



PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TOOLKIT

July 2019

This toolkit is intended for K-6 teachers seeking to improve classroom culture by refining classroom and behavior management systems. In this toolkit, Hanover Research provides guidance and resources to prevent disciplinary infractions, address behavioral issues as they arise, and increase teachers' capacity to improve their classroom management skills. The goal is to reduce the number of students dismissed from the instructional environment, increase the amount of time teachers focus on instruction, and generally improve the learning experience for all students.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

There has been a dramatic rise in disciplinary problems in elementary schools across the nation. For example, a recent national survey of approximately 1,900 elementary school educators and staff finds that 70 percent of teachers report more behavioral problems in their classrooms than in the past. Notably, as more school systems look to introduce Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to codify and unite behavioral expectations within schools and across classrooms to address these emerging behavioral challenges, administrators may find it difficult to assess the level of implementation. For example, only 57 percent of teachers in the previously cited survey acknowledge the use of PBIS in their daily routines, and 63 percent communicate that they have received no training in implementing PBIS. The result is that teachers create their own classroom management systems with varying degrees of success at keeping students engaged.¹



A GROWING NEED TO ADDRESS BEHAVIOR

Teachers face increasingly taxing demands on classroom time in terms of delivering instruction, completing administrative tasks, administering state- and locally mandated assessments, and much more. At the same time, available data show that teachers encounter a higher volume of behavioral issues in the classroom, and addressing these issues consumes valuable—and already limited—instructional time to the detriment of students.




Research establishes that teachers are the most important school-based factor in determining student success.² Likewise, research and policy guidance note that “the more time allotted to a content area, the higher the academic achievement” students will have in that content area.³ However, at the same time, research shows that outside factors (e.g., students being pulled from class, school announcements) and in-class disruptive behaviors among students continuously intrude on instructional time.⁴ **These dynamics drive a need for teachers to establish mechanisms and implement strategies to prevent problem behaviors before they occur, as well as to address them as they occur, to maximize students’ learning time and minimize disruptions.**⁵

Concurrent with improved teacher classroom management skills, teachers’ embrace of effective PBIS promotion and implementation in their schools will help reduce the wide variance in student engagement across classrooms, as well as bring school-wide improvements. While implementation fidelity is a challenge, schools that

institute PBIS effectively have seen significant reductions in negative behaviors, improved social cultures, increased student achievement, and increases in instructional time.⁶

To support teachers’ classroom management and the fidelity of the implementation of PBIS, this toolkit provides elementary school teachers with strategies and resources to enhance classroom behavioral management. Specifically, this toolkit explains how teachers might integrate their behavior management systems with their school’s behavioral expectations, improve behavior management plans and routines, and implement and adjust their plans as behaviors occur in the classroom. Notably, behavior management systems encompass three-levels (i.e., school, classroom, and student). This toolkit emphasizes efforts at the classroom and individual student level to directly support teachers’ work with students.

Levels of Behavior Management

|  |  |  |
|--|---|--|
| SCHOOL | CLASSROOM | STUDENT |
| <p>Schoolwide behavior management emphasizes systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. A continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings.</p> | <p>Classroom-level behavior management includes preventative and responsive approaches that may be effectively implemented with all students in a classroom and intensified to support small groups or a few individual students.</p> | <p>Behavior management for individual students includes rewarding and celebrating positive behaviors for the purpose of reinforcement, modeling appropriate behavior for individual students, and directly responding to problematic student behavior as needed.</p> |

Source: American Psychological Association and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports OSEP Technical Assistance Center, U.S. Department of Education⁷

OVERVIEW

This toolkit:

- ✓ **Discusses how teachers can develop classroom-level behavior management plans within the broader context of their schools' Ci3T structures;**
- ✓ **Reviews strategies and resources that will help teachers prevent problematic student behaviors that could potentially disrupt teaching and learning; and**
- ✓ **Provides guidance and strategies to help teachers directly address those problem behaviors that emerge despite preventative efforts.**

AUDIENCE

This toolkit is designed to support **elementary school teachers in Grades K-6**. Novice teachers will find tips, advice from experienced teachers, and resources to support them as they think about how to manage their first classrooms. The toolkit will also support veteran teachers looking to integrate new school-wide PBIS programs for the first time or who want to take a fresh look at their behavior management systems.

CONTEXTUALIZE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

UNDERSTAND THE CI3T MODEL

Many U.S. school districts are moving toward multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to ensure that the academic, social, behavioral, and other needs of all students are addressed via a range of universal preventative measures, targeted supports for some students, and intensive interventions for few students.⁸ These systems are effective because they categorize and prioritize student needs in multiple domains to better implement appropriate supports and improve "outcomes for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved."⁹ Fundamentally, MTSS establishes coherence and alignment across school-based (and potentially community-provided) supports to address students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.¹⁰

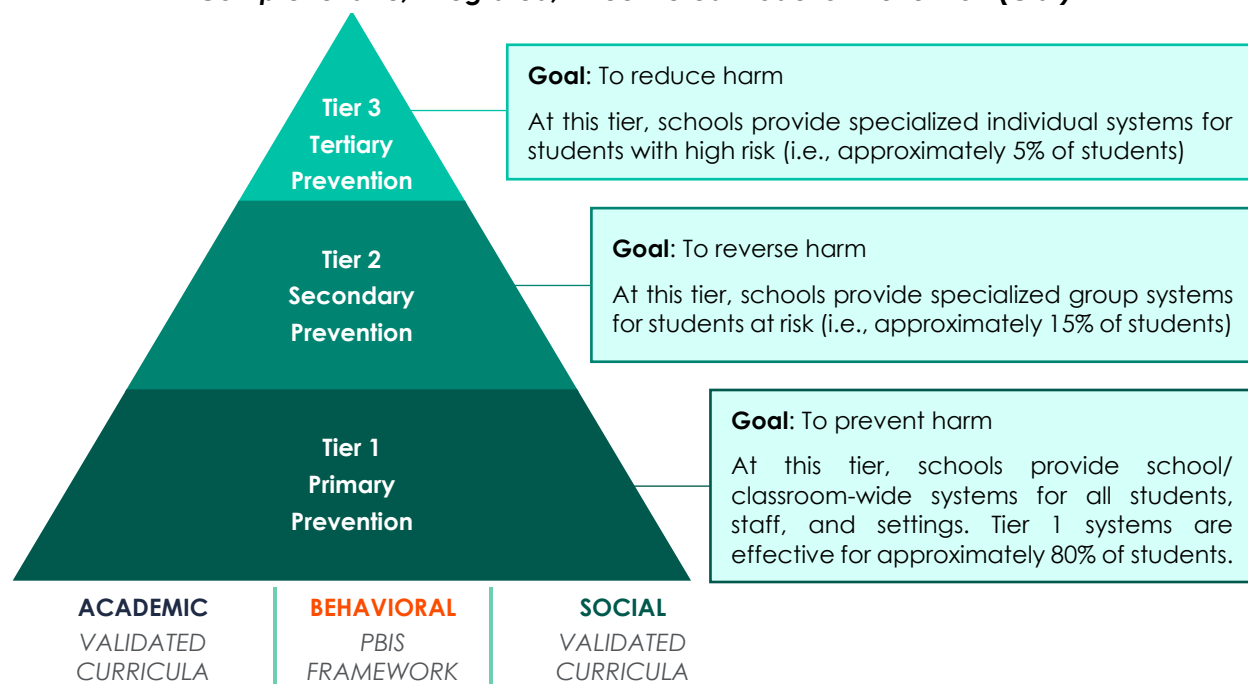
Learn More About MTSS and Ci3T

Watch the videos below to learn more about MTSS and Ci3T:

- ["Colleen Riley: What is a Multi-Tier System of Supports \(MTSS\)?"](#) – RTI Action Network
- ["Designing Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered \(Ci3T\) Models of Prevention: Building a Multi-Tiered System of Supports \(MTSS\) with an Integrated Focus"](#) – Ci3T.org

Some districts may decide to implement a specific MTSS framework: the **Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered (Ci3T) Model of Prevention**. Importantly, teachers should recognize Ci3T models as "data-informed, graduated systems of support constructed to address academic, behavioral, and social domains, with an overarching goal of supporting all learners in inclusive environments by maximizing available expertise through professional collaborations among school personnel."¹¹ Ci3T is distinct because it further categorizes student needs into *academic*, *behavioral*, and *social* spheres.¹² **Note that this toolkit focuses on the behavioral sphere of the Ci3T model.**

Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered Model of Prevention (Ci3T)



Source: Ci3T.org¹³

Implementing the Ci3T Model

Ci3T.org publishes materials for a five-part professional learning series to support school leaders in using Ci3T. Teachers can also acquire insight into the Ci3T model by reviewing these resources, which are available at the link below.



Source: Ci3T.org¹⁶

Teachers should consider how their classroom-level efforts fit into the Ci3T model's behavioral component as they work to create and implement their own behavior management plans.

Essentially, teachers should recognize the importance of classroom management as an avenue to model appropriate behavior for students and implement broader, research-based strategies to promote positive behaviors within Tier 1 of the Ci3T framework. At the same time, teachers can set up behavior management plans to help them gather data to determine which students require supports at Tiers 2 and 3.¹⁴ Likewise, teachers should apply their own behavior data—as gathered via Tier 1 preventative efforts—to the broader Ci3T model by engaging in collaborative dialogue with other school professionals.¹⁵

CREATE A BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

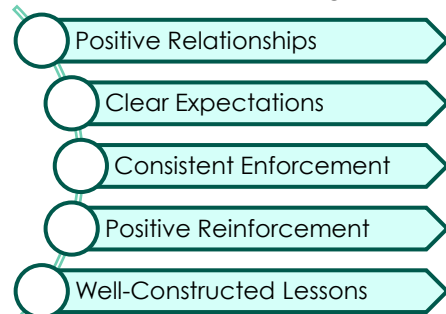
Teachers must recognize that a quality classroom management plan is vital to their ability to instruct students and their students' ability to engage in rigorous and meaningful learning.¹⁷

Research shows that strong classroom and behavior management on teachers' part can dramatically improve students' achievement outcomes, while poor classroom management and high levels of behaviorally-driven instructional disruptions can adversely impact teaching and learning.¹⁸ Notably, by creating a classroom management plan, teachers can:¹⁹

- ✓ **Prevent many problem behaviors from occurring in the first place;**
- ✓ **Minimize and directly address disruptive behaviors that students do display;** and
- ✓ **Help students feel physically and emotionally safe.**






There are five essential keys to building an effective classroom behavior management plan, as listed on the right. Each key is vital to consider before a teacher's first day of school, but the five keys should also be referenced as the year progresses and be built directly into any classroom management plan a teacher creates.²⁰ It is also important to consider how these elements interrelate to each other. For example, many veteran teachers share that one important way to build positive relationships is to have relevant and meaningful lesson plans.²¹ Likewise, setting clear expectations is useless if teachers do not consistently enforce them.²² In addition to considering these five keys, however, teachers should ensure that their behavior management plans to support Tier 1 preventative and corrective actions encompass the five components described in the figure on the next page.

Keys to Behavior Management



Source: Multiple²³

Components of an Effective Behavior Management Plan

| PLAN COMPONENT | DESCRIPTION |
|--|--|
|  Statement of Purpose | A statement of purpose is a brief, positive statement that conveys to students the reasons why various aspects of the management plan are necessary. It should be focused, direct, clearly understandable, and free of specialized jargon. |
|  Rules | Rules are explicit statements of how the teacher expects students to behave in their classroom. Rules provide a way for students to monitor their own behavior, and they remind and motivate students to display the behaviors that are expected of them. In cases where there is a school-wide behavior management system in place, teachers should create classroom rules that align with the school's existing rules. |
|  Procedures | Procedures are a description of the steps required for students to understand what is expected of them to successfully or correctly complete daily activities. Procedures can be developed so that routines in the classroom happen efficiently and without incident and to prevent problems in situations where students are more likely to exhibit disruptive or inappropriate behavior (e.g., transitions, unstructured time). Procedures should be explicitly taught and practiced until all students thoroughly understand what is expected of them. Correct execution of the procedure should be recognized, and problem areas should be immediately corrected. In addition, teachers should reinforce students with regularity and consistency to ensure that they perform the procedure correctly over time. |
|  Consequences | Consequences are actions teachers take to respond to both appropriate and inappropriate student behaviors. After a student follows a rule or procedure, their teacher can provide a positive consequence. A <i>positive consequence</i> , often referred to as reinforcement, is a means by which teachers can increase the probability that a behavior will occur in the future. When a student violates a rule or procedure, a teacher can provide a negative consequence. A <i>negative consequence</i> is a means by which the teacher can decrease the probability that a behavior will occur in the future. |
|  Action Plan | An action plan guides the teacher as they implement a comprehensive behavior management plan. Typically, an action plan includes goals to be accomplished (e.g., teach the behavior plan to the students), the tasks or steps to be completed to achieve each goal (e.g., create classroom rules), and a completion date. |

Source: IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University²⁴

On the next page, the "**Sample Classroom Behavior Management Plan**" provides a model behavior management plan addressing all five of the above-listed components that teachers can use to guide their behavior management planning efforts. A blank template that teachers can use to design their classroom behavior management plan, along with a checklist of important considerations for developing the plan are available in the "**Classroom Behavior Management Plan Template and Checklist**" on pp. 9-10.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLANS

THE IRIS CENTER AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY PUBLISHES FOUR ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING MODULES TO SUPPORT TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLANS. THESE MODULES ARE AVAILABLE USING THE LINKS BELOW.

[Classroom Management \(Part 1\): Learning the Components of a Comprehensive Behavior Management Plan](#)

[Classroom Management \(Part 2\): Developing Your Own Comprehensive Behavior Management Plan](#)






[Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors \(Part 1\): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle](#)

[Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors \(Part 2\): Behavioral Interventions](#)



Sample Classroom Behavior Management Plan

Description: The items below compose a basic sample of a classroom behavior management plan that teachers can emulate as they develop their classroom behavior management plans.

| | |
|--|---|
|  STATEMENT OF PURPOSE | <p>Our classroom will be a positive, considerate learning environment that fosters academic excellence and respect for others. All students will strive to do their best, both academically and behaviorally, to promote the success of everyone in the classroom.</p> |
|  Rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on learning ▪ Treat classroom materials and computers gently ▪ Be respectful to all staff and students ▪ Follow teacher directions the first time they are given |
|  Procedures | <p><u>Procedure for Entering the Classroom</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter quietly and take your assigned seat ▪ Get required materials (e.g., book, paper) ▪ Wait quietly for the teacher to begin class <p><u>Procedure for Leaving the Classroom</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean up your area (e.g., computer, desk) ▪ Return all materials or supplies ▪ Line up by the door with your hands behind your back ▪ Wait quietly for your escort |
|  Consequences | <p><u>Positive Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Snacks ▪ Free time in the classroom ▪ Extra computer time <p><u>Negative Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General reminder ▪ Individual reminder ▪ Second individual reminder ▪ Time out (in class) ▪ Time out (in an alternative setting) ▪ Office referral |
|  Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a toolkit of the materials and supports necessary to implement and sustain the plan ▪ Teach the plan to the students ▪ Share the plan with others (e.g., school staff, parents/guardians) ▪ Review the plan regularly and adjust as needed |






Source: IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University²⁵



Classroom Behavior Management Plan Template and Checklist

Directions: Use the blank template below to record your iterations of the five main components of your classroom's behavior management plan. In developing these items, consider the criteria and prompts included in the checklist on the next page of this document.

Classroom Behavior Management Plan Template

| | |
|--|--|
|  STATEMENT OF PURPOSE | |
|  Rules | |
|  Procedures | |
|  Consequences | <p><u>Positive Consequences</u></p> <p><u>Negative Consequences</u></p> |
|  Action Plan | |

Classroom Behavior Management Plan Considerations Checklist

| HAVE I CONSIDERED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN DEVELOPING MY CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN? | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The physical classroom design (i.e., how it is conducive to learning, how it impacts all my students, how I can easily access each area, how I can quickly reach all students) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Class routines (i.e., for morning announcements, lunch, transitions, getting students' attention, turning in work, asking for the restroom, other requests, wrapping up the day.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive classroom expectations (i.e., written out, posted, and routinely referred to every morning/day, statements that establish positive behaviors) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prompts (i.e., necessary, conditioned responses to get attention) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supervision strategies (i.e., how I will monitor students during assessments, lunch, recess, quiet time, group work) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Establishing opportunities to respond (i.e., what I will tolerate/allow to acknowledge student responses) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Specific praising strategies (i.e., how I will acknowledge good work during a lesson) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistent reminders (i.e., what reminders I expect I will have to reiterate, when to remind students about certain expectations and routines) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Responses to negative behaviors (i.e., what my behavior intervention plan is after each repeated offense, the consequences for each class and school rule, consistency with school responses) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Data collection (i.e., how I will collect behavioral data in a way that does not disrupt instruction, how and when I will share data) |

Source: IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University, and Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education²⁶

INSTITUTE PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

As a foundational step for preventing problematic behaviors, **teachers should consider and implement targeted actions to establish a positive classroom culture.** In doing so, it can be helpful for teachers to reflect on how they and their students would describe the ideal classroom, thereby setting a vision for classroom culture to which teachers can aspire.²⁷




Similarly, teachers should implement strategies to help build positive relationships with their students, as students will be more likely and willing to comply with outlined behavioral expectations when they have developed a rapport and respectful, caring relationships with their teachers.²⁸ In fact, students with strong student-teacher relationships "attain higher levels of achievement than those students with more conflict in their relationships" with teachers, are "likely to trust [their] teacher more, show more engagement in learning, [and] behave better in class."²⁹ As such, teachers should take informed action to get to know their students as learners and as individuals while also sharing information about themselves, though in a manner that is appropriate within the nature of the student-teacher relationship dynamic.³⁰

Learn More About Relationship and Culture Building

Watch these videos for additional insight into building stronger relationships with students and improving classroom culture:

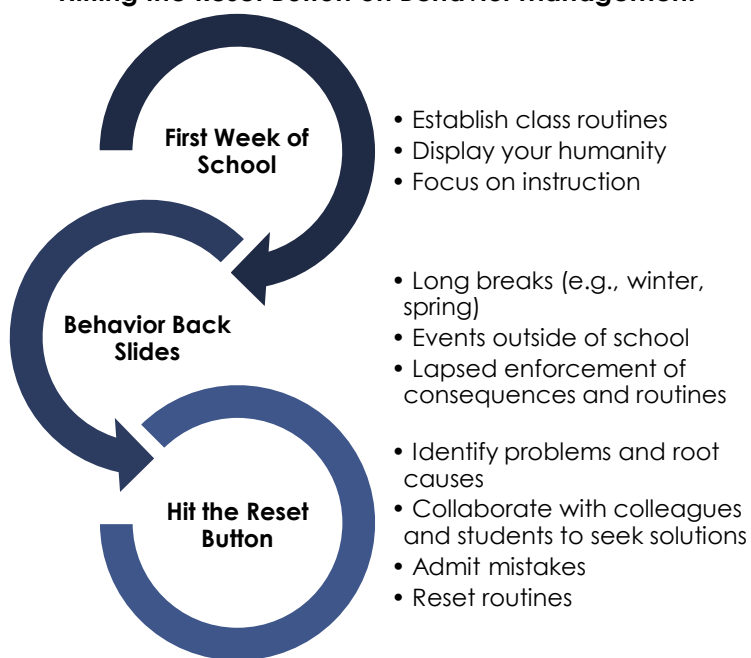
- ["Ready to Learn: Creating a Positive Classroom Culture"](#) – TeachingChannel
- ["Making It Personal in the Classroom"](#) – Teaching Channel
- ["Relationship Building: Getting to Know Your Students"](#) – San Bernardino Unified School District (CA)

Using Embedded Classroom Elements to Build Relationships with Students

| ELEMENT | ASSOCIATED RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING STRATEGIES |
|---|---|
|  Time | Teachers should purposefully schedule class time to get to know students. While students are in groups, sitting with them and sharing in the learning process is a great way for teachers to learn more about their students and tell students more about themselves as a person. Teachers may ask relevant questions in the moment or listen for things to explore later. One-on-one conferences are also great opportunities to get to know students, as students of all grade levels may be more open to sharing individually and better able to discover things about their teachers via one-to-one conversations. |
|  Curriculum | Teachers should make content and curriculum personal and relevant and learn about students while they learn the content. In essence, teachers should use instructional activities as a vehicle to learn more about their students, via both individual and group-generated responses and products to outlined tasks. All content areas leave room for the teacher to share relevant personal anecdotes that help students see their teachers as human, opening doors for future interpersonal interactions. In history, ask students how they got their names. In science, ask about a genetic trait that students think they inherited from their parents. In math, ask them why they think math is important. |
|  Planning | When planning, teachers have the opportunity to carefully plan assignments that bring their students' interests to light. These interests may be the catalyst for a stronger connection between the teacher and their students. Teachers can also create opportunities for students to learn more about one another by sharing a personal story that revolves around a lesson activator or by discussing a big-picture question that lays the foundation for a unit. By actively planning for such opportunities, teachers can ensure that other tasks do not interfere. |

Source: Edutopia | George Lucas Educational Foundation³¹

Hitting the Reset Button on Behavior Management



Source: Bright Hub Education and School Leaders³⁵

When thinking about how to create positive relationships, teachers may encounter myths passed on from previous eras. For example, the common adage, "Don't smile 'til Christmas" was intended to send a strong, serious message to students that teachers meant business and any misbehavior would not be tolerated.³² However, most educators now agree that simply being yourself and even sharing some personal information, when appropriate, reveals a teacher's humanity and helps to build positive relationships, thereby establishing a comfortable classroom culture.³³

Other ways to build and maintain positive relationships will depend on grade level, the makeup of

students in the class, and when the relationships might begin to sour. Even veteran teachers, having successfully established positive relationships at the beginning of school, find themselves having to "push the reset button" on occasion.³⁴

FOCUS ON ACADEMICS AND ROUTINES

Carefully constructed lesson planning is a key element of an effective classroom management plan.³⁶ In addition to improving student achievement, well-prepared teachers experience less stress, have more positive classroom cultures, and tend to stay in the profession longer.³⁷ However, to maximize the impact of lesson planning, teachers must emphasize instructionally sound techniques and anticipate potential behavioral distractions.³⁸ Importantly, teachers should focus on six core instructional elements to design lessons that will promote positive behaviors:³⁹

- Learning standards and objectives;
- Anticipatory sets;
- Direct instruction;
- Guided practice;
- Independent practice; and
- Authentic assessment

Teachers should understand that what separates good plans from excellent plans are those that consider and anticipate the behaviors of individual students or "types" of students. For example, as teachers write lesson plans, they should remember their introverted students, anticipate how they might receive a lesson, and make adjustments accordingly. Also, during the planning process, teachers should consider how to adapt every plan to every type of learner and learning style (e.g., visual, auditory, verbal, logical, and physical).⁴⁰

On pp. 13-16, the "**Lesson Planning Worksheet with Behavioral Expectations**" provides a tool and template to support teachers' instructional planning relative to desired and anticipated student behaviors. Using the worksheet will help teachers determine how they want students to behave during specific aspects of a lesson.



Lesson Planning Worksheet with Behavioral Expectations

Directions: Use the blank template below to plan academic tasks for lessons and outline behavioral expectations for various aspects of your lessons. This will help you articulate your expectations for activities and anticipate potential behavioral problems that may need to be addressed during lesson delivery.

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------|--|--------------|--|
| LESSON TITLE: | | PLAN | | | |
| Unit Title: | | Grade: | | Date: | |
| Learning Objectives: | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Anticipated Challenges: What aspects of this plan might present challenges for some students? | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| WARM-UP: AS STUDENTS ENTER THE CLASSROOM, WARM-UP DIRECTIONS ON THE BOARD WILL STATE... | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| List and label your expectations for the warm-up. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | | | | | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

ER = Established Routine – a regularly reinforced routine; **UD** = Unique direction - a new, one-time instruction unique to this lesson plan; **NR** = New Routine - a new routine I will implement from now on; **XR** = Experimental Routine – a new routine I want to try out.

Transition #1: As students finish the warmup and transition to the first activity, what are my behavioral expectations?

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| List and label your expectations for the transition. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |

ACTIVITY #1: MY FIRST ACTIVITY FOR THE DAY IS...

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| List and label your expectations for the activity. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |

ER = Established Routine – a regularly reinforced routine; **UD** = Unique direction - a new, one-time instruction unique to this lesson plan; **NR** = New Routine - a new routine I will implement from now on; **XR** = Experimental Routine – a new routine I want to try out.

TRANSITION #2: AS STUDENTS FINISH THE FIRST ACTIVITY AND TRANSITION TO THE SECOND, WHAT ARE MY BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS?

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| List and label your expectations for the transition. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |

ACTIVITY #2: MY SECOND ACTIVITY FOR THE DAY IS...

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| List and label your expectations for the activity. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |

ER = Established Routine – a regularly reinforced routine; **UD** = Unique direction - a new, one-time instruction unique to this lesson plan; **NR** = New Routine - a new routine I will implement from now on; **XR** = Experimental Routine – a new routine I want to try out.

TRANSITION #3: AS STUDENTS FINISH THE SECOND ACTIVITY AND TRANSITION TO THE CLOSING ACTIVITY, WHAT ARE MY BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS?

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| List and label your expectations for the transition. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |

CLOSURE: MY CLOSING ACTIVITY FOR THE DAY IS...

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| List and label your expectations for the activity. Label each expectation ER, UD, NR, or XR* | |
| <i>Label</i> | <i>Expectation</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |

ER = Established Routine – a regularly reinforced routine; **UD** = Unique direction - a new, one-time instruction unique to this lesson plan; **NR** = New Routine - a new routine I will implement from now on; **XR** = Experimental Routine – a new routine I want to try out.

Source: *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports OSEP Technical Assistance Center, U.S. Department of Education, and Texas Behavior Support*⁴¹

ADDRESS PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS

MODEL AND ARTICULATE EXPECTATIONS FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Successful implementation of a positive behavior plan requires teachers to be in the best possible frame of mind.⁴² The most important thing is to minimize negative events, apologize for mistakes, and repair any harm done. Modeling positive behavior is an essential, daily habit that will minimize negative behaviors of students.⁴³

Teachers can model positive behavior in a variety of ways during instruction and their non-academic interactions with students. Specifically, positive behavior can be expressed verbally or non-verbally. For example, speaking in your normal voice is a common refrain of advice that keeps class volume level in check, whereas keeping your desk clean is an example of a non-verbal behavior that models respect for the instructional environment. Teachers should consider how all their behaviors, verbal and non-verbal, may be impacting classroom culture.⁴⁴

Modeling Positive Behavior

| MODEL BEHAVIOR | NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| Use Normal Voice | Yelling; losing control | When the class is noisy during a transition and needs to get quiet, speak in your normal voice and use proximity, hand signals, and 1-1 contact, to gain attention. Do not talk over the noise. Wait for quiet. |
| Listen to Students | Interrupting; waiting to speak | As students share answers or respond to questions you asked, be patient, even if the answer is going in the wrong direction. Do not just wait to speak, really listen to what they are saying. |
| Demonstrate Respect | Sarcasm; sharing too personal information; using nicknames without permission | Teachers should address each other as "Mr." or "Ms." in the presence of students. Practice the correct pronunciation of student names. |
| Make "I" Statements | Make "You" statements | "I feel badly when you speak when I'm already speaking." "It makes me feel sad when you don't try your best." |
| Respect the Learning Environment | Failing to think about learning conditions | Start the day by ensuring everything is in its place. Do not eat during a lesson. Pick up trash in the hallway as you see it. |
| Involve Students in the Learning Process | Moving quickly through lessons | Think out loud through example problems asking students if they think it's right along the way; Occasionally ask students to choose between two activities; Get feedback from students about lessons. |

Source: National Education Association and Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota ⁴⁵

At the same time, teachers should be mindful of how they communicate with students.⁴⁶ As such teachers should use direct language when communicating with students, especially during critical times where disruptive or negative behaviors might be a safety concern or an instructional impediment. The bottom line is that, sometimes, teachers need students to redirect quickly and cannot wait for them to think through their behavior.⁴⁷

Examples of Direct Language

| INSTEAD OF... | TRY... |
|--|--|
| Manipulating children's behavior by holding up classmates as exemplars: <i>"Look how nicely Bobby and Clarence are standing in line."</i> | Telling the children directly what to do: <i>"Maria, Paul, and George, join me at the end of the line. Show me how to follow our hands-off rule."</i> |
| Phrasing directions as questions: <i>"Could you please wait for your turn to speak?"</i> | Phrasing directions as directions: <i>"It's time to listen."</i> |
| Using sarcasm: <i>"Samantha, you're in fourth grade. Our first graders follow the rules better than you. Why am I not surprised by your behavior?"</i> | Pointing children in a positive direction: <i>"Samantha, stop. Walk to your classroom. I'll watch you from here."</i> |
| Generalizing about a child's motivation: <i>"You're trying to test my patience, aren't you? I think you enjoy starting arguments during recess."</i> | Figuring out what's going on with a child: <i>"It looks like recess is a hard time of day for you. What's happening at recess that makes it hard to remember our safety rules?"</i> |
| Pulling in negative history: <i>"Taylor, we've talked about this many times. How many times do I have to remind you to keep your hands to yourself when walking in line?"</i> | Remaining in the present moment: <i>"Taylor, hands to yourself in the hall. Come walk with me."</i> |

Source: Responsive Teaching⁴⁸

Positive and direct language is a very complex cognitive strategy that includes social skills as a way "to guide children toward choosing and maintaining positive behaviors."⁴⁹ Translating common teacher vernacular into positive language is, therefore, much more complex than simply reversing a negative statement. Instead, the teacher must use language and tone of voice to encourage students to engage in their learning.⁵⁰

Consistent use of positive language can be difficult to maintain in all situations throughout the school year, and it would be unrealistic to eliminate negative statements completely. However, teachers should strive to follow the "one-in-three" rule (i.e., for every negative statement a teacher makes, they make three positive ones) or similar variation of this rule.⁵¹ The more consistently teachers can substitute negative speech with positive language, the more they enable students to learn in engaged and active ways.⁵²

On pp.19-20, the **"Positive and Direct Language Practice Worksheet"** presents a series of common phrases used in teachers' daily interactions that can be improved using more positive and direct language. By revising the listed items, teachers can begin to practice using positive and direct language more effectively.

DIAGNOSE PROBLEM BEHAVIORS AND SELECT INTERVENTIONS

Even the best-laid plans and most effectively executed Tier 1 behavioral supports will not prevent negative behaviors from occurring or reemerging throughout the school year. As such, teachers should revisit their behavioral management plans periodically throughout the school year, especially if classroom cultures begin to unravel. There are natural breaks in the school year to take back your classroom, but teachers do not have to necessarily wait for them.⁵³



Positive and Direct Language Practice Worksheet

Directions: Read the phrases in the left column. Try to rephrase each item using positive and direct language that fits your personal style. The resulting phrase should convey support, be inclusive, encourage learning, and demonstrate faith in students' abilities.

| COMMON PHRASE | YOUR LANGUAGE |
|---|---------------|
| Class be quiet! | |
| Not now. I'm busy. | |
| Please don't cry today. | |
| I don't want to have to take away recess. | |
| Why can't you guys get this? It's review. | |
| Let me help you. | |
| You need to follow the directions. | |
| That problem is too hard for you. | |

PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TOOLKIT:
ADDRESS PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS

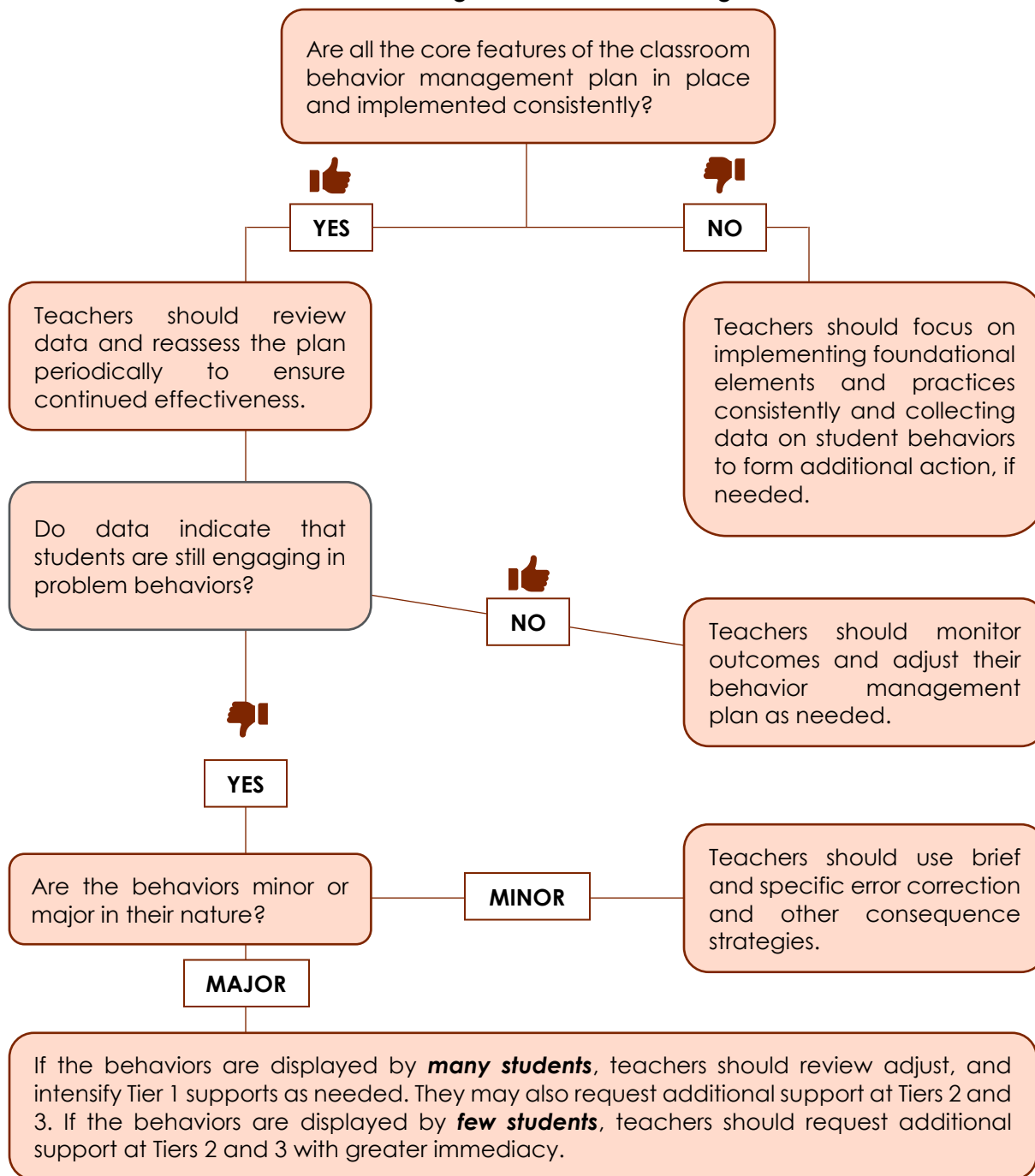
| COMMON PHRASE | YOUR LANGUAGE |
|---|---------------|
| Can you please wait for your turn? | |
| You all need to have a better day than yesterday. | |
| You're okay [in response to a fall]. | |
| Keep your hands to yourself! | |
| No talking during the pledge. | |
| <i>Below, add language you often use that you want to change.</i> | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and Educational Leadership⁵⁴

PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TOOLKIT:
ADDRESS PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS

In troubleshooting classroom problems, teachers should be honest by asking themselves tough questions about the effectiveness of their own instructional and behavioral management planning and implementation. A check on their behavior management plan will also provide teachers with an honest perspective with any challenges that arise during the school year.⁵⁵ If students display problem behaviors, teachers will need to either adjust their work in Tier 1 of the Ci3T framework or refer students to interventions at Tiers 2 and 3. The flow chart below guides how teachers should proceed.

Behavior Management Decision-Making Chart



Source: U.S. Office of Special Education Programs⁵⁶

PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TOOLKIT:
ADDRESS PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS

Teachers may conclude that after reviewing data, asking and answering tough questions, and rechecking their behavior management plan, that the problem comes down to one or two individual students in the classroom. If this is the case, **teachers may need to recalibrate their Tier 1 efforts or refer students to Tiers 2 and 3.**⁵⁷ The digital resource [PBIS World](#) can help teachers diagnose, troubleshoot, and select options for individual students who are finding it difficult to follow a teacher's behavior management plan relative to one or more specific behaviors. For some examples of how to work through the PBIS Behavior Assessment Tool, click on the links embedded in the table below.⁵⁸

PBIS Behavior Assessment Tool

| STUDENT BEHAVIOR | TIER 1 | TIER 2 | TIER 3 |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Name Calling | Tier 1 Interventions | Reward System | FBA |
| Negative Attitude | Tier 1 Interventions | Mentoring | Relationship Skills |
| Off-Task – Disruptive | Tier 1 Interventions | Behavior Contract | Social Stories |
| Hyperactivity | Tier 1 Interventions | Non-Verbal Cues | Sensory Tools |
| Failure to Cope | Tier 1 Interventions | Counselor Referral | Coping Skills |
| Out of Seat | Tier 1 Interventions | Structured Breaks | BIP |
| Low/No Work Completion | Tier 1 Interventions | Peer Tutoring | Check In/Check Out |

Source: *PBIS World*⁵⁹

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