

Tips for Good Behavior Plans

Ultimately, the best behavior plans result in a reduction of problematic behaviors and an increase in appropriate behaviors. This will be your best outcome. In designing your plans, though, keep all of these tips in mind to increase success.

- **Use the Team Approach** – Your plans will be much better if all the players have buy-in from the beginning. Include the students and parents/guardians. Specify a role for the parent in the plan.
- **Collect Data** - When someone says, the student “always” or “never” does something, this is more of an affective statement than a data-based one, and in order to measure the success of the plan, you must know where the baseline was.
- **Be Proactive & Teach**– What are we doing as staff to structure the environment, to provide prompts and cues, to lead the student towards positive behavior? How specifically are we going to teach the student the expected positive behaviors?
- **Teach in the Natural Environment** – We often make the mistake of sending students with “bad” behavior off to see the principal, the counselor, the Child Advocate, etc., and ask them to treat the student. In fact, most of us learn best in the environment in which we will need to use the behavior. Imagine if the only time you practiced golf was in a video game – you have to do it on the course. Behavior must be practiced in the classroom or the problematic environment.
- **Reward Change** – When the student starts to make efforts in the right direction, be sure to praise or reward that effort. Make sure you use a variety of rewards to avoid boredom and satiation.
- **Use Natural Consequences** - When student’s behavior improves, their peers may naturally want to spend more time with them, and they may like the positive attention from staff and parents. Rewards don’t always have to be edible!
- **Wean Reinforcement** – We all need positive regard for our work, but as the behavior becomes more internalized, we want the reward to be lessened in frequency and intensity, and also to get more natural (e.g., praise vs. food).
- **Teach Self-Management** – Just like you reward yourself with treats for working hard, we can teach students to do this. Intrinsic rewards are very powerful.
- **Follow-up** – Once the plan is written it must be used and data must be collected to determine it’s usefulness. Your first plan may not be perfect, and the student will let us know what’s working and what’s not. Readjust and re-assess – at least monthly, and following every major behavior incident.