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Supporting My Child with Intensive Social/Emotional Needs Using PBiS

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBiS) is a school-wide framework for creating a positive and safe climate in which all children can learn and grow. Throughout the country schools are implementing positive behavior supports in order to improve discipline practices and to help students succeed in school.

The Vermont State BEST (Building Effective Strategies for Teaching Students with Behavioral Challenges) Team supports VTPBiS implementation in Vermont schools state-wide. Each year more and more Vermont schools are actively adopting the framework of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in their schools.

As a parent of a school-aged child, you know how important a safe and effective school environment is to learning. In participating schools PBiS is used with all students and across all school environments, including the lunchroom and playground. When schools take a positive approach toward addressing discipline, school climate improves. Students spend more time in their classrooms rather than in the principal's office and teachers spend more time on instruction rather than on discipline.

Support for students with more intensive needs

If your child has complex social/behavioral challenges, he or she may require extra support and planning. A parent's participation is often critical for successful outcomes. The knowledge you bring to the table about your child's development, medical history, strengths, interests, and needs is an important resource to the team in creating an effective behavior support plan. A strong partnership between your family and the school helps to create consistency across home and school settings and will improve results for your child.

If your child is already receiving special education or Section 504 supports, the information you share with the team will be used to develop individualized academic and behavior support through an Individualized Education Plan or 504



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Published
March 2014

plan. However, eligibility for Special Education or 504 is not a requirement for behavior support planning. Additionally, participation by other agencies may be beneficial for meeting your child's mental health and behavior needs. Local community mental health agencies often provide services that schools cannot offer, such as certain types of mental health counseling, intensive family-based services, or wrap-around services. If your child is not on an IEP or 504 plan, you and/or the school may choose to make a referral for a special education or Section 504 evaluation.

When your child needs services from multiple agencies, he or she may benefit from a Coordinated Service Plan (CSP). You or the school may request a Coordinated Service Plan Team meeting to discuss your child's needs and how to coordinate services between agencies, such as education, local mental health centers and other community-based organizations. The plan, while not an actual entitlement to services, describes how services and supports will be coordinated and who will deliver them. A behavior support plan may be integrated into a CSP or may be carried out by school personnel without inter-agency involvement.

As a parent you can be involved by:

- Participating on your child's individual behavior support team.
- Sharing your child's strengths and needs in order to develop a behavior plan.
- Offering suggestions to the team based on your unique perspective and knowledge of your child.
- Advocating for your child's needs with other team members.
- Reviewing outcome data with the team to determine the effectiveness of strategies implemented by the behavior plan.

Why is my involvement important?

Teaching effective behavior strategies

requires consistent efforts across all settings school, home, and the community. When your child displays challenging behaviors at school, a strong partnership between the school and your family needs to be established to maximize the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. Family involvement has been seen as a key feature when developing individual positive behavior support plans for students with special needs. Twenty years of scientific study show that parent and family involvement positively influences children's academic achievement.

Resources

[Association for Positive Behavior Support](#)

An international organization dedicated to the advancement of positive behavior support.
570-389-4081

[Bazelon Center for Mental Health](#), dedicated to advancing the rights of children and adults with mental illness. "Way to Go: School Success for Children with Mental Health Needs" Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.
202-467-5730

[National Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports](#)

The Center assists states in implementing school-wide Positive Behavior Supports to improve problem behavior and enhance learning environments.

[PACER Center](#)

PACER Center in Minnesota was created by parents of children and youth with disabilities to help other parents and families facing similar challenges.
952-838-9000

[Vermont PBiS](#)

Includes information and resources about the initiative in Vermont, including a list of participating schools.
802-656-5775