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A Team Analysis of Student Behavior

Hidden Hills Elementary School, Arizona • May 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems
Practice: Describe Behavior

Highlights

- A team made up of teachers, administrators, and behavior experts at Hidden Hills Elementary convenes to discuss a particular student's disruptive behaviors.
- Members of the team share contextual information and expertise as they brainstorm in order to come up with a plan to collect behavioral data for this student.
- After agreeing upon the needed data and methods of collection and analysis, the team devises possible paths of intervention.

About the Site

Hidden Hills Elementary School
Phoenix, AZ

Demographics
70% White
19% Hispanic

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5% Black

3% Asian

2% Native American

35% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

8% English Language Learners

Hidden Hills Elementary uses a comprehensive, schoolwide approach to provide a safe learning environment and promote students' social and emotional skills and positive character values. The unique strategies used by the school are:

- A schoolwide approach that focuses on positive behavior support and is led and guided by a core team of five to six staff including the principal, social worker, and several teachers;
- Monday class meetings conducted by every teacher to talk about bullying prevention, social-emotional skills, and character values;
- Clear communication and reminders of behavior expectations;
- A web-based system and detailed referral forms to record characteristics of problem behavior, hypothesized motives for behavior, and actions taken; and
- A multi-level positive reinforcement system to acknowledge positive and caring behavior of students and teachers.

Full Transcript

Lynette Geake, Principal: So I think, as a team, what we need to do is identify one or two major behaviors to get started on and target those for our area of change so that we can move forward and we can all bring our expertise on that behavioral change to the table so that we can move his academics forward. Right now, his academics are struggling simply because the behaviors are interfering with his learning. So, you've heard quite a bit. Is there other information that you need about this child in order to make a decision as to what we want to target?

Jennifer Whitted, School Psychologist: Well, the two things that I'm hearing most significantly are the aggression and the disrespectful behavior.

Donna Loughney, Behavior Support Specialist: Yeah, the disruption, largely, of the class, I think, is what the teacher would say. That she just cannot, he makes it so she cannot teach around him.

Beverly Hall, Program Support Teacher: And she would define that as he is getting out of his seat.

Loughney: He's loud. He's just blurting, and he won't do the work, but it's not kind of the defiance of the teacher where she says do it, he says no, but then sits there quietly. He says no, and then he bothers everybody, and he's throwing things, and he's on the floor, and he's rolling around and that kind of stuff. So,

I think, in talking with the teacher, that's what she would say.

Geake: The aggression and fighting are discipline issues that are coming up at lunch with peer relations, and a lot of the behaviors, I think, are from the older brothers in the home because they do treat him roughly, and I don't think he has any idea that those behaviors aren't typical behaviors that you would bring to school. The teacher is finding that his behaviors are actually accelerating when she gives him a minor, that it doesn't seem to impede his behavior at all. It actually accelerates his behavior. So, we're almost skipping the point where she's dealing with it in the classroom and bringing it to the office instead. It doesn't seem to act otherwise.

Susan Benjamin, Assistant Director, Special Education: So, the consequence isn't working.

Geake: And that's what we feel is he is not getting any attention at home, either negative or positive. So, we think maybe that would be one of the highlights that we want to make sure is built into the behavior plan.

Off-screen speaker: Attention for positive...

Linda Taylor, Program Support Teacher: And in order for me to address that, I need to come look at him. I need to come and watch and see, how does he get that attention? Is it immediate? Is it from his peers? Is it from his teacher? But I need to see it from myself and just document, "when he does this, what happens immediately afterward?" That'll help me to determine the function of his behavior. What happened right before; what happened immediately afterward?

Geake: And I think that would be helpful to the teacher, too, to see if maybe there's peers sitting beside him that are setting him off or that he wants to impress. Maybe when it's the aid coming and going with the inclusion student that he needs her attention immediately. So, I think that would be good. What kind of format do you use for that assessment?

Taylor: Actually, believe or not, it starts with the plain old notepad, and I just write down times and everything I see, words verbatim that the teacher says, his exact response to her, what's going on around him, any environmental things that stand out. And afterwards, when I step out of that situation, I read through it, and you'd be amazed at the things that you notice. Yeah, they just pop out. And then based on that, I'll take it back to the teacher, and, "Do you realize that every time you say this, he does this?" And it's not rocket science. It's pretty amazing what pops out of it.

Beverly Hall, Program Support Teacher: Another thing we could do in order to get a global picture over time would be to have the teacher take some data. And I've got some forms that make it pretty simple for the teacher to record the time, record what happened in her schedule right before the incident, and if we can target two or three behaviors, then she can record just with a letter what happened right afterwards, how did she handle it, and what was the response of the student.

Benjamin: And I always like that because it gives the teacher buy-in, and then when you're talking about

it, they own that. Plus, it gives them something to do right away. It's kind of like you're not just waiting for something to happen. They actually are involved with that data collection. And sometimes they'll see the patterns, and then your job is pretty easy because they had the "aha."

Whitted: And the nice thing about that kind of data collection, too, is it's all day long. They document whenever the event happens rather then only when you are able to be in the class.

Geake: So, I think our school team then can meet with the teacher and just let her know the outcome of today's meeting. If you don't mind staying just a minute after school, I'll introduce you to the teacher so that she knows who you are when you come into the classroom, and maybe you can explain to her the tally sheet and how that'll incorporate in changing Justin's behaviors for the positive.