Problem Solving to Address Difficult Behavior

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Parenting with Positive Behavior Support

- Understanding Patterns
- Preventing Problems
- Teaching New Skills
- Responding Effectively
- Changing Lives
- Working Together

Hieneman, Childs, & Sergay; 2006

Trivia Question

How many active players are on each team in a soccer match?

Problem Solving with PBS

1. Establish Goals
2. Gather Information
3. Analyze Patterns
4. Develop a Plan
5. Use the Plan

Hieneman & Childs, 2010

About Grant

Grant was four years old and lived with both parents and his younger sister. He attended a regular preschool program and received support through an itinerant special educator. Grant enjoyed interaction and games, particularly when he could establish the rules. He was able to communicate his needs clearly and take care of himself, but was resistant to change and independence. When frustrated by changes or interruptions, Grant had tantrums lasting several minutes or became aggressive with his younger sister.

Grant’s Team

- Mom, Dad, Little Sister
- Aunts and Grandmothers
- Special Educator
- Preschool Teacher

Hieneman & Childs, 2010
Step 1: Establish Goals

- Broad goals for child and family
- Specific behaviors of concern
  - Define behavior
  - Prioritize (big Ds)

Goals for Grant & Family

- Learn to take turns and interact more positively with peers
- Complete self-care skills independently
- Accept changes in routines/transition to new activities without problems
- Engage in family activities (meal times, parties, shopping) without problems

Grant’s Problem Behaviors

- Tantrums: yelling, swinging arms, throwing items, running into objects, dropping to floor, running away, and crying for long periods
- Aggression: pushing his sister

Try It: Establish Goals

- Identify broad goals for your child and family
- Define the your child’s behaviors of concern
- Prioritize the behaviors (based on the Big D’s)

Step 2: Gather & Analyze Information

- Understanding Behavior
- Gathering Information

Understanding Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>What a child says or does</td>
<td>Gets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Avoids?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gathering Information

- Watching
- Talking
- Recording

Information Gathering

- Interviews with Grandmothers, Aunts, and Teachers
- ABC recording by Mom at home
- Duration of tantrums per day

ABC Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What happened before behavior</th>
<th>What the child said or did</th>
<th>What happened after behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Try It: Information Gathering

- Identify methods you could use to collect information about your child’s behavior.
- Consider how you could watch and listen, talk to others, and record (if necessary).

Step 3: Analyze Patterns

- Identify when the behavior is most likely and least likely
- Determine specific triggers
- Ascertain what the child is getting or avoiding as a result of the behavior
- Summarize these patterns

Finding Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When is the behavior…</th>
<th>Most likely</th>
<th>Least likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With whom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do they…</td>
<td>Get</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grant’s Behavior Patterns

Tantrums (and aggression) occur when:
- A routine is disrupted or one of Grant’s rules is broken, resulting in him regaining control of the situation and getting his way.
- When Grant asks for something and is told no, resulting in him getting what he wants or an alternative item.
- When adults attend to a peers or siblings, resulting in the return of adult attention.
- When Grant is involved in activities requiring turn-taking, resulting in removal from the situation and independent play.

Try It: Summarizing

Consider the circumstances surrounding your child’s behavior and based upon the information you have, summarize the patterns.
- Consider these questions: Do you need more information? What kind of information? How would you obtain the information?

Step 4: Develop a Plan

- Prevent Problems
  - avoid bad situations altogether
  - make difficult circumstances better
  - add cues that prompt good behavior
- Replace Problem Behavior
- Manage Consequences
  - rewards for good behavior
  - rewards for bad behavior

Grant: Prevention

- Provide a visual schedule to organize Grant’s day and clarify when activities, attention, and items will be available
- Use social stories to prepare Grant for new situations, changes to routines, and peer activities involving sharing or turn-taking
- Provide advance warning when adult attention will be diverted to other children or activities
- Use first-then statements to clarify expectations and rewards for completing demands

Grant: Replacement

Teach Grant to . . .
- Ask to be first next time
- Request an alternative activity
- Express frustration verbally
- Wait for attention or turns
- Request delays in transitions

Grant: Management

- Let Grant to choose the next routine or activity for waiting his turn and tolerating changes
- Allow Grant access to an alternative activity or delays in transitions if requested appropriately
- Provide attention during independent activities or when Grant waits appropriately
- Do not allow Grant’s aggression or tantrums to result in him gaining control of or escaping the activity
Try It: Make a Plan

- Given your summary statement, identify at least one strategy you could use to
  - prevent the behavior
  - replace the behavior
  - respond to the behavior

Step 5: Use the Plan

- Create an action plan
- Implement the strategies
- Monitor the results
- Adjust accordingly

Grant: Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What needs to be done</th>
<th>By Whom?</th>
<th>When?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create frustration board (images, activities)</td>
<td>Mom and teachers</td>
<td>4/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop social stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish schedule and rewards for daily activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share behavior plan with all team members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Review plan and track behavior</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grant: Outcomes

- Tantrums have diminished in length and severity
- Grant has learned "patience", waiting his turn and accepting changes
- Grant is gradually learning to be more independent in daily routines
- Family feels more confident about going out in the community and enjoys family activities more

Grant’s Behavior Change

- Self-Report Data
  - Pre: 40
  - Post: 30
- Disruptive Behavior
  - Pre: 30
  - Post: 10

A Final Note

Parenting with positive behavior support is about understanding behavior, being proactive, teaching skills, and reacting purposefully.
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Hieneman & Childs, 2010