the student in such a way that forces them to the floor (e.g., pressing on the backs of the student's knees, supporting the student's weight and then dropping them, tripping or pushing the student)
- Covering or manipulating any part of the student's face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth), or threatening to do so to gain compliance
- Any other practices which use pain or the threat of pain to gain compliance

LEAs are encouraged to publish their own list of prohibited restraint practices consistent with the contents of this chapter and any requirements of their de-escalation training program.

## *Requirements for Documentation*

LEAs must have procedures for the collection, maintenance, and periodic review of documentation or records of the use of ESIs at schools within the LEA.<sup>34</sup>

## Immediate Documentation of the ESI

Each use of an ESI with a student must be documented. Information collected should assist school staff in making changes that prevent the need for the ESI in the future. Documentation must include, but is not limited to, the information below.

- Student demographic information, including:
  - Sex
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Grade in school
  - Applicable disability status
- Incident, or the student's behavior that led to the use of the ESI (defined in measurable and observable terms)
- Stated purpose for emergency safety interventions used
- Alternative interventions used
- Date and time the ESI was used
- Type of ESI (physical restraint or seclusion)
  - For physical restraint, the specific restraint hold used
  - For seclusion, the specific seclusion space used
- Duration (in minutes) the ESI was in place
- Relevant training offered to staff, and if the staff involved received the relevant training
- Immediate notification of the student's parent , including the time and manner of notification (e.g., phone, e-mail, in-person, etc.)
- Notification of school administrator
- Any injuries or health concerns arising from the incident and/or the use of the ESI to any student and/or staff, and how those needs were addressed
- Incident outcomes



- Date of submission of the above documentation to ESI Committee and the student's parent, and the State Board

The names of school employees who participated in or monitored the ESI should also be documented, but those names do not need to be reported to the State Board.

An LEA may adopt a form that includes more than the minimum requirements. **Any in-progress documentation (e.g., seclusion room logs) must be stored in a confidential manner. ESI documentation becomes part of the student's educational record, which parents may view upon request.** For sample ESI forms, see Appendix D.

## *Requirements for Notification*

LEAs are responsible for following USBE requirements for notification of the student's parent and school administration whenever an ESI is used.<sup>35</sup>

### Parent Notification

When an ESI is used, the school must notify student's parent immediately, within 15 minutes after the use of any ESI on the parent's child. Notification must be documented in the LEA's student information system (SIS) records.

The school must provide the student's parent with a copy of any notes or additional documentation taken during the use of the ESI upon request. Within 24 hours of the school using an ESI with a student, the school must notify the parent that they may make this request. The parent may request a time to meet with school staff and administration to discuss the use of the ESI, in addition to the debrief that is required in Utah Code § 53G-8-301.



## School Administration Notification

When an ESI is used, the school employee must notify school administration immediately, within 15 minutes. Notification must be documented in the LEA's Student Information System (SIS) records.

## *Requirements for Reporting and Monitoring*

### Reporting Documented Use of an ESI

When an ESI is used, the documentation described ([see "Requirements for Documentation" section](#)) must be recorded in the LEA's SIS and submitted to the USBE as part of the LEA's daily submission.

All LEAs must establish an ESI Committee to ensure that each ESI is appropriately documented and reported as described above. Any time an ESI is used with a student, the school must provide all documentation of the use of the ESI to the LEA's ESI Committee. Further responsibilities of the ESI Committee are described below.

### Monitoring in the LEA: Emergency Safety Interventions Committee

As stated above, all LEAs must establish an ESI Committee. The ESI Committee should evaluate the safe and ethical use of ESIs in the LEA, provide assistance to teams as needed following the use of an ESI to ensure that students are appropriately supported, and ensure accurate submission of ESI data to the USBE. An LEA's ESI Committee must meet often enough to monitor the use of ESIs in the LEA, and they must collect and review submitted documentation of ESI use as described above.

Members of an LEA's ESI Committee must include the following:

- At least one administrator
- At least one parent of a student enrolled in the LEA, appointed by the LEA

- At least one licensed educational professional with behavior support training and knowledge in both state rules and LEA discipline policies
- At least one other licensed educator

The purpose of the ESI Committee is as follows:

1. Determine and recommend professional learning needs
2. Develop policies for processes to resolve concerns regarding the use of ESIs
3. Ensure that each emergency incident where a school employee uses an ESI is documented in the LEA's SIS and reported to the USBE

**LEAs are strongly encouraged to maintain records of ESI Committee meetings.**

For a sample template for an ESI Committee's meeting agenda and minutes, see Appendix D.

## Monitoring at the USBE



According to Board Rule, "The Superintendent shall periodically review:

- (a) all ESI data submitted to the Superintendent;
- (b) all LEA special education behavior intervention, procedures, and policies; and
- (c) ESI data as related to students with disabilities who are eligible or being evaluated for special education services in accordance with Utah's

Program Improvement and Planning System."<sup>36</sup>

## *Supporting the Student After the Use of an ESI*

No student should be subjected to an ESI unnecessarily. Physical restraint and seclusion do not teach appropriate behavior, and in many cases can cause a student's problem behavior to escalate. **Any use of an ESI should prompt the school team to convene, review the student's individual needs, and take**

appropriate steps to ensure that the student's behavior can be supported proactively.

- For a student who has not been determined eligible for special education, repeated use of an ESI should prompt the school team to consider whether the student may have a disability as a part of the LEA's responsibility to uphold their Child Find obligation as referenced in the SpEd Rules.
- For a student who has already been found eligible for special education (or who is in the process of being evaluated), repeated use of an ESI should prompt the school team to determine if they are still providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to that student, and if the student's IEP is reasonably calculated to enable the student to make progress appropriate in light of the student's circumstances.
- Under *no circumstances* should the team determine that the continued use of the ESI will be the sole response to the student's behavior support needs.



In addition, whenever an ESI has been used with a student, the school team should consider their process for tiered supports and problem-solving. If the student already has a BIP, the team should evaluate the plan and its implementation to determine if all involved staff are implementing the BIP correctly and the BIP itself is appropriate. If the student does not already have a BIP, the team should consider developing one (following the completion of an FBA). For more information on this topic, [see Chapter 5](#) and [Chapter 6](#).

## *Requirements for Policy and Procedure*

### **Prevention of the Use of ESIs**

LEAs are required to implement proactive measures in school settings to teach students appropriate behavior and prevent problem behavior from occurring. In

addition, schools that use tiered methods for behavioral problem-solving can address the needs of students with more significant problem behavior through a multidisciplinary teaming process that includes the parent(s). Schools that use these methods are likely to see fewer uses of physical restraint and seclusion compared to schools that respond to student behavior in a more reactionary way.

## Appropriate Use of ESIs

LEAs are required to establish policies in the following areas related to ESI use:

- Procedures to be followed when using ESIs, including written procedures that must be in place prior to the use of seclusion
- For LEAs that allow the building of a designated enclosed area for the sole purpose of seclusion, the requirements and prohibitions for the designated area and the written approval process
- Prohibition of prone and supine restraint<sup>37</sup>
- Prohibition of chemical restraint and prohibition of mechanical restraint with limited exceptions described in Board Rule r277-608-3(3)(e-f))<sup>38</sup>
- Prohibition of physical restraint/seclusion, unless the student presents an immediate and significant threat to self or others
- Prohibition of physical restraint/seclusion in a student's IEP unless all of the following conditions are met:
  - School staff and the IEP team (including the parent(s)) agree less restrictive means have been attempted
  - An FBA has been conducted
  - A BIP has been developed and implemented as part of the IEP
- Other dangerous practices as defined by the LEA

In addition, as part of the LEA's special education policies, procedures, or practices, the LEA must include criteria and steps for using ESIs consistent with state and federal law.

It is important for parents to understand their rights (and the rights of their students) with respect to behavior support and use of ESIs. LEAs are encouraged to provide information to all parents about LEA policies, as well as applicable local, state, and federal laws, governing the use of ESIs in the LEA.

# Notes on Chapter 7

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<sup>1</sup> Edwards, J.J., Wexner, S., and Nichols, A. (2021, November). *Debriefing for Clinical Learning*. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from:

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer/debriefing-clinical-learning>

<sup>2</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-301. Retrieved from:

<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

<sup>3</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-211. Retrieved from:

<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S211.html>

<sup>4</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:

<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>5</sup> USBE Special Education Rules. Retrieved from:

[https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/administrative\\_rules/\\_documents\\_incorporated/R277750RulesSpecialEducationReportJune2023.pdf](https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/administrative_rules/_documents_incorporated/R277750RulesSpecialEducationReportJune2023.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Shaver, E. A. & Decker, J. R. (2017). Handcuffing a Third Grader? Interactions Between School Resource Officers and Students with Disabilities. *Utah Law Review*, 2017(2), 229-282.

<sup>7</sup> United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2016). *Dear Colleague Letter: Restraint and Seclusion of Students with Disabilities*, p.15. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201612-504-restraint-seclusion-ps.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:

<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>9</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-3. Retrieved from:

[https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-P3.html?v=C53G-8-P3\\_2018012420180124](https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-P3.html?v=C53G-8-P3_2018012420180124)

<sup>10</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:

<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>11</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:

<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>12</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-301(1)(d). Retrieved from:

<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

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<sup>13</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-301(1)(c). Retrieved from:  
<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2012). *Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from:  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/restraints-and-seclusion-resources.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-301(1)(d). Retrieved from:  
<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

<sup>16</sup> Conditions for use of physical restraint are established in Utah Code §53G-8-301(4), <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Board Rule r277-608-3. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>19</sup> Board Rule r277-608(4). Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>20</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>21</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>22</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>23</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>24</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>25</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>26</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>27</sup> [Utah Admin. Code r392-200](#) and [Utah Admin. Code r710-4](#).

<sup>28</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>29</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

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<sup>30</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-301. Retrieved from:  
<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

<sup>31</sup> Utah Code §53G-8-301. Retrieved from:  
<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter8/53G-8-S301.html>

<sup>32</sup> Definition of Mechanical Restraint from U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2020, October). *The Use of Restraint and Seclusion on Children with Disabilities in K-12 Schools*. 2017-2018 Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/restraint-and-seclusion.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>34</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>35</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>36</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>37</sup> Board Rule r277-608. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-608>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

# Chapter 8: Considerations for Students with Disabilities

Public schools have a legal responsibility to identify and evaluate and then provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible students with disabilities. For students whose disabilities impact their behavior at school, it is especially important that school teams are aware of the specialized processes and resources that can help teach students with disabilities more appropriate behaviors, as well as the legal requirements that protect the rights of these students to access and benefit from public education.



Both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) establish the rights of students with disabilities to have equal access to public educational settings with the individualized services and supports necessary to benefit from that access. This concept is broadly referred to as the right to a FAPE. Each student with a disability also has the right to be educated in their *least restrictive environment* (LRE), including access to grade/age-appropriate core content standards, curricular materials, resources, and peers, based on team consideration of the individual student's needs. Each LEA has a responsibility to provide FAPE in the LRE to each student with a disability in accordance with the LEA's legal obligations under the IDEA and Section 504. That responsibility continues even if a student with a disability engages in problem behavior that violates the school's code of conduct.

This chapter will discuss various behavior-related supports, accommodations, disciplinary processes, and protections available to students with disabilities served under the IDEA or Section 504. A thorough explanation of student rights under the IDEA and Section 504 is outside the scope of this manual. However, key concepts will be explained briefly when relevant. In some cases, the requirements of IDEA and Section 504 are very similar; in other cases, there are notable differences. Throughout this chapter, the requirements for each will be presented and compared when applicable.

Some portions of this chapter include information about the rights and protections for students with disabilities under federal and state law. As noted in Chapter 1, this manual does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Content in this manual is presented for technical assistance purposes only.

For additional helpful resources on the topics in this chapter, please see the following:

- USBE, [SpEd Rules](#), (2023)
- Utah Parent Center, [Parents as Partners in the IEP Process: A Parent Resource Book](#), (2019)
- USBE, [Equal Rights for All Students: A Guide to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), (2021)

## Child Find

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Both the IDEA and Section 504 require LEAs to continually identify, locate, and evaluate children with disabilities living within the LEA's boundaries. School district boundaries include students who reside in the jurisdiction of the district. Charter school boundaries include students enrolled in the charter school. This requirement is referred to as *child find*. As child find is an affirmative requirement, it is not sufficient for LEAs to wait for a parent to request an evaluation or seek a medical diagnosis. Instead, LEAs must act on their child find obligation as soon as there is reason to suspect or believe a student may have a disability.

Some behavior concerns may provide a particular reason for an LEA to suspect a disability. While the suspicion of a disability for a particular student should always

be considered on an individual basis, the following circumstances may trigger an LEA's child find obligation to consider whether the student may have a disability impacting their behavior:

- The student is subjected to disciplinary removals that occur frequently and/or are becoming more frequent over time
- The student frequently misses school and/or skips classes for reasons that may be related to a possible disability
- The student is frequently "in trouble" for concerns related to:
  - Executive functioning, including attending to instruction, turning in work on time, starting and completing complex tasks, and organizing materials
  - Social interactions, including navigating disagreements and conflicts, interacting in age-appropriate ways with peers, following social cues, and self-monitoring socially expected nonverbal behavior like voice volume or personal space
  - Self-regulation, including coping with emotions like anger or disappointment, responding appropriately to criticism, and handling frustrating situations
- The student engages in a pattern of problem behavior that routinely results in avoidance of specific academic tasks, sensory stimuli, social interactions, etc.
- The student engages in problem behavior that poses such a safety risk to themselves or others that an emergency safety intervention (ESI) was necessary ([see Chapter 7](#))
- The student's problem behavior does not improve after sufficient informal and/or systematic behavior intervention ([see Chapter 5](#))
- The student's parent has expressed concern that the student may have a disability and/or requested an evaluation for special education and related services



- A teacher or other staff member has expressed concern about the student's pattern of behavior to the special education director or other supervisory personnel of the LEA

A student who is not yet eligible for special education services may still be covered by the IDEA's discipline protections if the LEA has knowledge that the student may have a disability. For more information on this topic, [see "Protection for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education."](#)

## Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for Students with Behavior Support Needs

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In 2017, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* clarifying the requirement for IEPs to promote meaningful, rather than minimal, progress for students with disabilities. According to the ruling, each student's IEP must be "reasonably calculated to enable a [student] to make progress appropriate in light of the [student]'s circumstances."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, behaviors that interfere with the student's progress must be considered as part of the IEP.<sup>2</sup>

For school teams, the message is clear. If a student served under the IDEA engages in behaviors that interfere with their learning or the learning of others, and/or are related to the student's disability, the student's IEP must address those behaviors. This is the case regardless of the student's qualifying disability. Therefore, a student's behavior needs must be addressed across all relevant portions of the IEP.

This section of the chapter will provide information about behavior support considerations when developing each part of a student's IEP. The term "IEP team" appears throughout this chapter and is inclusive of all required IEP team members, including the student's parent or the student who is an adult.

For more information on the IEP process, see the USBE's [Reflective Framework for Individualized Education Program Development](#), a resource to support educators in developing compliant and high-quality IEPs. Companion documents addressing each portion of the IEP are linked in each relevant section below.

## *Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance for Behavior Support*

The purpose of the **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)** in the IEP is to identify the student's needs and establish their impact on the student's access to the general education curriculum. The PLAAFP must include baseline and current performance data relevant to the area(s) addressed. The IEP requires regular progress monitoring, so it's best to identify a way to measure the PLAAFP that can also be used to monitor progress towards a related IEP goal. The PLAAFP must also include an impact statement that clarifies how the student's disability interferes with their progress in the general education curriculum.

When developing the PLAAFP for a student with behavior support needs, the team should include information from data sources relevant to the behaviors of concern. Common data sources include classroom observation files, discipline referrals, attendance records, and assessments completed for the student's special education evaluation or re-evaluation, etc. The PLAAFP should include a description of the problem behavior, a baseline measure of how frequently the problem behavior occurs, and a possible replacement behavior to teach. If the team has completed a functional behavior assessment (FBA) for the student, information from the FBA should also be included in the PLAAFP (e.g., the problem behavior's function, antecedents, and consequences).

For more information about the FBA, [see Chapter 6](#).

To write an impact statement that addresses a student's behavior support needs, the team should consider questions like the following:

- What is the expected behavior and how does the student's behavior differ?
- How does the problem behavior interfere with the student's performance in the general education curriculum and/or setting?
- Does the problem behavior appear to be used by the student as a form of communication? If so, how does the student's need for functional

communication interfere with their performance in the general education curriculum and/or setting?

- Does the problem behavior negatively affect the student's learning and/or the learning of other students, and if so, how?
- Does the problem behavior negatively affect the student's relationships with peers, and if so, how?
- Does the problem behavior pose a safety risk to the student and/or others, and if so, how?
- Does the problem behavior interfere with the student's ability to achieve their goals for post-secondary transition, and if so, how?
- How do factors in the student's environment affect the problem behavior?

For more information about developing the PLAAFP, see the [USBE's Reflective Framework for IEP Development: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance.](#)

## *Special Factors and Behavior Support*

The IEP team must consider the presence of *special factors* when developing a student's IEP. Special factors are variables that have the potential to limit the student's progress in their IEP goals overall and may also limit the student's access to a FAPE in their LRE. The five special factors the team must consider are English language proficiency, the use of braille, behavior, communication, and assistive technology.

Special factors can shape the direction of the IEP and therefore must be considered early in the process. The presence of a special factor may influence many areas of the IEP as it is developed, including areas of assessment, information addressed in the PLAAFP, and goals the team



may consider. To evaluate behavior as a special factor, the IEP team should consider the impact of the student's behavior needs on their learning and/or the learning of others, as well as the student's ability to participate in their LRE. The team should also consider collecting baseline data on relevant student behaviors, completing an FBA for the student, and developing a behavior intervention plan (BIP) to incorporate in the student's IEP.

It's not necessary for a student to be eligible for special education in a particular disability category for the team to identify behavior as a special factor. However, the student's disability may impact their behavior in ways that can and should be addressed in the IEP. For instance, a student whose disability impacts verbal communication may have learned to use problem behavior to get their needs met. In this case, the team should additionally consider communication (and, potentially, the need for assistive technology) as a special factor and should ensure that the student's communication needs relating to behavior have been addressed in the IEP.

During the IEP meeting itself, the team should also prepare for a discussion about how the student's behavior has been considered and addressed, if needed, in the IEP. Guiding questions for this discussion could include:

- How will the social and emotional needs of the student be met?
- How will the team consider student behavior and the impact on learning and participation with peers without disabilities?
- Are behavior data included in the IEP, and are the data measurable, objective, and quantitative?
- Should the team consider goals and/or accommodations to address communication needs as they relate to behavior?
- Should the team consider goals and/or accommodations to teach an appropriately selected replacement behavior?
- Should the team consider an FBA and/or a BIP for this student, either because 1) the team has documented previous behavior interventions that have not resulted in improvement in the behavior as measured by our data, or because 2) the student's behavior presents a safety risk to themselves or others?

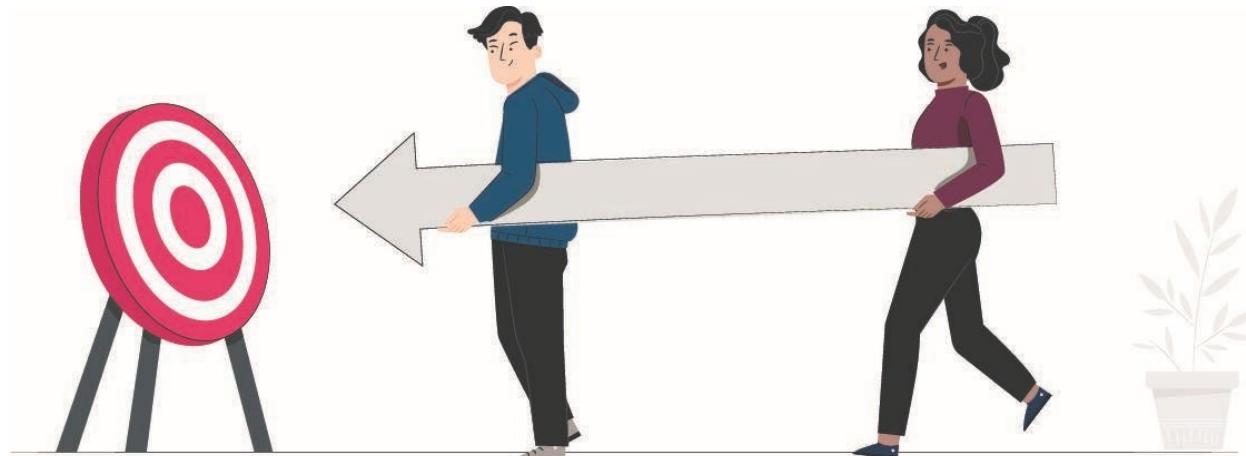
For more information about special factors, see the USBE's [\*Reflective Framework for IEP Development: Special Factors\*](#).

## *IEP Goals for Behavior Support*

### Components of an IEP Goal for Behavior Support

Each annual IEP goal must include three components: **the target skill/behavior, the condition, and the criterion**. In other words, **the goal should reflect an “appropriately ambitious” expectation** for what the student could achieve in a year with specially designed instruction.

To develop a behavior goal, the team should first ensure that the PLAAFP addresses the problem behavior, including a baseline measurement of the behavior, where/when/with whom it typically occurs, and what the function might be. With this information, the team can write a goal that addresses all three required components.



#### Target Skill/Behavior

The **target skill/behavior** specifies what the student will learn to do to achieve the goal. It should be age-appropriate, relevant to the student's needs, and socially acceptable—in other words, it should not stigmatize or create additional barriers for the student. It must also specify what the student will learn to do, rather than what the student will learn to stop doing.

When writing a goal addressing a problem behavior, it is best practice for the target skill/behavior to be a replacement behavior. Teaching the student to engage in this behavior instead of the problem behavior should be the focus of the IEP goal. The replacement behavior should match the function of the problem behavior as determined by an FBA.

For more on this topic, [see Chapter 5](#) and [Chapter 6](#).

Reducing the occurrence of the problem behavior must not be the sole focus of an IEP goal; however, the team may choose to include this as a secondary focus so long as teaching the replacement behavior is the primary focus.

## Condition

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The ***condition*** is the context or environment in which the target skill/behavior will be used. For goals related to problem behavior, the condition might include routines, activities, situations, and/or times of day when the problem behavior is likely to occur and/or the desired skill is likely to be needed.

To develop the condition, the team should identify opportunities to teach the student to use the target skill/behavior in the student's least restrictive environment. New behaviors are best learned in setting(s) in which they are necessary, so the condition should represent routines, activities, or settings with many natural opportunities for the student to use the target skill/behavior. It is generally not best practice for this to be an isolated setting that does not represent a natural opportunity for the student to use the replacement behavior; however, this should be based on the IEP team's consideration of the student's individual needs.

## Criterion

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The ***criterion*** specifies how the team will measure progress or mastery of the goal and should be linked to the information included in the PLAAFP. It must allow for consistent measurement of the student's progress towards the goal. For goals related to problem behavior, the criterion might be selected to measure the

student engaging in the replacement behavior more frequently, more independently, in more difficult situations, or across a wider range of settings.

The criterion should be developed to allow for small, reliable measures of the target skill/behavior. It is far more effective to use a lightweight daily measure of a given behavior than a time-consuming measure that can only be collected once a month. The team should also prespecify how often behavior data will be conducted. This facilitates graphing of the data which is essential to effective behavior support. The criterion should never allow for data collection to occur on an “as needed” basis. This can introduce bias into data collection—as it’s often easier to remember to record data on a problem behavior on a “bad day” than it is on a “good day”—and produce other serious errors. Teams must define a schedule of data collection in advance and follow it consistently.

While it is common practice when writing an IEP goal to include a criterion like “80% of the time,” the IEP team should use caution when considering this sort of criterion for behavioral goals. Most appropriately designed replacement behaviors should not be engaged in 80% of the time; even if that was the desired outcome, it would be prohibitively difficult for the team to determine if the replacement behavior is occurring that frequently. A more feasible alternative the team might consider is a measure of *percent of opportunities*.



# Example Behavior Support IEP Goals and Progress Monitoring

## Martina

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*During transitions from recess to the classroom, Martina will follow teacher directions as expected by complying with 80% of all such teacher directions across the school week immediately (within 30 seconds) and demonstrating zero instances of running away or engaging in physical aggression to objects after being given a direction during these transitions. Martina will demonstrate this for 4 consecutive weeks as measured by percent of opportunities data (e.g., percent of directions followed during transitions from recess to the classroom) and frequency data (e.g., frequency of running away or engaging in physical aggression to objects) collected daily.*

FIGURE 8-1: EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROGRESS MONITORING FOR MARTINA

Day: Date	Directions followed (frequency)	Directions not followed (frequency)	Percent of directions followed	P.A. to objects (frequency)	Running away (frequency)
M: 9/12/22	1	III	25%	III	1
T: 9/13/22	—	III	0%	III	11
W: 9/14/22	11	1	67%	Ø	Ø
Th: 9/15/22	1	1	50%	11	Ø
F: 9/16/22	11	1	67%	Ø	1
Weekly total	6	11	6/17 = 35%	14	4

## Tony

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*During independent work, if Tony appears frustrated or angry, he will use a pre-identified coping strategy (such as positive self-talk, deep breathing, or taking a break) and resume his work within 2 minutes, across 8 out of 10 instances of appearing to become frustrated/angry during independent work as measured by classroom observations.*

FIGURE 8-2: EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROGRESS MONITORING FOR TONY

Date	Time	Context of frustration	Coping strategy used?	Work resumed within 2min?
11/8/22	10:20	Journaling - ripped his paper by mistake	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive self-talk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a break (3min) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No: 1 min
11/8/22	1:35	Math- needed help to solve a problem and did not want to ask	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive self-talk <input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a break (3min) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: 17 min
11/9/22	10:15	Teacher had to ask him to get out his journal three times. He refused and said, "Leave me alone!"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive self-talk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a break (3min) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: 4 min

## River



*Given video self-modeling of expected classroom behavior and positive reinforcement for following classroom rules, River will increase the length of participation time (with no unsafe behaviors) in general education settings to a weekly average of three hours per day over three consecutive weeks, as measured by duration data on a daily tracker.*

FIGURE 8-3: EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROGRESS MONITORING FOR RIVER

Behavior: Participation with no unsafe behaviors	
<b>Definitions:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Participation:</b> Engaging in expected learning behaviors actively (e.g., responding to questions, discussing with classmates appropriately, working on an assigned activity) or passively (e.g., listening to instruction, listening to a classmate's question or comment, watching an assigned video).</li><li>• <b>Unsafe behaviors:</b> Behaviors which pose a safety risk to the student or others (e.g., physical aggression to others such as hitting or kicking; physical aggression to objects such as throwing or breaking items; self-injurious behaviors such as poking oneself with a pencil or staple; or other risky behaviors such as climbing on furniture or running from the building).</li></ul>	
Mon: 10/10/22	Tue: 10/11/22
Phase: Intervention	Phase: Intervention
Start time	End time
8:30	8:50
10:10	10:25
11:30	11:55
2:40	2:55
Total time: 75 min	Total time: 125 min
Wed: 10/12/22	Thu: 10/13/22
Phase: Intervention	Phase: Intervention
Start time	End time
8:30	8:35
10:20	10:22
10:45	10:55
11:45	11:55
2:40	3:00
Total time: 47 min	Total time: 165 min
Fri: 10/14/22	
Phase: Intervention	
Start time	End time
8:15	8:25
10:10	10:30
11:05	11:10
11:45	12:05
Total time: 55 min	

For information more about developing IEP goals, see the USBE's [Reflective Framework for IEP Development: Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Goals](#).

## *Mental Health Support and IEP Related Services*

The purpose of *related services* in the IEP is to provide the student with any necessary services to ensure they can access and benefit from special education. IEP teams sometimes overlook school-based mental health related services when considering the student's individual needs.<sup>3</sup> However, the IDEA's non-exhaustive list of related services includes counseling, psychological services, therapeutic recreation, and social work services. For some students with behavior support needs, underlying mental health concerns may be a significant factor.



Students with disabilities experience mental health needs at far greater rates than their classmates without disabilities.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, students with disabilities who demonstrate high rates of problem behavior may also demonstrate symptoms of mental health challenges, like self-harming behaviors, repetitive/ritualized behaviors, or indications of suicidal ideation. These symptoms may even pose a barrier for the student with a disability to access a FAPE. While a BIP can address environmental factors contributing to problem behaviors, teach more appropriate replacement behaviors, and provide reinforcement to strengthen those behaviors, it *cannot* treat any underlying mental health concern (e.g., anxiety or depression) contributing to problem behaviors.

**If the team has reason to believe a student is experiencing mental health challenges, it is unethical to attempt to address those concerns with a BIP**

**alone.** In these cases, the team should determine what school-based mental health related services are appropriate to support the student and identify any other necessary supports to ensure the student's IEP can provide a FAPE.

## Section 504 Plans for Students with Behavior Support Needs

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This section of the chapter will discuss behavior support and accommodations and related aids and services for students with disabilities who qualify under Section 504. The term "504 committee" (often referred to as a Section 504 team) appears throughout this chapter and is inclusive of all required 504 committee members, including multidisciplinary persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options available.<sup>5</sup> Comprehensive information about Section 504 requirements is outside the scope of this manual.

For more information, see the [Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#) and the [USBE Equal Rights for All Students: A Guide to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 \(Spanish\)](#).

Students served solely under Section 504 are entitled to a FAPE just like students served under the IDEA. A student's 504 committee is required to establish if a student qualifies as an individual with a disability. There are many potential ways in which a student's behavior may indicate the student has a disability and requires FAPE. For example, depending on the facts and circumstances, the school's duty to evaluate could be indicated by any of the following:

- Information or records shared during enrollment
- Student behaviors that may harm the student or another person
- The observations and data collected by school personnel
- Information voluntarily provided by the student's parents or guardians
- The school's own disciplinary or other actions indicating that school personnel have concerns about the student's behavior, such as frequent office referrals, demerits, notes to parents or guardians, or use of restraints or seclusion

- Information that a previous response by school personnel to the student's behavior resulted in repeated or extended removals from educational instruction or services, or that a previous response (e.g., a teacher's use of restraints or seclusion) that traumatized a student resulted in academic or behavioral difficulties.<sup>6</sup>

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requires that 504 committees draw from a variety of relevant sources in the evaluation process as appropriate based on the facts and circumstances. Evaluations under Section 504 must be administered by trained individuals. Where a student's behavior is a factor in an evaluation, such individuals might include, among others: psychologists, behavior specialists, teachers, social workers, and/or counselors. The information obtained from all such sources must be documented and all significant factors related to the student's learning process must be considered. When preparing to develop a student's 504 Plan, the team should review information provided for the evaluation, including relevant assessments and any other data collected about the student's disability-related needs, to identify the individualized accommodations and related aids and services the student requires to access a FAPE. This means the team must plan ahead to gather relevant information prior to meeting to develop the 504 Plan. For students with behavior support needs related to their disability, in addition to the evidence that initiated the eligibility evaluation, this information might include:

- Aptitude and achievement tests
- Teacher recommendations
- Physical condition
- Social and cultural background
- Adaptive behavior
- Notes and other documentation relating to previous behavior interventions
- Documentation from the school's MTSS team
- Medical or psychological records
- Results of an FBA
- Observations of the student by psychologists or other professionals while the student is in class or during other activities

When the team meets to develop a 504 Plan for a student who engages in problem behavior related to their disability, the team "must identify individualized services,

such as behavioral supports, to meet the student's educational needs.”<sup>7</sup> 504 Plans are not required to be put in writing, but teams are strongly encouraged to do so as it can ensure the team can implement the 504 Plan with fidelity and avoid misunderstandings about what must be provided. Services and decisions that relate to the student with a disability must be individualized and cannot be “based on stereotypes, generalizations, or assumptions about the student based on their disability or about individuals with disabilities generally.”<sup>8</sup> Some examples of services the team might consider include:

- Access to calming materials
- Schedule adjustments
- BIP

In its 2022 guidance for supporting students with behavioral needs under Section 504, the OCR notes that, “if a Section 504 committee chooses to use a behavioral assessment to develop a BIP, and that assessment identifies specific behavioral supports needed to ensure FAPE, the Section 504 committee would need to develop the BIP with such supports, and the school would need to implement it, as part of the student’s Section 504 plan for providing FAPE.”<sup>9</sup> While it is not mandatory to include a BIP for a student served under Section 504 who engages in problematic behavior related to their disability, the team should give serious consideration to the development of a BIP to teach the student to engage in an appropriate replacement behavior and reinforce that behavior when it occurs. Even if the team determines that a BIP is not necessary, the student’s 504 Plan must still include any other individualized services necessary to support the student in learning more appropriate behaviors and accessing a FAPE.

A student’s 504 Plan, including the BIP if applicable, must be accessible to all staff involved in providing services and accommodations to the student. If the student’s 504 Plan includes a BIP, the 504 committee might include a statement about the BIP in 504 Plan documentation, attach a copy of the BIP to the 504 Plan, and



include meeting notes and other documentation to support the team's determination about necessary services.

504 committees should meet regularly to review student progress, discuss how well the student's 504 Plan supports the student's needs, and determine if additional data is needed to improve the services the student receives. For a student with behavior support needs related to their disability, this would likely include a review of the BIP and/or other

services (and associated progress monitoring data). If a student is not making progress with the current plan, the team should collect additional data and/or adjust the student's services. If the team will be considering a significant change in placement for the student, they must conduct an evaluation beforehand to inform any such changes. Section 504 does not specify a timeframe for review of a 504 Plan; however, a 504 Plan must be modified if it does not appropriately provide the student the individualized support necessary for them to access a FAPE.

For information about developing an IEP for a student with behavior support needs, [see "Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\) for Students with Behavior Support Needs."](#)

## Paraeducator Support

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Paraeducators working in the LEA special education program may be involved in providing support to students with IEPs, including those who engage in problem behavior at school. There are a variety of positive ways a paraeducator may support a student with behavior needs, including:

- Implementing planned interventions for a student with behavior needs on a rotating basis with other team members
- Collecting student behavior data as directed by their supervisor (e.g., observation data for an FBA, progress monitoring of the BIP)

- Supporting intervention implementation across all team members by intentional modeling of behavior interventions for general education teachers and other related service providers
- Implementing classroom management strategies with a group of students while a special education teacher or general education teacher intervenes with a student with behavior support needs
- Assisting other team members with the safe implementation of an ESI in a designated role
- Sharing feedback with the special education teacher about possible improvements to a student's BIP

Unfortunately, paraeducators are often excessively relied upon to contain and respond to student's problem behavior. Assigning a paraeducator to a student with behavior support needs may provide a false sense that the student will automatically receive a higher quality of support. Some team members may also advocate for a paraeducator to bear the responsibility of managing the student with behavior support needs to avoid sharing that often difficult responsibility. However, most paraeducators have less training and experience than other team members and may not be able to implement a student's BIP without ongoing support and coaching. Excessive paraeducator support may also interfere with the student's ability to develop social skills and positive relationships with teachers and peers, both of which are areas which are critically important for many students with behavior needs.

[See Table 8-1](#) for various poor outcomes associated with inappropriate reliance on paraeducators to provide one-on-one support for students with disabilities.

TABLE 8-1: INADVERTENT DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH EXCESSIVE PARAEDUCATOR PROXIMITY<sup>10</sup>

Category of Effect	Description
Separation from classmates	A student with a disability and paraeducator may be seated in the back or side of the room, physically separated from the class.

Category of Effect	Description
<b>Unnecessary dependence</b>	A student with a disability may become hesitant to participate without paraeducator direction, prompting, or cueing.
<b>Interference with peer interaction</b>	Paraeducators may create physical or symbolic barriers, interfering with interactions between a student with disabilities and classmates.
<b>Insular relationship</b>	A student with a disability and paraeducator may do most everything together, to the exclusion of others (e.g., peers).
<b>Feelings of stigmatization</b>	A student with a disability may express embarrassment/discomfort about having a paraeducator because it makes the student stand out in negative ways.
<b>Limited access to effective instructional strategies</b>	Some paraeducators lack the experience and preparation to provide effective instruction. Some may do the work for the students they support in an effort to keep up; this is a sign that instruction has not been adequately adapted.
<b>Interference with teacher engagement</b>	Teachers tend to be less involved when a student with a disability has a one-to-one paraeducator because individual attention is already available to the student.
<b>Loss of personal control</b>	When paraeducators do too much for students with disabilities, those students may not exercise choices that are typical of other students.
<b>Feelings of persecution</b>	Some students report that because they are constantly being watched by adults, their behavior is scrutinized differently; minor infractions that might not be noticed or addressed when done by other students result in consequences for them.

Category of Effect	Description
Provocation of problem behaviors	Some students with disabilities may express their dislike of paraeducator support by displaying undesirable behaviors (e.g., running away, foul language, and aggression).
Risk of being bullied	Some students may be teased or bullied because they are assigned a paraeducator.

Effective behavior support requires a team approach in which the student experiences consistent support and response to their behavior from each member. In addition, students with behavior support needs can benefit significantly from intentional relationship-building by their teachers and other school staff. For these reasons, it is neither appropriate nor effective to limit the student's interaction to a single person. Any problems with consistent staff implementation of a student's behavior supports must be addressed with support for the staff having difficulty (e.g., coaching and modeling).

For a paraeducator to successfully support a student with behavior needs, they should receive appropriate training, ongoing supervision, and a schedule rotation that allows the paraeducator time to fulfill other responsibilities. Otherwise, a school team can inadvertently set a paraeducator up to fail. Paraeducators may experience burnout when assigned to support the same student for days or weeks on end, especially when that student engages in extensive problem behaviors that require intensive intervention and/or that presents a safety risk to the student or others. All team members should share the responsibility for intervention, as this allows for frequent breaks from providing intensive support, renewed energy and positivity when engaging with the student, and improved team problem-solving when issues arise.

Regardless of how paraeducators are assigned to support students with behavior needs, school teams must meet their obligation to provide a FAPE for students with disabilities without discrimination. This means that a student's attendance cannot be made contingent on the presence of a particular staff member.<sup>11</sup> Requiring a student to stay home if a behavior aide or other paraeducator is absent for the day

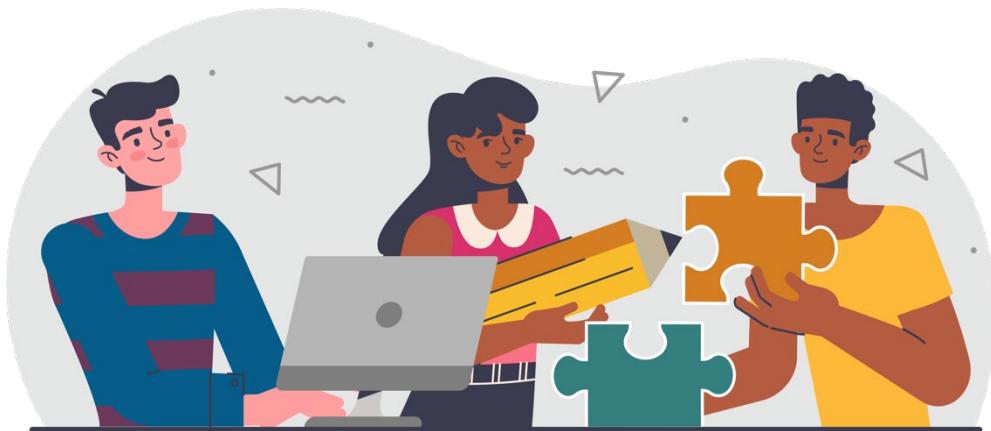
would likely constitute disability-based discrimination and denial of the student's right to a FAPE.

For more information about the role of a paraeducator in supporting students with disabilities, including students with behavior needs, see the [Paraeducator tab of the USBE Special Education Effective Instruction and Inclusion webpage](#).

## Placement of Students with Disabilities Who Have Behavior Support Needs

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Placement involves the instruction the student with a disability will receive in general education settings, the instruction the student will receive in other educational settings, the proximity the student has to same age/grade peers, and any other individualized services and supports necessary to meet the student's needs. A student's placement must reflect the student's LRE and can only be determined *after* the team has determined the student's needs, goals and services. Decisions related to LRE are individualized and should ensure that the student is educated with their non-disabled peers to the "maximum extent appropriate". Among other things, IEP teams should consider the effects of specific environments when making placement decisions. Placement decisions for students served under the IDEA or Section 504 cannot be made by individuals. They can only be made by IEP teams or Section 504 committees respectively.



For the student with a disability who has behavior support needs, the IEP or Section 504 committee must consider the student's LRE **before determining placement**. Teams should avoid overly simplistic placement determinations based solely on

how much support a student needs. This approach can result in a student with significant behavior support needs who is on/above grade level academically being placed in a “high support” setting designed for students with significant disabilities. This can be a poor fit for many reasons, preventing these students from building the social skills needed to address some problem behaviors, and placing these students at risk for worsening behavior due to boredom or frustration. Teams should consider all of the student’s needs when determining placement, including academic, communication, adaptive, social/behavioral, sensory, and motor. Placement decisions should not be made based on convenience or staff preferences.

Because placement can only be determined by the full IEP or Section 504 committee, school administrators and other LEA staff may not take unilateral action that changes a student’s placement in response to behavior concerns without the IEP or Section 504 committee’s involvement. For instance, a teacher may not inhibit a student with a disability from attending that class due to behavior concerns; however, the IEP or Section 504 committee may convene to discuss any such concerns and determine the best course of action. The IDEA and Section 504 have very specific provisions for changes in placement that result from disciplinary actions.

## **Discipline for Students with Disabilities**

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Students with disabilities receive additional protections under the IDEA and Section 504 regarding school discipline. These protections are intended to ensure that a student with a disability is not prevented from accessing a FAPE because of behavioral concerns related to their disability or the team’s implementation of their IEP or Section 504 Plan. This section will describe these protections in detail.

**School discipline measures must not infringe on the right the students with disabilities have to a FAPE.** However, students with disabilities are also not excluded from ordinary school discipline measures. When responding to a student with a disability whose behavior violates the school’s code of conduct, both the IDEA and Section 504 allow an LEA to apply the consequence outlined in the LEA or school’s policy, including the use disciplinary removals (such as suspension), with

certain important limitations. Determining if a disciplinary removal is permitted for a student with a disability depends on the answer to one or both of the following questions:

- Did the disciplinary action result in a change of placement?
- Was the behavior in question a manifestation of the student's disability?<sup>12</sup>

LEAs must understand the complexities of disciplinary removals for students with disabilities to ensure their students' rights are protected. This section will describe short-term and long-term disciplinary removals, removals which constitute a change in placement, required services during removals, and the process to determine if a given behavior is a manifestation of a student's disability.

For additional information, please see the following:

- [USBE SpEd Rules](#) (2023)
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions](#), (2022).
- USBE, [Equal Rights for All Students: A Guide to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), (2021)
- Office for Civil Rights, [Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), (2022)

## *Understanding Disciplinary Removals*

A disciplinary removal can occur when a student with a disability is removed from or prevented from accessing some part of their educational program for reasons related to the student's problem behavior. Suspension is a common example of formal disciplinary removal; however, it is not the only example. There are a variety of actions that an LEA might take that amount to disciplinary removals under the IDEA and Section 504, including:

- Issuing an out-of-school suspension or expulsion to the student
- Issuing an in-school suspension to the student, unless all the following occurred during that in-school suspension:

- The student was afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general education curriculum,
  - The student continued to receive the services specified on their IEP or Section 504 plan,<sup>13</sup> and
  - The student continued to participate with nondisabled students to the extent they would have in their current placement
- Unilaterally limiting the student's educational program due to behavior concerns, such as shortening the student's school day,<sup>14</sup> barring the student from attending a class on their schedule, or requiring the student to attend school virtually
- Placing conditions on whether the student will be allowed to attend school, such as requiring the parent to be present with their student during the school day or requiring the student to "earn" their way back into class by demonstrating desired behavior
- Preventing the student from participating in an available nonacademic and/or extracurricular activity for reasons related to the student's behavior
- Suspending a student with an IEP or Section 504 Plan that includes transportation as a related service from riding the school bus
- Conducting a disciplinary transfer of the student to an alternative setting
- Referring the student to law enforcement, including referrals that result in school-related arrest

Note that an in-school suspension referred to by an alternative name may still be regarded as an in-school suspension under the IDEA's and Section 504's discipline provisions. Some LEAs may have spaces that are utilized by staff in the same way as in-school suspension under different names (e.g., "Think Time Room" or "Calming Corner"). *It is the function of the disciplinary removal and its impact on the student's access to their educational program that determines whether it is an in-school suspension, not the name given to the room by the LEA. Similarly, some LEAs assign these types of names to spaces that function as seclusion rooms. Seclusion is not an*



*acceptable form of school discipline and should not be equated to an in-school suspension.*

For more information on this topic, see [Chapter 7](#).

A disciplinary removal may be for a partial or full day; however, partial day removals may be equivalent to a full day under the IDEA and Section 504. The IDEA defines a

*school day* as “any day, including a partial day, that children are in attendance at school for instructional purposes. *School day* has the same meaning for all children in school, including children with and without disabilities.”<sup>15</sup> Section 504 guidance does not specify the length of a school day, but similarly states that “students with disabilities are entitled to an entire school day that is as long as the school day for students without disabilities.” LEAs must carefully track how many school days (including partial days) the student with a disability has been subjected to short-term and/or long-term disciplinary removals and should properly document all such removals in their student information system (SIS).

## *Short-Term Disciplinary Removals*

OSERS defines a short-term disciplinary removal as follows: “Short-term disciplinary removal, although not defined in IDEA and its implementing regulations, means the removal of a child from their educational placement for 10 consecutive school days or less.”<sup>16</sup> LEAs are permitted to issue the same sorts of short-term disciplinary removals to students with disabilities as they do to students without disabilities within the following limitations:

**“School personnel may remove a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from the student’s current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting (IAES), another setting, or suspension, for not more than ten consecutive school days (to the extent those alternatives are applied to students without**

disabilities), and for additional removals of not more than ten consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement because of disciplinary removal as set forth in 34 CFR § 300.536 and these [SpEd] Rules V.D.”<sup>17</sup>

In other words, an LEA may issue short-term disciplinary removals for students with disabilities in the same manner that they do for students without disabilities. However, it is critical that the LEA maintain a record of all removals, short-term or otherwise. Whether a given removal is considered “short-term” is not solely determined by the length of that removal. As noted above, partial school days may be considered equivalent to whole school days. The LEA must also consider how many days in the school year the student has already been removed and whether a pattern exists between past and present removals. It is possible for a single day of suspension to move a student’s overall discipline status from “short-term” to “long-term,” thus resulting in a disciplinary change of placement.

Short-term disciplinary removals should not be described as “FAPE-free days.” For more information about the team’s obligation to students during short-term removals, [see “Services During Disciplinary Removals.”](#)

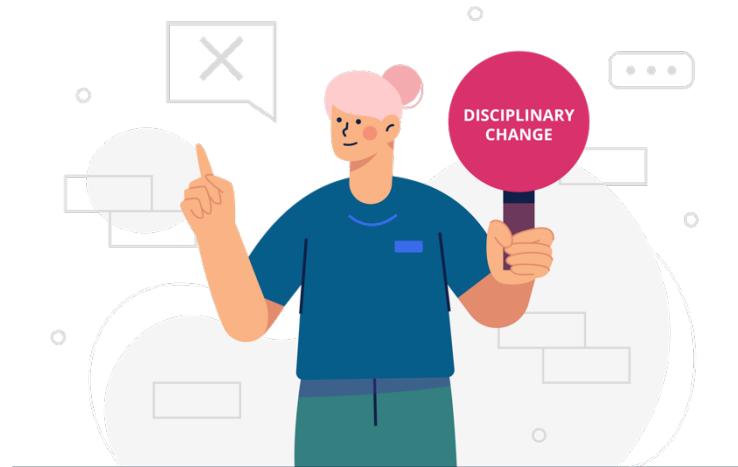
## *Disciplinary Change in Placement/Significant Change in Placement*

OSERS defines a long-term disciplinary removal as follows: “Long-term disciplinary removal, although not defined in IDEA and its implementing regulations, as currently defined for purposes of discipline data collected under IDEA sections 616 and 618, mean suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for more than ten school days in a school year.”<sup>18</sup> When an LEA subjects a student to long-term disciplinary action that removes the student from, denies access to, or significantly changes the student’s educational program due to behavior concerns for more than 10 school days, a change in that student’s placement occurs. The term for this type of change of placement is referred to as a *disciplinary change in placement* for students served under the IDEA and is considered a *significant change*

*in placement* for students served under Section 504. This type of change of placement can occur in one of two ways:

1. A single disciplinary removal that exceeds 10 consecutive school days in the school year
2. A series of disciplinary removals (that cumulatively exceed 10 total school days in the school year) that constitutes a pattern

As with short-term disciplinary removals, partial school days may be considered equivalent to whole school days. For more information on this topic, [see "Other Changes in Placement."](#)



## Pattern of Disciplinary Removals

A pattern of removals occurs because of all the following factors: <sup>19</sup>

1. Because the series of removals totals more than 10 school days in a school year
2. Because the student's behavior is substantially similar to the student's behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals
3. Because of such additional factors as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another

When evaluating whether a series of removals constitutes a pattern, the above criteria apply to all students with disabilities served under the IDEA and/or Section 504. The LEA determines on a case-by-case basis whether a pattern of removals

constitutes a change of placement. "This determination is subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings."<sup>20</sup>

## IDEA Requirements When a Disciplinary Change in Placement Occurs

On the same day that an LEA makes a decision that results in a disciplinary change of placement for a student with a disability served under the IDEA, the LEA must do two things:<sup>21</sup>

1. Notify the parent(s) or student who is an adult of that decision and
2. Provide the parent(s) or student who is an adult the copy of the procedural safeguards notice

Within 10 school days of the LEA's decision that results in a disciplinary change of placement for a student served under the IDEA, the LEA must hold a **manifestation determination review (MDR)** meeting.

For more information about IDEA requirements for the MDR, [see "Manifestation Determination Review."](#)

## 504 Requirements Prior to a Significant Change in Placement For Discipline



Under Section 504, an LEA *may not* significantly change the placement of a student with a disability for reasons related to discipline until it has convened the MDR team.<sup>22</sup> This requirement is different from that of the IDEA. The LEA is also required to provide notice to the parent before taking action regarding evaluation or placement, including a significant change in placement.

## Other Changes in Placement

The IEP or Section 504 committee may convene at any time to make changes to the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan to address the student's behavior. If the parent (or student who is an adult) and the rest of the team agree to a different educational placement to better implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan, this is not considered a disciplinary change in placement.

## *Services During Disciplinary Removals*

LEAs are responsible for providing services to students with disabilities during disciplinary removals under certain circumstances. The IDEA provides very specific requirements for how and when such services must be provided. Those requirements are outlined below. Where available, specific requirements under Section 504 are also included.

### Services Up to 10 School Days of Removal

Under the IDEA,<sup>23</sup> during the first 10 total school days of a removal in a school year for a given student, the LEA is not required to provide the services on the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan unless it provides services to students without disabilities who are similarly removed.<sup>24</sup> However, LEAs may wish to provide services during short-term removals to support the student in continuing to access the general curriculum, make progress towards their IEP goals, and maintain positive connections with teachers and other school staff. The LEA must include information about the availability of services during short-term removals in its procedural safeguards.<sup>25</sup>

These first 10 school days of removal should never be characterized as "FAPE-free days." This language incorrectly suggests that the team can disregard the student's right to a FAPE during short-term disciplinary removals.<sup>26</sup> In fact, IEP and Section 504 Plan teams have an obligation to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities and ensure each student is still able to access a FAPE. During short-term disciplinary removals, teams should take the opportunity to consider whether the supports in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan are adequate, whether all

members of the student's team are implementing the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan correctly and consistently, and what additional support may be needed. Questions to consider might include:

- What skills could the team teach the student that, if learned, might prevent similar disciplinary removals in the future?
- What supports does the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan offer regarding the behavior that resulted in this removal? Are supports adequate or should the team consider changes?
- Are universal/Tier 1 behavioral supports in place in the student's classroom(s) and accessible to the student? If not, what changes need to be made?
- Has the team completed an FBA with this student?
  - If so, are the student's behavioral supports congruent with the function of the behavior determined by the FBA?
  - If not, should the team consider completing an FBA?
- Has the team developed a BIP for this student?
  - If so, is the BIP being implemented consistently and does the team have fidelity data to establish that?
    - If so, how might the BIP be modified to make it more effective?
    - If not, which team members need support with implementation and how will that be provided?
  - If not, should the team consider developing a BIP? Has the team completed a current FBA with the student to inform the development of a BIP?

## Services Past 10 School Days of Removal with No Change in Placement

If a student is removed for more than 10 total school days in a school year, the LEA has an obligation to provide services beginning on the 11<sup>th</sup> school day of removal even if the LEA determines that the removal is not a change of placement. In this situation, school personnel, in consultation with at least one of the student's

teachers, must determine the extent to which services are needed so that the student can:

1. Continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and
2. Progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP<sup>27</sup>



## Services Past 10 School Days of Removal When a Change in Placement Has Occurred

Under the IDEA, if the current removal constitutes a disciplinary change in placement as described above, the student's IEP team must determine appropriate services to be provided during the removal. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES). In considering services, the IEP team must ensure that the student:<sup>28</sup>

1. Continues to receive educational services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP; and
2. Receives, as appropriate, an FBA, and behavior intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur

Under Section 504, "if a student's return to school involves a significant change in placement, Section 504 requires the school to which the student is returning to conduct an evaluation and determine the student's appropriate placement, including the individualized behavioral supports needed to address the student's disability-based behavior. . . The evaluation could include an FBA, as appropriate, used to develop a BIP."<sup>29</sup>

## Services Required if the Behavior is Not a Manifestation of the Student's Disability

Under the IDEA, services must be provided to the student with a disability when a disciplinary change of placement occurs, *regardless* of whether the behavior that gave rise to the disciplinary removal was a manifestation of the student's disability or not (as determined in the MDR). Services in this case may be provided in an interim alternative education setting (IAES).

Under Section 504, if the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary removal is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the LEA is not required to provide services during the removal unless it provides services to students without disabilities under similar circumstances.

For more information, [see "Response If the Behavior Is Not a Manifestation of the Student's Disability" section](#) in this chapter.

## Services Provided in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting

An **Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)** is "an appropriate setting determined by the child's IEP Team or a hearing officer in which the [student] is placed for no more than 45 school days."<sup>30</sup> The IEP team determines the IAES for services. An IAES may be considered if:<sup>31</sup>

- The behavior that gives rise to the removal is not a manifestation of the student's disability
- The removal constitutes a change of placement
- The behavior falls under special circumstances (for more information on this topic, [see "Special Circumstances" section](#))

A student may also be placed in an IAES as the result of a due process hearing. If the LEA believes maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the LEA may file a due process complaint and request for hearing. If the hearing officer agrees with the LEA, the student may

be placed in an appropriate IAES for not more than 45 school days. For more information on this topic, [see SpEd Rules V.H.](#)

Even when services are provided in an IAES, the IEP team must ensure the student's right to be educated in their LRE is upheld. The team must select an appropriate IAES along the LEA's continuum of alternative placements which is not inappropriately restrictive for the student's needs.

Section 504 does not address the provision of services in an IAES. However, OCR has indicated that that placement in an IAES can be an appropriate response under Section 504.<sup>32</sup>

## *Manifestation Determination Review*

A manifestation determination review (MDR) is the process for determining whether the **student's problem behavior that resulted in disciplinary removal is related to the student's disability** in some way. If this is the case, then the behavior is said to be a *manifestation of the student's disability*. The outcome of the MDR determines the extent to which an LEA can issue disciplinary removals which may change the student's placement because of behavior that violates the school's code of conduct.

## Definitions and Required Timelines for MDR Meetings

Though the purpose of the MDR is the same across the IDEA and Section 504, they define MDR in slightly different ways. They also hold different requirements for when the LEA must convene the MDR team and whether the meeting must occur before or after the disciplinary removal resulting in a change of placement.

## Definition of MDR

IDEA	Section 504
<p>"The decision as to whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or if the conduct in question was the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the child's IEP, including a BIP if required by the IEP."<sup>33</sup></p>	<p>"An evaluation...[required] prior to a significant change in placement due to a disciplinary removal, to determine whether a student's behavior was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability."<sup>34</sup></p>

## Required Timeline for MDR Meeting

IDEA	Section 504
<p>The LEA has ten school days to convene the MDR team <i>after</i> the LEA makes the decision to impose the disciplinary removal that will constitute a change of placement.<sup>35</sup></p>	<p>The LEA must convene the MDR team to conduct its required evaluation <i>prior to</i> any disciplinary action that constitutes a significant change in placement.<sup>36</sup></p>

## Conducting the MDR Meeting

The purpose of the MDR meeting is to determine whether the student's behavior is related in some way to the student's disability. Under the IDEA and Section 504, these processes are similar but not identical; differences in process are outlined in the comparison tables below. However, in either case, the team must determine the answer to both of the following questions:

1. Was the behavior caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability?

2. Was the behavior the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the student's IEP or 504 Plan, including a BIP when applicable?



If the answer to either of the questions above is yes, the team must find that the student's behavior is a manifestation of their disability. This determination must be made on an individualized basis with data to support the team's conclusion; it may not be based on assumptions or generalizations about the student or the student's disability. Teams may not predetermine the outcome of the MDR prior to the meeting and must consider input from the parent (or student who is an adult) during the meeting.

The MDR team does not make decisions about whether a student's behavior violated the LEA's code of conduct or not, or what the disciplinary response ought to be. Those decisions are made by school administrators in the same way they make decisions about behavioral incidents and disciplinary responses for students without disabilities.

## Required Participants

IDEA	Section 504
The LEA, parent, and relevant members of the student's IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the LEA).	A group of persons who are knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, least restrictive environment requirements, and comparable facilities.

## Information to Review

IDEA	Section 504
All relevant information in the student's file, including the student's IEP and any BIP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent.	Relevant information to review from a variety of sources sufficient to enable the team to make a determination.

## Response if the Behavior is a Manifestation of the Student's Disability

If the team determines the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, they are obligated to take additional steps to consider and/or address the student's behavior support needs as part of the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. The team must also address the student's placement. The specific requirements for these two required actions vary depending on whether the student is served under the IDEA or Section 504.

## Address the Student's Behavior Support Needs

IDEA	Section 504
<p>Conduct an FBA (unless the LEA had conducted an FBA before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred) and implement a BIP for the student; <b>or</b></p> <p>If a BIP has already been developed, review the BIP, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.</p>	<p>Determine whether additional assessment, including behavioral assessment, may be necessary.<sup>37</sup></p> <p>If behavioral assessment is deemed necessary, consider using the information to develop and implement a BIP.</p> <p>Cannot take any disciplinary action that would exclude the student based on their disability.<sup>38</sup></p>

## Address the Student's Placement

IDEA	Section 504
<p>Unless the misconduct falls under the definition of <i>special circumstances</i>, the student must be returned to the placement from which they were removed, unless the parent or student who is an adult and the LEA agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the BIP.</p>	<p>The MDR must be held <i>prior</i> to any decision to significantly change the placement of a student with a disability. The MDR team should determine if the student's current placement is appropriate and if any changes to services or supports need to be made to ensure FAPE.</p>

## Response if the Behavior is Not a Manifestation of the Student's Disability

If the team determines the behavior is *not* a manifestation of the student's disability, they may impose the same disciplinary action on the student with a

disability as they would on students without disabilities. However, under the IDEA, students with disabilities remain entitled to a FAPE in a setting determined by the IEP team. The LEA must always ensure nondiscriminatory administration of school discipline, so this disciplinary action must not be more punitive or exclusionary for the student with a disability than it would be for a student without a disability for similar behavior. IDEA and Section 504 have different requirements for providing services to the student during a removal for a behavior determined not to be a manifestation of the student's disability.

IDEA	Section 504
<p>School personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to the student with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to a student without a disability.</p> <p>After the tenth school day of removal that constitutes a change in placement, the LEA must provide services to the student.</p>	<p>School can discipline student as it proposed as long as it does so in the same manner that it disciplines other students without disabilities.<sup>39</sup></p> <p>Educational services are not required to be provided if these services are not provided for students without disabilities unless student is also IDEA-eligible.<sup>40</sup></p>

## *Special Circumstances*

The IDEA outlines several *special circumstances* in which an LEA may impose an extended disciplinary removal for a student with a disability. School personnel may remove a student to an IAES ([see "Services Provided in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting \(IAES\)" section](#)) for not more than 45 school days, without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, if the student:<sup>41</sup>

- a. Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an LEA,

- b. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an LEA, or
- c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an LEA.

The following definitions are used when considering the above special circumstances:<sup>42</sup>

- *Controlled substance* means a drug or other substance that cannot be distributed without a prescription, identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act.<sup>43</sup>
- *Illegal drug* means a controlled substance but does not include a drug controlled, possessed, or used under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional or one legally possessed or used under the Controlled Substances Act or under any other provision of federal law.<sup>44</sup>
- *Serious bodily injury* means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.<sup>45</sup> Serious bodily injury does not include a cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, disfigurement, physical pain, illness, or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or mental faculty that is temporary.<sup>46</sup>
- *Weapon* means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocketknife with a blade of less than 2.5 inches.<sup>47</sup>

Section 504 does not explicitly outline similar provisions for a removal to an IAES.

## *Protection for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education*

### **IDEA Requirements if the LEA Has Knowledge of the Student's Disability**

If an LEA "has knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred,"<sup>48</sup> that student or their parent may assert IDEA's disciplinary protections. An LEA must be deemed to have such knowledge if any of the following occurred prior to the behavior at issue:<sup>49</sup>

- a. The parent(s) of the student (or student who is an adult) expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the appropriate LEA, or a teacher of the student, that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- b. The parent(s) of the student (or student who is an adult) requested an evaluation of the student; or
- c. The teacher of the student, or other personnel of the LEA, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student directly to the director of special education of the LEA or to other supervisory personnel

If an LEA has knowledge that the student in question has a disability, it is responsible for ensuring the student's IDEA rights are upheld with respect to disciplinary actions. Depending on the nature of the disciplinary removal, this may mean that the LEA is responsible for timely convening an MDR team to determine if the student's behavior is a manifestation of their disability. This may be challenging if the team has not yet established the student's eligibility. However, the IDEA does not permit exceptions or postponement of an MDR in this circumstance. The LEA may seek to expedite the student's evaluation; however, if this is not possible, recent guidance from OSERS suggests the following:

**"[If] the LEA cannot conduct or finish the evaluation before the timeline for conducting a manifestation determination review...the group would likely consider the information that served as the LEA's basis of**

knowledge that the [student] may be a [student] with a disability under IDEA, such as concerns expressed by a parent, a teacher, or other LEA personnel, including any pattern of behavior demonstrated by the [student], the [student]'s suspected disability, and the relationship of the [student]'s behavior to the suspected disability. Based upon its review and consideration of the available information, the group would determine whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the [student]'s suspected disability.”<sup>50</sup>

## IDEA Requirements if the LEA Does Not Have Knowledge of the Student's Disability

An LEA would not be deemed to have knowledge that the student has a disability if:<sup>51</sup>

- a. The parent(s) of the student (or the student who is an adult) has not allowed an evaluation of the student or has refused services under this part; or
- b. The student has been evaluated in accordance with and determined to not be a student with a disability under Part B of the IDEA.

In this case, the LEA may apply the same disciplinary measure(s) that it would use for students without disabilities in response to similar behaviors. If the student is referred for an evaluation for special education while the disciplinary measure (e.g., removal) is ongoing, this evaluation must be expedited and the following requirements apply:<sup>52</sup>

- (1) Until the evaluation is completed, the student remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services.
- (2) If the student is determined to be a student with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by the LEA and information provided by the parent(s) or student who is an adult, the LEA must provide special education and related services.

## Section 504 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible

Section 504 does not specifically address disciplinary protection for a student not yet determined eligible when the LEA has knowledge of their disability. However, it is prudent for LEAs to follow the IDEA's standards (i.e., how an LEA must be deemed to have knowledge of a student's disability, as outlined above) for students who are not yet eligible under Section 504. OCR has previously characterized the IDEA's standards in this area as the "current standards under disability law."<sup>53</sup>

## *Disciplinary Actions and IDEA Dispute Resolution Options*



In the event of a disagreement that relates to a disciplinary measure, the parent (or student who is an adult) and the LEA have several dispute resolution options available to them. A comprehensive summary of these options is outside the scope of this manual. However, several key concepts related to discipline and dispute resolution are discussed briefly below. For more information, [see SpEd Rules V.H, V.I, and V.J.](#)<sup>54</sup>

### Stay-Put Provision

During the pendency of any administrative or judicial proceeding regarding a request for a due process regarding a student eligible for special education, the student involved in the complaint must remain in the student's current educational placement (as described in the student's IEP at the time of the dispute) unless the LEA and the parent (or student who is an adult) agree otherwise.<sup>55</sup> This is commonly referred to as the *stay-put* or *pendency* provision of the IDEA. This provision also applies to a student not yet eligible for special education if the LEA had knowledge

of the student's disability ([see "Protection for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education"](#)).

## Behaviors "Substantially Likely to Result in Injury to the Student or Others"

An LEA that believes that maintaining the current placement of the student is "substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others"<sup>56</sup> may appeal the team's decision by filing a due process hearing complaint. If the hearing officer agrees with the LEA, the student may be placed in an appropriate IAES for not more than 45 school days. The LEA may repeat this appeal if they continue to believe that returning the student to their previous placement is still substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.<sup>57</sup>

## Expedited Due Process Hearing

For disputes that involve school discipline and a student with a disability, given the time-sensitive nature of these disputes, the IDEA allows for a due process hearing to be expedited. For more information on this topic, [see SpEd Rules V.H.3.](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions

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In July 2022, OSERS released comprehensive guidance regarding school discipline and students with disabilities, including a document entitled [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions](#). Refer to this document for answers to a variety of questions on the following topics:

Topic	Pages
<a href="#">Obligations to Meet the Needs of Eligible Children with Disabilities under IDEA</a>	5-8
<a href="#">An Overview of IDEA's Discipline Provisions</a>	9-10
<a href="#">Change in Placement</a>	11-16
<a href="#">Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)</a>	17-20
<a href="#">Special Circumstances</a>	21-23

Topic	Pages
<a href="#"><u>Manifestation Determination Review</u></a>	24-27
<a href="#"><u>IDEA's Requirements for FBAs and BIPs</u></a>	28-29
<a href="#"><u>Provision of Services During Periods of Removal</u></a>	30-31
<a href="#"><u>Protections for Children Not Yet Determined Eligible for Services under IDEA</u></a>	32-37
<a href="#"><u>Application of IDEA Discipline Protections in Certain Specific Circumstances</u></a>	38-42
<a href="#"><u>Resolving Disagreements</u></a>	43-46
<a href="#"><u>State Oversight and Data Reporting Responsibilities</u></a>	47-50

# Notes on Chapter 8

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<sup>1</sup> *Endrew F. v. Douglas County Sch. Dist. Re-1*, 69 IDELR 174 (2017).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2017). *Questions and Answers on U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*, p.5. Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-endrewcase-12-07-2017.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Skaar, N. R., Etscheidt, S. L., & Kraayenbrink, A. (2020). School-Based Mental Health Services for Students with Disabilities: Urgent Need, Systemic Barriers, and a Proposal. *Exceptionality*, 29(4), 265-279.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09362835.2020.1801437>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2021). *Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs*. Washington, DC, Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 104.35(b)-(c)

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (n.d.). Section 504 Discipline Guidance. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved April 25, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-discipline-guidance.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2022, July). *Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Washington D.C., p. 10. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-discipline-guidance.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.10-11.

<sup>10</sup> Table 8-1 adapted with permission from Giangreco, M. and Hoza, B. (2013). Are Paraprofessional Supports Helpful? *Attention*, 20(4), 22-25. Retrieved from: [https://d393uh8gb46l22.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ATTN\\_08\\_13\\_PARAPROFESSIONALS.pdf](https://d393uh8gb46l22.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ATTN_08_13_PARAPROFESSIONALS.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Parents of MV v. Tunkhannock Area School District, No. 15903-1415KE, 115 LRP 36528, (Pennsylvania State Educational Agency, April 23, 2015) (Special Ed Connection Case Report). Retrieved from: <https://www.specialedconnection.com>

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<sup>12</sup> Disciplinary removals due to “special circumstances” are an exception to this. For more information, see [USBE Special Education Rule V.E.5](#) and the [“Special Circumstances”](#) section of this chapter.

<sup>13</sup> The standard for whether in-school suspension should be counted as a day of suspension for a student served solely under Section 504 is whether “the nature and quality of the education services provided [during in-school suspension] are comparable to those provided [otherwise].” Ocean Springs (MS) School District, Office for Civil Rights, Southern Division, Dallas (Texas), No. 06-17-1617, 120 LRP 20273, (April 28, 2020) (Special Ed Connection Case Report). Retrieved from: <https://www.specializedconnection.com>

<sup>14</sup> USBE Special Education Rules I.E.11.d., defines *shortened school day* as follows: “a student’s school day is reduced solely by school personnel in response to the student’s behavior for disciplinary purposes, rather than the student’s IEP Team or placement team, for that student to receive FAPE. In general, the use of informal removals to address a student’s behavior, if implemented repeatedly throughout the school year, could constitute a disciplinary removal from the current placement.” Retrieved from: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/9489d09b-5ede-462b-a135-4ee55918b431>

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2022, July). *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA’s Discipline Provisions*, p.54. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.B.2. Retrieved from: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/9489d09b-5ede-462b-a135-4ee55918b431>

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2022, July). *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA’s Discipline Provisions*, p.55. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.D.1. Retrieved from: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

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<sup>20</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.D.3. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>21</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.F. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2022, July). *Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, p.15. Washington D.C.

<sup>23</sup> Section 504 does not specify requirements for short-term suspensions; OCR typically follows the IDEA's requirements in this area.

<sup>24</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.C.3. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2022, July). *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions*, p. 30. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2016, December). *Dear Colleague Letter on Ensuring Equity and Providing Behavioral Supports to Students with Disabilities*. Washington D.C. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/dcl-on-pbis-in-ieps-08-01-2016.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> USBE Special Education Rules V.C.4. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>28</sup> USBE Special Education Rules V.C.1. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2022, July). *Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, p.21. Washington D.C.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2022, July). *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions*, p.53.

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Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> USBE Special Education Rules V.G. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>32</sup> Crockett County (TX) Consolidated Common School District, Office for Civil Rights, Southern Division, Dallas (Texas), Complaint No. 06-02-1173, 39 IDELR 39, 27 NDLR 32, 103 LRP 19584 (February 7, 2003) (Special Ed Connection Case Report). Retrieved from: <https://www.specialedconnection.com>

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2022, July). *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions*, p.53. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2022, July). *Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-discipline-guidance.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.E.1. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/rulespolicies?mid=4962&tid=1>

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2022, July). *Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, p.15. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-discipline-guidance.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 104.35(a)-(c).

<sup>38</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.4(a); 104.33(a), (b)(1)(i); 104.35(a), (c).

<sup>39</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.33(b)(1)(i); 104.4(a), (b)(1)(i)-(iv), (vii).

<sup>40</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.33(b)(1)(i); 104.4(a), (b)(1)(i)-(iv), (vii).

<sup>41</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.E.5

<sup>42</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.E.5.b

<sup>43</sup> 21 USC § 812(c)

<sup>44</sup> 21 USC § 812.

<sup>45</sup> 18 USC § 1365.

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<sup>46</sup> 18 USC § 1365.

<sup>47</sup> 18 USC § 930.

<sup>48</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.J.1.

<sup>49</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.J.2.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2022, July). *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions*, p.35. Washington D.C. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.J.3.

<sup>52</sup> USBE Special Education Rule V.J.4.a.(1).

<sup>53</sup> Washington (CA) Unified School District, Office for Civil Rights, Western Division, San Francisco (California), No. 09-98-1081, 29 IDELR 486, 29 LRP 5285, (May 13, 1998) (Special Ed Connection Case Report). Retrieved from: <https://www.specialedconnection.com>

<sup>54</sup> USBE Special Education Rules V.H, V.I, and V.J.

<sup>55</sup> USBE Special Education Rules IV.S.

<sup>56</sup> USBE Special Education Rules V.H.1.

<sup>57</sup> USBE Special Education Rules V.H.2.

# Appendices

- Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms
- Appendix B: Classroom Management Self-Assessment
- Appendix C: Datasheet Models for Behavior Support Progress Monitoring
- Appendix D: Model Forms

**NOTE:** The appendices are under construction and will be coming soon.