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# Behavior Coaching; A Curriculum Design to Help Coach Today's Teachers on How to Deal with Student Behavior in the Classroom

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BEHAVIOR COACHING: A CURRICULUM DESIGN TO HELP COACH TODAY’S  
TEACHERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

Behavior Coaching; A Curriculum Design to Help Coach Today’s Teachers on How to Deal with  
Student Behavior in the Classroom

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Otterbein University

March 26, 2019

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements of a Master of Arts in Education degree.

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BEHAVIOR COACHING: A CURRICULUM DESIGN TO HELP COACH TODAY'S  
TEACHERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

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By

Maggie Swanson

2019

# BEHAVIOR COACHING: A CURRICULUM DESIGN TO HELP COACH TODAY’S TEACHERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

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# BEHAVIOR COACHING: A CURRICULUM DESIGN TO HELP COACH TODAY’S TEACHERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

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VITA

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# BEHAVIOR COACHING: A CURRICULUM DESIGN TO HELP COACH TODAY'S TEACHERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this curriculum design project was to create a curriculum modeled after practices of literacy coaching, to help coach teachers on effective and inclusive methods and practices to offset disruptive, student behavior in their classroom. Using research from literacy coaching a curriculum was created into a handbook for behavior coaches to follow when coaching teachers in their building. The idea is to provide support and guidance to teachers that allow them to have a plan to address their specific student's behavior within their own classroom. A test trial was implemented to test the coaching handbooks effectiveness and gain feedback. Based on that test trial, teacher reflection proved it to be effective in providing support to teachers on how to deal with behavior and give them a plan to follow.

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## SECTION ONE

### Statement of Significance

Ohio state legislation has passed the Supporting Alternatives for Education (SAFE) Act which bans schools from suspending and expelling students from Pre-Kindergarten to Third grade. There were 36,000 such suspensions - removal from school for up to 10 days - of Ohio's 540,000 PreK-3 students in 2015-16 and 34,000 in 2016-17 (O'Donnell, 2017). With this new law, by the school year of 2021-2022, districts will have to find new ways to address student behavior in early childhood education, which does not involve simply removing the student from school. General education teachers are routinely taught if a child is a disruption in their classroom they should be removed. With the growing numbers of students per teacher, it is no wonder the easiest solution is to simply remove the "problem" child. However, schools do not always have the resources to deal with extreme student behaviors or the man power to assist all of its primary education teachers. With this new act coming general education teachers will need resources and training on how to properly handle behaviors within their own classroom, which are effective and set our students up for success and improvement.

Generally, schools promote professional development on curriculum within the core contents but rarely on student behavior. For example, in my district we have two days scheduled each year that are on professional development, however they are either on math or literacy. And when co-teachers of mine are pursuing professional development on student behavior they report that they are not getting the tools they need to be able to address it within their own classroom. As a district we are dumping our money into new reading and math curricula but we fire social workers who helped with managing student behavior the most. Districts are hiring reading coaches to teach our educators the best reading practices, but there are no coaches on the non-



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academic parts of instruction, such as classroom management and challenging student behaviors. Could teachers be supported in a way to deal with behaviors instead of just removing the student from the school? Removing the student is just a quick and easy fix.

In the long term, however, it is not addressing the root of the behavior or teaching the student or teacher how to cope or even prevent it. As of 2021, by law according to the SAFE Act these young students will not be allowed to be removed from their environment. Teachers cannot even begin to address our other content areas until the non-academic or social-emotional health of our students is understood. If a student is constantly in a state of stress they cannot learn and they will likely act out in ways that harm other children or themselves. While teachers may not believe dealing with behavior is their job this is no longer the case.

As educators we need to not only support our students but our staff. I do not believe that lecturing teachers on what they “need”, or “should” be doing is not going to create change or help them. Could a coaching strategy help our teachers with these student behaviors? Teachers and the students need our assistance to coach them through it. Teachers, in my building, have reported that they do not want someone taking over for them with student behaviors. Teachers want someone to talk them through what to do, a coach to make them better teachers and in turn make better students. Ultimately, teachers in my building want coaching.

I believe this problem can be addressed through a curriculum designed to coach teachers on how to address student behavior within in their own classrooms, instead of sending students to the office which typically leads to suspension. At the district where I work, there is hardly any professional development or support for teachers that provides them with tools to help with behavior interventions. Furthermore, in order to better help our young students; we need to understand what is causing their behavior so that we can properly address and prevent it.

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How can we use current research on literacy coaching, to help model a coaching protocol on student behavior, to in turn coach teachers on how to deal and address student behaviors in their own classrooms independently.

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## SECTION TWO

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

To be able to properly create a coaching curriculum on student behavior, we must understand the background of social emotional development in students and how it influences student behavior in the classroom. Literacy coaching is based on effective literacy teaching strategies. Similarly, behavior coaching should be developed through effective social-emotional learning curriculum. Before we can even begin to write a coaching protocol for behavior we need the background knowledge on how behavior manifests in students and what can be done to prevent it.

#### Social Emotional Development

In order for us to understand the root of student behavior we must understand the student first. According to Dr. Perry, MD, PhD, the timing and nature of a child's development and experiences shape the kind of adult they will become. In his book *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*, Dr. Perry's work with children revolutionized how mental health professionals address early trauma in childhood development. Therefore, social-emotional curriculum is starting to play a huge part in early childhood education, to the point that states are writing standards to address the new area of development.

According to Greenberg and Snell (1997) affective development, the emotional capacity to experience, recognize, and express a range of emotions and to respond to emotional cues in others, generally precedes cognitive and behavioral development. Children experience emotions and react to them long before they are able to verbalize about them or cope with them. However, these social-emotional skills do not develop on their own; they are strongly influenced by a

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child's learning environment (Kramer, Caldarella, Christensen, & Shatzer, 2010). The committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy found a relationship between a child's social-emotional developments in preschool and the success in the later years of school and into adult life (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008).

In summary, social-emotional development in the early years of a child's schooling is crucial in preventing disruptive behaviors from manifesting in their later school years. Ultimately, without early intervention, social-emotional problems students face in early childhood become undeviating after the age of eight, and less likely to change in response to behavior interventions. It is estimated that 20% of students have emotional or behavior problems and that up to 84% of those do not receive the appropriate interventions to address them (Kramer, Caldarella, Christensen, & Shatzer, 2010).

Unfortunately, even though social-emotional learning (SEL) has evidence to prove its effectiveness, many school districts are still reluctant to make it part of their standard curriculum. Schools in Kramer, Calarella, Christensen and Shatzer's study (2010), reported they were worried SEL would take away from the higher priority academic programs such as reading and math. Yet, how can students learn if they cannot self-regulate emotion that leads into disruptive behavior in the classroom? One study implemented *Strong Start* into four kindergarten classrooms to test the effects of 10 lesson plans on SEL, in congruence with their normal academic curriculum. Results showed gains in students' prosocial behavior and decreased internalizing behaviors. The prosocial behaviors were taught using stuffed animals to create scenarios and role play. These role plays worked on covering topics on recognizing one's own feelings and the feelings of others, handling anger and anxiety, being a friend and solving problems. (Kramer, Caldarella, Christensen, & Shatzer, 2010). Internalizing behaviors are a

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method of coping for students who do not know how to self-regulate. Internalizing behaviors often lead to disruptive behavior outbursts, which can turn physical and violent.

However, according to another study, many teachers stated they did not feel adequately prepared to deal with student behaviors within their own classroom. The purpose of this study was to determine how professors in undergraduate programs address content such as social-emotional development and behaviors, and how well graduates felt with dealing with them in their own classrooms. Over the past five years researchers have identified the crucial skills children need to develop in the preschool years to help them be successful in elementary school (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008). These skills are:

1. Ability to recognize and express emotions in appropriate ways.
2. Maintain relationships with peers and adults.
3. Persist at difficult tasks.
4. Follow directions and participate in group activities.
5. Solve social problems.
6. Manage difficult emotions.

When you look at these skills, even when a child does not know how to manage at least one of them it leads to disruptive behavior in the classroom. These are skills teachers need to know how to teach to their students.

Currently when a child in early childhood education demonstrates challenging behavior they are suspended and expelled from their schools. Teachers also report disruptive behavior as being the greatest challenge in their work. The significant training needed, is how to teach educators to work with children with behavior problems. Majority of teachers report their

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comfort being the lowest when working with children with disabilities. Uncomfortable teachers cannot teach effectively. In the Journal of Early Intervention they state:

To prepare students to address the social-emotional needs of all young children in preschool settings, faculty members in preservice programs should address content and provide practicum experiences that reflect a comprehensive approach to promoting social-emotional development, preventing challenging behavior and implementing interventions for children with persistent and severe challenging behavior (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008, pp. 322).

One framework, mentioned in multiple journals, as a prevention-intervention is the Teaching Pyramid as a Tier 3 model. This type of pyramid allows educators to address behaviors at varying levels based on student need. Tier one being the bottom of the pyramid and the “universal” strategies to be used on all students. Tier two then addresses a narrowing range of students who require more prevention strategies. And finally tier three is the final level that addresses specific behavior interventions that are individualized for the student, such as a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

However, to properly implement the teaching pyramid, teachers need experience in child development, developmentally appropriate practice, SEL, and behavior intervention strategies (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008). We cannot teach our students on how to deal and address their own behavior until we teach our faculty the proper ways to address student behavior. Schools need a specific faculty member that can coach these strategies to its teachers to promote meeting the needs of all children in not only academics but also SEL. In the survey study conducted by Hemmeter (2008) the data revealed that one of the barriers to preparing students to address the needs of children with challenging behaviors was the lack of experiences

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in practicum settings that include children with significant behavior difficulties. Therefore, our teachers are coming into their careers without the proper knowledge and background to address SEL and specific behaviors in their students.

The study also determined that students with special education backgrounds or degrees had more training in the area of behavior and social-emotional development than general education teachers (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008). But the problem that still persists is with inclusion on the high rise, special education students are not being separated from their peers. They are in the same classrooms as the general population with general education teachers, so shouldn't those teachers have the knowledge and background to teach their students with disabilities in the general setting? Fortunately there has been discussion in early childhood literature about integrating early childhood education with special education. This could result in the blending of different approaches with working with our young students (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008).

Dr. Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD addresses what separating special education students, especially those with behavior disorders, does to their development. He states: "Research has repeatedly found that surrounding a child with other troubled peers only tends to escalate bad behavior (Perry, B. D., & Szalavitz, M., 2017, pp. 125)." So behavior students need to be surrounded by same age peers to learn the skills needed to manage their own behavior. Inclusion is going to be continued in general education classrooms because students with disabilities need their peer models to influence their learned behavior. Therefore, teachers, general education and special education, need the proper training and background in child development, social-emotional curriculum, and behavior intervention to promote healthy learning environments for every student.

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We need to create classrooms that are developmentally appropriate, by providing students with a learning environment that is developed based on childhood development research. This in turn creates developmentally appropriate classrooms that are designed to support students with self-regulation (Viglas, M., & Perlman, M. 2017).

### **Behavior Interventions and Strategies**

When you hear the term *intervention*, educators typically think of special education teachers or intervention specialists. We have coined the term *intervention* as a strategy only used with our students who qualify for special education. Yet, more and more teachers are finding interventions necessary in their day to day classroom to help with managing behavior. However, the majority of general education teachers do not have the proper knowledge and schooling in the area of behavior management like a special education teacher might. Heather D Beam and Tracey Gershwin Mueller (2017) asked the question: What do educators know, do and think about behavior?

They found that students with challenging behavior such as, aggression, noncompliance, and disrespectfulness, are considered to be the most difficult population to work with. Disruptive behaviors lead to decreased academic achievement and in turn more behavior problems. In addition to adversely affecting academics, disruptive behaviors also contribute to classroom environments feeling unsafe and increasing teacher stress (Chaffee, R. K., Briesch, A. M., Johnson, A. H., & Volpe, R. J. 2017). As stated in the previous section teachers do not feel adequately prepared to deal with these behaviors in their classroom. Teachers need to be properly trained on behavior interventions and strategies to implement in their classrooms to prevent these behaviors and improve the academic success in all of their students.



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The most common disability category that contributes to behavior is Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD). Typically, these students are put into a classroom with each other, a special education teacher and two aides. However, 25% of these students are receiving their education in a general classroom for almost 80% of their school day. The Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE) found that over half of special educators who work with students with challenging behaviors are not fully certified in their field (Beam, H. D., & Mueller, T. G. 2017).

Due to the lack of knowledge and resources for general education teachers, the common solution of EBD students in particular, is removal from the classroom. However, according to Oliver and Reschly (2010):

A cycle of negative reinforcement is created for both the teacher and the student in which the student is reinforced because the demand has been removed and the teacher is reinforced because the student and disruptive behavior have been removed from the classroom (pp.188).

In fact, many behaviors are linked to low academics skills and the behaviors are manifestations in their attempt to escape from “difficult tasks.” In turn, students who are constantly being removed from the classroom receive less instructional opportunities, and therefore fall more behind, adding to the low academic skills that are causing their behaviors in the first place (Oliver, R. M., & Reschly, D. J. 2010.)

This vicious cycle is all too common in schools. Yet many teachers feel as though removal is their only solution to address challenging behaviors in order to teach their other students. What other behavior interventions could teachers be utilizing in place of removal to promote student learning in all aspects? And why aren't teachers properly trained on how to use them? According to Battilaio, Dalhoe and Shirer article (2013) teachers are constantly walking a

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fine line on how to address behavior in their classroom. Teachers naturally feel responsible for the safety and learning of all students. If one student is putting that responsibility in jeopardy a teacher's instinct is to remove the "problem" student for the sake of the other students. However, the decisions teachers make set the stage for a variety of student outcomes. Therefore, teachers should focus on more nonreactive responses to disruptive behaviors (Battalio, R., Dalhoe, A., & Shirer, D. 2013).

The key to addressing any behavior problem is prevention according to Crisis Prevention Training. If a teacher can recognize a student's trigger before escalation happens, a disruptive behavior and outburst can be avoided. For a teacher to be more proactive in their strategies they must have a rapport with their student to develop a more effective learning environment (Battalio, R., Dalhoe, A., & Shirer, D. 2013). If a separate adult is constantly coming into a classroom to take over the behavior, students become confused about the strategy being used based on the timing and lacking the relationship with the other adult. As a teacher when you allow another adult to take over working with a student's behavior you are giving up all of your power as that student's teacher. The student no longer sees you as the authority, nor do they feel the need to follow your directions. Before you call the office for assistance, you have to recognize that you are giving away your power to that student because you are admitting to them that you cannot "handle" them.

Student behavior is a daily struggle for all teachers. Up to 15% of students break classroom rules on a daily basis and 1-7% demonstrates chronic disruptive behaviors. The ineffective strategies being used to address these behaviors are creating uncontrollable classrooms that cost critical instruction time (Chaffee, R. K., Briesch, A. M., Johnson, A. H., & Volpe, R. J. 2017). To help prevent these behaviors, many schools have adopted the three-tier

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model to help prevent behavior by creating standard behavior expectations for all students. By schools taking this approach, implanting an effective tier one allows students who are at risk for behaviors be identified early on to promote early intervention (Lane, Kathleen L. 2007). How can we expect students to behave a certain way if we aren't teaching and modeling it as soon as they enter school?

One strategy researchers believe we should be implementing is praise and positive reinforcement. The use of praise and reprimand shape the social-emotional learning of a child in the classroom. According to Split, Leflot, Onghena and Colpin (2016):

Guided by behavior learning theory and principles of operant conditioning, there is a wide consensus about the importance of positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior using contingent praise for the prevention of oppositional behavior and the promotion of on-task and compliant student behavior. Punitive contingencies, in contrast, have shown to be counterproductive, initiating more-off task and oppositional behavior in the long run (pp. 733).

Even though many educators recognize praise as being an effective strategy, the ratio for praise to reprimand is 2.5:6.5 times per 10 minutes in elementary classrooms. Therefore, there is a need for interventions that promote the use of praise for compliant behavior and reduces the use of reprimands for non-compliant behavior (Spilt, J. L., Leflot, G., Onghena, P., & Colpin, H. 2016).

Now that we know how children's behavior is shaped and how we should address it; we are going to look at a form of professional development called Literacy Coaching. How can we use this successful technique in reading to coach teachers on how to address student behavior in their own classrooms?

### **Literacy Coaching and modifying it for behavior**

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In schools, literacy coaching takes its name and goal from the world of sports, with the idea that if face-to-face, in-service professional development can help practitioners thoughtfully adapt to ever-changing classroom and curricular contexts, then students' achievement will likewise improve (Morrow, Casey, and Haworth, pp. 3. 2003)

This quote from *Staff Development for Early Literacy Teachers* addresses the core idea of literacy coaching and why it is such an important way to approach professional development. Classrooms are ever-changing, especially in terms of student behavior. So if we can influence teachers to change their curriculum style, why not help change their mindsets on how to address student behavior in the classroom through coaching.

To be a successful coach in any area, one needs to be an expert in their field. For example, literacy coaches have extensive knowledge on literacy pedagogy and know how to apply theoretical knowledge into instructional practice. Literacy coaches are also typically viewed as leaders in their schools and therefore can build schoolwide community. Coaches have direct contact with principals and provide ideas for professional development through their coaching experiences. If a coach is also a part time teacher they create an even stronger relationship with colleagues because they can show their techniques being used within an actual classroom. The formats followed for literacy coaching can easily be altered to meet the needs for behavior coaching. The common formats being used are:

- Master teacher observation
- Formative observation
- Teacher-coach conferences
- Attending professional development as a team
- Literacy groups

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By taking what we know from literacy coaching and how it has been successful we can mold these forms to help address student behavior in a new light (Mraz, M., Salas, S., Mercado, L., & Dikotla, M. 2016).

One data-driven coaching model being used to address behavior is based on a behavioral consultation framework. This model is followed based on school settings and follows four guidelines to support teachers through problem identification, problem analysis, implementation of plans and evaluating. Traditional behavioral consultation has been grounded in behavioral theory and social learning theory. These theories support the relationships between behavior and environment. Change in behavior can only happen if modeling of the desired behavior is shown in a positive light and demonstrates the importance of desired behavior. This instructional coaching model goes past behavior change by also requiring changes in instructional practice and skills as demonstrated by teachers (Glover, T. A. 2017).

The ultimate goal behind this model is that by advancing teacher practices it in turn creates positive student outcomes. The three primary components of this model to promote this outcome are:

1. An emphasis on the learning environment
2. Enrollment of teachers via modeling, designated opportunities for practice and feedback
3. The use of a formalized data-driven implementation framework

Literacy follows a cycle of pre conferences, observations, post conferences and implementation. First, the teacher and the coach meet for a pre-conference where the teachers comes up with an issues or questions that they want help with and what they want out of working with a coach. The coach then turns the question into a rationale and then plans a day to come in and observe. During the first observation the coach observes and scripts everything that is being

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said, keeping the rationale in mind. This also allows the coach to make side notes about anything significant. During the post conference the coach and teacher look at the script and talk about what the coach noticed, positives and negatives. The teacher should leave with an action plan based on the coaches' observations and expertise in the field. This is also a time where the coach can ask questions on what they observed.

By creating behavior coaches in our schools we can utilize this model to promote student growth and radically alter student behavior outcomes. Coaching will focus on using data to create a learning environment that is ultimately responsive to student need. Our current Response to Intervention system is slow and typically unsuccessfully in addressing student behavior early on to create a bigger impact. This data-driven model would replace the RTI system in a more positive and effective way. The ultimate goal is to coach teachers on how to make instructional decisions within their own classroom based on the situational need. There will never be enough able bodies to assist in behavior situations on a daily basis, so teachers need to be able respond to the behavior on their own. Coaching focuses on scaffolding teachers to be able to identify a behavior, why it might be happening and what strategy would be the most effective in addressing it (Glover, T. A. 2017).

Coaches can also practice gradual release with newer teachers who require more support. Following the same coaching cycle model, coaches can create more observation and conference opportunities. Teachers would have the opportunity to actually observe the coach teach, and then they would try co-teaching and finally teach completely independently. During all of these observations there would also be pre and post conferences to allow for the sharing of ideas and the opportunities for questions. This kind of support is ideal for first year teachers to help them feel less overwhelmed.

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Through coaching if we can focus on the actual quality of instructional delivery and the application of a “toolkit” based on research-based practices, instead of whatever might be easiest in the situation, it will create a greater student impact. One specific form of coaching that could be ideal in creating behavior coaches is student-focused coaching. This model was created for the purpose of creating process for providing coaching support to teachers in realistic settings in the schools that are effective and functional in terms of the outcomes. One aspect that makes this model optimal for addressing student behavior is it's designed to be flexible, so responses can be specific to the needs of a situation (Hasbrouck, J. 2017).

When implementing student-focused coaching within a school, teachers or specialists that take on the important role of coach need to have extensive knowledge in the content area (eg. behavior, child development) and a specialized interest in working in collaboration with colleagues. Collaboration is a key when implementing coaching. Hasbrouck defines student focused coaching as, “a cooperative, ideally collaborative relationship with parties mutually engaged in efforts to provide better services for students (pp. 22).” Coaching of any matter will never be successful unless all parties have the same end goal and mindset when addressing students.

In Bethanie Pletcher's article from the Texas Journal of Literacy Education; *Literacy Coaching Advice: Cultivating Healthy Working Relationships with Teachers*, she emphasizes the importance of working relationships between coaches and the teachers that they work with. Unfortunately, this aspect of building relationships is typically overlooked due to urgency of beginning implementation and coaches feeling they do not have the time. However, Pletcher states that in order for coaching to be successful, knowledge only gets you so far and the relationship takes coaching the rest of the way (Pletcher, B. 2015). The coach's job is to be the

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support system for teachers based on their needs. Depending on how much support a teacher needs drives the coach's role. They must have a relationship with the teacher to make for successful implementation.

Teachers often view outsiders coming into their rooms as threats to their environment. They typically have the attitude of you don't know what's going on in here because you're not in here every day, therefore you have no say on what should be done. As coaches, you have to respect a teacher's space and teaching style and approach working with them as I'm here to help and assist you, not take over your classroom and students. These interpersonal skills are imperative with being a sufficient coach. This relationship is even more powerful, when addressing student behavior, due to high tension that has been created through the behavior. Teachers tend to be on their "last straw" with a student who exhibits disruptive or physical behavior and need that collaborative relationship to help alter their mindset to find the best solution in helping the student. Working together to find the best solution based on a student's current state is addressed in the following section; through the training of the Crisis Prevention Initiation (CPI).

### **Utilizing NCI Training for Behavior Coaching**

The Crisis Prevention Institution (CPI) uses non-violent crisis intervention (NCI) to train teachers on how to properly and safely react to crisis situations with students. This is a program typically required for special education teachers to obtain, due to the high risk nature of their job from working with behavior students. However, as we've seen in the recent years, general education teachers are seeing more and more extreme student behavior, and they do not have the proper training to be able to safely address it in their classrooms.



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As previously stated in the behavior section; prevention, recognizing student triggers and de-escalation are the most crucial tools when address student behaviors. Student triggers can be situations or things that cause stress in a student that leads to acting out behavior. Student triggers are individualized to a student. For example, a change in the daily schedule could be a trigger for one student, where loud noises could be a trigger for another student. NCI builds it's tactics off of these tools to create the most positive outcome for the student and the teacher. NCI and other trainings started being used in the schools after the use of physical restraint has increased in the school setting and resulted in harmful outcomes for both the student and adult. The International Society of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurses define physical restraint---as "any physical method of restricting [an individual's] freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to his/her body (1999)."

Unfortunately, physical restraint has become more common in schools due to the increased number of students with behavioral issues. These students typically range from the disability categories of Emotional Behavior Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Other Health Impairment. Students with these disabilities are being placed into general education settings under staff members who lack the expert knowledge on how to prevent or manage their behavior effectively.

To avoid having to use restraint at all, many schools are started implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Strategies (PBIS). Similar to the Teaching Pyramid, positive reinforcement is more effective in addressing student behavior than negative reprimands. PBIS focuses on initially teaching students on how to behave appropriately, increasing the use of positive reinforcement for good behavior, and using data to monitor interventions and supports. PBIS should be implemented in the very beginning of the school year to start shaping

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expectations for students. By setting clear expectations for behavior in the beginning of the school year we are making it clear to students on what we expect of them on a day to day basis. PBIS interventions increase prosocial behavior and reduce challenging behavior when implemented properly.

Overall, preventive approaches reduce challenging behavior, which in turn reduces the use of physical restraint for disruptive or physical behaviors. De-escalation techniques that can be used on a student in crisis mode, exhibiting harmful behavior are considered essential in properly addressing the behavior in a safe manner. The various cycles of aggression that students might go through when in crisis behavior are: agitation, acceleration peak and de-escalation. Students in a state of stress go through the CPI Verbal Escalation Continuum. The five stages of that continuum are as follows:

1. Questioning
2. Refusal
3. Release
4. Intimidation
5. Tension Reduction

Depending on what stage a student is experiencing their stressors determines how a teacher should react. But if staff that are working directly with these students are not properly trained in how to address these stages, their actions might continue to aggravate the student, leading to a harmful or unsuccessful outcome for both parties involved (Couvillon, M., Peterson, R. L., Ryan, J. B., Scheuermann, B., & Stegall, J. 2010).

When we use the term *crisis* to describe a student's behavior, it is hard for non-educators or people who are not constantly surrounded by children, to understand what exactly that means.

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How can a student experience a crisis in a safe school environment? Crisis is defined in literature as:

An unstable situation that is related to a danger or a threat; an unexpected change in the course of an illness or a disease that determines recovery or relapse; a personally stressful event during which that situation approaches or exceeds the adaptive capacities of the individual (Paulauskas, Roland. 2011. pp. 71)

So crisis can happen in all sorts of situations. They all have common features such as unwelcomed feelings related to stress, create a negative effect on the environment, last for long periods of times, and need external intervention to help an individual overcome the outcome caused by it.

It's hard to imagine a young child going through these emotions, but in fact when a child is exhibiting an out of control behavior that is exactly what they are experiencing. Stress, from a place they might not even understand, their environment being affected based on their behavior, tantrums lasting for an hour and the need for a trusted adult to step in and help them. These are the realities of what is happening in our schools. Student behavior isn't happening just out of defiance. It is happening because students are experiencing some sort of stress and triggers that are sending them into a mode of crisis that they physical and mentally cannot control (Paulauskas, Roland. 2011.)

However, we cannot help these students as educators without the proper knowledge and training to do so. It is time for our districts to recognize student behavior as the most imperative need in our schools. Learning cannot happen if teachers, students and administrators are in a constant state of stress due to extreme student behavior. There needs to be professional development, coaching and training administered to all educators who deal with these behaviors

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on a daily basis. They need to be provided with evidence-based interventions and strategies that can be used in an effective way to help these students.

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## SECTION THREE

### Curriculum Development Framework:

#### Theoretical Perspective & Criteria for Development

##### Introduction

Behavior coaching was created based on a crucial need within my school on how to manage student behavior within the classroom. This district is an urban Title I school district in central Ohio. The district serves just fewer than 3,500 students, 69% of the student body are considered a minority race, majority of them being Black, which is more than the states average of 29%. The student to teacher ratio is 19:1. As a Title I district, all students receive free breakfast and lunch based on the average income per family. It is also a very transient district; many students are move-ins from other districts and typically will move again. We have many students who live in single parent households or who are being raised in foster care.

As a school, we service preschool, kindergarten and first grade students only. We are considered a literacy campus to address reading in the early years. In this year alone, there were an average of 4.73 disciplinary referrals per month and there were more disciplinary referrals in kindergarten than the other two grades. The most common problem behaviors that the referrals were written for included: defiance, disruption, and physical aggression. For the 2017-2018 school year the campus had 18 suspensions for the entire year. For this school year, from August to January there have already been 17 suspensions.

To gain insight into this growing need within my own district I conducted interviews with various teachers and administrators that helped drive my research and curriculum design.

##### Interviews

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When I initially came up with the idea of behavior coaching I wanted teacher input to drive my project. Since this curriculum design's ultimate goal is to help teachers within their own classroom I wanted to be sure it addressed something teachers wanted and needed. I interviewed five classroom teachers. Their experience ranged from having 10 years of teaching experience to being a first year teacher. They were all asked the same questions (Appendix A) and some gave very similar answers. For the question, what is the most common behavior problem in your classroom, all five teachers' stated physical aggression was one of their top concerns.

When the teachers were also asked, how do you want to be helped to deal with behaviors, their answers all involved some sort of support. I received answers such as:

- Someone who is going to come into classroom, observe and give constructive criticism.
- Someone to observe the behavior kids and help give feedback.
- Help with challenging behavior.
- Unsure- thought professional development would help but didn't learn how to apply it.

When I read through these answers I realized that a coach could address all of their needs. Like in literacy coaching, support is the key role coaches play to helping teachers improve themselves. By creating a curriculum that builds on relationships and trust between a teacher and coach you are promoting self-extended learning for the teachers. A coaching framework is based on teaching teachers how to change the way they look at something and the way they approach it. Through the framework of literacy coaching, I am creating a behavior coaching model that also builds on the support and relationships to promote change in teachers which will then translate

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into their classrooms to help them learn on how to independently address student behavior on their own.

### **Curriculum Framework**

Literacy coaching is a very successful form of professional development districts use to coach teachers on how to teach literacy. I wanted to model my curriculum development on behavior coaching off of this coaching frame work (Appendix D).

Literacy coaching is taught as a cycle. Coaches provide teachers with relevant professional development, have pre and post conferences with individual teachers, observe the teachers, model for the teachers and then finally coach the teachers through what they have learned. It is a very immersive experience that provides teachers with extra support in the classroom (Mraz, M., Salas, S., Mercado, L., & Dikotla, M. 2016).

For my behavior coaching curriculum development it will follow a similar cycle to literacy coaching. First, teachers need to be exposed to the necessary research in child development, behavior management and social emotional learning (Refer back to Section Two). Through professional development coaching helps to apply the research to their own classroom content. Heavy coaching would begin with new teachers who need the extra support in their classroom. This is what the behavior coaching cycle would look:

1. Teacher and coach have a pre-conference meeting.
  - a. During this meeting the teacher comes up with an issue they want the coach to specifically observe.
  - b. Teacher informs the coach of what they want out of the coaching experience.
  - c. The behavior coach turns that issue into a question that needs to be answered and addressed.

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- d. The teacher and coach pick a day for the coach to come in and observe that issue.
2. Observation
  - a. The behavior coach watches for the issues and takes specific notes on everything from what the teacher says and the students do.
  - b. Through this note taking process the coach can make other notes of issues/concerns they observed that could be helpful in solving the issue.
3. Post-Conference
  - a. After the initial observation teacher and coach have a post conference meeting.
  - b. They discuss what the coach observed.
  - c. The coach brings up strengths they noticed the teacher doing in the classroom.
  - d. The coach asks the teacher any questions that may have arisen from the observation.
  - e. There is no agenda in this conference; it is a time for the teacher and coach to share their observations and thoughts.
  - f. Through research and data the coach creates an action plan for the teacher that can be used to solve the problem based off of the guiding question.
4. In a gradual release coaching situation, which is a form of coaching that slowly transitions from highly supported to less support, there would be a total of three observations and pre and post conferences that occur during all three.
  - a. After the initial pre and post conferences and observation, the teacher would then observe the coach addressing behavior.
  - b. Then the coach and teacher would work together to address the behavior.



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- c. Finally the teacher would address the behavior independently while the coach observes.

Through this cycle of conferences and observations teachers create a relationship with the coach and a form of trust. They are provided the support they need to address their biggest behavior concerns. Coaches also become a provider of data for the principal. The coach should ultimately be a resource for the building. The coach provides one on one support, knowledge on behavior management, professional development on relevant issues that are occurring in the classrooms and data on what is working and how.

### **Coaching Content**

For a behavior coach to be successful in their field they need extensive training and knowledge in the background like literacy coaches. Behavior coaches need core training in Child Development, Social Emotional Learning, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), CHAMPS Behavior Management, and a background in special education to be able to address students with disabilities.

Student behavior is completely individualized- focused on particular students in specific contexts. Therefore, behavior coaches need access to multiple types of interventions that can be used to address various student behaviors within specific classroom contexts. When coaching a teacher on how to address the student behavior, the coach's feedback and advice should come from the teachers need. Interviews and observations should drive where the coach goes in terms of assisting the teacher. For example some teachers might want help with an individual student's behavior and others may want help as whole in terms of classroom management.

The teacher's need will also determine how much support the coach provides. First year teachers will require more support and gradual release where experienced teachers may only

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need to go through a single cycle of conferences and observations. This behavior coaching curriculum framework should be followed as a guideline. It will assist coaches on how to approach conferences and observations, but outcomes will vary from the situations.

## SECTION FOUR

### Curriculum Framework

# The Behavior Coaching Handbook: A Guide for Coaches on How to Work with Teachers with Addressing Student Behavior in their Classroom

## Contents

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## Preface

Coaching has been used as new form of professional development since the early 2000's. Most commonly it is used by districts to address literacy. Literacy Coaching was designed as a way for teachers to get direct instruction on how to teach literacy to their students. Literacy Coaches have extensive knowledge in literacy practices that allows them to work directly with teachers based on teacher and student needs. Literacy is still one of the most important subject areas in early childhood; it creates the basic skills for reading and prepares students for their schooling for years to come. However, there has been another area of great need in early childhood that takes away from academics: student behavior.

Ohio state legislation has passed the Supporting Alternatives for Education (SAFE) Act which bans schools from suspending and expelling students from Pre-Kindergarten to Third grade. There were 36,000 such suspensions - removal from school for up to 10 days - of Ohio's 540,000 PreK-3 students in 2015-16 and 34,000 in 2016-17 (O'Donnell, 2017). With this new law, by the school year of 2021-2022, districts will have to find new ways to address student behavior in early childhood education, which does not involve simply removing the student from school. General education teachers are routinely taught if a child is a disruption in their classroom they should be removed. With the growing numbers of students per teacher, it is no wonder the easiest solution is to simply remove the "problem" child. However, schools do not always have the resources to deal with extreme student behaviors or the man power to assist all of its primary education teachers. With this new act coming general education teachers will

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need resources and training on how to properly handle behaviors within their own classroom, which are effective and set our students up for success and improvement.

This problem can be addressed through behavior coaching to coach teachers on how to address student behavior within in their own classrooms, instead of sending students to the office which typically leads to suspension. Furthermore, in order to better help our young students; we need to understand what is causing their behavior so that we can properly address and prevent it.

By using current research on literacy coaching, this behavior coaching has been created to create a coaching protocol on student behavior, to in turn coach teachers on how to deal and address student behaviors in their own classrooms independently.

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## Introduction

By taking on the role of a behavior coach you are committing yourself as a supporter of other teachers to make them feel confident in addressing student behavior in their classrooms. You will be utilizing your knowledge and experience to create actions plans for teachers on addressing issues within their own classroom. You will be that support and resource teachers need in dealing with a difficult topic. It is your job to create a safe environment for teachers to feel comfortable in when meeting with you. A safe environment should be an office or classroom where only you, the coach, and the teacher are present in. You should make it clear to the teacher that in no way are you evaluating them or there to judge their teacher abilities or classroom management skills. You are there to listen to them and support them in any way possible.

You will be assisting them through their own need and what they want out of coaching sessions. Your support could be as minor as giving ideas to as crucial as modeling teaching and being involved in multiple observations and conferences. It is your job to figure out what a teacher needs and provide support to meet that need.

This handbook is designed to help guide you through your role as a behavior coach but still allow you the flexibility to adjust instruction based on the given situation. Coaching is all about relationships and apprenticeship. Therefore, there is no singular way to coach; your coaching should evolve based on the teacher, students, and situations. You are the support system for teachers and your role is crucial to helping them and their students succeed. Return to this guidebook anytime you need guidance to steer you in the right direction.

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### **Phase One: Building Rapport with Colleagues**

As a coach you are going to be working one on one with teachers and entering into their classrooms. Therefore, you need to have established a relationship with that teacher to make the experience successful and comfortable. In order for teachers to trust you and feel at ease about you coming in to observe their classroom, they need to know that you are there to support them in any way possible, not judge their abilities as a teacher.

Ways you can show respect are when you are listening to the teacher, take a few extra seconds to respond so they know you are really listening and waiting for them to be done. You can also restate what they said back to show that you have a real understanding of what they are saying and you are making sure you are on the same page before moving forward.

You can also show respect by making an effort to stay in contact with them between meetings, and making sure they know how to contact you when they may have questions. You want to make yourself easily available to them in case they need that extra support.

## Phase Two: Pre-Conferences

The pre-conference meeting should take place between the coach and the teacher prior to the first observation. As a coach you should set up the meeting around a time that works for the teacher's schedule and yours. Allow a minimum of 30 minutes for the meeting, but know they could go over depending on teacher's concerns and their available time frame. This is an outline on how a pre-conference should go:

- Be on time to the conference and bring materials to take notes.
- Introduce yourself to the teacher and state that you are there to support and help them in any way possible.
- Allow the teacher to introduce them self.
- Ask the teacher what grade/subject area they teach.
- To build their confidence, ask the teacher what strategies they are currently using that they feel are effective.
- The number one leading question that will fuel the rest of the conference is asking the teacher what their concern/issue/question is and what kind of help or support they want.
- From there you can modify your questioning based on their responses.
  - **For example:** If a teacher says, **"I am struggling with whole classroom management."**

You could respond by restating what the teacher has said and prompting the next question such as, **"So what you are saying is you're struggling with**



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**classroom management, correct? When do you find classroom management the most difficult? During whole group lessons, transitions etc?"**

This will help you identify the teacher's number one concern.

- **Another example:** If a teacher says, **"I have one student who is a behavior problem and I would like assistance with how to help them."**

Your response could be, **"So you have one student whose behavior is disruptive correct? What kind of behavior are they exhibiting? Physical behavior, the inability to pay attention etc?"**

- As you ask the teacher questions about their concerns this allows you both to pinpoint where you should start.
- The more information you have from the teacher will allow you to have an idea of what you will be looking for during your first observation.
- From the teacher's responses you will turn their concerns into a question that needs to be answered and a rationale on how you will solve it.
- Once you have established the guiding question explain to the teacher that you will be coming into the classroom to observe the target behavior problem. During that observation you won't be intervening but taking detailed notes on what is going on during the observation. Explain to the teacher that you will be typing/writing out what is going on in the situation, what the teacher is saying and what the students are saying or doing.

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- This will allow both of you to discuss and evaluate what happened immediately prior to the behavior and the immediate result/consequence or reaction to the student behavior.
- Make sure you explain to the teacher that in no way are you there to evaluate them. You are not there to evaluate their teacher or classroom management. Your sole objective is to observe the situation at hand.
- Ask the teacher if they have any questions so far and then set up a time to observe that will allow you the opportunity to address the issues that were discussed during the pre-conference.
  - **For example:** If the issue they would like you to observe is on one student who has behavior issues during dismissal, that is when you should come observe that student at that designated time.
  - **Or-** if it's whole classroom management during whole group lessons you should come at the time that the teacher is typically teaching whole group.
- This observation could range in time due to what you will be observing and when. Allow a sufficient amount of time to make sure you are able to observe the problem as a whole which will then allow you to come up with an action plan on how to address it.

This pre-conference allows you the time to make sure the teacher understands that you are there to support and assist them in any way possible. The conversations you are having should allow the teacher to feel comfortable with expressing their concerns. This is a good place to start building that relationship with the teacher. When you both leave this pre-conference you

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should feel that you have adequate background information to allow you to know what you will be looking for and what areas need to be addressed. The teacher should leave knowing that someone is there to listen to them and support them in whatever way possible. Going into the first observation the teacher should feel like someone is coming in to help them where needed and that their concerns are valid and important. Prior to going to observe you should reflect on your notes from the pre-conference.

### Phase Three: Observations

Once you have established the teacher's overreaching question, you should have a way to take detailed notes. You could use a laptop, tablet or even a notebook and a writing utensil. Put a time stamp at the top of your observation notes, so you can document the day and time at which the observation occurred. This will allow you to reflect on when the behavior is occurring so you can start to figure out why.

Behavior intervention is about focusing on one thing at a time, so make sure you know what child or situation your attention needs to be on. While taking notes you should write what the teacher is saying and what the child or children are saying. Make notes of what's happening in the classroom. During this time you can also write out questions that may pop up during the observations or things that you think might be helpful. While taking these purposeful notes you should leave out any judgement. Your notes should be subjective to what is happening or being said without an opinion. This allows you to stay unbiased, especially when you go back over your notes to find a solution that would best help the situation or student.

- Here's an example of what your notes might look like from a made up scenario:

- **Question from pre-conference: How can we help Joe not throw tantrums during end of the day dismissal?**

- **2:30 PM**- Wednesday 2/20
- Students walk back into the classroom from gym and are instructed to put on their coats and pack up their backpacks
- Joe starts roaming the classroom while students are all at cubbies

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- Teacher says "Joe please come get your coat on."
- Joe continues to roam and then starts running circles around table.
- Teacher says "Joe stop running and come get your coat on."
- Joe yells "I don't want to go home."
- Teacher says "that's not a choice it is time to go home and you need to get your coat on." Teachers tries to physical prompt him towards getting his coat by putting her hands on his back and lead him toward his cubby.
  - I like how the teacher keeps reminding Joe of the classroom expectations and what she's expecting him to do. *(These type of statements allow you to lead in with positive observations during the post conference)*
- Joe resists and tries to run out the classroom door
- Teacher chases after him and brings him back to the classroom and to his cubby. She says, "Joe it is not safe to run out of the classroom. It is time to get ready to go home."
  - Teacher remained calm during the incident- kept a calm voice
- Joe sits inside his cubby with his arms folded across his chest.
- **2:40-** The rest of the class is now sitting on their carpet with coats and book bags while teacher is still trying to figure out a way to have Joe follow suit.
  - Q: Why doesn't Joe want to go home?
  - Q: What's happening prior to dismissal?

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- Teacher starts offering incentives if Joe gets his stuff on. She says, "If you get your coat and book bag on I will give you a piece of candy."
- Joe slowly starts putting on his coat and then his book bag.
- Teacher then says, "Thank you for following directions Joe, here is your piece of candy."
- **2:45-** Joe takes it and sits down at a table to wait for the bus to get there.

Q: How can we help Joe follow the dismissal schedule without him running away or refusing?

Q: Does he need a visual schedule to help him expect what is coming next?

Q: Is there another way he can earn an incentive other than as a last resort?

Q: What are Joe's interests?

Q: Does Joe have trouble with all transitions or just dismissal?

Ending your observations with questions allows you to reflect on what you might look into when creating an action plan for the teacher. You also want to begin the post-conference with positive observations, like the comment made during the example: **I like how the teacher**

**keeps reminding Joe of the classroom expectations and what she's expecting him to do.**

We never want to make the teacher feel like they are not doing anything right. Creating questions that you want to ask the teacher also helps you prepare for your post-conference meeting with questions you can lead in with.

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After the observation plan with the teacher when you will have your post-conference to talk about your notes and come up with an action plan that will help them address the student behavior. Make sure you look over your observation notes to highlight anything of important significance or add other questions that you may have thought of later. You will want this information for when you start researching ideas to address the behavior.

## Phase Four: Creating an Action Plan

Now you have you have your pre-conference and observation notes. These should be plenty of information for you to start making an action plan. Your action plan should be created around the information you have gathered on the behavior problem. Use your personal experiences and resources to figure out what techniques might be best suited for the guiding question and what you observed.

Based on the observation example from phase 4, note taking example we can use that as our example to come up with said **action plan**. In that example, the guiding question was:

**How can we help Joe not throw tantrums during end of the day dismissal?** So from this question we know during the observation we were focused on watching Joe during the classroom's dismissal time. Based on our time stamps we know this student's behavior lasted from 2:30-2:45. We can reflect on the observation notes that describe what Joe did, said and also what the teacher said and did. From those notes, we can conclude that Joe avoids putting on his coat and book bag during dismissal and tried to run away and avoid the task. We also know from the questions we wrote down that we need to figure out why Joe doesn't want to go home and what motivates him. After going back and forth with Joe, the teacher finally convinced him to put on his coat and book bag with a piece of candy.

Therefore, we know Joe can be motivated by something but we need to motivate him prior to the running away so it doesn't seem like we are rewarding him for the unwanted behavior. We would ask the teacher these follow up questions during the post-conference.

- **For example:**



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- We asked, **"What motivates Joe other than candy?"**
- The teacher responds by saying, **"He really likes to play with cars."**

Now we have a positive reinforcement we can try with Joe to help get him to put his coat and book bag on during dismissal. Our action plan now can be prior to dismissal the teacher can tell Joe, **"If you get your coat and book bag on when we get back to the classroom, you can earn ten minutes of play time with your favorite car until the bus gets here to take you home."**

Now before the transition even begins Joe knows if he does his job like the teacher asks he can play with the car until the bus gets there. This prior knowledge can help motivate him from the beginning with completing the task.

Action plans will vary on the teacher, student behavior and classroom context. However, your action plan should never be considered a "permanent fix." Your original action plan may not even work initially and need to be revisited. You need to make this clear to the teacher that there are no permanent ways to fix student behavior. Sometimes you need to try multiple variations of the plans or come up with an entirely new plan based on how the student reacts initially. Other times, the plans just take time for the student to fully change their behavior.

At the beginning of behavior intervention it is possible to see an increase in undesired behavior. Being consistent with directives and rewards will encourage the student to modify their own behavior.

## Phase Five: Post-Conferences

You should schedule your post-conference with enough time after observation to allow you to read over your observation notes and to start coming up with an action plan, ideally within 2-4 days of the observation. As previously stated, your action plan might be influenced by your post-conference conversation, but you should still have some sort of framework to go off of. Such as our example scenario, we needed another form of positive reinforcement for Joe other than candy and we found out that preferred activity was cars. We then added that detail to the action plan that we had already developed.

The post-conference is going to involve you talking more than the pre-conference. The pre-conference was about the teacher getting the opportunity to express all of their concerns and you to just listen and take notes on what they were saying. The post-conference is more about you going over your notes from the observation and providing feedback on what you think could be done to help address the guiding question from your expertise. Before you start discussing your observation notes with teacher, you should restate that you are not evaluating them in anyway. Your notes are strictly what you saw, heard and questions that arose. Begin the conversations with positives you observed.

**For example:** During our scenario the coach made a note of- **I like how the teacher keeps reminding Joe of the classroom expectations and what she's expecting him to do.**

Use that note to remind the teacher that they are doing good things in terms of addressing the behavior and that you see it. This helps build off that rapport and trust between coach and teacher. People, including children, do not respond to hearing just negative

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comments or that they're doing everything wrong. As a coach, it is your job to remind them what they are also doing right. Describe what you observed but also add in comments like:

**"During dismissal I observed how Joe was running around the classroom when you were asking him to put on his coat and book bag. I liked how even as he continued to avoid the task you kept reminding him of what the expectation was and kept a calm voice."**

Go over your notes on what you observed, because this also allows the teacher to reflect on what happened during the observation. You might also help them realize something that happened that they didn't at first recognize. As a coach your ultimate mission is to help change teacher mindsets on behavior.

- **For example:** A teacher might think **a student's behavior is because they just don't want to listen.** However, as a coach and an expert in student behavior **you know there is always an underlying reason on why a student is doing what they are doing.** Your job is to help teachers see that behavior in that mindset, so that they can find the solution on their own.

**The post-conference is where this shift in mindset can occur.**

Once you go over your observation notes with the teacher and make any necessary comments or ask questions, allow the teachers to also ask questions. The teacher should have to opportunity to address what you observed or ask for your professional opinion of what you might have done in the situation.

Sometimes you will not be able to view the particular behavior the teacher wanted you to address for various reasons. If that is the case, during the post-conference, you and the

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teacher can decide if you have enough information to move forward with an action plan or if you need to plan on doing a second observation. On occasion you will have observed enough and have the information from the pre-conference to move forward. However, if you feel you need another opportunity to really observe the behavior at hand you will want to set up another observation.

The teacher and you should end the post-conference feeling as though you have created a plan to start implanting. The teacher may feel comfortable enough to start implementing the plan on their own, or they may need further assistance. In that case we will move on to the gradual release plan that provides extra support for new teachers in particular.

## Phase Six: Gradual Release with New Teachers for Extra Support

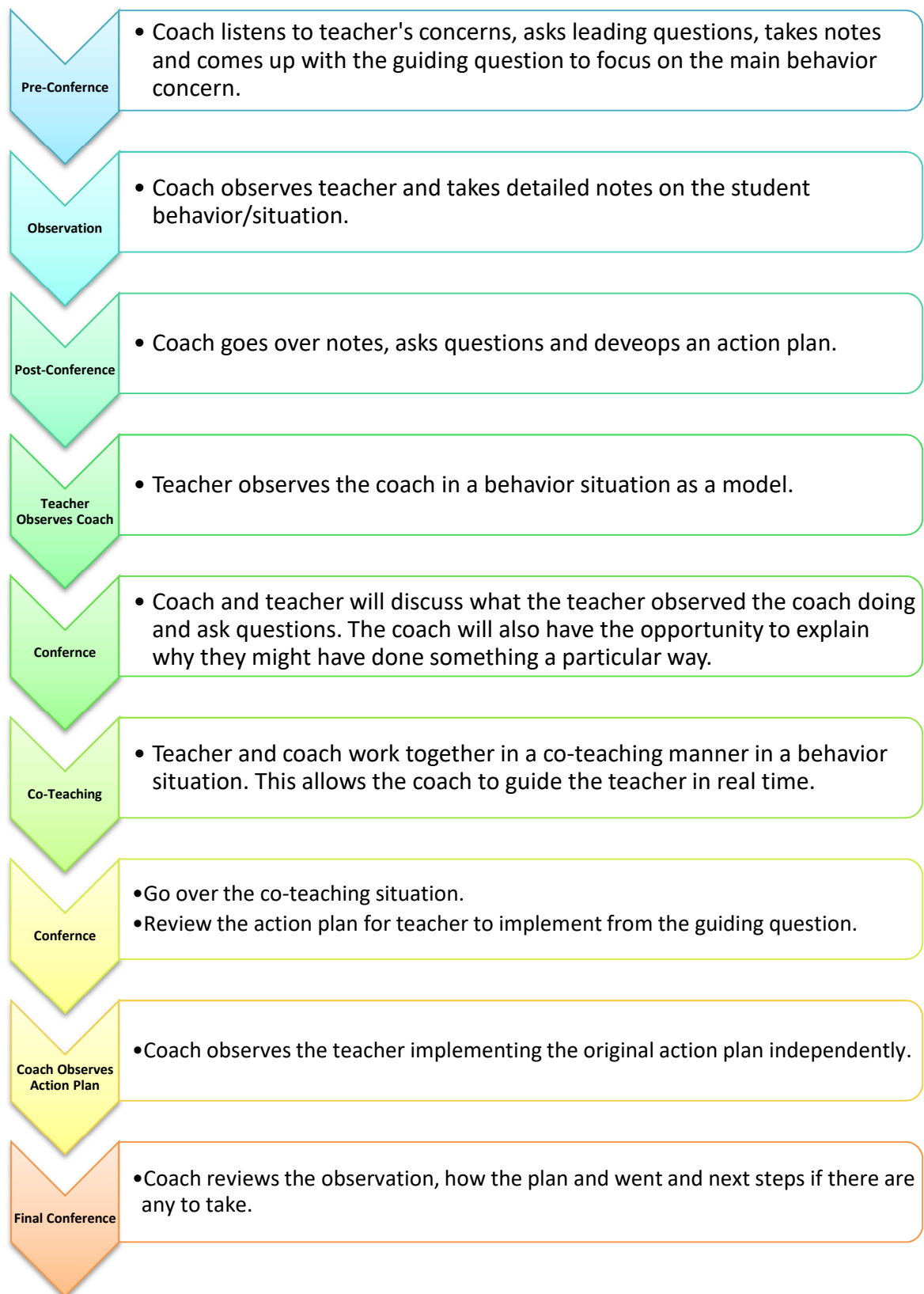
Typically the cycle of behavior coaching will be in four parts:



However, when working with new teachers, such as first years, you may be required to complete the gradual release cycle for extra support. Gradual release involves you starting out extremely involved with the teacher and their behavior situation, to slowly releasing them to doing it on their own with less support.

**See the diagram below (pg. 19) for what a gradual release coaching cycle looks like:**

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There are many more meetings during gradual release. You are following the same guidelines for your pre and post conferences, but your observations vary on support. During the first observation the teacher should have the opportunity to observe you as a model. Then, during the second observation you and the teacher should work together to address a behavior situation so you can guide them through it. Finally, for the last observation the teacher should be carrying out the action plan you created independently.

## Phase Seven: Resources

**This is a list of behavior management sources you  
can use or pass along to teachers to use as  
resources.**

### PBIS

- Positive Behavior Intervention and Support
- [www.pbisworld.com](http://www.pbisworld.com)

### NCI

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention a Crisis Intervention Prevention(CPI) training
- Talk to your district about getting certified

### CHAMPS

- *A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Mangement*
- By Randall Sprick

### BOOKS

- Dr. Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD
- *The Boy Who Was Rasied as a Dog*
- *Born for Love*



## **Phase Eight: Self-Reflection and Apprenticeship**

Baltasar Gracian said, "Self-reflection is the school of wisdom." As educators, coaches, and administrators to grow in our field, self-reflection is a crucial element. Now that you have completed a coaching cycle you need to allow yourself the opportunity to self-reflect on the process. Coaching is an intricate apprenticeship between yourself and the teacher. There will be ups and downs on the process, but ultimately there will be success in helping a teacher learn new techniques in behavior management, providing them with support and ultimately helping them support their students in the best way possible.

### **Some questions you might ask yourself after a coaching cycle to reflect on are:**

- Did I support the teacher in the way they needed?
- Did I allow the teacher the opportunity to express their concerns and be heard?
- What might I change about the coaching cycle I completed?
- Did I make myself available to the teacher to ask me questions and seek out additional help/support?
- Was I non-judgmental in my observations?
- Did I provide positive feedback to the teacher?
- How can I make myself an even better coach?
- What might I do differently next time to further my abilities as a coach?
- Do I need to revisit the teacher and/or the student/situation?

Remember your role as a coach is extremely important for supporting teachers and then in turn supporting students. Continue to assist both in reaching their goals!

## **SECTION FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Test Trail**

Once I finished writing the curriculum for behavior coaching, I did a test trial with my colleagues. I followed the same steps I list out in my section four:

1. Pre-Conference
2. Observation
3. Post-Conference
4. Implementing an Action Plan

I followed all the steps of the curriculum, making sure I built rapport, took detailed notes and created an action plan for them to carry out.

#### **Pre-Conference**

For the test trial I worked with preschool teachers. In their classroom they have a co-teaching set up, so there are two head teachers. During this pre-conference I explained to them that the point of the pre-conference was for them to express their concerns and what they needed help with.

I first facilitated the conversation by asking what their biggest behavior concern was in their classroom. They stated it was with one particular student who was struggling to deal with his emotions and anger. They gave me multiple examples of his behavior and the situations that they were occurring in. During this time I asked questions to allow them expand on their concerns and to give myself more background on what was going on. Through our conversation I came up with the guiding questions of: How can we help

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the student control and manage his anger when he's upset? I checked with the teachers to make sure this was accurate and they agreed.

I then wrote down their daily schedule and we set up a time for me to come in and observe the student, based on a time when his behavior occurred the most often. After our conference I reflected on my notes to prepare myself for the observation and what behavior I needed to focus my attention on.

### **Observation**

I conducted my observation from 9:00-11:00 AM. I entered the classroom with my laptop and sat in the back of the classroom to try and be less of a distraction to the students. From there I started taking notes on everything that was happening in the classroom that directly affected the student my focus was set on.

I wrote out detailed notes of what the teacher was saying and doing as well as the focus student. I made inferences of the student behavior and wrote down questions that occurred for the post-conference. I wrote a total of five and half pages of notes during my two hour observation. I was able to gain important insight into the student behavior and the environment in which it was occurring. My notes from the pre-conference and observation allowed me to then create an action plan for the teachers.

### **Post-Conference and Action Plan**

During the post-conference I went over my observations with the teachers. We talked about their schedule and I had the opportunity to ask any questions I wrote down. During this time I made small suggestions they could try to implement to prevent the student behavior as well as the importance of consistency. As stated previously, this is where I tried to shift the teachers' mindset on how they approach student behavior.

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Based on notes and observation, I determined that the student needed to have a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) completed and then be put on a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). A FBA is a report written up to determine the nature of a student's behavior. It details what the behavior looks like, when it is occurring and why it might be happening. A FBA must be completed prior to writing a BIP. The BIP is the actual plan teachers and anyone else who is involved with the student follows in response to the student behavior. I explained to the teachers the student needed to be on a BIP to create the most effective plan in addressing his behavior and preparing him for kindergarten.

After I went over the FBA and BIP with the teachers I explained that a behavior plan takes time and patience. Since we are getting towards the end of the school year the behavior plan needs to be followed for the remainder of the year. I answered any questions they had and told them I could help them with implementing the plan and do additional observations if needed.

### **Reflection Questions**

After our post-conference I asked the teachers a series of reflection questions about the behavior coaching experience. (See Appendix E) Overall, they found the trail to be very helpful. They found the actual information given to them by me was the most important in terms of helping them find the steps to take when dealing with the student's behavior. They also found it very helpful to have someone to confide in about the issues. The only thing they would change was to have the coach even more available to observe the student behavior.

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When I asked them if they thought behavior coaching should be used in school districts they said yes because it allowed additional help and an outside perspective to help teachers see what is happening within their own classrooms. They felt as the teacher they got too emotionally involved with the situation and having an outsider allowed for a more unbiased opinion. They also believe our personal building needed a behavior coach.

### **Reflection**

In two years, school districts are going to have to find alternative ways to deal with student behavior in the early childhood, other than suspension. Based on my research, curriculum design and implementing it into practice I have come to the conclusion that behavior can be addressed in the classroom, with support. From my interviews and test trial I have discovered that teachers want support when dealing with behavior, and ultimately they do not want to send students out of their rooms.

If the curriculum I designed could be perfected and implemented into elementary schools, the suspension rates for preschool to third grade students should decrease. If there was a designated person to coach teachers on how to address student behavior in their classroom, teachers would not have to send the student to the office, nor would the behavior escalate into being uncontrollable. Student behavior needs to be addressed in early school years to have lasting effect leading into secondary grades and adulthood (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008). If we can address this student behavior where it begins to manifest we can set these students up to be successful in later life.

Student behavior needs to become our main priority in early childhood education if we want to set up our students for academic success in the future. Coaching our teachers is where this change can begin.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Questions for Practicing Teachers

Appendix B: Questions for Special Education Director

Appendix C: Questions for School Principal

Appendix D: Questions for Literacy Coach

Appendix E: Reflection Questions for Test Trial Teacher

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## APPENDIX A: Questions for Practicing Teachers

Grade Taught:

Years Teaching:

1. What is your personal experience with student behavior in your classroom?
2. What strategies do you currently use that you feel are effective?
3. What is the most common student behavior problem in your classroom?
4. Did you ever experience dealing with student behaviors during student teaching or other field placements?
5. Did you ever take classes on managing extreme student behavior (other than classroom management)?
6. How do you personally think student behavior should be addressed in early childhood?
7. Do you recognize student triggers in order to prevent escalation?
8. How do you want to be helped to deal with student behaviors?
9. Do you know how to write a FBA/BIP? Have you ever written one?
10. What do you think the solution is to help our behavior kids and make teachers feel more prepared to address them?
11. Anything else you'd like to add?

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## APPENDIX B: Questions for Special Education Director

- How long have you been in special education?
- How long have you been certified in CPI/NCI training?
- When is the new SAFE act going to be implemented in districts?
- Have you been involved with a manifestation determination meeting/hearing before?
- What are your concerns involving manifestation determination?
- What is your personal experience with student behavior?
- What do you think the solution is for dealing with student behavior at the general education level?

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## APPENDIX C: Questions for School Principal

Grade Taught:

Years Teaching:

Years in Administration:

1. What is your personal experience with student behavior in your school?
2. What is the most common student behavior problem in your school?
3. Did you ever experience dealing with student behaviors during student teaching or other field placements?
4. Did you ever take classes on managing extreme behavior (other than classroom management)?
5. How do you personally think student behavior should be addressed in early childhood?
6. Do you recognize student triggers in order to prevent escalation?
7. How do you want to be helped to deal with behaviors?
8. Do you know how to write a FBA/BIP? Have you ever written one?
9. What do you think the solution is to help our behavior kids and make teachers feel more prepared to address them?
10. What is your experience with literacy coaching?
11. Anything else you'd like to add?

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### APPENDIX D: Questions for Literacy Coach

- How long have you been a literacy coach?
- How does literacy coaching work?
- How do you “coach” teachers?
- Do you think it’s effective?
- Do you believe the coaching protocol is more effective than professional development?
- Do you think behavior coaching could be developed through a literacy coaching framework?
- May I observe you in a coaching session?

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### APPENDIX E: Reflection Questions for Test Trial Teacher

- Did you find this trial helpful?
- What did you find the most helpful?
- What would you change?
- Do you think behavior coaching should be used in school districts?
- Would you want a behavior coach in your building?
- Do you have any concerns about behavior coaching?
- Any additional comments, concerns or questions?