Early Intervention Symposium

Making the Most of Your Day: Using Visual Supports to Address Challenging Behaviors in Young Children

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The Children’s Center
FOR COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT
The University of Southern Mississippi
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Agenda:
- Overview of Common Behavioral Challenges
- Setting up your classroom for success
  - Classroom Arrangement
  - Basing activities on IEP goals, Assessments, Functional goals
  - Sequencing Activities
- Behavioral Interventions
  - Visual Schedules
  - Reinforcement Programs
  - Simple Interventions for Common Problems
- Question/Answer
What about Problem Behaviors?
Problem Behaviors

- Common behavioral challenges
  - Symptoms associated with children with autism
  - Symptoms associated with children with ADHD
  - Separation Anxiety
  - Aggression
  - Disruption
  - Elopement (running away)
Why's and How's to Treating Problem Behaviors

Functions
Treatment
Examples
Sample Cases
## Sample Data Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>ANTECEDENT</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Check only one)</td>
<td>☐ Wants peer attention</td>
<td>☐ Inappropriate language/profanity</td>
<td>☐ Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Cafeteria</td>
<td>☐ Wants teacher/adult attention</td>
<td>☐ Physical aggression/fighting</td>
<td>☐ Verbal redirection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Hallway</td>
<td>☐ Wants item/activity: __________________________</td>
<td>☐ Defiance/Disrespect/Insubordination</td>
<td>☐ Conference with teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Classroom</td>
<td>☐ Instruction given</td>
<td>☐ Lying/Cheating</td>
<td>☐ Time-out in room (duration _______ )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Playground</td>
<td>☐ Individual work</td>
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<td>☐ Time out in another room (duration _______ )</td>
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<td>☐ Transition/ Interruption</td>
<td>☐ Property damage/vandalism</td>
<td>☐ Loss of time on recess/activity</td>
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<tr>
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<td>☐ Forgery/Theft</td>
<td>☐ Loss of access to items</td>
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<tr>
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<td>☐ Wants to avoid adult</td>
<td>☐ Technology violation</td>
<td>☐ Parent phone call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Bus loading zone</td>
<td>☐ Other: _________________________________________</td>
<td>☐ Use/ possession of weapons</td>
<td>☐ Parent Conference</td>
</tr>
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<td>☐ Car loading zone</td>
<td>☐ Other: _________________________________________</td>
<td>☐ Off-task</td>
<td>☐ Detention</td>
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<td>☐ Other: _________________________________________</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ ISS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Other: _________________________________________</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ OSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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**Comments:**
Functions of Problem Behaviors Simplified

- Problem behaviors are usually related to 4 main conditions (variants of the conditions may also occur)
  - Escape function - "I prefer not to..."
  - Attention function - "Hey, look at me!"
  - Tangible function - "I want my toy!"
  - Alone (Sensory) function - "I love my musical and light-up toy."

- Children with communication difficulties typically can't tell us the function of their behavior.
- However, they can engage in a behavior that typically gets us what we need!
Methods for Teaching Children with Behavioral Difficulties and Communication Problems

Keeping Them Interested, Reducing Behaviors, & Meeting IEP Goals
Setting Your Classroom Up For Success

- General Classroom Guidelines
  - Less is More (helps with minimizing distraction)
  - Make changes to Specific Areas based on the Unit you’re teaching (you don’t have to change everything all the time)
  - Section your classroom based on the furniture you have in your room
    - Make big areas small
    - Fill open areas with stationary furniture and screens
    - Use screens to help minimize distraction
    - Ensure play areas have boundaries, limit toys in that area
  - Be Mobile: to help keep kids in your area
  - Have a variety of different activities to guide your day; rotate a sitting activities with activities that require more movement
Classroom Example

Carpet/Circle Time Area

Shelves & Dividers

Assistant

Students

Teacher
Things to Remember

• Use visual cues to help remind students where they need to sit.
  - Print out names, laminate, place them on a chair
  - Helps with identification of name as well as learning "mine"
• **BOUNDARIES:** For areas without seating, using colored masking tape or small colorful cushions to help designate where to sit
Things to Remember

- Make sure the assistant, visiting therapist, etc. is seated in an area that is advantageous to the primary teacher (e.g., behind the students, blocking the doorway for students that are "on the go")
- Door alarms/ plastic door knob covers
- Are students all over? Is your play area too big?
Factors to Consider

Use these:

- **Concrete/Visual**: literal thinkers, process visual supports better than verbal (think inclusion classroom); visual also helps with organization and attending to tasks
- **Simple/One Step**: break activities into simple, discrete steps
- **Routine/Familiar**: Same is good! Do not change types of activities frequently--otherwise you're treating behavior versus educational goals
- **Rule Based**: Simple, concrete steps and rules will help guide participation versus open-ended rules and/or steps that require judgement (too many choices such as freely based, centers activities)
Factors to Consider

Avoid these:

- **Abstract/Language Based**: lots of words and open-ended questions may cause confusion and you'll lose attention
- **Complex/Multi-step**: reduce number of steps, unless you have simple visual prompts
- **Unpredictable/Unfamiliar**: do not change everything up daily--it's best to keep the basic plan the same and familiar (e.g., daily schedule)
- **Requires Judgement**: keep things rule-based with simple rules (finish this, then this)...limit multiple open-ended activities.
**Using Visual Supports**

- Using visuals with abstract concepts (reading comprehension, counting money) should improve comprehension.
- Utilizing manipulatives/hand-holds will also enhance learning.
- Use of verbal instruction paired with visuals will likely be more effective than purely verbal instruction.
- Simple phrases or concise speech = easy comprehension.
Visual Supports: Rationale?

• Do you as teachers/parents/assistants repeat directions over and over?
• Are your students immediately engaging in desired activity?
• Are the students having a meltdown? Where do things start to break down in your observations?
• Look at your observations for the answers!

"If you’ve told a child a thousand times and he still does not understand, then it is not the child who is the slow learner."
Attributed to Walter Barbee
Structured Tasks

- Tasks should be structured
- Areas of the room are clearly defined
- Daily class visual schedule will organize the student's day
- A "task schedule" is used when several tasks are to be completed
  - represented in a meaningful way
  - should be manipulative
  - should increase the student's independence

  - For example, a schedule may consist of a set of numbers which correspond to folders. Upon completion, the work folder is moved to a "finished" area, such as large box or office organizer. An then the student would be instructed to complete the next activity on the schedule.
Visual Schedules

- Visual schedules provide predictability
- Reduces inappropriate behaviors
- Provide flexibility
- Can increase self esteem
Visual Schedules
Visual Schedules

Insert video of schedule use
Curriculum Continued...

• Use benchmarks as your guide
• Also look to your IEPs
• Make a list of all of the classroom goals that you should be teaching (in order to become proficient, you have to actively teach the skill).
• Create IEP data sheets on each student: (see example)
  - A simple table can be used for each child. Teachers can mark off what has been met and what needs work throughout each day, at the end of the week, when planning activities, etc.
What about Problem Behaviors?
# Sample Data Sheet/Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IEP GOAL</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
<th>Met Goal</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Unable to Complete Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Manipulates preschool and environmental materials such as play dough, finger paint, wrappers, bowl/spoon, etc</td>
<td>Play Doh Tree Fingerpainting Activity</td>
<td>Plah-Doh</td>
<td>Yes: had to guide for finger paint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Imitate prewriting strokes (vertical, horizontal, scribbling, “pretend” writing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Would not attempt to use pencil without hand over hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identifies “Safety” words in the classroom &amp; generalizes to the community (outside of classroom)</td>
<td>Practiced “Stop” with Stop Signs throughout class</td>
<td>In Classroom Community: Needs Improvement</td>
<td>Did not stop at Stop sign in Cafeteria</td>
<td>Will Continue to Practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Fall

Gross Motor
Fine Motor
Social Skills
Cognitive Language

ALL DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS
Visual Support for Song & Rhyme

Individual boards for each child or turn taking with one
Counting
Color identification
Group participation
Tray Activities
Learn concepts by performing them: pouring, shapes, cutting, pasting, etc.
Example Trays
Feeling Faces

www.sparklebox.co.uk
Faces!

Use playdough to add the missing feature to this face.
File Folder Activities
Activities that can address many different skills.
Examples: matching, labeling
Color by Number/Letter/Word

www.crayonboxchronicles.com

www.teacherlingo.com

TURKEY TISSUE PAPER by number

www.makinglearningfun.com
Tangrams
Dot to Dot Activities

[Diagram of a scarecrow with numbers 1 to 18 and letters W to Z connected by dots]

[Diagram of a turkey with numbers 1 to 18 and letters A to Z connected by dots]
Teaching Prepositions
Money Skills

- 31¢ (French fries)
- 40¢
- 3¢
- 10¢
- 50¢
Pre-Writing Activities
Sensory Activities to Incorporate in to the Classroom
Sensory Play

Sorting  Pouring  Finding  Identification
Sensory Play

Squishy Baff
Gelli Baff
Sensory Box

These are items that can be used as reinforcers.

Can schedule during class time.

Example: Break time for pre-K class with high levels of sensory seeking behaviors. Also helps with WAITING!
Independent Work Activities

One example: Shoebox tasks
Shoebox Tasks: Learning to Learn

- Tasks are located to the student's left.
- The visual structure of the task shows the student what to do.
- As the student completes the task, it is moved to the right to an "all done" area.
- After the student is finished, there is reinforcer or directive of what to do next.
WORK ROUTINELY FLOWS IN A LEFT TO RIGHT DIRECTION

Tasks to be completed

1

2

3

4

Toy to play with after work is finished

Student

Finished Basket

Teacher
Reinforcement Programs

Maintaining Success! These should be used for all children needing behavioral supports.
What is reinforcement?

- Reinforcement refers to the strengthening of a behavior so that it (the behavior) will be repeated.
- If a behavior is repeated or increases, then the reinforcing consequence is known as a reinforcer.
- Reinforcement ALWAYS increases the behavior.
Categories of Positive Reinforcers

Tangible Reinforcers
- Material objects that have personal value - toys, food, books, etc.
- can include activities such as watching TV, playing iPad, etc.
- Easy for children to understand due to concrete form
- Difficult to decrease dependence on this type of reinforcer
- Can be expensive or inappropriate to use
- Most items are subject to satiation--except money
Categories of Reinforcers

Social Reinforcers

- Attention, praise, proximity, approval from other people
- Given either verbally, physically (hugs, pats on the back), or through gestures (smiles, thumbs up)
- 4 Advantages
  - Easy to administer
  - Limitless supply
  - Can be given immediately after the behavior
  - Considered natural reinforcers - consequences that people receive as a regular part of their daily lives
- Among the most powerful consequences available for initiating and maintaining behaviors.
- People rarely become satiated of social reinforcers
Categories of Positive Reinforcers

Token Reinforcers

- Symbolic items that have value because of what they can be exchanged for.
- Examples: casino/poker chips, arcade tokens, tickets, stickers, etc.
- Reinforcement is most effective when it is delivered immediately after the behavior. However, this is not always possible so the use of tokens provides caregivers with a tangible source to represent the actual reinforcer that will come at a later time.
- Can be exchanged for tangible or social reinforcers.
Behavioral Treatments

Reinforcement

- Reinforce appropriate behaviors
- What do you want the person to be doing?
- If and when they display that behavior, reinforce it!
- Use both immediate and long term reinforcers.
Steps for Setting Up a Reinforcement Program

• Identify something that your student is working for (e.g., small edibles, prize bag item, special activity)
• Make the rules of what is desired:
  -(a) completing a task (cleaning, finishing meal, following sleep routine)
  -(b) make sure the chart is a reasonable tool to use during an activity
  -(c) make chart appropriate based on what we know our kiddos can do
Reinforcement Program Continued

- Move target to desired area based on meeting approximations to goals. Sample activities may include:
  - Seat work: every time the child works appropriately, character moves up.
  - Reducing aggression: every 5 minutes child is following his rules, character moves up.
- When character meets the targeted place, child receives a prize that has been identified. Stickers are NOT a good prize unless that is truly a preferred item because they typically will lose desirability. Stickers are great motivators for leading to a prize, but not always the final prize.
Reinforcement Chart

Insert video MW group
Initially you do not want to move your character down. You always want to start by allowing the child to earn a prize as quickly as possible. 
-If you move the character down, or not up fast enough, the child may never earn a prize, causing them to lose interest in the program.

Leave the character in the spot until rules are followed appropriately. As the child becomes better with the program, gradually increase time between moving the character (increase effort).

Sometimes it's best to give a little more for less the first few times for meeting goals more efficiently in the future.
Reinforcement Sample 2

- Tangible tokens (e.g., strips of paper, paperclips, poker chips, clothespins)
- Data sheet for data collection (identification of behaviors to increase, decrease, and row for how often behaviors occur)
- Envelopes created for target student or each student and placed on board
- Prize sheet (laminate this so that you can change it frequently)
- Easily accessible prizes for varying amounts.
I Can Earn/ I Can Lose

I can earn points for:
- following directions
- keeping hands to self
- talking nicely and quietly
- answering a question
- helping my teacher
- helping a friend

I can lose points for:
- talking loudly
- shouting
- refusing to complete work
- aggression
- standing in other's personal space
Keeping Tokens

- Create a token board with envelopes attached
- Provide tokens as students engage in to appropriate behaviors
- Remove tokens based on inappropriate behaviors (or behaviors you want to decrease)
- Ensure a visual of expected rules is presented to students as well as a reminder of how system works
Sample

Charles

Snoopy

Lucy
Sample Continued

Daily price sheet:

5 tokens
5 min iPad

1 token
Sensory toy break

6 tokens
Prize Box

8 tokens
Feed the Pet

10 tokens
Computer Time
Things to Remember

- Baseline will let you know about how many tokens a student can earn.
- Keep prices low and give frequent tokens initially. You may have to get creative and/or provide opportunities to keep mostly positive points.
- Opportunities to buy items can be provided at the half day (maybe even sooner that that) and eventually at the end of the day.
- Increase prize amounts to increase delay for tangible reinforcement as data indicates this will be successful.
Resources
