



Lives IN THE Balance

Changing the conversation about behaviorally challenging kids
and with

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School Discipline Survey

Are your school's discipline practices in line with what we now know about why students exhibit challenging behavior? Take the brief survey below to find out!

1. My school relies very heavily on adult-imposed consequences – such as detentions, suspensions, paddling, and other punishments – in responding to challenging behavior.
2. In my school, classroom teachers frequently send students to someone outside the classroom – for example, the principal or assistant principal – to deal with behavior problems.
3. In meetings about students with behavioral challenges, discussions focus primarily on *behaviors* rather than on lagging skills and unsolved problems.
4. Terms such as *manipulative*, *attention-seeking*, *unmotivated*, *coercive*, and *limit-testing* are frequently used to describe students with behavioral challenges.
5. Our Functional Behavior Assessments focus on how a student's challenging behaviors are *working* to enable him or her to *get*, *escape*, and *avoid* rather than on the fact that the behaviors *communicate* that the student is lacking the *skills* to respond more adaptively.
6. The philosophy guiding our thinking about behaviorally challenging kids is *Kids do well if they want* rather than *Kids do well if they can*.
7. In responding to challenging behaviors, the school relies heavily on a rubric system: a list of behaviors students mustn't exhibit and an algorithm for how adults should respond to those behaviors if they are exhibited.
8. There are many "frequent flyers" in the school: students whose behavior has not improved despite frequent exposure to the school discipline program.
9. The problems precipitating students' challenging behavior seem to occur again and again without ever being durably solved.
10. We're still blaming parents for the challenging behavior their children exhibit at school rather than on collaborating with them to understand the lagging skills contributing to that challenging behavior.
11. Our response to students' challenging behavior is primarily *emergent* and *reactive* rather than *planned* and *proactive*.

If you answered yes to any or many of these questions, your school may need a discipline overhaul...and *Lives in the Balance* can help! Contact us to find out how we can work together to get the ball rolling.

How did your school do? What areas still need the most work? How will you organize the effort and galvanize people? Tell us about it!

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Comments

Well.....as feared it has happened. My son who has problems when he is expected to control his frustration, be flexible or handle unexpected events. Friday he was put in in-school suspension which means sitting at a desk facing a wall in the principal's office.....all day. I guess they think this will help him learn the skills he is lagging.

I have requested a meeting with all the teachers as I plan to have everyone help me identify my son's lagging skills. I think this might be the only way to get them to use common sense and start understanding when I talk about lagging skills and tell them his behavior does not concern me near as much as what happened that may have led to his behavior. They are so stuck on telling me how he hides under the table when he is upset but nobody as tried to figure out what made him upset. They are instead teaching him to lay his head on the desk when he is upset as this is more acceptable behavior to them. What about helping him solve problems so he doesn't need to do either.

reply

I am the trail blazer in our school.

After attending a lecture by Dr. Greene last spring, I was energized and excited to implement his approach. I sent my notes from Dr. Greene's lecture to our school principal. He is in favor of this approach, however I am the initiator for our school. I am currently working with a third grade teacher to help a child who has lagging skills that are causing behavior challenges in the classroom. As the school's Resource Teacher, I gave her a few pages to read from Lost at School. We watched a video from Lives In The Balance on implementing Plan B. Immediately after watching the video, she replied, I want to see more.

It is not that Dr. Greene's approach is difficult to implement, but changing peoples philosophies and mindsets can take time and a lot of patience. I expect bumps along the way, but I am going to push ahead, and work to get the model working in our school - one step at a time!

I must also add - with heavy pain and sorrow in the aftermath of the horrific tragedy in Connecticut yesterday - that we all need to find what skill deficits are causing behavioral problems in our youth. Diagnosing and medicating will not change behavior long-term if the child is lacking the adaptive or developmental skills needed to succeed.

Thank you Dr. Greene

reply

My son has been having difficulty in school and after school programs since kindergarten. He has been suspended and in shool suspension numerous times. I had tried to get an IEP for my son and was told he didn't qualify because of his IQ, I was able to get him on to a 504 plan, but his difficulties still arise. When he has what I call "episodes" the manner in which the school handles it, is to clear the classroom of other students, or to put him in an empty room, (about the size of a closet) to see if he calms down. He is then put in to the principals office for the remainder of the day, or I receive a phone call that I have to come and pick him up because the school states he cannot stay.

It even went as far as the principal telling my son that he has been in trouble and in his office more than any other child in the school. Totally innappropriate, in my opinion, to tell this to a 6 almost 7 year old child. My son was devastated by this and wanted to know why he wasn't normal.

I have requested another meeting with the school to review the 504 plan and to get him an IEP.

reply

Perhaps it is time for us in the education world to start thinking much more seriously about the relationship between how teachers/schools handle discipline, and bullying behavior in students. Is there are correlation between using the CPS approach, and reduced incidences of bullying behavior? It sounds like it! Another interesting question to ask after taking the survey is, How much bullying is happening at your school if you answered yes to any or many of these questions?

reply