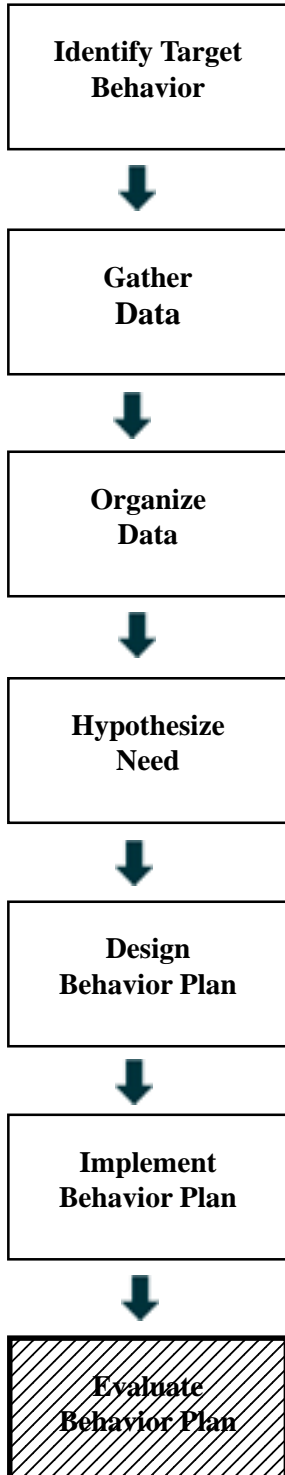


Evaluating Positive

Positive Behavior Support




When a student is receiving special education services and his/her behavior interferes with his/her learning or that of others, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) directs schools to consider **positive behavioral supports (PBS)** and strategies to address that behavior.

Positive behavioral supports look for the function and triggers (causes) of problem behavior and teach the student new skills without resorting to punishments. The idea is to change the environment--what “sets up” the challenging behavior and how people around the student react to it--in order to improve a student’s ability to learn and make friends.

The goal (of Positive Behavior Support) is not to fix the person but rather to find the environment where the person can be successful.
 --Greg Llewellyn

This article is the third in a series about PBS. Part I - *Assessing Behavior: The Initial Line of Inquiry* covered the first four steps in the process. Part II - *Building a Positive Behavior Support Plan* talked about how to design and implement a behavior plan. (Note: these articles can be downloaded from our website).

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PLANS



- Identify alternative, desired behaviors
- Identify strategies to reduce problem behavior and increase desired behavior

PROGRESS MONITORING

Once a plan is in place, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Ideally a well designed behavior plan will result in:

- ☺ the student acquiring and using new skills;
- ☺ a decrease in the problem behavior, and
- ☺ general improvements in the quality of life of the student, his or her family and members of the support team.

Progress monitoring is a process which involves collecting and analyzing data to determine a student’s progress toward specific skills or behavioral/academic goals. Once the data has been collected and reviewed, the teacher and other members of a behavior support team can decide if any changes to instruction or prevention strategies need to occur.

STARTING WITH A BASELINE

It’s hard to measure where you are going if you don’t know where you’ve been, so good behavior plans clearly identify how a student is

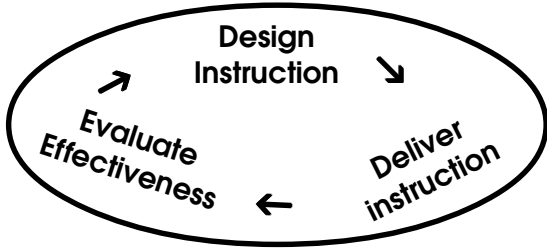


performing at the onset of the plan. If the target behavior is sleeping in class, for example, we would want to know when the sleeping occurs, in what subjects and for how long. Or if we are trying to improve the time a student is able to stay on task, we would want to know how long he or she stays on task in each subject that includes independent work periods. Paying close attention to how a student is performing will also give the team a sense of the rate at which the student is likely to progress.

Behavior Support Plans



PROGRESS MONITORING



SETTING MEASURABLE GOALS

Behavior goals need to be both functional and measurable. *Functional* means that the goals address a priority need, support success in future environments, are age appropriate and built on the student's abilities and special interests. Goals that are *measurable* provide a clear focus for instruction. They communicate what we expect the student to be able to do and spell out a timeline for success. These goals should answer the question, "what will the student actually DO?" They are clearly defined (for example, *be seated on time, use a picture exchange system to ask for a break*) rather than vague (for example, *understand, improve*).

COLLECTING DATA

Data helps to track the rate and growth of the student's progress. It offers clear evidence of whether an intervention is having the desired effect on the student's behavior.

A number of questions must be answered before data is actually taken:

- ? ? ?
? ? ?
? ? ?
- What type of data will be collected?
- Where will it be collected?
- How often?
- Who will collect the data?

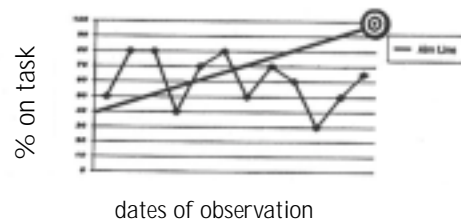
Behavior team members often have to decide whether they can make room in their busy schedules to take data more frequently. The payoff is that the team can identify trends sooner and adjust the plan accordingly. Parents and students can help by recording data, too.

GRAPHING THE DATA

Graphs can be a wonderful visual tool for

looking at the data that has been collected. In the graph below, you see Katie's progress in meeting her goal of working independently. The left side of the graph shows the percentage of time she was recorded working by herself, and the points along the horizontal axis represent 12 observations. The diagonal line is called an *aim line*. It is drawn between the starting point (or baseline) and the target. In this example, Katie started out working by herself only 40% of the time, and the target is for her to be able to do this 100% of the time. If the target represented a reduction in a behavior (like hitting), the aim line would be drawn pointing down.

Example: Katie will remain on task during independent work periods 80% of the time as measured by time sampling three times a week.



By connecting the points of observation, you begin to see a trend. In Katie's case, she starts out staying close to the aim line, but her last six observations fell short of expected progress.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

If a student is NOT making progress, as in Katie's case, the team may want to adjust the way she is being reinforced to work independently. Changing the frequency, duration and intensity of supports may have a more positive effect. Perhaps the original hypotheses needs to be looked at again. For instance, if Katie's behavior support team guessed that her difficulty working independently was due to a lack of organizational skills, and the function was really to get attention, then the strategies would have to be adjusted to factor in Katie's need for attention. By setting measurable goals, by taking good data and by analyzing the data, behavior plans can make a positive difference for the student!

