Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports
Best practices in early childhood settings

Elizabeth Kelly, Scott Spaulding, & Katelin Hobson
University of Washington

This presentation provides an overview of current recommended practices for positive behavior interventions & supports (PBIS) in early childhood classrooms.

PBIS is an evidence-based framework for preventing and responding to students’ challenging behaviors, and teaching new skills.

Learning objectives
Participants will
1. Describe the basic framework of PBIS.
2. Explain the three tiers of the PBIS Pyramid Model.
3. Develop a plan for implementing 3 basic classroom-wide PBIS strategies in your setting.

Outline
• PBIS Framework
• Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions
• Tier 3 strategies

School-wide PBIS

Primary Prevention:
School (Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff & Settings)

Secondary Prevention:
Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

Tertiary Prevention:
Specialized Individualized Systems for Students with High-Risk Behavior

At each tier:
• Screening
• Intervention
• Assessment

Primary Prevention:
~80% of Students

Secondary Prevention:
~15% SOME

Tertiary Prevention:
~5%
Intensive Intervention
- Interventions are individualized and measurement based

Targeted Social & Emotional Supports
- Directed support strategies for positive relationships
- Establishing consistent routines and expectations
- Teaching social & communication skills
- Responding to appropriate and problem behavior

Suppoersive Environments, Nurturing Relationships
- Sustains the healthy development of children
- Supports an environment that promotes healthy development and learning
- Facilitates positive interactions among peers and adults

PBS model and Early Childhood
- Program-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Examples of different models

Contextual Framework for EC Practices
- Family Determined
- Natural Settings
- Developmental
- Child-Focused
- Inter-disciplinary

Childhood settings
- Community preschools
- Head Start
- Inclusive preschools
- Home
- Day Care
- Specialized classrooms
- Other settings?

Some ethics of behavior support
- Changing someone’s behavior is a powerful decision.
- How do you select which behaviors to change? Who gets to decide?
  - We should work to support and include our students and their families in this process as much as possible.
  - Possible concerns with the label of problem or challenging behavior. The risk of further exclusion.
  - “Problem behavior”, “Challenging behavior”, “Behaviors of concern”

Culturally and linguistically responsive interventions
- Teaching and learning are “cultural acts” (they happen in the context of a student and family culture). (Gritz, 2013)
- Questions we should ask:
  - Is the strategy appropriate for the student’s culture?
  - What do we know about the student’s culture?
  - Could this behavior be appropriate for the cultural context?
  - How does the strategy match what happens in the child’s home and community?
  - Do our strategies avoid disproportionate discipline practices?
Tier 1 Assessments & Interventions

Find an appropriate assessment to assess your classroom for tier one supports.

Assessments can be specific to environment, instruction, or both.

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Tier 1 Assessment Examples

**Formal**
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R)
- Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (T-POT)
- Early Childhood Assessing Behavioral Support (EC EBS) [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

**Informal**... Your assessment doesn’t need to be formal, it just needs to objectively guide your decision making.

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Checklist - environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Always/sometimes/never</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there 3-5 agreed upon classroom rules that all children can follow and adults model?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are instructional materials reflective of child/family culture?</td>
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<td>Are there well defined play areas?</td>
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<td>Are there areas which may be visually distracting to the children?</td>
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<td>Is there a schedule for the classroom?</td>
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<td>Does the schedule reflect varied activities (quiet/loud, active/passive)?</td>
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<td>Are transitions structured and time allotted?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are materials age appropriate?</td>
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<td>Are materials reflective of children's preferences?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Checklist - instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Always/sometimes/never</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the ratio of positive feedback to corrective feedback around 5 to 1?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the instruction occur immediately prior to requesting the child to perform a new or not yet mastered task?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the instruction provide adequate rate of success?</td>
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<td>Are directions delivered clearly and consistently?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are tasks developmentally appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are learning activities culturally responsive?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is positive feedback occurring for correct responses?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is reinforcement withheld for inappropriate behavior?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is environmental setup for inappropriate behavior?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Activity

- 15 min
- Use checklist to think about your own classroom
- For at least 3 items you marked "sometimes" or "never", propose how your assessment will guide changes to your own classroom

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Monitor progress!
Tier 2 interventions

- Focused on systematic approach to teaching social communication and social emotional skills

Social communication
- Appropriately getting attention
- Turn taking
- Sharing

Social emotional skills
- Teaching emotional vocabulary
- Social emotional curriculums

“Why can’t we just start with interventions?”

The path to effective behavior supports...

Understanding behavior in context

Operational definitions
- Context for problem behavior
- Function and form

Operational definition

What does the behavior look like? Make it observable and measurable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Non-examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitting with closed fist; kicking peers</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not follow directions w/in 5 sec</td>
<td>Defiant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses profane language</td>
<td>Rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of seat during work time</td>
<td>Always on the go; “everywhere”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tears worksheets; incomplete pages</td>
<td>Messy work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking out of turn</td>
<td>Annoying and disruptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not answer when teacher asks</td>
<td>Not paying attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destroys materials, screams</td>
<td>Possessed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example

- When Susan thinks of aggression
- When Emily thinks of aggression

Activity: Defining Behaviors

- Step 1. Identify a behavior of concern for your student and define it in observable and measurable terms

  - Examples
    - Aggression is defined as any instance or attempt to hit, push or kick another person
    - Disruptive behavior is defined as any instance of talking to peers or talking loudly while the teacher is presenting without being called on
  
  - Non-Examples
    - Aggression is defined as any time Timmy hurts a peer
    - Disruptive behavior is defined as bothering peers
Understanding the **function** of behavior

**Behavior is lawful.**

All behavior has a function. When we understand **WHY** a student is demonstrating a behavior, we say we understand the function of that behavior.

Why is it important to identify the function of a behavior?

- Leads to **effective interventions** that meet the needs of the student
- Helps ensure **efficiency** and **durability** of the intervention
- **Avoids harm** or accidentally reinforcing the behavior-of-concern
  - Example: Sending a student to the office for a behavior-of-concern functioning for escape from work tasks, resulting in a future increase in the frequency of the behavior
- Facilitates use of reinforcement-based strategies to teach replacement skills

4 Main Functions of Behaviors (The **Whys**)

1. **Access attention** (from adults and/or peers)
2. **Access tangibles** (food, clothing, toys, other preferred objects)
3. **Escape/avoidance** (of aversive task or stimuli)
4. **Automatic reinforcement** (Sensory stimulation/self-regulation)

Why is it important to identify the function of a behavior?

**Functions (Why)**

- **Attention**, Tangible, Escape, Automatic

- **Attention**
  - Child raises hand and the teacher calls on them.
  - Child asks para for different marker and the para gives it to them.
  - A child imitates the teacher when she has her back turned to write on the board and the other children laugh.

- **Tangible**
  - Obtain Tangible

- **Escape**
  - Obtain Attention

- **Automatic**
  - Obtain Attention
Child is sitting at free play, teacher asks child to go to circle, child keeps playing with toys. Escape demands

Child fidgets with objects. Automatic reinforcement

Child hands the teacher a break card and goes to sit in a bean bag chair at the back of the classroom for 5 minutes before returning to the activity. Escape demands

**Functions (Why)**

*Attention, Tangible, Escape, Automatic*

**Functional Assessment**

A process of problem solving

**“Problem Solving”**

Another way to conceptualize the FBA process

**FBA methods**

| Informal | • Archival Review  
| Direct Observation Meeting |
| Indirect | • Checklist, Rating scale  
| • FA Interview |
| Direct | • ABC (narrative, continuous)  
| • Scatterplot, FAOF |

**FBA LEVELS**

- Informal:
  - Archival Review
  - Problem Solving Meeting
- Indirect:
  - Checklist, Rating scale
  - FA Interview
- Direct:
  - ABC (narrative, continuous)
  - Scatterplot, FAOF

**Indirect FBA process**

- Interview adults, student
- Administer rating scales
- Integrate information
- Develop hypothesis

**Direct FBA process**

- Systematic direct observation
- Establish a pattern
- Integrate information
- Revise hypothesis

**Indirect FBA process**

- Low rigor, low precision
- Requires time and expertise
- Systematic observation of behavior
- Helps build or revise hypothesis
- May need additional analysis

**Direct FBA process**

- More precision
- Relatively easy, very efficient
- Builds rapport
- No direct contact with problem behavior
- Often inconclusive
- If no clear hypothesis, what now?
Hypothesis statements
A hypothesis about the problem behavior in context

When this happens...
...the student does this...
...followed by this event or result

Antecedent Behavior Consequence

Hypothesis statement: Content

Hypothesis statement: Examples

During circle time, Tom often talks out of turn. When the teacher tells him to stop, he is quiet for a few minutes but then starts talking out again. Eventually, the teacher lets him have another turn. Tom seems to talk out more when he is not called on first.

What’s highlighted in this hypothesis statement?
Antecedent, behavior, or consequence?

During circle time, Tom often talks out of turn. When the teacher tells him to stop, he is quiet for a few minutes but then starts talking out again. Eventually, the teacher lets him have another turn. Tom seems to talk out more when he is not called on first.

What’s highlighted?
Antecedent, behavior, or consequence?

When Alba is told to go to free play, she is likely to run around in circles and engage in hitting to avoid the task. This behavior is more likely if Alba is teased by her peers.

What’s highlighted?
Antecedent, behavior, or consequence?
What's highlighted?
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When Alba is told to go to free play, she is likely to run around in circles and engage in hitting to avoid the task. This behavior is more likely if Alba is teased by her peers.

What's highlighted?
Antecedent, behavior, or consequence?

When Sue asks Nate to read books, he tells her “no”, crosses his arms, and refuses to look at her; she helps another student. This behavior is more likely if he has had a conflict with a peer.

What's highlighted?
Antecedent, behavior, or consequence?

When Sue asks Nate to read books, he tells her “no”, crosses his arms, and refuses to look at her; she helps another student. This behavior is more likely if he has had a conflict with a peer.

A setting event (SE) makes it 4 terms
After the value of the consequence in the moment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Event</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
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Hypothesis statement:
Example with setting event added

Sneaky Setting Event
When Jack is asked to color a picture at a loud table, he is likely to scream, and bother others to get attention. This is more likely when he has headache.

When Alba is told to go to free play, she is likely to run around in circles, and engage in hitting to avoid the task. This behavior is more likely if Alba is teased by her peers.

Choose intervention strategies

- Make Problem Behavior Irrelevant, Ineffective, and Inefficient
  - **Irrelevant**
    - student no longer needs to use problem behaviors to achieve wants/needs
  - **Ineffective**
    - Problem behavior no longer enables the student to achieve the function of his/her behavior
  - **Inefficient**
    - Problem behaviors require much more effort and time to achieve purpose compared with acceptable behavior.

 Positive Behavior Support Plan

- Analyze the data --- determine the function.
- Develop hypothesis statements.
- Brainstorm interventions to address different parts of the hypothesis statement.
- Identify a situation in which you can consistently implement an intervention.
- Choose one set of interventions.
- Make sure that you have buy in...
Intervention example: Timmy

- Setting event:
  - Skipped breakfast

- Antecedent:
  - Asked to color

- Teaching acceptable alternative:
  - Throws crayon

- Consequences:
  - To quiet space

Develop intervention strategies that address each component of your hypothesis.

- Setting event: Can we change the setting event?
- Antecedent: How will we modify antecedents?
- Acceptable alternatives: What will we teach the student to do instead? (Same function)
- Consequences: What will we do when the problem behavior/new behavior happens?

Antecedent Strategies

Address immediate antecedent events in the student’s environment that predict or trigger problems behavior.

Common setting events, antecedents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Peers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Predictable</td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>Free choice</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Proximity</td>
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<td>Meds</td>
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<td>Materials</td>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
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<td>Noise</td>
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<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td># people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allergy</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
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<td>Seizure</td>
<td>Space size</td>
<td>OTR</td>
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<td>Familiar</td>
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<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Transition</td>
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</table>

Consider whether these events change the “value” of the consequence or the likelihood of problem behavior.

Antecedent Strategies

Use to modify demands, instructions, transitions, people, environments, expectations.

- Choosing materials for a task or which peers as work partners.
- Option to refusing specific options (snack).
- Provide visual cues to assist students during transitions.
- Intersperse easy and difficult tasks if a student refuses to work on harder tasks.
- Move the student to a part of the room with more/less noise/light/people.
- Embed classroom rules into routines and activities.
- Move activities to other times or locations.
- Increase the pace of instruction and opportunities to respond.
- Provide praise and positive comments frequently if a student likes attention.
- Provide several easy requests that a student likes before a harder one is asked.
- Use a preferred activity as a distractor.

Intervention example: Timmy

- Setting event:
  - Give Timmy a snack if he seems hungry.

- Antecedent:

- Teaching acceptable alternative:

- Consequences:
**Intervention example: Timmy**

- **Setting event**: Give Timmy a snack if he seems hungry.

- **Antecedent**: Choice about what to color, which crayon; alternative task.

- **Teaching acceptable alternative**:

- **Consequences**:

---

**Teaching Strategies**

Teach the child a socially appropriate alternative that meets the same function as the problem behavior.

Strategies are linked to the skill deficits that are associated with the occurrence of problem behavior.

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**Behavior Teaching Strategies**

Use to teach social, academic, communicative, or adaptive skills:

- Identify replacement behaviors. Consider those that functionally equivalent to or physically incompatible with the problem behavior.
- Teach expectations for appropriate behavior and how rewards can be earned.
- Provide explicit, direct instruction in academic areas at the student’s level.
- Teach the student how to solve problems.
- Teach students to follow teacher directions.
- Teach the student to ask questions when upset.
- Teach the student to ask for help or attention appropriately.
- Teach the student how to make conversations.
- As a skill is learned, teach the student to self-manage (self-monitor) the new behavior.

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**Consequence Strategies**

Make the behavior irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective.

Strategies are linked to the function and should reinforce the positive behavior and not reinforce the problem behavior.

Consequences should follow both the new, appropriate skills and any problem behaviors that occur:

- Be sure you have a powerful reinforcer. Who will provide it, how and when?
- Reinforce the new skill you are teaching immediately and every time it occurs.
- Use appropriate reinforcers, based on the function (praise, attention, break from work, access to preferred activities).
- Once the new skill is established, fade or “thin” the reward using a plan.
- If the problem behavior occurs, prompt the student to engage in the new behavior.
- Do not reinforce the problem behavior (no attention or no break, depending on the function).
- Respond to inappropriate responses with verbal correct or removal of privileges, if warranted, based on FBA and school/district policies.
- Set goals that involve other students if peer attention is important.
- Give more positive than negative!
Intervention example: Timmy

- **Setting event**: Give Timmy a snack if he seems hungry.
- **Antecedent**: Choice about what to color, which crayon; alternative task.
- **Teaching acceptable alternative**: Teach how to reject, request other task.
- **Consequences**: Break if polite request; choice provided; stays with activity if throws crayon.

Resources

- **Evidence Based Intervention Network**
  [http://ebi.missouri.edu/](http://ebi.missouri.edu/)
- **National Center on Intensive Intervention**
  [https://intensiveintervention.org/](https://intensiveintervention.org/)
- **Integrating Behavior Support and Team Technology**
  [http://www.education.uw.edu/ibestt/](http://www.education.uw.edu/ibestt/)