

Behavioral Intervention Strategies

An important goal in education is for all students to be successful in school and in life. Behavioral interventions are essential for providing behavioral support to those students who display challenging behaviors. Interventions lead students to improved behavior so they can achieve success. Different types of student behavior require different types of interventions. The following research-based intervention strategies are used to establish and maintain a learning climate that promotes both teaching and learning.

- Redirection/Calming -

Watch for signs of student frustration and use de-escalation strategies to redirect and calm a student.

- Be alert to triggers that lead to misbehavior (1)
- Use a soft, soothing voice when redirecting/directing a student to focus (2)
- Call student by name and discreetly redirect (3)
- Intervene quickly at the first sign of a student losing control (4)
- Use verbal or nonverbal cues to refocus a student (5)
- Assign a task for redirection (e.g., passing out paper, running an errand, taking a note to a neighboring teacher) (6)
- Play soft, classical background Music (7)
- Use relaxation exercises (e.g., use guided imagery, take deep breaths, perform cross-lateral exercises, count slowly, use laughter) (8)
- Teach students to use positive self-talk (9)
- Model and practice Give Me Ten (e.g., count forward or backwards to 10) (10)
- Allow time for student to refocus and gain self-control (11)
- Lead students to recognize when a problem situation might occur and what action to take (12)
- Provide a cool down area in the classroom that a student can access when needed (13)
- Allow student to take a walk with supervision (14)
- Use physical activities to relieve stress (e.g., walking fast, using clay, squeezing a stress ball) (15)

-Giving Directions -

Give explicit directions in an appropriate environment to promote student success.

- Use a signal to gain the attention of students prior to giving directions (e.g., clapping pattern, raised hand, bell ringing, music) (16)

- Face students when you address them (17)**
- Give directions when you have the attention of all students(18)**
- Obtain eye contact and use close proximity for struggling students (19)**
- Give clear, simple directions (20)**
- Give one direction at a time, dividing the task into smaller segments (21)**
- Use specific information and avoid vague language so that students know precisely what to do and what behavior is expected (22)**
- Write directions on the board or use visual displays to add meaning (23)**
- Model directions using a visual reminder for all to see (24)**
- Use a buddy system for students who need additional assistance (25)**
- Have students rephrase or retell the directions to a partner to check for understanding (26)**
- Read written directions to the class (27)**
- Encourage students to highlight or underline key words in written directions (28)**
- Allow students to ask questions to clarify any misunderstandings (29)**
- Avoid unnecessary talking after directions are stated and allow five seconds "wait time" for students to comply (30)**
- Repeat directions after "wait time" if needed (31)**
- Include directions for procedures when students complete tasks or assignments (32)**
- Give praise and positive feedback to students when explicit directions are followed (33)**
- Follow up with praise and reinforcement after a task is completed (34)**
- Use non-disruptive techniques such as eye contact, close proximity, or a note for a non-compliant student to enforce following directions (35)**
- Follow through with a mild consequence for non-compliance to directions (36)**

- Discipline/Consequences -
Address misbehaviors to increase appropriate behaviors.

- Take proactive steps to establish a positive classroom climate (37)**
- Clearly define expectations and motivate students with positive reinforcement (38)**
- Teach rules and procedures (39)**

- Plan and inform students of consequences that relate to misbehaviors (40)**
- Teach student to take responsibility for self and actions (41)**
- Follow through with consistent consequences in a timely manner (42)**
- Communicate the classroom behavior plan to students and parents (43)**
- Deal with misbehaviors promptly, fairly, consistently, and equitably (44)**
- Use I messages to let students know what is expected (e.g., "Linda, I need you to put the book inside your desk.") (45)**
- Avoid using threats (46)**
- Identify significant others with whom the child is successful and involve them in working with the student to reach a behavior goal (47)**
- Report serious infractions to campus administrator (48)**
- Initial corrective interventions could include: (49)**
 - **proximity (49A)**
 - **quiet redirection (49B)**
 - **private nonverbal cues (49C)**
 - **verbal reminders (e.g., "Beverly, remember to ____.") (49D)**
 - **directives (e.g., "Sam, I need you to ____.") (49E)**
 - **repeated practice (e.g., If a student uses inappropriate vocabulary, makes unsuitable choices, or interrupts unnecessarily, talk about how the acceptable behavior would look and sound and have student practice the action.) (49F)**
- Consequences that occur after warnings are given might include: (50)**
 - **loss of privilege (50A)**
 - **time of silence (50B)**
 - **correct inappropriate action (e.g., "Martin, please go back and walk down the hallway.") (50c)**
 - **temporary time away from the group, yet remain in the classroom (50D)**
 - **log misbehaviors in a notebook (50E)**
 - **student reflects on misbehavior through journaling (50F)**
 - **teacher/student conference (50G)**
 - **parent contact (e.g., phone call, note home, report card note, parent conference) (50H)**
- Follow campus guidelines and campus plan for corrective action (51)**

-Defiant and Challenging Behavior -

Use strategies to manage students who exhibit defiant or challenging behaviors.

- Analyze and document an inappropriate situation to gather information on what might have triggered the misbehavior. (52)**
 - **What was the behavior the student displayed? (52A)**
 - **What should the student have been doing at the time of the displayed behavior? (52B)**
 - **What occurred prior to the behavior? (52C)**

- When did the behavior occur (e.g., day, time of day; before, during, or after a particular subject or activity)? (52D)
- Is there an observable pattern among the gathered information? (52E)

- Determine if an element in the environment needs adjustment to avoid the display of inappropriate behavior by a student (53)
- Develop a plan to prevent triggers (e.g., hunger, lack of sleep, confusing directions) that lead to misbehavior (54)
- Increase positive reinforcement and feedback (55)
- Have planned responses to avoid an emotional reaction (56)
- Avoid immediate responses when in an emotional state (57)
- Recognize improvements in behavior with praise and encouragement (58)
- Encourage defiant students to keep a daily log of successes and accomplishments to track improvement (59)
- Teach students to take responsibility for their behaviors (60)
- Model a firm, fair, and consistent approach when dealing with difficult behaviors (61)
- Refrain from engaging in an argument or power struggle (62)
- Refuse to threaten or plead with students (63)
- Teach students an alternative to aggression (e.g., Stop, Think, Act) (64)
- Acknowledge student's feelings when upset (e.g., "I understand you are upset.") (65)
- Use diffusing statements (e.g., "I can see you are angry. I need you to use words to solve the problem." "Throwing books won't make the problem go away. It only makes it worse." "Rest for a few minutes and then we will talk.") (66)
- Avoid taking behaviors and comments personally (67)
- Use what questions and avoid why questions (e.g., "What were you doing?" "What should you have been doing?" "What will you do differently?") (68)
- Use a calm manner and positive body language (69)
- Keep a sense of humor (70)
- Hold private conversations away from others (71)
- Eliminate nagging, fussing, demands, and threats from conversation (72)
- Avoid judgmental comments (73)

- Follow a structured process when investigating a situation: actively listen, ask open and clarifying questions, and restate what was said (74)
- Involve the counselor as a support person (75)
- Determine the root cause of the problem (e.g., hunger, illness, family, academic difficulty) (76)
- Share literature that provides positive examples of appropriate behavior or character (e.g., books about bullying, books about honesty, character training videos) (77)
- Involve the student in developing a behavior plan that is meaningful and motivating to the student (78)
- Build strong home and school relationships (79)
- Offer choices (e.g., "You have a choice. You may ___ or ___ (80)
- Teach students a problem-solving approach to use when confronted with a conflict (81)
- Design activities to help students feel an integral part of the classroom and campus (82)

- Transitions -

- Reduce the amount of downtime between activities or a change in subjects (83)
- Establish clear, consistent routines and expectations for accomplishing daily tasks and activities (e.g., entering the classroom, taking attendance, handing in homework, working in groups, working independently) (84)
- Provide daily warm-ups or bell-ringer activities for immediate student engagement (85) 13 Post and adhere to a daily or weekly schedule incorporating transitional times (86) C3 Notify students of any schedule changes in advance (87)
- Eliminate disruptions between lessons or activities through careful planning and preparation (88)
- Model appropriate procedures and signals for transitioning; have students practice all procedures; give feedback as they practice (89)
- Design the layout of the classroom to facilitate a smooth flow so students move around the room with ease (90)
- Make materials quickly and easily accessible to students (91)
- Give consistent visual or auditory signals and verbal cues to alert students to a transition (e.g., bell ringing, clapping rhythm, countdown, overhead timer, sounding a clicker, playing music, performing a chant) (92)
- Use transition signals in advance to allow students to finish and prepare for the next activity (93)
- Provide "transition time" for students to follow through and/or prepare before the next activity

begins or before instructions are given (94)

- Circulate among students during transition times to assist, prompt, or intervene before a disruption occurs or escalates (95)**
- Provide incentives or other reinforcers for smooth and successful transitions (96)**
- Use relaxation and visual imagery exercises to set a calm atmosphere after recess, lunch, or any physical activity (97)**
- Teach, model, and practice specific procedures and expectations for out-of-class activities (e.g., walking in hallways, cafeteria routines, attendance at an assembly) (98)**
- Monitor students during class changes, lunch, recess, and dismissal (99)**
- Provide behavioral contracts for students who have difficulty in out-of-class settings (e.g., bus, playground, cafeteria) (100)**
- Offer school-wide incentives and positive reinforcers to motivate appropriate behaviors outside the classroom (101)**
- Prepare and organize instructional materials in daily files or baskets for easy access (102)**
- Refer to the Mentoring Minds' Behavior Guide™ for more behavior strategies (103)**