

THE SPECIAL EDGE

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BEHAVIOR

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Approaching Behavior Head-On

California has been awarded a State Improvement Grant (SIG) by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). One of the purposes of this grant is to train teachers and families in the best ways to address challenging behaviors that children and young adults display at school. The leadership of Jeff Sprague and his colleagues from the University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior (IVDB) is helping the California Department of Education realize the intents of the SIG by offering multi-day trainings on whole-school reform to school sites in all 11 regions in California (see article, page 12). Also in support of the SIG reform efforts and under the direction of Diagnostic Center South, Diana Browning Wright has been conducting numerous, one-day trainings on a variety of behavior topics throughout the same regions.

Many thousands of educators have benefited from these on-going efforts and have made site-based changes that are improving educational outcomes for all students, with and without disabilities. Through positive practices that address changing how we view and respond to misbehavior, students have been taught and encouraged to use replacement behaviors that do not interfere with their learning or that of their classmates.

While the design and style of these trainings are very different, their underlying principles are identical: they seek to support the nine core messages on behavior that the California Department of Education has developed, with the help of key stakeholders, in support of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The articles in this issue address various facets of these messages, with the intent to provide both information and further resources to parents and teachers, who can use them to more effectively serve the students in our state.

To learn more about the IVDB trainings, call the CalSTAT Project at 707/206-0533; email <allison.smith@calstat.org>. To learn more about Diana Browning Wright's trainings, call your Regional Coordinating Council (listings at <http://www.calstat.org/regionalcontact.html>).

Core Messages

1. Sustained use of effective practices must be a priority to make schools safe, healthy, and effective places.
2. A system of positive behavioral supports needs to be integrated with an entire school improvement plan.
3. Schools need a clear system of intervention that addresses behavior at all levels: the whole school, non-classroom, classroom, and individual student.
4. Schools must adopt effective practices and implement them consistently.
5. Schools need to directly teach appropriate behavior.
6. Schools need to support teachers in classroom management, effective instruction, and curriculum adaptation for all learners.
7. Effective and appropriate interventions can change the lives of students with even the most challenging behaviors.
8. Supports for students with chronic behavior problems can be most effectively established with functional behavioral assessments.
9. The powerful influences of family and community need to be taken into account when carrying out a plan for school-wide reform.

For more information on the core messages, go to <http://www.calstat.org/cores.html>

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Informing and supporting parents, educators, and other service providers on special education topics, with a focus on research-based practices, legislation, technical support, and current resources



Dr. Alice Parker, Director of the Special Education Division of the California Department of Education

LETTER FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR

Every one of us believes passionately in the importance of safe schools. Each of us, in our work and home life with children, also knows that if behavior problems are addressed early, and that if a consistent and proven system is in place to support appropriate behavior for our children, the chances of school being a safe and healthy place increase exponentially, regardless of the size of school, its location, or its demographics.

This issue of *The Special Edge* addresses school reform as it applies to behavior. The articles examine the topic from multiple perspectives, but they all operate out of a basic set of assumptions: that we can no longer expect all children to come to school

knowing how to behave, but that, given the right structure and the right kinds of positive supports, children rise to our expectations and do the right thing! With parents, teachers, administrators, and involved professionals all working and modeling together to guide children, we can have safe and healthy schools — schools where the needs of each child are met, and all children are free from fear, free from unhealthy pressures, and free to learn and grow into their full potential. It's a challenge that no single one of us can face on our own. But when we work together, it becomes a goal we can *and must* realize.

Family Collaborative Leadership Projects

Parent Training and Information centers are collaborating with Family Resource Centers to deliver leadership training to parents throughout California. The projects use a variety of approaches to help parents increase their ability to advocate for their children in special education and to participate in collaborative decision-making.

Many involved families have children

with behavior problems. The trainings show parents how to develop action plans for working with teachers and their own children to affect change.

Below is a list of the sponsoring organizations and the locations of the trainings. For contact information, call CalSTAT at 707/ 206-0533 or Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services at 800/ 926-0648.

Sponsoring Organizations

Disability Rights Education Defense Fund, Oakland

Exceptional Parents Unlimited, Fresno

Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center, Marin County

Parents Helping Parents, Santa Clara

Exceptional Family Support, Education, & Advocacy (SEA) Center, Paradise

Support for Families of Children with Disabilities, San Francisco

Team of Advocates for Special Kids, Anaheim

California Training Locations

Contra Costa County

Fresno, Merced, Mariposa, and Madera County areas

Lake and Mendocino County and the Sacramento area

Gilroy area

Northern California from Modoc down to Butte County

Alameda, San Mateo, and San Francisco County

Southern California area

School-Wide Behavioral Supports

Fern Ridge Middle School Becomes a National Model

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BY SUSAN TAYLOR-GREENE

THE AUTHOR IS THE PRINCIPAL AT FERN RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL, LOCATED IN ELMIRA, OREGON. HER SEVERAL ACADEMIC DEGREES AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION HAVE MADE HER A CREDIBLE VOICE IN FAVOR OF SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS.

I am very proud to share with you a real success story about a school that was able to vastly improve its own culture and turn itself into a safe place for students and staff to learn and teach.

Eight years ago, during my first year as vice-principal at Fern Ridge Middle School, I processed well over 5,000 office discipline referrals. On some days, I had to deal with as many as fifty; some individual students received over 100 during the school year, with no hint of improvement in their behavior as the months progressed.

Not surprisingly, it was nearly impossible for us to keep a substitute teacher in the building. I recall one sub who walked out of the classroom while students were still there. She stormed into my office, threw the school keys down on my desk, and insisted "I'm out of here. Don't ever call me to work in this school again!"

Things were challenging at our school in 1992. But they have changed.

An overview

Fern Ridge Middle School serves around 500 students in grades six through eight. We are located in a rural community in west central Oregon. Students come to our sixth grade from four small elementary schools.

Over 25 percent of our students qualify and receive some special education services, and another 20 percent receive Title I support. Thirty-seven percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunches;

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

- **W**ORK FROM A TEAM PERSPECTIVE
- **S**ECURE SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP FROM THE ADMINISTRATION
- **D**EVELOP POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS
- **A**DDRESS THREE AREAS OF FOCUS: SCHOOL-WIDE, SPECIFIC AREAS, AND AT-RISK STUDENTS
- **T**EACH APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR DIRECTLY TO STUDENTS
- **R**EINFORCE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR
- **M**ONITOR OUTCOMES OVER TIME

some of our students live in foster homes, some in group homes for delinquent offenders, placed there by the juvenile justice system.

Our 45 teachers and support staff work as a team. We currently operate from an inclusion model whenever possible, but we make available a wide range of supportive, remedial services to all of our students.

Today, Fern Ridge Middle School can be accurately described as a safe place for students, and a place where adults work to support every student in a rich learning environment.

The past

It's not an exaggeration to say that seven years ago the school was in chaos. It was not a safe place, and both the adults and the students were, for the most part, out of control.

Many students were not learning and the staff was not functioning as a team. Instead of engaging in effective problem-solving, people simply reacted to problems. When students misbehaved, teachers kicked them out of the classroom. Chronic offenders were kicked out of school. Fighting on campus was rampant. Many of our most at-risk students spent more time out of class than in, lining the walls of the main office waiting to see me or to be suspended.

Parent volunteer programs were nonexistent. Parents did not like to come into school, and many were reluctant to even send their child to enroll. Prior to my being hired as principal, eight different administrators over a five-year period tried their hand and left. And most of the school staff had no idea what was expected from the students. Teachers honestly believed that the consequences associated with the referrals would result in improved student behavior. However, this is not what was happening.

After taking a hard, painful look at the degree of chaos that daily visited the school, accompanied by the high rate of referrals, we knew we had to make a change.

Change

During my second year at Fern Ridge, I learned about a graduate program titled "Effective Behavioral Support (EBS)," offered under the direction of George Sugai and Rob Horner of the University of Oregon. Attending the program as part of a team of teachers and administrators from Fern Ridge, I learned about effective behavioral support and its basic principles:

Fern Ridge continued, page 4

1. Three separate areas need to be addressed in light of behavior:
 - Specific areas within the school setting
 - Significantly at-risk students
 - Individual classrooms
2. Effective strategies must be, and can be, used to directly improve student behavior in over 80 percent of the school population.
3. Student expectations or behaviors must be identified and stated in positive terms that students can relate to and understand.
4. Students must be actively taught what is expected of them and then provided with opportunities to practice appropriate behavior.

We developed a set of expectations which we now refer to as

The High Fives:

- Be respectful
- Be responsible
- Hands and feet to self
- Follow directions
- Be there and be ready

We then came back to school to endorse the EBS approach and work with the entire staff to build consensus. From this came the plan to devote the first two days of the school year to High Five training, which is fun, fast paced, and informative. Our teachers developed the training curriculum and our entire staff is involved in delivering it. Over these two days, students have opportunities to show that they know how to behave appropriately and that they know how not to behave, all done in a positive, supportive manner with many reinforcements built into the instructional activities.

Additionally, The High Five Program includes a more structured component, which we call the BEP: Behavioral Education Plan. This plan addresses the needs of the more at-risk students — in our case, about 30–35 students each year. A BEP requires the at-risk student to check in and check out with a significant adult every day;

it gives them extra contact with teachers; and it ensures them of feedback after each period of the day. It also gives parents the opportunity to communicate with teachers daily. This facet of EBS has also shown positive results: over 51 percent of these students meet their personal goals on a daily basis.



The picture behind this data is clear: instead of standing in the main office waiting to see an administrator, or instead of being sent home because of inappropriate behavior, our most at-risk students are in their respective classrooms, actively engaged in learning.

It is important to note that, over the past five years, we have not changed The High Fives or significantly altered the training. This has provided stability and continuity for the school, and has given our staff the experience of formative evaluation: taking an existing model and refining it each year, basing the changes on outcomes, research, and feedback.

The data that we have gathered has been favorable: after the first year of the program, our referral rate declined by 47 percent. Since then, we have sustained a 67 percent reduction in referrals. This and other supporting data from Fern Ridge Middle School represent the longest trend of outcome data available across the United States.

In February, 2000, I accompanied George Sugai and Rob Horner to Washington, D.C., to share our data and testify before the Department of Education staff and the Senate about the significance of this program. The High Five Program has been nationally recognized for its positive effect on student behavior. Once a negative, reactive, and unsafe place, Fern Ridge Middle School is now a safe and productive place for students and teachers alike. To visit Fern Ridge Middle School online, go to <http://www.fernridge.k12.or.us/fr99/> and click on the name of the school.

Teaching Respect... continued from page 11

that are being taught to the disruptive student (see article, page five).

Outcomes

One of the positive outcomes of going through this process with a student is an increased, mutual understanding. Rapport with a student is the most important tool an educator has in preventing and reducing problem behaviors. Teachers and parents both need to take the time to connect with students and children every day — to listen to them and clearly demonstrate to children that they are being heard. Above all, adults need to give students greater control over their own lives. Often disrespect comes from feeling powerless. By allowing children to choose things in their day — such as which activity to do first or last, where to sit, what topic they want to select for a report, even what colored pencils they can use — children see respect being modeled and are more likely to be respectful themselves. Remember: children watch adults closely to see how we behave. They are more likely to do what we do, not what we say.

For more information on Positive Behavioral Support, visit the following website: <http://www.pbis.org>

For more information on Functional Behavior Assessment, see <http://ici2.umn.edu/multistate/>

For general behavior support information, go to www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/homepage.html

Adapting Curriculum in the Classroom

Reducing Problem Behaviors



MODIFIED FROM *ADAPTING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: A TEACHER'S DESK REFERENCE, 1994*, BY JEFFREY SPRAGUE, CATHY DESCHENES, AND DAVID G. EBELING

In any classroom, there almost always is a group of students who cannot understand the content or learn the lesson that is designed for the majority of the students in the class. As educators, we need to face the fact that poorly adapted instruction is difficult or boring, that difficult or boring instruction is aversive, and that aversive instruction promotes problem behavior: too many mistakes, too

much acting out, not enough accuracy, or not enough involvement. When instruction is too difficult or poorly adapted, students misbehave. For instruction to be effective, we need to meet the students at their current level of performance.

While many teachers think that adapting curriculum and instruction is very complicated or time consuming, this does not have to be the case! Good teachers regularly

adapt instruction for students simply by using basic problem-solving skills. Any lesson can be adapted to meet the needs of a group of struggling learners. Well-adapted instructional materials allow success and even excellence for students who are too often left behind.

The table below offers a simple, problem-solving strategy for quickly developing successful adaptations to curriculum and instruction.

TWELVE TYPES OF CURRICULAR ADAPTATIONS

CHANGE THE CONTEXT

- **PRECORRECT ERRORS**
Give extra practice for errors you anticipate before instruction.
Example: Practice expected behaviors; give reminders before errors occur; give feedback during instruction.
- **LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION**
Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in a task or activity.
Example: In geography, have a student hold and turn the globe while others point out locations.
- **ALTERNATE GOAL**
Adapt the goals or expectations while using the same materials.
Example: In social studies, expect a student to locate just the states while others locate the capitals as well.
- **SUBSTITUTE CURRICULUM**
Provide different instruction and material.
Example: During a written language test, one learner is practicing computer skills.

CHANGE THE PRESENTATION

- **TASK DIFFICULTY**
Adapt the skill level, problem type, or rules to increase accuracy (to greater than 75 percent).
Example: Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems; simplify task directions; change the rules for a game.
- **TASK SIZE**
Adapt the number of items that a learner is expected to complete or master.
Example: Reduce the number of social studies terms required at any one time.
- **INPUT METHOD**
Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner.
Example: Use different visual aids; use concrete examples; use hands-on activities; place students in cooperative groups.
- **LEVEL OF SUPPORT**
Increase the amount of personal assistance provided to the learner.
Example: Assign peer tutors, teaching assistants, or cross-age tutors.

CHANGE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

- **TIME TO COMPLETE**
Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.
Example: Provide an individualized time-line for task completion.
- **OUTPUT METHOD**
Adapt how the learner can respond to instruction.
Example: Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response; use a communication book; demonstrate knowledge with hands-on demonstrations.
- **INCREASE REWARDS**
Make doing expected behaviors more valuable than errors or other problem behavior.
Example: Provide tokens, points, or privileges based on meeting behavior expectations; develop a contract that includes a reward.
- **REMOVE OR RESTRICT**
Take away desired objects or activities when problem behavior is observed.
Example: Restrict access to the computer at break when the student doesn't complete the assigned task.

Adaptations continued next page

Listed below is a guide for adapting curriculum and instruction:

1. Select the subject area and grade level to be taught.
2. Select the topic.
3. Identify the goal and the objectives of the lesson for most learners.
4. Develop the lesson plan for most learners (How will the lesson be taught? What is the format — whole class, small group, individual? What will the students do — write a paper; fill out a worksheet; listen; work cooperatively in groups?).
5. Identify any learner who will need adaptations in curriculum or instruction in order to reduce problem behavior and enhance learning and participation.

Providing a summary statement on the student with problem behavior is helpful. The following statement can serve as a guideline: “When _____ (the predictor) happens, the student performs _____ (behavior), in order to get/avoid _____ (attention, the task, etc.).”

6. Choose an appropriate mix of adaptations. Use the Twelve Types of Adaptations as a means of thinking about ways you could adapt material or how you could teach to support this learner. Try to come up with a strategy for each of the twelve. Some may overlap.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of the adaptation. The following questions can help a teacher reflect on and evaluate a proposed adaptation:
 - a. Will this adaptation improve the level of participation in class for the student?
 - b. Is this adaptation the least intrusive/interfering option?
 - c. Will this adaptation give the student a variety of options, or do you use the same adaptation for all activities (e.g., always solve fewer problems)?
 - d. Does this adaptation ensure an appropriate level of difficulty for the student?
 - e. Can the student use this adaptation elsewhere?

Curriculum adaptations blend behavioral supports with learning. When thoughtful adaptations accept the current abilities of the students, the adaptations promise to be more engaging than instruction that does not consider individual needs. These curricular changes urge our struggling learners to take that one, sometimes small, next step toward competency, and this step may create the very experience that nudges a child onto a road toward excellence. As educators, we can't predict this with any certainty, but we certainly can try.

To learn more about Jeff Sprague's work and that of his colleagues at the Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior (IVDB), visit their website at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ivdb/>

To find out about IVDB's State Improvement Grant-funded behavior trainings in California, contact CalSTAT at 707/206-0533, ext. 110.

Cottonwood... continued from page 16

The school is sending a team of staff members to Jeff Sprague's BEST Practices training, coordinated by Region Ten (see article, page 12). The Cottonwood staff sees this training as a way to help them develop a comprehensive plan for addressing behavior issues.

Interestingly, most school communities fear that behavior problems will escalate if general and special education programs are integrated in the classroom. Cottonwood has found that the opposite is true. Not only was there a decrease in behavior problems after implementing their ExCEL program, but the staff was inspired by this success to create a school-wide action plan specifically dealing with behavior issues, which broadened and enhanced the initial reach of the program. Cottonwood is a dynamic example of the power of change to revitalize an entire school community. The staff has created a learning environment that is effectively serving the needs of all.

To learn more about Cottonwood Elementary School as a model site, go online at <http://www.calstat.org/modelandmentor.html>

may act out as a defense mechanism against shame. They need to be encouraged and supported.

- Use one-on-one tutoring, whenever possible, with boys who have difficulty concentrating. Customize instructional approaches to meet individual needs.
- Reduce English class sizes, thus allowing teachers to give boys additional time and attention.
- Use the arts, trade classes, and even sports to stimulate reading and writing. That is, make reading a key part of nonacademic courses to which boys may be attracted.
- Encourage, train, and support more energetic young men in becoming teachers. More male teachers allow boys to directly see, through the teacher's gender role-modeling, how better language skills are not a threat to their self-image, but rather a complement that can enrich their masculinity.

When we let students slip through the cracks at school, the consequence is much more severe than limited self-expression or reduced earning capacity. Our country now has a higher percentage of boys and young men behind bars than any other nation on earth. The one thing these young felons all have most in common is early school failure. It may take a significant investment in the creation of boy-friendly curricula and teaching methods to reverse current trends. Education, however, is cheaper by far than incarceration.

*As a dyslexic child, Aaron Kipnis was kicked out of over a dozen schools. He dropped out in the ninth grade and did not return to school until college. Currently a professor of psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, Dr. Kipnis's most recent book is **Angry Young Men: How Parents, Teachers and Counselors Can Help "Bad Boys" Become Good Men** (1999, Jossey Bass Publishers). For more information visit <http://www.malepsych.com>*

Establishing Rules in the Classroom

Supporting Positive Student Behavior

W

BY COLLEEN SHEA STUMP, PH.D., SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

hen addressing student behavior, successful teachers create a learning environment of support, trust, and care that motivates students to learn. In addition, these teachers are proactive. One big step toward realizing this kind of well-thought-out classroom environment involves providing positive supports for students by explicitly teaching appropriate behavioral and social skills. Teachers can start to do this by establishing classroom rules.

Establishing rules

It is critical for teachers to clearly establish rules, to establish them early, to model and teach them to students, and to consistently enforce them in the classroom. Establishing explicit rules and making time for students to practice them can significantly reduce conflict and power plays between student and teacher. When students act out, teachers can simply refer to the rules and their associated consequence. The personal and emotional baggage is removed.

Moreover, explicitly stating rules, modeling them, providing time for students to practice them, and periodically reviewing them with the students goes a long way toward supporting the success of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. These students may require multiple opportunities to learn the rules before they truly understand them and how they should guide their behavior in the classroom.

Often, the behavior of students with disabilities is misinterpreted by others as a flagrant violation of the rules, when in fact, students may be unaware of the rules or may not understand them thoroughly because the rules have not been explicitly taught or reviewed frequently enough.

The need for modeling, practicing, and reviewing rules can be especially

important for students with disabilities who are educated in general education classrooms. Often, these students are in and out of different classrooms throughout the day, with each setting having its unique rules. Because these students are not consistently in any one classroom, they may miss out on significant instruction related to classroom rules and routines, and therefore, engage in inappropriate behavior that does not reflect the rules for a particular classroom. Often, they do not engage in this misbehavior maliciously or intentionally, but rather because they just do not know the rules or expectations, or because they have confused the rules in one classroom with the rules of another.

Suggestions for establishing rules

- **Create classroom rules with the students to increase ownership.**

This could be done with students nominating rules. The teacher could also provide a list that includes serious and silly rules and that the students use as a basis for writing the class rules.

- **Limit the classroom rules to no more than five or six.**

Too many rules can result in confusion. Teachers and students both are likely to forget the rules when there are many. Too many rules can also backfire and become a point of disagreement and a hindrance to conducting classroom business.

- **Keep rules simple and explicit.**

Use direct language when writing rules (e.g., "Use inside voices when working in cooperative groups," "Listen when others are talking," rather than "Respect others").

- **State rules positively.**

There is nothing more negative or defeating than having a list of rules that tell students what they cannot do. In contrast, stating rules in the positive creates a supportive and encouraging

classroom tone. For example, rather than having a long list of no's (e.g., "No eating in the classroom." "No talking."), turn it around: "Eating in the classroom is only allowed on special occasions; students may talk when they have raised their hands and have been called on, when working in pairs or groups, or when they are asking questions." These rules are positive and indicate what students are to do. These rules provide more information for students, and they frame behavior in a positive way.

- **Establish common rules across classrooms.**

Teams of teachers working with the same groups of students may want to establish rules to be followed in all classes. This prevents students from having to adjust to different expectations as they move from class to class and from teacher to teacher.

- **Share the rules with families.**

Enlist the support of parents after your rules are established. Ask each student to take a list of the rules home and have the parents sign them. Then ask the students to discuss with parents the meaning and value of the rules and which ones may even be useful at home.

- **Establish school-wide rules to be observed in common areas.**

These common rules become part of a school's improvement plan and need to be modeled and enforced by all adults in the school. Common rules provide consistency for students and teachers and serve to prevent problem behavior because all adults are "on the same page" when it comes to responding to students.

More information about successful classroom rules is available at <http://askeric.org/Virtual/Lessons/Interdisciplinary/INT0039.html>

To read about school-wide rules, see the article on page three of this issue.

Educating Boys

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BY AARON KIPNIS, PH.D.

any teachers today are concerned about the growing challenge of disruptive students in the classroom. Often, the students identified as having the most chronic behavior problems are boys. They are featured in roughly three-quarters of all suspensions and expulsions; and they represent 70 percent of students labeled “learning disabled” and 80 percent designated as “emotionally disturbed.” Boys receive more Fs and have lower grade point averages. They drop out or fail to graduate four-to-one over girls. Nationwide, the participation of young men in college is steadily declining. Males are 44 percent of the 2001 freshman class and only 41 percent of new graduate students.

A higher percentage of American boys now score in the lower ranks of literacy than in any other industrialized nation. These language-skill deficits are closely tied to failures in academic, economic, and social arenas. When boys fail at verbal skills in the presence of girls, for example, whom they often want to impress, their embarrassment can be quite painful. Sometimes, to mask feelings of shame, some boys deal with their poor performance in one arena by acting out in other ways that display their strength and self-confidence, ways that often are inappropriate or even harmful. There appear to be real causal links between academic failure, with its incumbent social defeat, and involvement in the disruptive activities that channel an increasing number of boys out of educational institutions.

Stillness, neatness, conformity, quietness, politeness, attentiveness, and patience with repetitive verbal drills — historically regarded as more feminine virtues — are still the preferred norms for most classrooms today. But many boys, whether by nature or nurture, are typically more active, challenging, disorderly,

assertive, irreverent, questioning, boundary testing, and perhaps, a little more physical and visually oriented in their learning style. Consequently, teachers attuned to the stillness/neatness/patience norms tend to perceive boys as having more personality disorders and behavior problems than girls — particularly in overly large classrooms where it is difficult to absorb all of that male energy. Instead of regarding spirited boys as disruptive, defiant, or deviant, however, a gender-sensitive, male-affirming view sees them as full of energy that needs engagement and firm direction.

For many boys, the persona that they are too-often called to assume in the classroom is not in accord with the



traditions of male identity they encounter in the broader cultural milieu. It may even be, at times, both developmentally appropriate and completely normal for adolescent boys to challenge the environment of today's coeducational classroom. Developmental psychologist Jean Piaget wrote that it is the duty of a boy “to revolt against all-imposed truth and to build up his intellectual and moral ideas as freely as he can.”

Competition and confrontation are healthy, normal ways of testing the worth of new knowledge. Of course, wild boys have to be taken out of classrooms at times. They distract other students and sidetrack teachers. If suspended from campus, however, their punishment is often more a vacation. Alternative consequences

offered in school offer a more constructive approach: boys get up, go to school, and receive their classwork. There, in set-aside areas of the campus, they can work in smaller classes, receive one-on-one tutoring, and get counseling — services many failing boys need in order to succeed.

As a rule, boys respond well to a strong classroom presence that can contain and direct their aggression with caring firmness. Highly spirited boys need one-on-one or small-group instruction, realistic expectations, clear behavioral limits, frequent changes in activity, and opportunities to burn off excess energy. In many schools today, academic demands have become so great that physical recreation is reduced to fifteen minutes a day. Many other schools have no functioning outdoor equipment for fear of litigation for permitting its use. Consequently, some schools now host no physical activity at all. In my experience, however, when boys are allowed to let their feelings and physicality remain connected with their mental learning, they are rarely bored or restless.

As educators, we can do a number of things to improve performance and effect the positive behavioral changes that often accompany the self-esteem associated with academic success:

- Acknowledge that the development of language skills is often slower for boys than for girls, and structure learning so that boys do not fall behind.
- Identify and remediate learning problems early on.
- Introduce reading materials most likely to capture boys' interests, understanding that building verbal skills is initially more important than curriculum contents.
- Assign writing exercises relevant to boys' daily lives, such as a journal that is then reviewed more for content than form or grammar. This is especially critical for the learning disabled.
- Understand that when boys feel verbally outclassed by girls, they

Educating Boys continued, page 6

Young Children Who Challenge Us

Resources for Reflective Thinking

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Challenging behavior among young children is becoming increasingly common. Parents and professionals worry about the social and emotional well being of these children. How can adults work with them to effect positive change? How can they be confident in the accuracy of their reactions and judgments and sure of their ability to support these children? It is fairly common among parents and professionals alike to wish for that one article or workshop that is able to “make all the problems disappear.” Unfortunately, neither exists. In one way or another, most adults know that the solution lies in having access to tools and resources that can help them be more effective with the children and respectful of the other adults involved, while helping everyone avoid burnout. This article offers some tools to help parents and professionals do just that.

Who challenges you?

Take a moment to think about a young child who tests your coping skills. Jot down a few single words that describe the most difficult aspects of that child. Are the terms negative? Can you substitute a more positive (or at least neutral) counterpart? Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, author of *Raising Your Spirited Child*, has done extensive work on helping parents and professionals see that labels and descriptions of a child can dramatically change the way we relate to the child. By identifying the characteristics and providing positive labels, we can use “words that wrap our children in a protective coat of armor, giving them the strength they need to make the behavior changes that actually turn the inappropriate behavior into acceptable actions.”

There are many reasons why a child may be regarded as challenging: it may be the child’s particular

temperament or disability; it may be the child’s reaction to situations at home. We may view children as challenging when they disrupt the status quo or “ruffle” our values. Adults carry with them a strong sense of what children should or should not do, a sense that comes from a combination of upbringing, cultural values, education, and training. The best resources recommend that adults shift the way they approach this kind of challenge. And reflection is the best place to start, because “what we think determines what we do” (*from the video “Reframing Discipline,” see page 10 for contact information*).

Challenging behavior pushes our buttons. Recent research on the brain offers an image of the path that thinking takes as it travels through the brain. Daniel Goldman, in *Emotional Intelligence*, summarizes how, in a moment of crisis, the usual path is short-circuited and the “thought energy” can get stuck in a primitive part of the brain that triggers the “flight, fight, or survival” response.

Postponing action when a challenge from a child triggers this response allows time for that thought to reach the more developed part of the brain. A delay allows for more careful consideration, not just gut-level reactions. The more refined part of the brain can then actually think about its own thinking, access all that it knows, and make careful choices about interpretations and actions.

Why do children challenge us?

Children challenge us in order to communicate their needs or goals. Children are people. They want the same things that the rest of us want: to belong, to feel important, to accomplish things, to satisfy desires, to be cherished. The underlying goal of all behavior is to find a sense of belonging and significance. This holds

true for adults as well as for children. While in group settings and in families, adults tend to emphasize the “belonging” aspect — fitting into the whole — young children are driven by their need for “significance.” They want to feel unique. It may seem as though these goals are contradictory, when in fact they are two sides of the same coin. Everyone needs to belong by being valued for his/her uniqueness.

Behavior is communication. So what is the challenging child trying to tell us? Rudolf Dreikurs and Jane Nelson identify four mistaken goals of behavior: attention, power, revenge, and assumed inadequacy. However, the underlying goals are always to belong and feel significant.

How do we respond?

Respect and developmentally appropriate practices must be the foundation of caring for children. Many workshops and publications are devoted to methods that involve various positive discipline techniques; sensory stimulation; expression of feeling through words or motion; and on and on. Yet parents and professionals who use these creative approaches continue to struggle with challenging behaviors in children.

At this point, it may be helpful for a teacher, parent, or child-care provider to write down a list of a few single words that describe how he or she feels when these practices don’t work. This list may provide a clue about the mistaken goals of the child. They may also show why many people give up.

In response to repeated failures, frustration, or lack of progress, people tend to react emotionally, not only in the moment, but also over time. This tendency may cause them to pull back and distance themselves from the child, when they really need to be

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getting more and more connected with the child. In addition, when adults react out of feelings of failure, they miss opportunities to act out of a deeper understanding.

What do adults do next?

We have to challenge ourselves to move from the adult as teacher/facilitator to the adult as learner and the child as teacher. The basic premise is this: young children have good intuitions about their needs and feelings. As adults, one of our roles is to nurture children's self-esteem by respecting and interpreting what they communicate through language and behavior, while supporting them as they tune in to their intuition, temperament, and feelings.

What most people want to change is the child (and/or the parent or the teacher). We become frustrated when we realize that we usually cannot control anyone beyond ourselves. But as teachers, parents, or caregivers, we do have some control over three things: our own behavior, our environment, and our knowledge of the individual child that we gain through observation. When we are able to think and learn about the emotional and internal component of those areas, we become more reflective and responsive. Changing ourselves may even result in changing the reactions we get from children and other adults. What follows are some ideas for helping adults become more reflective in this effort.

Tools for reflective thinking

1. *Meeting children's emotional needs — an integral part of any home or school environment.* We need to rethink how we structure and design our time with children. How much value do we place on the underlying goals of belonging and feeling significant? How often do we observe children carefully to see where their interests lie? How can we be respectful of the children with challenging behavior while acknowledging our frustrations and needs as adults?

2. *Problem solving as a tool for reflection.* Most people are familiar

with some version of problem-solving steps:

- a) Define the problem.
- b) Gather information.
- c) Partner with other significant adults, e.g., spouse, teachers, caregivers, etc.
- d) Generate as many solutions as possible.
- e) Choose one possible solution and make a plan.
- f) Implement the solution chosen.
- g) Evaluate the solution.

Such steps can be useful in developing a positive behavior plan. Taking preliminary, reflective steps is an important part of finding an accurate definition of the problem.

3. *Mistakes versus miss-takes.* Consider how you feel about yourself when the techniques that you use do not work. While the feelings and emotions themselves are neutral, they can often take on negative meanings as a result of our past experiences. Thus, they cloud our perceptions and reactions. When dealing with a child whom you find challenging, turn your mistakes into *miss-takes* by following what Jane Nelson calls the three "R's" of recovery (adapted from *Positive Discipline*):

Recognize: Catch your internal messages, thoughts, feelings, and reactions.

Reconcile: Shift from the negative. There are many ways to do this: recognize and replace the thought; let the thought go; analyze the thought; and let the thought run its course. An additional idea is to imagine the child as an adult looking back on the situation. What is the long-term view for this child? Can you reconcile your ideas with this "big picture?"

Resolve: Wait for the "internal calm." Once this occurs, you will be able to find other approaches. There are many right ways. You are an artist; be creative in your solutions.

How can administrators support reflective practices?

Administrators are challenged to find the time, energy, and resources

to use and support this reflective process with staff, children, and families. The process may include more planning time, career personnel development, regular staff meetings, reflective supervision, and time for parent conferences. A parallel process occurs as we recognize and reflect. How we interact with each other in turn influences how we interact with children and parents or teachers. Just as it is difficult to be effective with children without a relationship, administrators will find reflection more effective when they have taken the time to build a community within and around their organization.

Are you successful?

Change is not easy. When you first start looking at yourself in new ways, you may feel less than successful. But don't be fooled — the success lies first in the trying. Focus on small changes. Although the majority of your interactions will be positive, there are still going to be "miss-takes." Keep in mind the goal of supporting the two needs of all people: 1) to belong, to fit into the whole and 2) to feel significant, to be unique.

Learning about another individual will never fail to teach you new things about yourself. The challenging child accelerates your growth curve. Consider this: the child who stumps you may take you where no one else can!

Resources for Reflective Thinking

Positive Discipline. Jane Nelson, Ed.D. New York: Ballantine Books, revised 1996. Go to <http://www.positivediscipline.com/> or call 800/ 456-7770.

Practical Ideas for Addressing Challenging Behaviors. Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Early Childhood. Longmont, CO: Sopris West, 1999. Go to <http://www.sopriswest.com/swstore/> or call 303/ 651-2829

Raising Your Spirited Child. Mary Sheed Kurcinka. New York: Harper Collins, 1991. Go to <http://www.homeschoolzone.com/amazonbooks/kurcinka.htm>.

Reframing Discipline. Video series. Educational Productions. Go to <http://www.edpro.com> or call 800/ 950-4949.

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Teaching Respect in the Classroom



BY ADAM STEIN, PROGRAM SPECIALIST, SONOMA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

educators are finding it harder and harder to work with students who exhibit antisocial behavior in schools. Though these students represent only one to five percent of a school's population, they typically are responsible for upwards to 50 percent of the office referrals at any given site.

School-wide behavioral supports

Recent research has shown that schools can substantially reduce challenging behaviors by developing school-wide behavioral supports (see article, page three). Schools that effectively handle behavior problems do so by developing clear and concise behavioral expectations for the school and classroom, expectations that are

- systematically taught to the students throughout the year
- practiced through role playing
- regularly and meaningfully reinforced and modeled by adults

The staff in these schools focus on positive interactions with the students, and the students know what the rewards are for adhering to the expectations and what the consequences are for violating them. The result is a "healthy host environment"



for prosocial behavior, where students feel respected and supported and thus are less likely to act out.

Prevention

Prevention is one of the hallmarks of Positive Behavioral Support (PBS), a process that is at the root of the successful, school-wide programs outlined above. With PBS, a student's behavior is examined for the existing conditions that contribute to, or set the stage for, the behavior to occur (the ecology of the behavior). PBS also recognizes that since students exhibit behaviors for a purpose (or function), students who behave inappropriately have to be taught new or replacement skills to allow them to satisfy that purpose in a more prosocial way. A PBS plan is developed by conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment (see insert) to establish ecological factors that contribute to the behavior and the function, or purpose, of the behavior. Once these factors are understood, a plan can be developed that does three things:

1. It changes environmental conditions that impact the behavior (such as reducing distractions, changing reading partners, moving from the door, etc.).
2. It lays out specific new skills that the student needs to learn in order to meet the purpose/function of the behavior (such as teaching a student to use language to resolve problems instead of hitting a peer).
3. It alters the way adults and peers respond to the challenging behavior, helping to diminish or minimize it.

The environment is key

When a student is disrespectful, teachers need to ask themselves what in the environment makes it possible or more likely for that behavior to occur. For example, is the work too hard, too easy, or too boring from the student's point of view? Is there little or no opportunity for the student to interact with adults in a positive and meaningful way? Do peers tease the

student, fear the student, or somehow make the student uncomfortable? Is the student organized enough to do what is asked of him/her? Do the students have enough appropriate materials to do what they need to do?

If adults can recognize the factors that contribute to the disrespectful behavior, perhaps they can change those factors and help to prevent the behavior. Parents and educators also need to watch for patterns around the behavior: when is it most likely to occur; what are the times when it doesn't happen; what factors create the difference? Looking for and responding to these patterns will help to prevent the behavior from occurring, and are the first areas of intervention under PBS.

Pinpointing the conditions that contribute to the behavior leads to the second area of intervention: identifying the function. It is important to view student behavior as an effort to get something out of the environment. Students may be disrespectful for many different functions: they may know that they will get sent out of the classroom, thus escaping work or classmates they fear; or they may want attention. Sometimes the child wants to be sent to detention, where he knows certain friends are likely to be.

If we know why a student is being disrespectful in our classrooms, we can teach that student alternative skills so the need to be disrespectful and disruptive diminishes and is replaced by something more positive.

Finally, adults need to look at how they are responding to the disrespectful behavior. Do they inadvertently reinforce it? For example, are they sending the student out of the room when the function is to escape from work? If this is the case, a more constructive response to the disrespect would be to individually adapt any new material or skills

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Behavior Trainings That Work

As Program Specialist for the Shasta County SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area), Bobbie Groves is pleased. Having helped organize a series of trainings that focus on school climate, she is convinced that they are already making a difference in the lives of both students and teachers from several schools in her region.

Developed by the University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior (IVDB), these trainings, titled BEST (Building Effective Schools Together) Practices, present a set of strategies for improving discipline in schools. Groves is confident that current and future efforts to build effective BEST teams at school sites will only enhance each school's ability to improve in the areas of behavior and academics.

The BEST Practices training offers more than just a one-day workshop. It also asks more of the participants. Besides taking place over several days, it requires the attendance of particular school personnel. Participating schools are represented by teams made up of both general and special education teachers, the building administrator, a classified staff representative, a related services staff person, and a parent, when possible. Area personnel who provide training and assistance related to school discipline are also invited to attend. This cross-sectional representation is based on IVDB's research-based conviction that no behavior plan will succeed unless it is supported by all levels of school personnel.

Groves was impressed with the manner as well as the expertise of the presenters of BEST Practices. Jeff Sprague, the team leader who was central to developing the training, and Dale Meyers, are very dedicated, according to Groves. And she liked the way they presented the material. It

was "almost like a fireside chat . . . but all of the [IVDB] staff have a passion for behavior, school climate, and how to create a place for kids to learn." The relaxed pace of the presentation is interspersed with planning and sharing time. Groves explained that "when the participants left after the first two days of the four-day training, they had clear ideas about what they could do to get their schools involved."

What was particularly encouraging, according to Groves, was the level of continued support that the IVDB provides through training and technical assistance. Once the initial training is over, there are formal, follow-up training days for the school teams, and "a lot of ongoing support and consultation available by phone and email. These are real people who care."

Groves is also pleased about the many general education teachers and

underscore the pervasiveness of behavioral problems in schools, problems that regularly descend into outright violence.

Mary Hatwood Futrell, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University, states the problem succinctly: "When teachers and students are more concerned about their safety than about education, they cannot concentrate on teaching and learning."

Research additionally shows what many educators have experienced: schools that punish inappropriate and violent behavior on campus do not solve the problem. Students tend to simply respond to punishment with more inappropriate and violent behavior. So what is a school or district to do? This is where the BEST Practices model enters the picture.

Based on the Effective Behavioral Support (EBS) (Sugai and Horner, 1994; Sprague, Sugai, and Walker, 1997) staff development model and on many years of research on effective school and classroom management, BEST Practices addresses school-wide, non-classroom, classroom, and individual student interventions. It helps instructors learn ways to teach appropriate behavior as a subject, just like teaching math or science. EBS has a system of supports for students, faculty, and staff, and it involves everyone in making, teaching, and enforcing the rules.

The aim of BEST Practices is to train representative school team members to develop and implement customized school rules, positive reinforcement systems, and data-based decision making. It offers strategies that support effective classroom management and curriculum adaptation. Additionally, it introduces team members to functional

Training continued, next page



administrators who have "come on-board" to collaborate with special education on the critical topic of school behavior.

There is no denying that behavior is a central topic to anyone involved in education. It is one of the principle reasons why beginning teachers, in both general and special education, quit within the first five years of entering the profession. But the problem is larger than that of basic classroom management. Recent media stories, Congressional testimony, and numerous studies and reports vividly

behavioral assessment and positive behavioral intervention.

During the training, team members complete work that directly applies to the school and classroom (e.g., review and develop school rules, make a plan for recognizing and rewarding good behavior, revise or develop a model for a discipline referral form). The teams then leave the training with custom-designed plans that they can immediately use at their school sites.

This school-wide approach was a big "Aha!"

— *Gail Cafferata*
Region Two SELPA

After the initial training, teams are asked to meet once a month between training days to process the information and adjust the school plan. This approach allows the content to be embedded into the daily practices of the school personnel; and it improves the chances of the school continuing to use the practices.

For many schools, one of the most interesting aspects of the training involves assessment. Each team is asked to provide some archival information to create a current behavioral picture of its school (e.g., discipline referrals, achievement test scores, student grades, etc.). What this information does is provide a kind of baseline from which school staff can refine their data collection and make ongoing comparisons as they chart the results of their efforts toward change. IVDB coordinates the collection, analysis, and interpretation of these data. Giving data-based feedback to schools is a vital part of the effort to implement a new behavioral plan. And it helps keep motivation high.

When Gail Cafferata, from the Butte County SELPA, also in Region

Two, learned about school-wide behavioral supports, she became intrigued with the effective work that the IVDB was doing in this area. This last summer, when she was informed of the IVDB trainings that the CalSTAT Project was offering through California's RCCs (Regional Coordinating Councils), she said that she "didn't have to think twice . . . these trainings are dynamite."

"I came out and harassed our boss to let me do a presentation about the [BEST Practices] project. The data was astounding. I can go on and on about how excited I was. I work with behavior problems constantly, supporting teachers as they deal with students. This [school-wide] approach was a big "aha." I work on a daily basis with individual teachers, figuring out the 'whats' and 'whys' of children's behavior and how to deal with them in a positive fashion. What IVDB did was take the same behavioral approach and apply it to a whole school."

The schools in Cafferata's county have just finished their first, year-long training as part of a five-year reform effort. And she is already excited at the results. "It reduces the number of [behavior problems] you have to deal with every day." These schools are now in their second year and have started to collect formal data.

The school teams have been extremely enthusiastic about the trainings. According to Cafferata, "they have taken the ball and run with it . . . A high school in Oroville, for example, got 100% of the staff to buy into it, to teach the kids the rules and how to apply them in a classroom."

Cafferata stresses the central importance of full administrative and staff commitment. Even though she is part of the special education staff, she "had no problem getting general educators onboard. The administrators and school psychologists were very committed, too. The enthusiasm was contagious." She notes that hard data was responsible for winning this commitment. The impressive results experienced in schools that have used these programs are hard to ignore (see article page 3).

When asked what a teacher should do who wants to implement this sort of system of behavioral support, but who has difficulty getting the attention of the administration, Cafferata immediately responds with "just keep showing them the numbers." She feels sure that the proven results that other schools have experienced will convince teachers and administrators alike that this change in the system only makes their jobs easier. In addition, it has a very "positive impact on the climate of schools, in academics as well as behavior."

School sites interested in learning more about BEST Practices trainings can visit the CalSTAT website at <http://www.calstat.org/bestpractices.html> or call CalSTAT at 707/206-0533, extension 110.

LRE News

The assurance of an education in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for children with disabilities is one of the central mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has, over the past few years, encouraged California to find a consistent way to evaluate how LRE is being implemented in schools across the state. An LRE Design Team has been working at the California Department of Education to construct a universal set of evaluations for LRE. The team's work is drawing to a close, and it plans to offer trainings this spring that address the newly developed Self-Assessment Instruments or Protocols that are designed for three levels: state, district, and local school. These instruments will provide educators with a consistent rating and evaluation scale to help them determine the degree to which they are successful in providing a least restrictive environment. Watch the website of the Special Education Division for more information about these trainings: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/sed/>

RiSE LIBRARY RESOURCES

View all resources from the RiSE Library online at <http://www.php.com>; or phone in orders: 408/ 727-5775, ext. 110.

Back Off, Cool Down, Try Again: Teaching Students How to Control Aggressive Behavior

By Sylvia Rockwell. The Council for Exceptional Children; Reston, VA, 1995; call # 22469 & 22470; 140 pages. A vividly descriptive primer on how to work with groups of students with behavioral or emotional problems using the stages of group development as the basis for classroom management.

Beyond Behavior Modification: A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach to Behavior Management in the School

By Joseph Kaplan. Pro-Ed; Austin, TX, 1991; call # 5298; 312 pages. A comprehensive reference on behavior management for professionals.

Communicative Alternative to Challenging Behavior: Integrating Functional Assessment and Intervention Strategies

By Joe Reichle. Paul H. Brookes Publishing; Baltimore, MD, 1993; call # 6871; 457 pages. Explains how challenging behavior can be redirected into socially acceptable behavior through transdisciplinary communication intervention. Includes in-depth, hands-on assessment and intervention strategies that can be used in home, work, and community settings.

Decreasing Classroom Behavior Problems: Practical Guidelines for Teachers

By John Burke, Ph.D.. Singular Publishing Group, Inc.; San Diego, CA, 1992; call # 21876; 195 pages. This book adds to the training of teachers and instructional assistants by presenting information and practical guidelines that can be used to prevent and reduce disruptive classroom behaviors.

Emotional and Behavioral Problems in Children with Learning Disabilities

By Robin P. Gallico. College Hill Press; Boston, MA, 1988; call # 4841; 162 pages. Gives examples that demonstrate effective treatment plans addressing cognitive and emotional symptoms in learning disabilities through an interdisciplinary approach.

Functional Analysis of Problem Behavior: From Effective Assessment to Effective Support

By Alan Repp and Robert Horner. Wadsworth Publishing Company; Belmont, CA, 1999; call # 22490; 416 pages. This innovative collection gives educators a broad look at problem behavior analysis; it features current essays by top experts in the field.

A Positive Approach to Understanding and Addressing Challenging Behaviors: Supporting Educators and Families to Include Students with Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties in Regular Education

By K. Topper, et al. University of Vermont; Burlington, VT, 1994; call # 21001; 106 pages. Offers ways to address challenging behaviors based on experiences of students, families, and teachers. Discusses the establishment of a collaborative team, the inclusion of students with challenging behavior in the regular classroom, transition planning, and more.

Positive Behavioral Support: Including People with Difficult Behavior in the Community

By Lynn Koegel-Kern, Robert Koegel, and Glen Dunlap. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.; Baltimore, MD, 1996; call # 22498; 510 pages. Discusses which strategies and approaches make inclusion possible for individuals who engage in challenging and self-injurious behavior.

Positive Interventions for Serious Behavior Problems

By Diana Browning Wright and Harvey Gurman. California Department of Education; Sacramento, CA, 1998 Revised Edition; call # 22445; 303 pages. Offers ideas about discipline, functional behavioral assessment, and positive behavioral interventions that have proven to be effective in helping students with severe behavior problems.

The Teacher's Guide to Behavioral Interventions: Intervention Strategies for Behavior Problems in the Educational Environment

By Kathy Cummins Wunderlich. Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc.; Columbia, MO, 1998; call # 21307; 291 pages. Provides educators with intervention strategies for common behavior problems, including goals and objectives for use with IEP writing.

Teacher's Encyclopedia of Behavior Management: 100 Problems/ 500 Plans, for Grades K-9

By Randall Sprick and Lisa Howard. Sopris West; Longmont, CO, 1998; call # 22651 & 22652; 871 pages. Offers hundreds of model plans as well as invaluable techniques for customizing and implementing effective interventions; designed to help teachers create productive and respectful learning environments.

Teaching Students with Behavioral Disorders: Basic Questions and Answers

By T. J. Lewis. Council for Exceptional Children (CEC); Reston, VA, 1991; call # 21212; 47 pages. Offers ways to improve effectiveness in working with students with challenging behaviors in the areas of assessment and evaluation, curriculum and instruction, and collaboration.

What Do I Do When . . .

The Answer Book on Discipline

By Susan Gorn. LRP Publications; Horsham, PA, 1999; call # 22454 and 22455. Offers parameters of appropriate discipline procedures and intervention alternatives; also contains complete coverage of 1999 IDEA Regulations.

ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.air.org/cecp/school_violence.htm

The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) offers links to best practices for prevention of delinquency, drug abuse, and violence; it also provides resources for the promotion of mental health.

<http://www.mentalhealth.org/>

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) assumes a leadership role in delivering mental health services, generating and applying new knowledge in the mental health care field, and establishing national mental health policy. Their website features programs and information for children, the homeless, immigrants, women, and others, as well as links to state planning and resource guides, all in an effort to improve and increase the quality and range of treatment, rehabilitation, and support services for people with mental illness, their families, and communities.

http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCINTYRE/SchoolWideSystem.html

Developing a School-Wide Behavior Management System offers a step-by-step guide

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Online Resources . . . continued

to developing school-wide behavior plans, with special references and links to materials for a school-wide plan for high schools.

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html>

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools. A summary of the research on violence prevention, intervention, and crisis response in schools; designed to help school personnel, parents, community members and others identify early indicators of troubling and potentially dangerous student behavior.

<http://brt.uoregon.edu/ebs/EffectiveBehavioralSupports>

The Effective Behavioral Supports website, created and maintained by the University of Oregon's College of Education; this information-filled site offers an in-depth look at effective behavioral supports, from research to practice.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/hatemotivated.pdf>

Hate-Motivated Behavior in Schools: Response Strategies for School Boards, Administrators, Law Enforcement, and Communities. This free resource is designed to promote discussion, planning, immediate action, and effective, long-term responses to hate-motivated incidents on campus.

<http://ici2.umn.edu/multistate/default.html>

Positive Approaches to Challenging Behaviors for Young Children with Disabilities offers discussions of positive supports for children who engage in inappropriate behavior. Intended to help families, caregivers, and service providers understand why a particular behavior may occur, help service providers develop intervention strategies for organizing environments to decrease the possibility of challenging behaviors in young children, and help families and service providers to learn more about strategies to support children with challenging behaviors.

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/ActionGuide/>

Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide. Provides practical steps schools can take to design and implement school safety plans that can help reduce violence and direct children toward getting the services they need.

SIG-FUNDED TRAININGS

Various dates

A variety of trainings funded by the State Improvement Grant (SIG) are coordinated regionally. These activities address topics such as behavior, literacy, and collaboration. The CalSTAT website offers a calendar that lists trainings available in your area.

Website: <http://www.calstat.org/regionalinformation.html>

CALENDAR

March 7-10, 2001

California Association of School Psychologists Convention "A CASP Odyssey: Building Resiliency in a Complex World"

A continuing education conference for school psychologists, counselors, administrators, social workers, and special education personnel; features keynote speakers Gary Hart and Gary Howard. Costa Mesa. Contact: 916/444-1595; email: memberservices@casponline.org; Website: http://www.casponline.org/source/events/events_conv2001.htm

April 4-7, 2001

The Family and Community Violence Prevention Program's Fifth National Conference "Families Building Bridges: Strategies to Prevent Violence"

For educators, administrators, social service providers, and others who work with youth and their families who are at risk of violent or abusive behavior. Los Angeles. Contact: 888/496-2667; email: fcvp@csu.ces.edu; Website: <http://www.fcvp.org>

April 27-30, 2001

California Alliance Concerned with School Age Parenting and Pregnancy Prevention's (CAC SAP) Annual Conference presents "Taking it to the

Streets: Raising Awareness of Teen Pregnancy Policies and Programs"

For counselors, educators, administrators, childcare providers, social workers, researchers, students and public health practitioners interested in issues of adolescent sexuality, teen pregnancy and parenting. Sacramento. Contact: 916/454-1450; email: info@cacsap.org; Website: <http://www.cacsap.org>

May 4-6, 2001

California Continuation Education Association CCEA Annual State Conference for Continuation High School and Alternative Education Educators offers "2001 An Education Odyssey"

For educators, administrators, classified personnel and family members interested in alternative education and independent study. Topics include instructional strategies, high school exit exams, SAT 9, API, legislative updates and more. San Francisco. Contact: Janet Knoeppel, 562/961-8613; email: janetwk@aol.com; Website: <http://www.cceanet.org>

June 6-8, 2001

California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth (CMHACY) Conference 2001

For parents and families, youth advocates, legislative staff, county administrators, and service providers; topics include policy issues and system reform, program creativity and effectiveness, and promising clinical practices. Asilomar. Contact: 707/795-4261; email: coordinators@2xtreme.net; Website: <http://www.CMHACY.org>

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Award-Winning Cottonwood Tackles Behavior

Schwab Collaborative Challenge Winner Takes on New Challenges

Cottonwood Elementary School in Hesperia, California received the Schwab Collaborative Challenge Award last spring for the model work it is doing to bring general and special education together in the classroom. With the help of the Hesperia Unified School District and the Desert/Mountain SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area), Cottonwood developed and implemented the “Excellence: A Commitment to Every Learner” (ExCEL) program. This model program is grounded in three primary strategies: intervene early in learning problems, group students with similar reading abilities, and elicit parental support. The ultimate goal of the program is to learn how to identify and instruct all students successfully — before they fail. The ExCEL model stresses communication and collaboration between administration and all regular and special

education staff. Collaborative teams have been formed that meet regularly in order to address the needs of all students on an individual and a school-wide basis. These collaborative meetings are an essential element to the program’s success in blending general and special education program and student needs.

One of the unexpected benefits of the ExCEL program is the improvement of the behavior of Cottonwood’s students. Principal Carol Whitton believes that the recent 20 percent drop in behavior problems stems from the fact that instruction is personalized and individualized for all students, not just students identified with special needs. This individualization has

helped to decrease the level of frustration and increase the performance of all students.

Such a welcomed outcome deserves proper attention. The staff and administrators at Cottonwood have consequently expanded the ExCEL program to include three behavioral elements: a formal behavior modification program called “Positive Action;” the use of small groups of students that, led by the school psychologist, target specific behavioral needs; and staff training in best practices for behavior management. All three elements work together to meet the needs of students who are struggling with critical issues in their personal lives and who need additional support.

“Positive Action” is a skill-building program that helps students make positive choices in all areas of their lives. Students who could benefit from this program are identified through assessment by a collaborative,

interdisciplinary process. The Special Day Class (SDC) teacher facilitates the program, which consists of a class in which children are placed by age level in small groups of five to six students. The groups meet weekly to help the students learn a variety of skills: from following directions to managing anger. There is usually a chance to role-play different scenarios that would help build a particular skill, and there is mandatory homework for older students (third grade and up). The homework requires the students to practice their newly learned skill at least once before the next class. Younger children have no homework, but instead are required to take home a worksheet that will help them and their families work on a particular skill.



Now Available!! Collaborative Challenge Award Applications

If your school or district is improving education for all students through collaborative efforts; if you are working to join special and general education; and if your success in these areas is something that you would like to share, then take the Collaborative Challenge!

The benefits include a \$10,000 cash award to help you strengthen your existing program, press coverage in statewide publications, support for presentations at regional and state conferences, and more.

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If the SDC teacher has some ongoing concerns about particular students in the “Positive Action” program, she refers them to the school psychologist, who schedules them into more directed groups. These sessions address critical issues in a child’s personal life that may be affecting his/her behavior at school. These meetings further emphasize the importance of making positive choices.

In order to develop a school-wide behavioral plan that broadens the collaborative efforts of the ExCEL program, the school community is committed to providing effective staff training around behavior issues.

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