



CENTER ON

PBIS

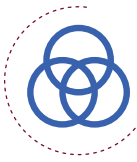
Positive Behavioral
Interventions & Supports

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE CLASSROOM WITHIN A PBIS FRAMEWORK

BRANDI SIMONSEN
ROBERT F. PUTNAM
KIMBERLY YANEK
LAUREN L. EVANOVICH

SACHA K. G. SHAW
CYNTHIA SHUTTLETON
KELSEY MORRIS
BARBARA S. MITCHELL

September 2020



Supporting Students with Disabilities in the Classroom within a PBIS Framework

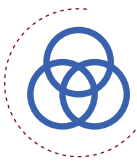
Authors

Brandi Simonsen
Robert F. Putnam
Kimberly Yanek
Lauren L. Evanovich

Sacha K. G. Shaw
Cynthia Shuttleton
Kelsey Morris
Barbara S. Mitchell

Introduction

Students with disabilities are more likely to experience exclusionary and reactive discipline practices than students without disabilities. For example, according to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), students with disabilities comprise 12% of the school enrollment; however, they experience 26% of out of school suspensions, 24% of expulsions, 28% of referrals to law enforcement or arrests, 71% of restraints, and 66% of seclusions (Office of Civil Rights [OCR], 2018). Students with disabilities are overrepresented in other school disciplinary consequences (e.g., office discipline referrals, in school suspensions) as well (Fabelo et al., 2011; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Vincent et al., 2011).



Fortunately, decades of research demonstrate that when educators implement positive, proactive, and evidence-based practices within a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, students experience (a) improved academic, social-emotional, and behavioral outcomes and (b) reduced exclusionary and reactive discipline (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2009; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2012; Horner et al., 2009; Lassen et al., 2006). Within a PBIS framework, educators implement universal practices (Tier 1) to support all students, targeted practices (Tier 2) for students who require an enhanced level of support to experience success, and intensive and individualized practices (Tier 3) for students with more significant or chronic levels of need.

Practitioners may question where students with disabilities “fit” within multi-tiered frameworks, like PBIS (Chan et al., 2018; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). By legal definition, students with disabilities require specially-designed instruction documented in an individualized education program. Therefore, we hear common misrules or “myths” in the field, including (a) special education is Tier 3 or (b) students in special education require only Tier 3 supports to be successful (IDEA, 2004). In reality, students with disabilities may receive and benefit from supports within each tier, including Tier 1 (Cheney et al., 2004; Grasley-Boy et al., 2019; Tobin et al., 2012).

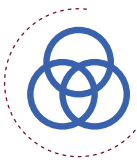


Core Features

There are four core features of implementing PBIS to support all students, including students with disabilities, in classroom settings: (1) invest in prevention, (2) integrate classroom practices, (3) tier 1 is for all, and (4) all means all.

Invest in Prevention

Within each classroom, effective educators [support and respond to student behavior](#)¹ by (a) implementing Tier 1 foundation, prevention, and response practices and (b) using data to guide their implementation and differentiation of practices (Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP], 2015).



In particular, educators:

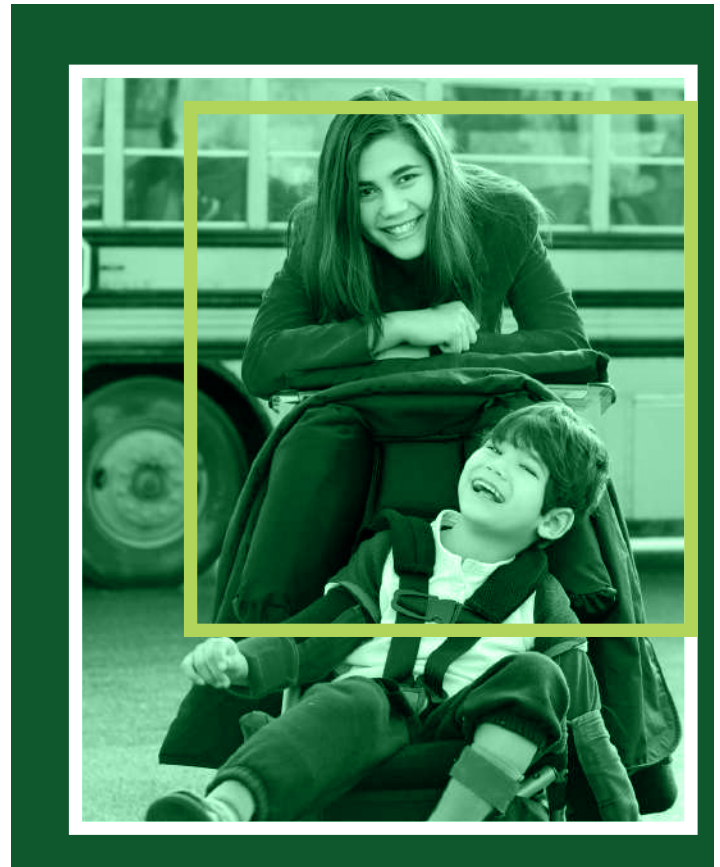
- emphasize positive and proactive practices,
- respond to challenging behavior with an instructional focus (i.e., teach and strengthen social, emotional, and behavioral skills to replace the challenging behavior), and
- minimize their use of exclusionary and reactive discipline ([#DitchTheClip²](#)).

Integrate Classroom Practices

Further, within each classroom, educators [integrate effective academic and behavior support³](#) to increase the likelihood that all students, including students with disabilities, benefit from classroom supports.

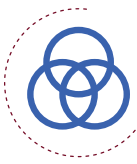
Tier 1 is for All

Effective educators design, implement, and differentiate [Tier 1⁴](#) practices to meet the needs of the majority (>80%) of their learners. Thus, when learners have more intensive needs, educators intensify their Tier 1 practices—they may provide more explicit social skills instruction, frequent prompts or reminders, engaging instruction, opportunities for reinforcement, and specific instructional feedback for academic and social behavior at an intensity that meets the needs of at least 80% of students in their classroom or school. For students who continue to require additional support to be successful, educators may layer on additional [Tier 2⁵](#) or [Tier 3⁶](#) supports; however, all students continue to receive Tier 1 support.



All Means All

To increase likelihood of equitable outcomes with Tier 1 practices, effective educators engage students and families in selecting, implementing, and adjusting practices to consider cultural and contextual factors that may affect teachers' implementation, students' experiences and outcomes, and other key factors that contribute to the discipline gap. Educators also intentionally implement key practices to [increase equity⁷](#) within classrooms.



Intervention Strategies

Guided by the above core features, effective educators implement the following “top ten” intervention strategies to [support and respond to student behavior](#)⁸ in their classroom.

1 Design and Adapt The Physical Environment of the Classroom to Meet the Needs of All Students.

To support all students, consider (a) mobility around and access to all areas of the classroom, (b) visual supports for students, and (c) assistive technology and other supports to promote learning within the classroom environment (Archer & Huges, 2011; Wong & Wong, 2009).

2 Develop and Explicitly Teach Predictable Classroom Routines to Maximize Students’ Ability to Independently Navigate the Classroom

To increase the likelihood that all students benefit from [predictable classroom routines](#),⁹ explicitly define and teach the routine, review and re-teach on a regular schedule, and provide and gradually fade prompts until students are able to independently navigate classroom routines (Kern & Clemens, 2007).

3 Post, Define, and Teach 3-5 Positive Classroom Expectations

Engage students in defining and positing a small number of positively stated expectations, and ensure posted expectations are accessible to learners from

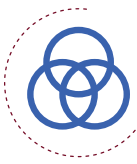
a variety of language and ability backgrounds. To maximize efficiency, explicitly teach expectations in the context of classroom routines, leveraging the planned schedule for reviewing, re-teaching, and fading prompts to also teach expectations (Alter & Haydon, 2017).

4 Promote Active Engagement with High Rates of Opportunities to Respond.

All students, across all grades and content areas, benefit from engaging instruction that includes high quality, high rate, and varied opportunities to respond (Alter et al., 2011; Partin et al., 2010; Sutherland et al., 2003). To increase engagement opportunities for all students, consider incorporating instructional and assistive technology (Hirsch et al., 2019) and other empirically-supported strategies to increase [opportunities to respond](#).¹⁰

5 Provide Prompts, Pre-Corrections, and Other Reminders to Set Students Up for Success

Simple strategies, like providing “[positive greetings at the door](#)”¹¹ (i.e., connect with each student as they enter the classroom, prompt routines and expected behavior, and provide specific praise for transition), result in positive outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities (Allday & Pakurar, 2007; Allday et al., 2011; Cook et al., 2018).



6 Engage in *Active Supervision* to Monitor Student Behavior

By engaging in [active supervision](#)¹²—that is, moving around the classroom, scanning frequently, and interacting with students—educators promote contextually appropriate behavior and prevent or reduce contextually inappropriate behavior (Colvin, Sugai, Good, & Lee, 1997; DePry & Sugai, 2002).

7 Deliver Behavior *Specific Praise* and Other Strategies to Acknowledge Behavior That is Appropriate for the Context

Specific praise “tags” a contextually appropriate behavior with a positive statement (“Thank you for participating respectfully.”) and results in an increase in desired behavior for most students (Floress, Beschta, Meyer, & Reinke, 2017). Supplement specific praise with additional strategies to acknowledge student behavior (OSEP, 2015).

8 Provide Behavior *Specific Error Corrections* and Other Strategies to Respond Instructionally to Behavior That is Inappropriate for the Context

[Specific error corrections](#)¹³ signal an error, share how to correct the behavior in the future, and provide an opportunity to practice and receive praise for the contextually appropriate behavior. When needed, supplement this approach with additional strategies to respond to contextually inappropriate behavior.

9 Ensure Each Student Experiences a Favorable *Ratio of Positive to Negative Interactions* (e.g., Praise to Corrections)

As highlighted in [national news](#),¹⁴ all students benefit when they experience more positive than negative feedback, and this is especially true for students with disabilities who may require even more favorable ratios (as high as 9:1) to experience benefit (Caldarella et al., 2019; Downs et al., 2019).

10 Collect And Use Fidelity and Outcome Data to Guide Implementation and Differentiation of Practices

Educators use data to evaluate their own implementation fidelity and students’ outcomes (indicating responsiveness to classroom practices). Based on data, educators may (a) adjust or differentiate Tier 1 supports or (b) layer on additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports to meet the needs of all.

The Bottom Line

All students, including students with disabilities, benefit from effective implementation of empirically-supported practices within a PBIS framework.

References

- Allday R.A., Bush M, Ticknor N, Walker L. (2011). Using teacher greetings to increase speed to task engagement. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 44, 393-396.
- Allday, R. A., & Pakurar, K. (2007). Effects of Teacher Greetings on Student On-Task Behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 40, 317-320.
- Algozzine, K. & Algozzine, B. (2007). Classroom Instructional Ecology and School-Wide Positive Behavior Support. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*. 24. 29-47. https://doi.org/10.1300/J370v24n01_02
- Alter, P., & Haydon, T. (2017). Characteristics of effective classroom rules: A review of the literature. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 40, 114-127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406417700962>
- Alter, P., Brown, E.T., & Pyle, J. (2011). A strategy-based intervention to improve math word problem-solving skills of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Education and Treatment of Children* 34, 535-550. <http://doi:10.1353/etc.2011.0028>.
- Archer, A., & Hughes, C. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Koth, C. W., Bevans, K. B., Ialongo, N. S., & Leaf, P. (2008). The Impact of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) on the Organizational Health of Elementary Schools. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23, 462-473. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012883>
- Bradshaw, C.P., Koth, C.W., Thornton, L.A., & Leaf, P.J. (2009). Altering school climate through school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: findings from a group-randomized effectiveness trial. *Prevention Science*.10(2).100-115. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-008-0114-9>
- Bradshaw, C. P., Mitchell, M. M., & Leaf, P. (2010). Examining the effects of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports on student outcomes: Results from a randomized controlled effectiveness trial in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 12, 133-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300709334798>
- Bradshaw, C. P., Wassdorp, T. E., & Leaf, P. J. (2012). Effects of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports on child behavior problems. *Pediatrics*, 130, 1136-1145.
- Caldarella, P., Wills, H.P., Anderson, D.H., & Williams, L. (2019) Managing Student Behavior in the Middle Grades Using Class-wide Function-Related Intervention Teams. *Research in Middle School Education*. 42. 1-15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2019.1654799>
- Chan, G., Simonsen, B. Goodman, S & Kincaid, D. (2018) *The Intersection of MTSS and Special Education: Addressing Myths, Facts, and Misconceptions*. Presentation at the meeting of the International Association for Positive Behavior Support, San Diego, CA.
- Cheney, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Transition of secondary students with emotional or behavioral disorders: Current approaches for positive outcomes (2nd Edition)*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Colvin, G., Sugai, G., Good III, R. H., & Lee, Y. Y. (1997). Using active supervision and pre-correction to improve transition behaviors in an elementary school. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 12, 344.
- Cook, C. R., Grady, E. A., Long, A. C., Renshaw, T., Coddling, R. S., Fiat, A., & Larson, M. (2017). Evaluating the impact of increasing general education teachers' ratio of positive-to-negative interactions on students' classroom behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 19, 67-77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300716679137>
- DePry, R. L., & Sugai, G. (2002). The effect of active supervision and pre-correction on minor behavioral incidents in a sixth grade general education classroom. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 11, 255-267.
- Donovan, M. S., & Cross, C. T. (Eds.). (2002). *Minority students in special and gifted education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Downs K. R., Caldarella, P., Larsen, R. A. A., Charlton, C. T., Wills, H. P., Kamps, D. M., & Wehby, J. (2019). Teacher praise and reprimands: The differential response of students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 21, 135-147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300718800824>



Fabelo, T., Thompson, M.D., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, M.P., & Booth, E.A. (2011). *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement*. Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Filter, K.J., & Horner, R.H. (2009). Function-based academic interventions for problem behavior. *Education and Treatment of Children* 32, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/etc.0.0043>

Floress, M. T., Beschta, S. L., Meyer, K. L., & Reinke, W. M. (2017). Praise research trends and future directions: Characteristics and teacher training. *Behavioral Disorders*, 43, 227-243. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0198742917704648>

Grasley-Boy, N. M., Gage, N. A., & Lombardo, M. (2019). Effects of SWPBIS on disciplinary exclusions for students with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 86, 25-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402919854196>

Harrel I. P., Leavel, I. A., Van Tassel, I. F., & McKee, K. (2004). No teacher left behind: Results of a five-year study of teacher attrition. *Action in Teacher Education*, 26, 47-59.

Hirsch, S. E., Alves, K. D., & Dunn, M. (2019). Integrating Technology for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders to Promote Engagement. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 55(2), 94-102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451219837638>

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Smolkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A. W., & Esperanza, J. (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide positive behavior support in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 11, 133-144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300709332067>

Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. (2004).

Kern, L., & Clemens, N. H. (2007). Antecedent strategies to promote appropriate classroom behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 44, 65-75. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20206>

Lassen, S. R., Steele, M. M., & Sailor, W. (2006). The relationship of school-wide positive behavior support to academic achievement in an urban middle school. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43, 701-712. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20177>

McIntosh, K., & Goodman, S. (2016). *Integrated multi-tiered systems of support: Blending RTI and PBIS*. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Office of Civil Rights. (2018). *2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection: School Climate and Safety*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf>.

Office of Special Education Programs. (2015). *Supporting and responding to student behavior: Evidence-based classroom strategies for teachers*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. www.pbis.org

Oliver, R. M.; & Reschly, D. J. (2007). *Effective Classroom Management: Teacher Preparation and Professional Development*. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Washington, DC.

Preciado, J. A., Horner, R. H., Scott K. Baker, S. K. (2009). Using a Function-Based Approach to Decrease Problem Behaviors and Increase Academic Engagement for Latino English Language Learners. *The Journal of Special Education*, 42, 227-240.

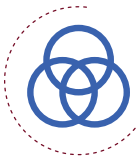
Skiba, R. J., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). Zero Tolerance, Suspension, and Expulsion: Questions of Equity and Effectiveness. In Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (p. 1063-1089). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Sutherland, K. S., & Wehby, J. H. (2001). The effect of self-evaluation on teaching behavior in classrooms emotional and behavioral disorders. *The Journal of Special Education*, 35, 2-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002246690103500306>

Tobin, T., Horner, R., Vincent, C., & Swain-Bradway, J. (2012). *If discipline referral rates for the school as a whole are reduced, will rates for students with disabilities also be reduced?* Evaluation Brief, retrieved from www.pbis.org.

Vincent, C. G., Randall, C., Cartledge, G., Tobin, T. J., & Swain-Bradway, J. (2011). Toward a conceptual integration of cultural responsiveness and schoolwide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 13, 219-229.

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2009). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher*. Mountain View, VA: Wong.



Embedded Hyperlinks

1. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-and-responding-to-behavior-evidence-based-classroom-strategies-for-teachers>
2. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/ditch-the-clip-why-clip-charts-are-not-a-pbis-practice-and-what-to-do-instead>
3. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/classroom-integrated-academics-and-behavior-brief>
4. <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-1>
5. <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-2>
6. <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-3>
7. <https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity>
8. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-and-responding-to-behavior-evidence-based-classroom-strategies-for-teachers>
9. <http://pbissmissouri.org/classroom-procedures-and-routines-content-acquisition-video/>
10. <https://pbissmissouri.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ECP6.2-Classroom-Module-Opportunities-to-Respond-1.pptx>
11. https://www.sjcoe.org/selparesources/tiers/Positive_Greetings_at_the_Door_script.doc.pdf
12. <http://louisville.edu/education/abri/primarylevel/supervision/group>
13. <http://louisville.edu/education/abri/primarylevel/correction/group>
14. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/30/health/teacher-praise-wellness/index.html>

This document was supported from funds provided by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports cooperative grant supported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education (H326S180001). Dr. Renee Bradley served as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, or enterprise mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.

Suggested Citation for this Publication

Simonsen, B., Putnam, R., Yaneck, K., Evanovich, L., Shaw, S. Shuttleton, C. Morris, K., & Mitchell, B. (September, 2020). *Supporting Students with Disabilities within a PBIS Framework*. Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. www.pbis.org.