

SAFETY PROTOCOL TEMPLATES AND TOOLS

APPENDIX E

In our experience, the most overlooked aspect of behavioral programming is establishing safety and emergency protocols from the outset. Too often, safety protocols are established after a major incident. We have found that when safety protocols are reactionary, teams feel as though it was “too little, too late.” We believe safety protocols should be proactive and preventative.

When we accept the reality that the student(s) we’re working with can cause real, immediate, and capable harm, we must begin with keeping all students and staff safe. So much of our work in building optimism in teams will fall short if our team doesn’t feel safe. It is basic human need for our staff to feel safe at the workplace and our children to feel safe at school. As such, safety and emergency protocols should be our first step, not the third or fourth.

GOAL:

Establish basic safety and emergency protocols for when a student becomes physically aggressive or elopes (aka runs away). These protocols should be designed to keep all faculty, staff, and students safe from harm.

SAMPLE EMERGENCY PROTOCOL CHECKLISTS:

Medical Emergencies:

- Do we have the contact information for school nurse and school administration?
- Do we have access to first aid materials? Do we need to be trained on them?
- Do any of our students have allergies we should be aware of?
- Have we assigned a school staff member to send with student to hospital (unless parent/guardian is there)?
- Do we have a way to document and report events of medical emergency?

Mental Health Crisis Response-Recovery Phase Checklist

- Do we have the contact information for a school mental health team lead?
- Do we have a response team? Do we have the ability to mobilize that in-school response team?

- Administrator Responsibilities:
 - Does the administrator have the contact for school operations to report and, if necessary, request additional mental health response crisis support?
 - Does the administrator have the ability to coordinate with mental health team lead?
 - Has the administrator reviewed crisis response and crisis follow-up with mental health team lead in a timely manner?

Child Missing/Abducted Checklist

- Call 911. Be prepared to provide a description of the child/abductor including a description of the child's/abductor's clothing.
- Contact school administrator to initiate a lockdown procedure.
- Notify teachers and direct them to take attendance and sweep school grounds as appropriate.
- Cooperate with police investigation.
- Administrator Responsibilities:
 - Notify child's parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - Manage faculty, parent, and community communications about the incident.
 - Develop a plan for working with parents/guardians concerned about the welfare of their children.

Individual Student Crisis (Aggressive, Dangerous, and/or Threatening Behavior) Checklist:

- Immediately notify the principal or principal's designee.
- Create a safe space by moving furniture, computers, sharp objects, blunt objects, etc., out of the area.
- If possible, transition the student to a de-escalation area.
- Keep a calm voice and validate the emotions you see (e.g., "I can see you're upset. I've been upset before, it's hard. You're in a safe place and I need you to be safe, too").
- Identify and/or confirm his/her wants, needs, and feelings by reflecting back what they are saying.
- Limit the number of adults in the room to no more than three.
- Do *not* leave the student alone.
- Do *not* attempt to discipline a student while they are in crisis.
- Do *not* approach or touch the child without asking their permission. Only engage if the child is in real, immediate, and capable harm. Follow your district's emergency physical response policy and procedure at this point. (We utilize ASPEN De-Escalation Strategies. Visit www.totempd.com for more details.)
- Do *not* ignore what the child may be trying to communicate.
- Document the before, during, and after of the incident with dates and times.
- Notify school administration and parents/guardians within 24 hours of the incident about the details.
- Convene as a team to discuss ways to support the child and staff to prevent another crisis.

THANKS FOR THE CHECKLISTS; SO NOW WHAT?

As much as we all like a good checklist, they are mostly worthless unless we practice all the steps within the checklist outside of a real crisis. In other words, it is essential that our teams practice these steps in a meaningful way. Think of these like fire drills or earthquake drills. Prior to any major implementation of the child's behavior plan, the team should practice each step in the checklists. We recommend practicing at least once a quarter. We also recommend practicing the steps until everyone on the team feels comfortable with the steps.

We have found role-playing is the best way to practice. That means we have someone "acting" as the child in crisis. (Please use common sense and avoid getting "too into it" so you don't get hurt while practicing a crisis.) However, it is remarkable how different we respond to role-playing than just a simple "checklist review." We have had hundreds of educators tell us how grateful they were for role-playing. Through role-play, they have discovered unique issues that needed to be addressed prior to any real crisis. For instance, one team we worked with identified their walkie-talkies did not reach the administrator's or the School Resource Officer's (SRO's) walkie-talkies. They were on totally different networks. They never would have discovered this without the role-play.

REMEMBER: A crisis practiced is a crisis averted.

SAMPLE OF A "SKELETON DRAFT" OF CLASSROOM EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

STUDENT NAME
Assigned seating
Designated cool-down area in the class
Prep room by removing any potential "blunt objects" and dangerous/extremely messy objects.
Prep meaningful work materials for other students. When the students leave the area, they will be able to access meaningful work materials until the crisis is averted.
Letter to parents about the new safety procedures/precautions
Training faculty and staff on the procedures

Procedure:

1. **Outburst Occurs**
2. *Staff Action:* Validate the emotion you see: "I can see you're upset. I'm going to help the other students and I want you to be safe."
3. *Staff Action:* Ensure staff have adequate communication devices (e.g., walkie-talkie, cell phone service, etc.).
4. *Staff Action:* Deliver firm, precise command to target student: "I need you to stay in your own workspace. You have plenty of time to calm down."
5. *Staff Action:* Ensure other students depart room safely and access their preplanned meaningful work activity.
6. *Staff Action:* Assign supervision to group of students.
7. *Staff Action:* Assign supervision of target student.

Retrieved from the companion website for *Optimistic Teaming: Coordination Strategies for Tough Student Situations* by Ben Springer and Ben Belnap. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com. Copyright © 2024 by Corwin Press, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction authorized for educational use by educators, local school sites, and/or noncommercial or nonprofit entities that have purchased the book.

8. *Staff Action:* Document behaviors of students removed from class.
9. *Staff Action:* Document behaviors of target students.
10. *Staff Action:* Communicate Steps 1–9 to Building Admin and Behavior Plan Team Lead.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER HOME AFTER CLASSROOM DISRUPTION/CRISIS

Drafted Letter to Parents If and When a Student Exhibits Dangerous or Challenging Behaviors Affecting Other Students/Personnel in School

Date:

Dear _____,

Recently we experienced an aggressive outburst from a student at school. While we do not go into details about the student for the sake of privacy, we do want to share with you all our procedures for both responding and preventing these outbursts from occurring in the school setting.

Our school district is very fortunate to staff several specialists and provide trainings for these instances. We will be working closely with our specialists to learn how to safely respond to the outburst by:

- Creating an emergency procedure designed to keep students and staff safe.
- Practice the emergency procedure to help students and staff feel more comfortable executing the procedure (much like a fire drill).

We will be working closely with our specialists to learn how to prevent future outbursts by:

- Creating a behavior support plan for the student that teaches new behaviors and provides consequences for negative behavior.
- Collect data in 2-week intervals to determine the success of the plan/approach.

If you have any questions and/or concerns about the steps we take daily to keep our students and staff safe, do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your School

Your Contact Information

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT (FBA) STEPS

There are a million different FBA forms out there. In fact, in our opinion, there are too many. It's gotten to the point (within some school teams) that the form has overshadowed the process. You see, FBAs are a process—not a form. How the team decides to document the process is up to the team. However, the form is meaningless if the team doesn't understand the process.

Retrieved from the companion website for *Optimistic Teaming: Coordination Strategies for Tough Student Situations* by Ben Springer and Ben Belnap. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com. Copyright © 2024 by Corwin Press, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction authorized for educational use by educators, local school sites, and/or noncommercial or nonprofit entities that have purchased the book.

What is the process? Well, in a nutshell, the process applies principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). These principles include framing all behavior excesses as a function of one, two, three, or four things:

- Gaining access to attention
- Escaping/avoiding a demand
- Gaining access to a tangible, preferred item or activity
- Gaining sensory stimulation

Once we identify our “best guess” about the function of the excessive behavior, we must attempt to teach the child a more appropriate way of gaining access to that function. That’s it. Now, your school team may have access to any number of experts (e.g., Board Certified Behavior Analysts, or school psychologists, or special educators) capable of taking deep dives on the process—and that’s great. What we are very adamant about is this: Try not to overthink it.

All we need to do is identify behaviors we want to see decrease and behaviors we want to see increase. Then, we provide consequences for the behaviors we want to see decrease, and we must take the time to teach the behaviors we want to see increase.

It is through this lens that we’ve found the most success with teams. Through this lens, we frame FBAs like a “race.” In Lane 1, we have the negative or maladaptive behavior. In Lane 2, we have the new replacement behavior we are going to attempt to teach to the child. The following table represents “The Behavior Race.” Our job? Rig the race. That’s right, we want Lane 2 to win. Therefore, we’re going to spend most of our time building all the capacity and focus on Lane 2. Too often, we find teams overfocused on Lane 1. Most of the data collected by teams end up being Lane 1 behaviors, but not Lane 2 behaviors. No improvement can come from this approach. Improvement only comes when we focus on Lane 2 more than Lane 1.

“The Behavior Race”

LANE 1 (BEHAVIOR TO DECREASE)	LANE 2 (BEHAVIOR TO INCREASE)
1. Target Problem Behavior: What do you see? (e.g., biting)	1a. Target Replacement Behavior: What do you want to see? (e.g., no bites)
2. How frequently do you see it? (e.g., 2–3 times a day)	2a. How frequently do you want to see it? (e.g., at least 20–30 times a day)
3. How intense is the behavior? Low, medium, high?	3a. How intense do you want the behavior to be? (e.g., low-to-zero intensity)
4. Where did the behavior occur? (e.g., in the SPED classroom and recess)	4a. Where do you want to see the behavior? (e.g., the SPED classroom and recess)
5. How long did the behavior last? (e.g., “The bite itself doesn’t last long. The time it takes to respond to the bite is around 14–20 minutes.)	5a. How long do you want to see the behavior last? (e.g., 100% of the school day: Zero bites!)
6. Provide data points for each area 1–5.	6a. Provide data points for each area 1–5.

Use “The Behavior Race” to fill in the blanks of a basic drafted behavior plan:

(Student) has been observed to exhibit (target behavior to DECREASE). The behavior may best be described as (information 1). The behavior occurs (information 2), with a (high, medium, low) intensity. The behavior tends to occur in (information 4) and may last up to (information 5).

In an effort to reduce the (target behavior to DECREASE), (student)’s support team is proposing to teach (student) a positive replacement behavior. For the next 10 school days, the support team will be working on teaching (student) (target behavior to INCREASE). The replacement behavior may best be described as (information 1a). The replacement behavior will occur (information 2a), with a (high, medium, low) intensity. The behavior will occur in (information 4a) and may last up to (information 5a).

Within 10 school days, (student)’s support team will evaluate the following areas:

- 1. How well the support team can identify the target replacement behavior (and reward/reinforce that behavior)*
- 2. The frequency of rewarding the target replacement behavior*
- 3. The intensity of the target replacement behavior (high, medium, low)*
- 4. Where the target replacement behavior will occur (What areas at school/home need to be reinforced the most?)*
- 5. How long the target replacement behavior will last (Make sure the student is clear on what the replacement behavior looks like.)*

SAMPLE OF FORMAL BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

Your Name, Credential

Your Title

Your ext.1234

youremail@yourwork.com

Date: mm/dd/yyyy

Behavioral Plan for (Name of Student)

-Confidential-

Reason for Referral:

(Use this section to briefly identify student and student concerns. A sample is provided below).

Currently, (Student) is qualified for Special Education services under the classification of (include classification). (Student’s) parents, faculty, and administration have requested a behavioral addendum to (his/her) IEP to help address behavioral concerns. (Student’s) behavioral concerns may best be described as:

Observable and Measurable Problem Behaviors:

(The information below consists of sample descriptions of common behavioral concerns. Use only if they apply.)

- I). Noncompliance
- II). Verbal defiance
- III). Physical aggression (e.g., scratching, biting, pinching)
- IV). Strange and/or unusual perseveration/preoccupation with staff, schedules, and food
- V). Coercive physical and verbal behavior (i.e., aggression with the intent of getting a specific, desired activity and/or item)

Functional Behavioral Assessment:

FBA's can be conducted in many ways. Simply take the time to complete an "ABC Worksheet." If you've identified an antecedent, defined the behavior, and the consequences, you've completed an FBA. A sample of the summary is below:

A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) was conducted on (Date: mm/dd/yyyy) The FBA concluded that there are (one? two? three?, four?) plausible functions of (Student's) behaviors. The first function was observed to ESCAPE an undesired activity. The second function was observed to gain ATTENTION from both peers and teachers.

Remember, there are only FOUR possible functions of a behavior in an FBA. You will have determined this through your Antecedent/Behavior/Consequence worksheet.

Target Replacement Behaviors:

Use this section to define behavioral goals. Use measurable/quantifiable data to measure (i.e., percentages, frequencies, etc.).

1. 80% compliance to teacher commands. (Current compliance at 75% as measured by teacher report.)
2. 80% accuracy of using appropriate communication to request attention of peers and/or adults. (Current accuracy at 50% as measured by teacher report and classroom observation.)
3. 0 physical aggression toward peers, property, and adults. (Currently, Eliza averages 1.5 physical aggression per school month.)

Teaching Strategies (Replacement Behaviors):

TARGET NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR	TARGET POSITIVE BEHAVIOR
Biting	Teeth behind lips
Yelling	Quiet voice
Pinching	Hands in pockets

In an effort to reduce the (Include target behavior to DECREASE), (Enter Student Name's), support team is proposing to teach (Student Name) a positive replacement behavior. For the

next 10 school days, the support team will be working on teaching (Student Name), (Include Target behavior to INCREASE). The replacement behavior may best be described as (Insert information #1a). The replacement behavior will occur (Insert Information #2a), with a (SELECT ONE: high, medium, low) intensity. The behavior will occur in (Insert Information #4a) and may last up to (Insert Information #5a).

Antecedent Control (Environmental Supports):

A sample of how to complete this section is provided below. (Basically, what are you going to do in the environment to prevent a problem behavior?)

1. Over the past 15 school months, (Student's) antecedents or "triggering events" tend to be related to fluctuations in daily schedules (e.g., late bus, assembly schedules, etc.), and the presence or absence of staff members. It is safe to conclude that on days wherein there are little if any schedule changes and consistent staff, (Student) exhibits very few problem behaviors.

While efforts have been made to minimize the impact of the triggering events, the events cannot be eliminated entirely from his/her experience in the school setting.

As such, it is recommended that (Student's) school team plan accordingly for these events and engage a "protocol" for days with schedule/staff fluctuations.

The protocol will include the following:

1. Adjusted schedule and activities that limit (Student's) distance from trained staff, seat away, or "safety zone."
 2. Inclusion of a physical and visual barrier to vulnerable students (i.e., students confined to wheelchairs, students with limited gross motor/evasive motor skills, students with limited and/or impaired coping/social skills, etc.).
 3. Workspace will be in close proximity to both "seat away" location as well as a "safety zone" location.
 4. Limited plus supervised access to the lunchroom or other less-structured locations throughout the school.
2. The protocol will only be initiated on days when there are noted changes in the daily school schedule as well as noted changes in the presence and/or absence of staff.
 3. (Student) will continue to have access to the following positive behavior supports:
 - a. Positive reinforcement system (point system) for targeted positive replacement behaviors.
 - b. Beep tape interval system.
 - c. Access to highly motivating incentives
 - d. Posted visual schedule.
 - e. Posted visual rules.
 - f. Ongoing "zone" emotional regulation instruction.
 4. (Student) will continue to have access to typical peers throughout the school day.

Consequences:

Use this section to clearly identify what will happen when the target student engages in positive behaviors *and* negative behaviors.

When (Student) provides teachers with adequate-quality assignments and is compliant to teacher request, he/she is to be rewarded with “points” that can earn him/her access to an incentive of her choice (i.e., free time, no homework, treat, etc.). ****At home, swimming, or whatever he/she is interested in.****

When (Student) engages in “fits” or episodes of uncontrollable behavior, staff is to firmly provide him/her with precision requests to calm down and take a “seat away.”

If (Student) refuses to respond to staff precision requests, measures to ensure her safety and the safety of other students must be taken.

For instance, enlist a “room clear” procedure. Teachers should have a “codeword” in place that directs students to leave the area immediately and go directly to a preordained location (i.e., library). In addition, remove any blunt and/or sharp objects from her immediate vicinity. Enlist (Your District’s) A.S.P.E.N. procedures to de-escalate (Student’s) behavior.

Avoid physical assistance unless (Student) is in immediate danger of hurting him/herself or others.

Team Coordination:

Use this section to provide each team member with information about their role, steps to help with the plan, and how they will be supported in the process.

	TEACHING REPLACEMENT BEHAVIORS	PROVIDES A REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULE	PROVIDES CONSEQUENCES
Who?	Classroom Teacher Paraprofessional Special Education Teacher	Classroom Teacher Paraprofessional Special Education Teacher	Classroom Teacher Paraprofessional Special Education Teacher
In What Conditions?	In the GENED classroom. At recess. In the SPED classroom.	In the GENED classroom. At recess. In the SPED classroom.	In the GENED classroom. At recess. In the SPED classroom.
In What Manner?	Positive while building rapport.	Immediately. Frequently. With enthusiasm. Make eye contact. Describe the positive behavior.	Immediately and as consistently as possible. (Include references to consequences in the section below.)
What Will They Do Exactly?	List steps to teaching the replacement behavior and provide copies to everyone involved in the “Who” section.	List steps to the reinforcement schedule you have designed.	See consequence section below.
How Frequently Will They Do It?	Daily. May be multiple times during the day.	Daily, at a high frequency (minimum of 15-minute intervals).	Daily. May be multiple times during the day.
How Will 2-Way Feedback Occur?	2-week (10 school day) check-in debriefs with all team members.	2-week (10 school day) check-in debriefs with all team members.	2-week (10 school day) check-in debriefs with all team members.

For questions and concerns, please contact Your Name, Title at, ext. 1234 or email at youremail@email.edu

Team Signatures:

_____	_____
Parent/Guardian	Date
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian	Date
_____	_____
Staff	Date
_____	_____
Staff	Date
_____	_____
Staff	Date
_____	_____
Staff	Date