Collaborating with Your Child’s School to Develop Effective Behavioral Plans and Classroom Strategies

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Objectives

- Understand important factors for working collaboratively with schools when developing behavioral intervention plans.

- Discuss steps for developing an effective behavioral intervention plan (BIP) in a school setting.

- Learn specific behavioral strategies that can be used in classroom settings to minimize attention and behavior problems.
Working with your child’s school should not feel like a Duel!

It should feel like a collaborative partnership.
Creating a Collaborative Relationship

- Parents of children with academic and behavioral difficulties may perceive many barriers to getting school-based services.
  - Lack of consistent communication
  - No plan or poor plan implementation
  - Lack of knowledge about appropriate services
- Teachers and school staff may feel that they do not have the support they need to help the child.
  - Poor understanding of child’s difficulties and/or limited information about child
  - Limited resources
  - Lack of parental involvement

Problem-solving these concerns from both “sides” is key to developing an effective plan for child’s success.
Methods for Getting Accommodations and Services

Informal/School-Based Services

Eligibility Law

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.

- For a student to be eligible for accommodations under Section 504, s/he must have a physical or mental need that “substantially limits one or more major life activities.”

Entitlement Law

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** is a federal education law that requires schools to provide special education services to eligible students as outlined in their **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**.

- Guarantees a **free appropriate public education (FAPE)** in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

- At minimum, state regulations must provide all protections contained in IDEA.
Common Misperceptions about IEPs and 504s

IEPs
- Automatically will not qualify if they aren’t “below grade level”
- IEPs are only for “extreme cases” of ADHD
- There is no IEP classification for children with ADHD “only”

504 Plans
- 504 plans are just for testing accommodations
- We should just include “standard” accommodations
- There’s no reason to meet to discuss 504 accommodations
- Parents are not allowed to attend 504 meetings
Prepare for IEP/504 Meetings

BEFORE:
- What is the GOAL of the meeting?
- Who is attending? Where? When?
- Prioritize your list of requests beginning with most important
  - Not sure what you can request → do some research

DURING:
- Listen carefully
  - Teacher perceptions/attributions/concerns
  - What is already being done?
- Take good notes and ask relevant questions
- Use “broken record technique” or just let them talk if already giving you everything your child needs
5 Steps for Developing a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)
General Goals of a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)

- Manage and modify attention and behavior problems that are interfering with school functioning.
- BIPs can focus on:
  - Increasing child’s academic productivity (both “input” and “output”)
  - Minimize inattention and off-task behavior
  - Reduce hyperactivity/impulsivity and other disruptive behavior
  - Decrease frustration and improve coping skills
  - Increase compliance with classroom/school rules
  - Increase child’s independent functioning and self-esteem
Step #1: Identify specific concerns

- What specific difficulties or behaviors are impacting the child in the following areas?
  - Learning (input)
  - Academic productivity (output)
  - Social-emotional functioning (engagement & participation)
- Does the child have a skill and/or a performance deficit?
- Are there characteristics of certain tasks or situations that “set the stage” for difficulties? (Antecedents)
- What is the “function” of certain behaviors?
  - Gain attention, tangible reinforcement, escape/avoid, self-stimulate, communicate, etc. (Consequences)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What “sets the stage” for specific difficulties or behaviors?</td>
<td>What specific, observable behavior does the child display?</td>
<td>What happens after the behavior and does it reinforce the behavior?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Functional Behavioral Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequences (currently)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seated on carpet during reading lesson</td>
<td>Making silly sounds</td>
<td>Teacher reprimands, Sends back to desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During math and writing seatwork</td>
<td>Not completing work</td>
<td>Sent to sit with guidance counselor to complete it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallway transitions and recess</td>
<td>Hitting/pushing others</td>
<td>Moved to front of line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sits out during recess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An FBA gives us information that allows us to understand the Antecedents that make it more likely a behavior will occur and current consequences that may inadvertently reinforce the behavior.
## Developing BIP using FBA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent Strategies</th>
<th>Target Behavior</th>
<th>“Positive opposite” of target behavior</th>
<th>Positive/Negative Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making silly sounds</td>
<td>Sitting quietly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not completing work</td>
<td>Initiates first step of task when asked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hitting/pushing others</td>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Keep in mind that children with ADHD have more difficulties…

- Later in the day
- During tasks requiring organizational strategies
- When behavioral restraint (i.e., impulse control) is required
- Under low levels of stimulation, passive listening tasks
- Under variable (inconsistent) schedules of consequences
- Under longer delays to reinforcement
- In absence of adult supervision
- When required to “stop”/”start”
- In the context of negative/hostile relationships
Associated problems that should also be considered

- Other psychological disorders:
  - Anxiety Disorders
  - Depression and other mood disorders
  - Low frustration tolerance, poor coping skills, low self esteem

- Learning disorders/cognitive deficits
- Language/communication disorders
- Motor coordination deficits
- Medical or eating/sleeping problems
- Family stress/conflict
Step #2: Identify potential strategies related to each area of concern

- Select the behaviors/skills/deficits that will be addressed with specific strategies and accommodations.
  - Be sure to “plug up each leak”
- Use “antecedent control” strategies
- Include positive consequences to shape behaviors/skills
  - Avoid negative consequences or use sparingly
- Address skill and/or performance deficits
- Teach replacement behaviors that will serve the same “function”
Sample Strategies

- **Academic accommodations**
  - Modified classwork/homework load
  - Written instructions/teacher’s notes
  - Review of homework log before leaving for the day
  - Extra set of materials for home

- **Environmental changes:** location of seat, materials, etc.

- **Transitional warnings and prompts**

- **Break down tasks, give shorter direct instructions**

- **Review established routines regularly, use specific routines to “modulate” attention and hyperactivity**

- **Set clear rules/expectations and associated consequences**

- **“Fidgets”, gum, doodle pad, sensory-related strategies**

- **Scheduled, structured breaks**

- **Daily Report Card (DRC)**

* 3 personal favorites
Structured Attention & Movement Breaks

- Parents and teachers are often hesitant to give kids with ADHD breaks (for fear they won’t come back!).
- Breaks provide essential cognitive and behavioral “reset” and minimize likelihood of disruptive behavior… kids take them anyway!
- With specific rules, kids often do well on breaks.
- Rules should specify when?, where?, what? & how long?
- For example,
  - Breaks can be taken before or after a lesson, but not during
  - You may take 3 before lunch and 3 after lunch (you don’t have to take a break, but you can use them if you need them!)
  - You can take a break at your desk or in a quiet corner of the room
  - During your break, you can do a quiet activity (read, draw, solve math problems, write part of a cool story, etc.)
  - A break can last 3-5 minutes
Using Daily Report Cards (DRC)

- Includes 2-3 specific goals/target behaviors
- Can be reinforced at school *and* at home and/or tied in to existing reward systems
- Increases consistency of communication between parents and teachers
- Focuses parent/teacher attention on specific goals/behaviors and reduces subjective reporting
- Provides a method for tracking progress on specific goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival until Lunch</th>
<th>After Lunch until Dismissal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay in my seat (with less than 3 reminders)</td>
<td>Stay in my seat (with less than 3 reminders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise my hand before I talk (with less than 3 reminders)</td>
<td>Raise my hand before I talk (with less than 3 reminders)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher: Indicate reminder given by checking box
## DRC Sample
(Multiple times/day)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Behaviors</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing assignment</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Cluster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates task/activity when prompted</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows activity rules (with &lt;3 reminders)</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
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# of Yeses = ____ %
# of Possible Yeses

Level 1 Reward = ≥ 80%
Level 2 Reward = 60-79%

Teacher Comments:
Sample Positive Consequences

Sample Home Rewards
- Extra screen time
- Special treat
- Special outing
- X minutes past bedtime
- Free pass on chore
- Points toward specific reward
- Many more! Be creative!

Sample School Rewards
- X minutes free time
- Extra computer time
- Visit to preferred staff member
- Teacher’s helper or special job
- Special recognition
- Points toward specific reward
- Many more! Be creative!

PRAISE and POSITIVE FEEDBACK!!
Step #3: Develop a Specific Plan

- Keep in mind “the devil is in the details”
- Be sure to specify “5 W’s and one H”

- ...will the strategy or accommodation be used?
- ...will the strategy or accommodation be implemented? How often? How will we know it’s working?
- ...are we using this specific strategy or accommodation? Why not another?
- ...is the specific strategy or accommodation for each area of concern (“leak”)?
  What are the goals?
- ...will be responsible for implementing the strategy or accommodation?
**Behavioral Intervention Plan**

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<th>Target Behavior</th>
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<tr>
<td>Review carpet time rules</td>
<td>Making silly sounds</td>
<td>Sitting quietly</td>
<td>Ignore silly sounds Praise sitting quietly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional warning before challenging task</td>
<td>Not completing work</td>
<td>Initiates first step of task when asked</td>
<td>Praise when starts Circle YES or NO on DRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break down task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remind student of DRC goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review transition rules</td>
<td>Hitting/pushing others</td>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
<td>Praise for “safe hands” Circle YES or NO on DRC X minute loss of recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign transition task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remind student of DRC goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Incorporating BIP into an IEP

- Review current annual goals and intervention strategies
  - Specific? Measurable? Feasible?
- Specify how progress will be monitored and communicated to parents regularly
- Request that the IEP include the BIP

On many IEPs, these questions are checked “No”, but both should be checked “Yes” in order to ensure that the IEP includes a behavioral plan if your child needs one.

**STUDENT NEEDS RELATING TO SPECIAL FACTORS**

Does the student need a behavioral intervention plan? □ No □ Yes:

Does the student need strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, supports and other strategies to address behaviors that impede the student's learning or that of others? □ No □ Yes:
## Typical Sample IEP Goal

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Annual Goals</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
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<tr>
<td>What the student will be expected to achieve by the end of the year in which the IEP is in effect</td>
<td>Measure to determine if goal has been met</td>
<td>How progress will be measured</td>
<td>When progress will be measured</td>
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<tr>
<td>In one year, CHILD will demonstrate more appropriate classroom behavior by following teacher instructions and classroom rules.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
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**Modified Sample IEP Goal**

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<td>What the student will be expected to achieve by the end of the year in which the IEP is in effect</td>
<td>Measure to determine if goal has been met</td>
<td>How progress will be measured</td>
<td>When progress will be measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In one year, CHILD will demonstrate more appropriate classroom behavior by following teacher instructions and classroom rules.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Teacher observation of target behavior recorded on Daily Report Card</td>
<td>Recorded daily, reviewed monthly, modified as needed</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Step #4: Monitor the plan regularly

- Create a concise written plan and ensure everyone has a copy.
  - This can be a summary email following a meeting
- Specify method and frequency of communication between parents and teachers to regularly monitor plan and progress.
- Try to include a monitoring/tracking tool to assess whether strategies/accommodations are working (e.g., DRC)
  - Is the child making progress? How will we know?
- Follow up and problem-solve any issues as soon as you know a part of the plan is not being implemented or is not working.
Step #5: Troubleshoot the plan

Common reasons plans fail:

- Goals are not clearly defined or plan addresses too many goals at the same time
- Plan addresses the wrong issue (misunderstanding of the nature of child’s difficulties)
- Child has a skill deficit that is not being addressed
- Positive rewards being used are not reinforcing to child
- Positive rewards not being provided frequently enough
  - “Front-load” the intervention plan with a high rate of reinforcement at the beginning
- No home-based consequences included in plan
- Plan is not being implemented as designed
- Plan is not reviewed/modified or is stopped too soon
Effective plan development and implementation is a circular process

Step 1: Identify concerns

Step 2: Identify potential strategies

Step 3: Develop specific plan

Step 4: Monitor plan regularly

Step 5: Troubleshoot plan
Ensure Continuity of Care

- Many individuals involved in implementing educational and treatment plan, but who is the coach?
- How do we ensure consistency and reinforcement of skills across settings and providers?
- How will we all communicate? When? How often?
- When should you seek additional support?
  - Educational advocates/lawyers
  - Mental health providers
  - Parent support groups
Available Resources

- The NYC Department of Education:
  - Family Guide to Special Education Services summarizing the process and available services: [http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/tellmemore/importantDocuments.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/tellmemore/importantDocuments.htm)
- Special Education Advocacy: [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)
- The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey (SPAN): [www.spanadvocacy.org](http://www.spanadvocacy.org)
- Parent-friendly information about ADHD and related topics: [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
Questions?