

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

Sam is an 11-year-old child with autism who was unable to concentrate either in the classroom or at home. Violent outbreaks and the inability to communicate effectively characterized her behavior. A network of parents, therapists, teachers, and students gathered around Sam to identify her problem, assess her needs, and develop an effective solution to meet her needs.

The team decided that the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support process could help Sam. First, Sam's daily life was carefully observed in order to identify a set of triggers that led to Sam's problem behavior. Second and most importantly, a positive behavioral support plan was developed to avoid this behavior and to encourage positive social skills. The plan created a new "environment" that consisted of a varied group of people, an inclusive classroom, a relaxation room, a daily schedule and academic adaptations.

The program led to great improvements in her behavior. The team successfully designed preventative measures, direct instruction methods, self-management skills, and crisis management strategies that helped her transform her negative behaviors into positive social interactions and academic connections. Over time she was able to be less dependent on her aide, attend to tasks, concentrate her attention on the classroom teacher, and be more like her peers.

Introduction

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach. It is based on research regarding behavior in the context of the settings where it occurs. Schools, families, and communities work with this approach to design effective environments to improve behavior. Such environmental interventions, in turn, serve to make problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant and desired behavior more functional. In addition, the use of culturally appropriate interventions is emphasized.

Why this Approach is Important

The use of PBIS emerged 12 years ago as an alternative to more traditional behavior approaches for students with severe disabilities who engaged in self-injury and aggressive behavior. PBIS has since emerged as a tool to be used with all children—with and without disabilities—to achieve long-term positive social behavior. PBIS is a powerful tool that all schools and families can use as they address issues related to troubling behavior and create effective learning environments.

Key Principles of Practice

- The difference between PBIS and traditional approaches is that PBIS focuses on changing the environment while traditional approaches focus primarily on changing the person.

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- A key component of PBIS is a functional behavioral assessment (FBA). The FBA includes the observations and input of people close to the person exhibiting problem behavior. This team observes the person's behavior to identify and define the problematic behavior, what actions or events precede the behavior, those that follow the behavior, how often the behavior occurs, what actions or events precede the behavior and those that follow the behavior. The FBA serves as an important part of the process in determining appropriate positive behavioral support plans.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that, at a minimum, the FBA be conducted when disciplinary sanctions result in extended periods (i.e. either before or not later than 10 business days after either the first removal beyond 10 cumulative school days in a school year or commencing a removal that constitutes a change in placement) in which a student is removed from school.
- PBIS components are implemented in schools, homes, and communities. Families, educators and other professionals administer the program.
- PBIS can be used for individual students with chronic behavior difficulties and with entire schools.
- The goal of PBIS is to eliminate problem behavior, to replace problem behavior with more appropriate behavior, and to increase a person's skills and opportunities for an enhanced quality of life.
- PBIS is effective. Schools and individuals that implemented PBIS have demonstrated effective results

Where To Go For More Information

Office of Special Education Programs

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

U.S. Department of Education,

330 C Street, SW

Washington, DC 20202

Phone (202) 205-5507

Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/index.html>

The OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Behavioral Research and Training

5262 University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97403-5262

Phone: 541-346-2505 Fax: 541-346-5689

Web site: <http://www.PBIS.org>

The Center was established by OSEP to give schools capacity-building information and technical assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices.