



FAMILIES TO THE MAX Tip Sheet

Behavior

Challenging behavior and intense emotional responses can cause distress for children and adolescents, as well as their families.” It is estimated that approximately 30 percent of school-aged children will experience a behavioral, mental, or developmental condition in any given year.” (Pennsylvania Department of Education)

Understanding Behavior

Did you know that a person’s behavior is a form of communication? For example, a child’s behavior might be communicating that something is too difficult to do, that they need someone’s attention, or that they would like to be given an item or to engage in an activity. Even a child’s non-disruptive behavior can be a sign that they are disengaged or withdrawn. A child’s religious, linguistic, and/or cultural background may also influence behaviors, communication, and interactions with others.

The way an adult perceives and reacts to a child’s behaviors can make the difference between a behavior escalation or a resolution of the issue. For example, adults could:

- Understand behavioral challenges as delays in developing skills (e.g., flexibility, frustration tolerance, and problem solving).
- Treat lagging skills that show up as behavioral challenges with the same compassion and strategies applied to cognitive delays in reading, writing, and math (all academics).
- Understand that challenging behavior occurs in response to specific unsolved problems.
- Attribute challenging behaviors to conditions in combination with environmental factors, not character (e.g., spoiled, bad, manipulative).

- Look for patterns in behavior and recognize that behaviors can often be predicted. Patterns may include common triggers and responses to challenging and appropriate behavior.
- Stay calm and do not take the child’s behavior personally. A calm adult is better equipped to de-escalate a difficult situation.
- Recognize that the child would like to succeed but may not be able to in the moment.

Adapted from Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.

Supporting Students

Schools provide a variety of supports to assist students who are demonstrating or exhibiting challenging behaviors and intense emotions. Supports for students in the classroom vary based on their needs. Students who receive special education are provided with supports and services based on their individualized education program (IEP). For more information about special education, read “Does My Child Need Special Education?” on the following page.*

Supplementary Aids and Services means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in general education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate.



“Kids do well if they can.”

- Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.

Some Examples of Program Modifications, Accommodations, and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Include:

- Environmental supports: preferential seating; planned seating on the bus, in the classroom, at lunch, in the auditorium, and in other locations; altered physical room arrangement
- Specialized equipment: headsets, computers, software, and augmentative communication devices; extra set of equipment/materials for home; and, related service providers
- Instruction needs: built-in breaks, additional time, specialized reinforcement
- Special materials: tests and notes scanned to a computer, shared note taking, large print or Braille, assistive technology, writing implements, prewritten notes (for those who cannot copy from a board)
- Subject matter presentation: taped or prerecorded lectures, sign language, primary language, paired reading and writing technology
- Testing adaptations: read aloud, modify format, extend time or no time limit (based on the test), reduce number of questions
- Assignment modifications: shorter assignments, taped lessons, instructions broken down into steps, students permitted to record or type responses, flexible due dates, varied difficulty levels on assignments based on subject

Related Services refer to any developmental, corrective, or other supportive service a student with a disability needs to benefit from special education. This can include, but is not limited to, transportation, psychological services, assistive technology, social work and counseling services, mental health services, and orientation and mobility training.

Resources

Center for Parent Information and Resources

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

The National Childhood Stress Network

PA Parent and Family Alliance

PaTTAN's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports System (PBIS)

PaTTAN's Supplementary Aids and Services fact sheet

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

Understood.org

References

Greene, Ph.D., R.W. (2014). *Lost at school: Why our kids with behavioral challenges are falling through the cracks and how we can help them*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2021). *Mental health*. [Online]. Available: <https://tinyurl.com/pdmentalhealth>

* * * * *

Does my child need special education?

As a parent, you are uniquely qualified to know your child's learning strengths and weaknesses. If it is determined that your child is eligible for special education services, school professionals will utilize your knowledge in designing a special education program for your child's benefit. Your child may be eligible for special education if your child:

- 1) Has an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, a hearing impairment, deafness, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities and
- 2) Needs specially designed instruction, as determined by an evaluation team.

Your child must meet both qualifications to be eligible for special education.

In Pennsylvania, all children eligible for special education have the right to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE). If you think your child may need special education, talk to your child's teacher.



The contents of this training were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education #H323A170023. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. Project Officer Dr. Sarah Allen



HUNE: 215-425-6203
La línea de asistencia de
FAMILIAS A LO MÁXIMO
215-595-5866



PEAL
866-950-1040



PaTTAN
800-441-3215