



Strengthening Tier 1 & 2 Behavior Strategies and Building Strong School Culture for Greater Student Success

With Polly Bath – a pioneer in changing today’s school behaviors

This 3-day Summer Institute is all about helping students who are at-risk for behaviors to succeed in school. You’ll learn how to establish highly successful classrooms as well as how to build school-wide Tier 1 and 2 strategies to address the unique needs of these students. You will leave with strategies you can use and share.

Participants: This Summer Institute is for every educator who wants to improve student behavior, including general and special education teachers and administrators, social workers, school psychologists, school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals.

CONTENT:

I. Making sure Tier 1 behavior practices are strong:

A successful Tier 2 must have a strong Tier 1 to build upon.

Do all adults in your school know how to:

- Avoid power struggles, even with oppositional kids?
- Avoid and manage behavior escalations?
- Respond consistently and predictably toward all students? ALL the time?
- Respond to mild, moderate, and severe behaviors?
- Meet the basic social/emotional needs of the vast majority of students?
- Smoothly redirect students in both structured and unstructured environments?
- Identify and teach needed behavior and social skills day in and day out?
- Maintain the dignity of adults and students no matter what the situation?
- Build a stronger classroom learning environment by handling mild and moderate behaviors inside the classroom?
- Access useful assistance when behaviors exceed classroom capacity?
- Relate effectively with a range of students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds?

Does your school have a structured, easy-to-use behavior data system? Does it:

- Clearly and objectively define and target the worst behaviors?

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- Readily reveal students with at-risk behaviors?
- Reveal behavior hot-spots—the whens and wheres of behavior?
- Produce measurable data?
- Simplify data-gathering and progress-monitoring for everybody?

II. Building successful Tier 2 practices for kids at-risk for behavior

- 1. Installing the missing team to accelerate behavior change!** Every school needs a highly trained, swift-acting Behavior Intervention Team (or subset of an existing team) to problem-solve relentlessly, every week, around the worst behaviors in the building.
 - Using a unique data-driven protocol that will zoom in on:
 - The kids who are displaying at-risk behaviors this week;
 - The behavior hot spots in need of assistance this week—times of day, places, activities, environments, classrooms, and staff.
 - Responding to the data in a highly effective, responsive, behavior-changing way. (Otherwise, you'll be discussing the same students in January that you were discussing in September!)
- 2. Developing a “Menu of Services” for the Behavior Intervention Team that speeds up and improves interventions.**
 - Learning a systemic approach to identifying and maximizing which program, service, or individual is best for specific interventions.
- 3. Developing a Student Support Center** (using existing staff) to proactively address behaviors that threaten to exceed classroom capacity.
- 4. Restructuring In-School Suspension** to add behavior interventions and skill building in order to prevent repeated violations.

----- A word from Polly Bath:

Introduction:

My specialty is changing the worst classroom behaviors, as well as upgrading all behaviors school-wide, until the learning climate becomes stable, consistent, and predictable.

The research-based techniques I use and teach are based on the enormous power of cognition to change behavior. Therefore, my techniques are intended for use with students who have the cognitive ability: (1) to understand what is being asked of them and (2) to choose and to execute a new behavior.*

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Why kids behave the way they do:

We must remember that the purpose of every behavior is to meet a need, whether the behavior is mild, moderate, or severe. If the need is important enough, and if the behavior is the only thing that works, we will repeat it, despite negative consequences. Therefore, we can conclude that **difficult behavior is a symptom**. It is a symptom that the student has a skill deficit in meeting a need. If we want to intervene in such a behavior, we must start by identifying the motivation and function behind it—i.e., what need is the student trying to meet? Then we must teach the child useful, positive skills for getting that need met. Over time, if we do our work well, we will see a decrease, and eventual elimination, of the difficult behavior.

The difference between behavior management and intervention:

There is a critical difference between a behavior management plan and an intervention plan. Both are necessary, but they are different. A management plan is about what the adults will do and say consistently in response to a targeted behavior. An intervention plan includes teaching a student the skills they lack.

Rewards, punishments, and consequences:

Rewards can have disappointing results with children who are cognitively intact unless the child has learned internally how to make a lasting change. Also, the most challenging child, socially and emotionally, often has enough cognitive ability to manipulate a reward system.

Punishment can be appropriate, but remember it won't teach a skill. We have to teach the missing skill, in addition to punishment if we are using it, if we want to see behavior change.

Well-chosen consequences are an important part of the learning process, and any teacher can employ them well. Consequences are at their most powerful, however, when teachers and administrators work school wide to connect consequences directly to their school's values, philosophy, and mission. Then students have a feeling of receiving a coherent message of expectations from one end of the school to the other. Such consistency and predictability of expectations and consequences have a profound effect on all students, but most especially on those who are fragile or volatile.

Students from difficult homes and circumstances:

When faced with difficult behaviors from a child who comes from a difficult home, or no home at all, educators often say to me, "But, Polly, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." They say this as though their hands are tied, that surely here stands a student whose background guarantees that nothing will work. This is untrue! All humans

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whose cognitive ability is intact have the capacity to learn how to behave differently in different settings.

It's our job to teach our students what we expect when they walk through our doors, and then to teach them the skills they need to meet our expectations. That's what education is. But some things have changed. Thirty, even twenty years ago, students came to school with many more social and emotional skills than they have now. We must accept that we must teach students those skills, as well as academic ones, if they are to succeed in our schools, and then to succeed in life.

**Decades of research on the power of cognition to change behavior began at least with Albert Banduras and his colleagues.*

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