



# Behavioral INTERVENTIONS

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

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The National Mental Health and Education Center is a public service program of the National Association of School Psychologists.

## Introduction

There is growing recognition among educators, parents and the community that truly effective schools must impart more than the three Rs; they must also attend to children's social and emotional learning. The deliberate teaching of behaviors such as sharing, helping, initiating relationships, requesting help from others and empathy give children the tools they need to optimize their life skills and competencies. The 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97) reaffirmed this approach by calling for positive behavioral interventions into all aspects of special education. Schools can meet this challenge by utilizing the expertise of school psychologists in addressing classroom management, school climate, social skills and violence prevention.

In this publication, the National

Association of School Psychologists draws upon promising practices that reflect practical approaches to positive behavioral interventions. Directed at both regular and special education students across the school years, these articles feature prosocial skills for improving student responsibility and discipline, effective parenting strategies, conflict resolution and violence prevention programs, techniques to defuse disruptive behavior in the classroom, and implications of the behavioral provisions of IDEA '97. We hope that practitioners, educators and parents will find this publication an important resource in assuring that schools are safe learning environments for all children.

*This issue edited by Andrea Canter, Ph.D., NCSP (Editor, Communiqué) & Victoria Stanhope (Director, Special Projects).*

## Disciplining Students With Disabilities

by Kevin P. Dwyer,  
NASP President

A child runs, out-of-control, down the busy school hallway and punches another child who is quietly waiting in line outside her classroom. She starts to cry while the disruptive child continues down the hall, not responding to the teacher aide's commands to stop. Another adult says, "He's special ed, there's nothing that we can do. You can't send him to detention. I'll tell his teacher." The aide is frustrated and upset as she comforts the crying child.

A child, who is labeled seriously emotionally disturbed, sets a trash can on fire. When brought to the principal's office the security specialist is told that it is a manifestation of the child's disability and the usual disciplinary procedures will not be followed. The security specialist leaves muttering, "Those kids get away with murder!"

Both examples are serious, wrongful misunderstandings of the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA procedural safeguards were designed

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**DISABILITIES** *continued from page 1*

to assure that students with disabilities (receiving special education and related services) were not arbitrarily removed from their parent-approved program without consent and were guaranteed a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) within the least restrictive environment (LRE).

There is nothing in IDEA that restricts schools from disciplining children with disabilities. In fact, some would say that, by not addressing these dangerous behaviors, the student with special needs is *not* receiving an "appropriate" education. Both of the above children may need specialized services to change the disruptive and dangerous behavior and to make sure that whatever discipline is used works in preventing a reoccurrence of that behavior.

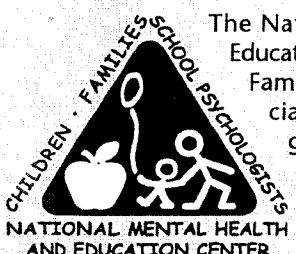
This article is designed to provide a set of practical concepts to improve the chances that positive behaviors will increase and negative behaviors will decrease among children with disabilities who warrant special education and related services under IDEA. Some of these concepts

may also be applied to other troubling students. Regardless of students' classification, all interventions should be evaluated as to their effectiveness. We know, for example, that expulsion may result in a positive behavioral change for some students but may be ineffective or increase negative behavior in others. Research shows that when education is disrupted by long absences (such as expulsion), the likelihood of dropping out increases dramatically and that children with special needs are more likely to drop out and never complete a diploma, to remain unemployed and economically dependent. Expulsion may be a deterrent for many students who worry about their academic progress and who hold to a high standard of behavioral control. The threat of expulsion may be one small component of a comprehensive discipline plan. However, there is little research regarding the actual effectiveness of expulsion in improving school discipline.

The materials contained in this article are based on several resources and the author's 30 years experience as a school psychologist. Many of the steps noted below already are found in the practices of some school districts. A "best practices" example which this document follows is the policy of the Parkway School District in Missouri. These steps have been modified to conform to the author's interpretation of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97).

IDEA was amended to better ensure that children with disabilities whose behavior blocks learning have those behaviors addressed within their IEP. Although this was *expected* practice prior to IDEA '97, it was seldom implemented; children with such needs were underserved and punished and too frequently dropped out of school. The amendments also balance intervention with safety, allowing school staff to remove children from their school for possession of a weapon or drugs (including drug sale or use). One remedy allowed by the IDEA '97 is placement in a 45-day alternative placement. Other options can be tried, including parent-supported change in placement and IEP. More complex is the removal by hearing examiner of a child when there is a preponderance of evidence that maintaining the child in the present placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

It is hoped that these principles will increase positive behavior conducive to learning and reduce the need to use expulsion and suspension as interventions for behavior problems. Positive interventions will also increase classroom teacher and parental support for actions taken to improve school discipline and safety.



The National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families of the National Association of School Psychologists is an information and action network to foster best practices in education and mental health for children and families — building upon strengths, understanding diversity and supporting families.

The primary goal of the National Mental Health and Education Center is to provide leadership to address the critical issues that affect education and improve the outcomes for children and their families. The problems of school failure, classroom disruptions, violence and drug abuse have actually increased during each decade over the past 30 years. They place a heavy burden upon families, children, schools and communities. At the same time, decision-makers are raising standards for graduation — often without concurrently improving instruction, classroom management, school climate or anticipating how this affects children and families.

The National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families works to provide support for children and families and improve the professional training and practices of school psychologists and pupil service providers. It is dedicated to ensuring children receive the optimum services in their schools and communities.

For more information on the National Mental Health and Education for Children and Families, contact Lesley A. Carter at the National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814; e-mail: <[center@naspweb.org](mailto:center@naspweb.org)> or visit our web page at: <[www.naspweb.org/center.html](http://www.naspweb.org/center.html)>.

**Communiqué** is a publication of the National Association of School Psychologists. Many of the articles in this publication are reprinted from *Communiqué*. The content of this document reflects the ideas and positions of the authors. The responsibility lies solely with the authors and does not reflect the position or ideas of NASP.

## 1. Maintaining a Safe Environment Conducive to Learning

School systems have the legal responsibility to maintain safe, violence-free schools. Part of that responsibility includes the establishment of a code of conduct containing specific consequences for violations of the code. School authorities have the right and responsibility to discipline children (including the removal of children from their present school) when those children violate school rules by engaging in conduct that materially and substantially disrupts the rights of others to be physically safe and educated. When conduct endangers the student or others, temporary removal of that student may become imperative. Schools also have these rights and responsibilities when students with disabilities violate school rules, causing disruptions or danger to themselves or others.

All students have the right to know the rules of conduct and to learn to master school rules. All children learn differently. Many children learn intuitively through observation, experience and encouragement. Many other children need further assistance and instruction in order to master developmentally appropriate behavior that enables them to attend, learn, share and cooperate with other children and adults. As school psychologists, we know that knowledge and demonstrated skill are required before we can presume a rule is "learned." The level of learning also varies and it is important for schools to acknowledge marginal, minimal and developmentally standard levels of mastery.

Students with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services have, by definition, problems in learning and skill development. Unlike their nondisabled counterparts, they may, in some cases, have difficulty demonstrating socially appropriate behaviors. Unlike their nondisabled peers they also have a continued right to a free and appropriate public education within the least restrictive environment even when their behavior violates a discipline rule or code.

When any child, disabled or not, has been found to violate a code resulting in proposed disciplinary action, that child has rights to challenge the reason for the action, including the right to prove that the accusations are false, distorted, exaggerated or based upon racial, ethnic, gender or even disability bias. All students have the right to challenge the severity of the consequent disciplinary action recommended by the school authorities.

## 2. Responsibility to Teach Code of Discipline to All Students

Schools have the responsibility to make sure that all children attending, including those receiving special education and related services, are familiar with the discipline code and that their families also have the opportunity to know and understand the code. Parents of children with disabilities should be given the opportunity to discuss the discipline code when it is a concern for their child and to be partners in finding effective ways of assisting in maintaining the code and its intent. Parents are allies in helping predict problems related to codes of conduct and their individual child's

strengths and needs. Such discussions can generate IEP goals as well as necessary exceptions that may prevent the child from meeting a requirement of the school's code.

## 3. The IEP as Vehicle for Effective Behavior Management

Children who have disabilities that prevent them from understanding or responding appropriately to components of a discipline code or school rule should have those exceptions incorporated and addressed in their IEP. IEPs are designed to address both traditional academic needs and to meet "each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability." The law also says that schools shall consider, when needed, "strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports to address that behavior" that impedes learning.

*Examples of IEP discipline issues:* A student with Tourette's Syndrome may repeat vulgar, obscene words or bark over and over. Obscene language may violate the discipline code, but in this case is out of the child's control. Working with the child, family and physicians, the special education and related service program should determine the best possible plan to reduce and compensate for the disruption that this syndrome causes. Another child may be extremely cognitively challenged and need very concrete examples of what the school discipline code means, just as a child who is deaf or visually impaired needs special accommodations. Children with Attention Deficit Disorder, generally, should not be suspended for inattention but their IEP should contain goals, support and specialized help to increase attention and sustained effort. The same can be true for a child who is severely depressed or withdrawn and therefore inattentive. This behavior should also be comprehensively addressed to increase learning and productivity.

A child with autism who bangs her hand on her desk over and over cannot be treated the same as a child or group of children who are doing the same thing to deliberately disrupt the class. A child who cannot speak clearly or communicate feelings or ideas can become extremely frustrated and may stomp out of the class or toss his pencil across the room. Training in finding alternative methods for communicating and for coping with frustration must be in place before the disruptive behavior becomes routine and results in disciplinary action, which may only increase the disruptive behavior.

All of the above examples require an effective individualized intervention plan documented in each child's IEP. If such a plan did not exist and a disciplinary action were taken resulting in a suspension, expulsion, an arbitrary change-in-placement or illegal removal from FAPE, it would be a violation of the child's civil rights.

## 4. Addressing and Preventing Behavior Problems

It is the responsibility of the IEP team to review the discipline code and determine what specialized help and instruction the child may need to understand the code and

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**DISABILITIES** *continued from page 3*

consistently demonstrate the appropriate classroom and school behaviors conducive to learning. The team should identify and address the difficulties that may occur and may be related to the child's disability, and establish plans that will reduce the chance that such infractions will occur. The team should plan to provide adaptations and compensations for those behaviors that require an intervention plan and also address those behaviors that may remain unchanged due to the complexity of the disability. Behavioral goals, like goals for reading or other elements of the general curriculum, should be incorporated into the IEP and not be developed as a separate document or plan. To design a separate "behavior plan" implies that such plans should be treated differently, apart from academic functioning. Additional distinct "behavior plans" could also cause prejudice and establish a sub-set of children within special education (those with behavior plans). There is evidence that effective individualized academic goals and services reduce frustration and behavior problems.

### **5. Behavioral IEP Goals, Parent Involvement and Services**

A child with a disability and the family or parent surrogate should be aware of the discipline code and the consequences for violating each component of that code. Parents can assist the school in finding effective strategies for positive behavioral interventions and strategies for the IEP. They should participate in the IEP development to help determine what exceptions to the discipline code are necessary and to help design behavioral goals that progressively address those exceptions to reduce behavioral difficulties. These plans should include the special education and related services interventions designed to assist the child in maximizing her/his social responsibility. Behavioral goals, as with academic goals, should be measurable, reviewed and modified as needed. As with other goals, services and interventions, frequent review is imperative to success.

### **6. Problematic Patterns of Behavior and Prevention**

When children with disabilities demonstrate a new pattern of problematic behavior potentially leading to suspension, the school should initiate an IEP meeting to determine if additional interventions or modifications in the IEP are needed. Such interventions may reduce the chances of the child accumulating a series of suspensions which may, over time, constitute an inappropriate "change in placement." Any behaviors that block learning and the success of the educational program should be addressed. When the behaviors are not related to the disability, it remains important to both address the problems and to restate the pattern of code violations and the consequences for those violations to the child and parent. Schools and parents should work cooperatively to change the pattern of negative behavior. The school should support the parent in securing other resources to assist in

positive behavioral change and work cooperatively with those resources.

### **7. Weapons and Drugs**

Weapons violations require quick and deliberate administrative action. When a child with a disability violates a rule involving weapons, safety should be the priority both for the child and others. If the local school rules mandate "automatic" expulsion and notification of the police, a written notice of such action must be made available to the parents. Weapons must be clearly defined in the code of conduct. IDEA requires initiating an IEP meeting within 10 calendar days. An ordinary expulsion (lengthy removal from educational opportunity) is no longer permitted for children with disabilities who violate weapon laws. Removal from special education services for more than ten days violates the child's right to FAPE. IDEA '97 does not use the term "expulsion" but uses the term "a change in the placement of a child with a disability."

Drug use and possession are also intolerable in schools. Drug use can endanger both the user and peers. It is also a violation of state and federal laws and may involve police action. Schools should be aware that drug use and addiction can be higher among some groups of children with disabilities. Drug use, abuse and addiction require professional intervention which frequently includes drug treatment and physical monitoring. A review of the IEP and a functional assessment may control some of the related behaviors demonstrated by a child with a disability who is a drug abuser, but drug use and addiction require assessment and intervention beyond the IEP team's skills and may require interagency involvement. Drug possession should not be dismissed as unrelated to disabilities since some youth may be cognitively unaware of what they possess.

The IEP team is now required to review and modify the IEP to address that behavior. If the behavior was not already addressed on the IEP, the IEP team should implement interventions and goals to address that behavior. The law also requires a "functional behavioral assessment" when such behaviors have not been addressed. A true functional behavioral analysis or assessment cannot be effectively carried out as proposed in the law. Such assessments require a series of observations by highly qualified professionals who already know the child in depth, including the child's strengths and needs. Such an assessment should also follow the guidelines of any review, reevaluation or assessment according to the law's requirements for reevaluation. In other words such an assessment should consider the existing IEP goals and services as well as what is needed. School psychologists should be involved in this review as the persons most qualified to address behavior and learning. They should become involved in assisting in developing the most effective disposition as soon as possible.

### **8. Behavior "Likely to Result in Injury"**

A child with a disability who causes injury to self or

others cannot be placed in a different program without parental consent. If the parent does not consent, a hearing officer can be requested to determine if a change is required, when there is a preponderance of evidence presented "that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others." The hearing officer is required to examine the evidence to determine the above as well as the "appropriateness" of current placement, including the reasonableness of the school's services, interventions, aides and other efforts to minimize the risk of harm related to behavior within the current placement. The hearing office must also determine that the interim alternative 45-day placement provides effective IEP services to ensure FAPE, including participation in the general curriculum.

## 9. Manifestation Review

When the IEP has already addressed problem behavior, the team has valuable information about the relationship between the child's disability, the behavioral concerns, the components of the IEP and classroom, including the services provided. When a suspension or 45-day alternative placement is recommended, the IEP team, assisted by qualified professionals, should determine if the student's behavior (misconduct as defined) is related to the disability and whether the current placement is appropriate by evaluating all factors related to the students' behavior and IEP. This should include review of the interventions tried and services provided to prevent the presenting problem. Such a review should be comprehensive and focus on multiple factors, not merely the behavioral goals of the child's IEP.

The determination that a behavior is a manifestation of the child's disability can be a complex process. It must be determined by qualified professionals, on an individual, case-by-case basis. It cannot be determined by the child's label or category. For example, a label of "emotionally disturbed" does not by itself imply a manifestation of the disability. A behavioral goal or its absence does not determine manifestation. It is not decided by the "ability of the child to determine right from wrong." Under IDEA, a manifestation determination must include an analysis of the child's program as well as the child's physical, cognitive, developmental, mental and emotional challenges. The child's behavior may be considered unrelated to the disability if the disability did not impair the child's understanding of the impact of the serious consequences of the behavior and if the disability did not impair the ability of the child to control the behavior. These factors must be viewed in the context of ecological variables and IEP services and goals.

It is best practice that the school psychologist assisting in such a determination knows the child and the child's program. School, classroom and external factors can result in additional inappropriate and dangerous, reactive behaviors from a child with disabilities. Ecological factors that can be addressed within the LRE should be considered in a manifestation review to prevent inappropriate recommendations of changes in placement.

## 10. When Behavior is a Manifestation of the Child's Disability

When the dangerous behavior is the result of the disability, expulsion is an inappropriate action. The child cannot be expelled for that behavior. However, this does not mean that the child must remain in the present placement. When it is determined that the placement or the IEP is not meeting the child's behavioral needs, modifications should be made to IEP and, if necessary, to the placement and needed services, to assure that the behavior will be addressed and to prevent its reoccurrence. When dangerous behavior such as weapons violations continue, a controlled, secure placement may be necessary. Any placement should continue FAPE as well as addressing the behaviors of concern. When parents have been involved in the development of the IEP, including the behavioral goals and services, agreement is more likely to occur between school and family regarding modifications in the program and changes in placement.

## 11. When Behavior is Not a Manifestation of the Child's Disability

A child with a disability, whose dangerous misconduct is found to be unrelated to his/her disability and whose IEP, program and services are appropriate to address the child's needs, may be subject to the regular discipline code of consequences, provided that the child continues to receive FAPE. The parent continues to have the right to appeal this decision and any decision regarding placement. Even when the behavior remains a perceived threat or danger to the child and/or others, FAPE should continue but may need to be provided within a more restrictive alternative center where control reduces danger. Restrictive alternatives may include, for example, a juvenile detention center, residential treatment center or other secure facility. It is not in the child's, the school's, community's or family's interest to maintain a child using an existing IEP and placement when the weapons or dangerous behavior cannot be effectively addressed within that placement. It is in no one's interest to terminate FAPE to a child with a disability who is in need of special education and related services.

*Kevin P. Dwyer, NCSP, is NASP President (1999-2000). This article is reprinted from Communiqué, October 1997.*

### IDEA Resources

For updated information about IDEA '97 and other resources for behavioral intervention, visit the NASP Website at:

<[www.naspweb.org](http://www.naspweb.org)>  
or  
<[www.ideapractices.org](http://www.ideapractices.org)>

# Prevention Strategies for the Elementary School Classroom

by Pam Kay & Amy Ryan

## Does your school use a classroom-based approach to prevention of emotional disabilities?

- Teachers teach a social skills curriculum to help students understand and use expected behaviors.
- Teachers encourage suitable behavior by recognizing students when they behave appropriately. All classroom rules and consequences are clearly stated so that all students understand them.
- Options are available for children who learn core academic material at a different pace, or in a different way from the majority of their classmates.

Teachers know that some students need extra support to adapt to the demands of school. Effective teaching practices and minor disciplinary measures are not enough to keep all students engaged in classrooms. Students who show *internalizing* behaviors, such as withdrawal and extreme shyness, can have just as much trouble learning as children with *externalizing*, or acting out, behaviors. Both types of behaviors can pose frustrating challenges to educators, and take valuable time away from teaching the content today's standards demand. Repeated patterns such as the inability to fit in with peers, or being at odds with teachers, may indicate that a child is at risk for developing serious emotional problems. It is important to break the cycle early so children at-risk can learn behavior that makes it easier for them to be successful in school. Teachers can encourage more adaptive behaviors in their students by making preventive techniques part of their classroom management strategy. Three common elements of classroom based prevention of Emotional Disorders (ED) are: 1) *Social Skills Instruction*, 2) *Positive Behavior Management* and 3) *Academic Enrichment*. These three elements are beneficial to all students, and offer the extra social training children at risk for developing ED need. Ultimately, these techniques save valuable time so educators can focus on academics instead of discipline.

Several research projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the United States Department of Education used classroom based strategies that benefitted all the children in the classrooms. **Project SUCCESS** (University of Miami) and the **Behavior Prevention Program** (University of Kansas) provide examples of three common elements in classroom-based prevention measures.

**Social skills instruction** teaches students how to behave in school so that they can take advantage of positive social and educational opportunities. Social skills curricula break down abstract concepts like "listening," "cooperating," and "asking for help" into concrete steps that young students can understand and apply. Of course, every conscientious teacher already models appropriate behaviors and guides students to

do likewise. However, some students need an explicit approach and direct instruction. Those students that have maladaptive social behaviors are exposed to 'replacement behaviors' that help them learn more effective ways to get the attention from teachers and the friendship from their peers that they need. Their more socially adept peers learn non-threatening ways to remind classmates to use the skill being taught. Teaching social skills directly, reinforcing the use of these skills, in addition to after-the-fact discipline, establishes common expectations for behavior in the classroom. There are many social skills curricula available commercially, and content should be selected based on the needs of the children in a particular class or school.

An effective way to teach social skills is to link behavior lessons with academic activities. Most instructional formats require social as well as academic skills, such as discussion, cooperative learning, peer tutoring and group problem solving. **Project SUCCESS** uses the following steps to teach and reinforce each social skill:

- Define the social skill to be taught in observable terms.
- Teach the behaviors that make up the skill.
- Model the skill.
- Engage students in practicing the skill.
- Provide reinforcement and feedback for skill performance.
- Have students self-monitor their behaviors.

These skills are broken down into concrete categories and taught in steps. For example, "Listening Manners" is a social skill that involves these behaviors: have your eyes on the speaker, hands still, feet on the ground, ears ready to listen, lips quiet and concentrate on what the speaker is saying. The skills are taught through demonstration and role playing, then reinforced by the teacher and peers during academic activities.

**Positive behavior management systems** rely on carrots more than sticks, meaning they place more emphasis on rewarding appropriate behaviors than on punishing negative behaviors. For positive behavior management systems to be effective, every student needs to understand the teacher's expectations for appropriate behavior. Educators clearly define the behaviors that are appropriate for the classroom by posting rules and consequences for breaking them. Once these guidelines are established, teachers model behaviors, have students role-play, praise students for what they are doing correctly, and redirect students when their behavior strays beyond acceptable limits. Naturally, it is vital that the teacher be consistent in applying consequences for inappropriate behavior so that treatment of students is at all times fair.

In the **Behavior Prevention Program**, teachers identify their expectations and teach the appropriate behaviors directly. Key instructional strategies include modeling, pro-

viding practice, rewarding good behavior, and having students self-monitor their progress. To give structure to these components, teachers use a strategy called the Good Student Game (Babyak, Luze & Kamps, in press), the steps of which are:

- Identify when to play the game.
- Identify and clearly define behaviors to be rewarded.
- Set goals for individual and group performance.
- Select rewards (e.g. pencils, notebooks, extra time at recess).
- Set the monitoring interval, meaning variable intervals when students will assess and record their own behavior.
- Teach the game procedures to all students.
- Play the game.

The Good Student Game provides a structure that helps students become aware of their own behavior, as well as for teachers to consciously give positive reinforcement to students when they behave well. It can be applied to whatever area students need improvement in because the behavior goals are determined by the teacher. Willia Crawford, the principal of a school where The Behavior Prevention Program was implemented, commented, "The strong programs implemented have strengthened the social and academic performance of our students. Our students now display more of a positive disposition, and discipline problems have declined. Our student attendance has improved significantly as well."

**Academic enrichment** is a vital component of classroom prevention because it ensures that students master key knowledge and skills. Learning difficulties can often lead to behavioral problems. For example, students who have difficulty staying on task during reading group may have an underlying reading problem that should be assessed. Remedial programs, such as those in reading, can play important roles in preventing behavior problems (Rankhorn, England, Collins, Lockavitch, & Algozzine, 1998). Academic tutoring — and especially peer tutoring — is often cited as a viable prevention strategy. Peer tutoring can have a positive effect on student learning, is cost effective, and improves both the tutor's and tutee's social development (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1992). Because many teachers are already overtaxed, one creative solution is peer tutoring structures which provide interesting learning opportunities for both the tutor and the student getting help. Peer tutoring is also a good way to reinforce positive social interactions for both students.

*Project SUCCESS* offers cross-age peer tutoring which uses a phonological awareness program and partner reading. Cross-age peer tutoring has been shown to result in significantly improved reading scores for students identified to be at risk for behavioral problems. The Behavior Prevention Program sets up peer dyads that engage in oral reading and comprehension practice. These peer tutoring sessions, given three to four times per week, facilitate basic literacy skills and active student engagement in instruction.

Prevention in the classroom is just one of the components of a preventive school. Other USDE/OSEP funded re-

search projects focus as well on school-wide prevention and school-family-community linkages. You can read more about all six elementary and middle school projects\* by logging onto our website at <<http://www.air.org/cecp/preventionstrategies>>.

\* The Achieving Behavior Caring Project, Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Project, Improving the Lives of Children, Linkages to Learning Program, Behavior Prevention Program and Project SUCCESS.

### For further reading about Project SUCCESS:

Montague, M., Bergeron J. & Lago-Delello, E. (1997). Using prevention strategies in general education. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 29 (8), 1-12.

McKinney, J.D., Montague, M., & Hocutt, A.M. (1998). Systematic screening of children at risk for developing SED: Initial results from a prevention project. In C. Liberton, K. Kutash, & R. Friedman (Eds.), *The 10th Annual Research Conference Proceedings, A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Knowledge Base* (pp. 271-276). Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health.

### For further reading about the Behavior Prevention Program:

Babyak, A., Luze, G., & Kamps, D. (In press). The good student game: Behavior management for diverse classrooms. *Intervention in School and Clinic*.

Kamps, D., Ellis, C., Mancina, C., & Greene, L. (1995). Peer-inclusive social skills groups for young children with behavioral risks. *Preventing School Failure*, 39, 10-15.

Kamps, D., Kravits, T., Rausch, J., & Kamps, J. (In press). The effects of prevention and the moderating effects of variation in strength of treatment and classroom structure on the related behaviors of SED and high-risk students. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*.

Kamps, D., Kravits, T., Stolze, J., & Swaggart, B. (In press). Prevention strategies for at-risk and students identified with emotional and behavioral disorders in urban elementary school settings. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*.

Kamps, D., & Tankersley, M. (1996). Prevention of behavioral and conduct disorders: Trends and research issues. *Behavioral Disorders*, 22, 41-48.

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# Prevention Through School-Family-Community Linkages

by Pam Kay & Amy Ryan

## Does your school use School-Family-Community Linkages for prevention of emotional disorders?

- The school develops partnerships with parents to develop consistent responses to the child's behavior between home and school.
- Teachers understand that a child's ability to learn can be compromised by social, emotional, economic or health needs that are not being met.
- The school establishes links to other social service agencies and provides a pathway for families who need extra help to take advantage of these resources.

For some children, classroom-based and school-wide approaches will not be enough to prevent Emotional Disabilities. Children whose daily lives place them at high risk for developing emotional disorders (ED) need their school to serve as a pathway to other human services within the community. Living with poverty, inadequate health care and nutrition, physical or emotional abuse, and homelessness can create negative stress that gets in the way of learning. A coordinated approach among schools, families and community agencies can remove or reduce the impact of these obstacles. Increasingly, schools are addressing prevention through the following approaches:

- Developing partnerships between parents and educators to build students' behavioral skills and competencies.
- Building linkages with community agencies such as mental health and other social services which are vital to the educational success of some students.

Several projects funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs establish school-family-community linkages that positively impact students' success in school. Two projects, the **Achieving Behaving Caring Project**, (University of Vermont) and the **Linkages to Learning Program** (University of Maryland) provide unique and effective examples of how linkages between the school, families and the community are a vital component in the prevention of emotional disorders.

Programs to help students at risk for developing emotional disorders are most successful when solutions involve the home (Cheney, 1998; Watson & Rangel, 1996). Parents, meaning the person(s) responsible for the

daily care of the child, work together with educators to build student behavioral skills and competencies. They work to stop aggression before additional problems develop. Even students with more serious behavior problems benefit from reinforcement and mild consequences that are similar between home and school settings so that the messages they receive are always consistent.

The **Achieving Behaving Caring Project** found that when parents join teachers as equals in Action Research (Kay & Fitzgerald, 1997; McConaughy, Kay & Fitzgerald, in press.), they develop new relationships that can ultimately strengthen their involvement in their child's education. Action Research involves the systematic investigation of a specific challenge facing the student by those most closely concerned with him or her. In education, action research is usually carried out by teachers, either singly or in collegial groups. Parent-Teacher Action Research combines the benefits of parent-teacher teaming with the systematic and democratic structure of action research. With the support of Parent Liaisons, parents can participate as equal partners in their child's education.

The parents and teachers of a child identified as at risk for developing emotional disorders begin their work by describing the child's strengths and identifying what is puzzling to them about the child's behavior. This discussion forms the basis for the action research process, which involves the following steps:

- Choose research questions about the child's behavior.
- Collect data about the child's behavior that answer the research questions, perhaps in the form of journal entries, notes, the child's school work, or anecdotes.
- Reflect on the data and share thoughts with one another.
- Analyze the data, making sure that both parents and teachers participate.
- Formulate a practical theory about what might be the causes of the child's behavior.
- Use the practical theory to guide a new plan of action.
- Implement the new plan of action

Parents and teachers set mutual goals for the child's progress during the school year so that expectations and consequences for behavior are consistent, and the child



can learn faster. Observation and reflection yield new knowledge that can help teachers and parents improve their practices. The ABC Project found significant improvements for the children whose parents and teachers worked together in the PTAR Process, both in their academic performance and their social skills.

A child's academic success can be compromised by health and social problems. It is important to link the various services provided by human service agencies with the schools. Many families have needs, but they may not be aware of the resources that are available to them in the community. The **Linkages to Learning Program** is a collaborative, school-based program that provides an array of health and human services to children and families in an accessible and familiar setting. The goal of the program is to address social, emotional, economic and health problems that interfere with a child's ability to succeed in school. Linkages to Learning is located on the grounds of an elementary school and is available to all children and families at the school. The program is staffed by a multidisciplinary team that works with school personnel and community providers. Funding is managed through a consortium of local, state, federal and foundation sources.

There are four key components to the Linkages to Learning Program:

- *Social service assistance for families.* Case managers work with families to help them learn about and access resources in a variety of areas, including housing, food/clothing, financial assistance, employment, legal/immigration concerns and medical/dental needs.
- *Mental health assessment and treatment for children and families.* Services for children include comprehensive mental health assessments, individual and family therapy, classroom-based social skill groups and after school groups. Psychological and medical evaluations also are available. Services for families include counseling, support groups and workshops on child-related topics.
- *Educational support.* Services for children include evening tutoring programs and recreational activities. Adult education classes are offered for parents. Once a month, parents, children and teachers participate in a Family Learning Night, which focuses on building partnerships between home and school. Workshops on topics related to prevention/management of behavioral and emotional problems are offered to teachers.
- *Health and wellness services for students.* Health services are available to children who demonstrate financial need. These include primary health care, immunizations and physical exams; diagnosis and treatment of acute illnesses and minor injuries; management of chronic illnesses; hearing and vision

testing; some prescriptions, medication and laboratory testing; dental education, screening and referral; and health/nutrition education.

Program staff for Linkages to Learning include project directors, case managers, mental health therapists, community service aides, the school-community health nurse and a health room technician. These staff work closely with guidance counselors, a parent outreach coordinator and resource staff. An advisory board made up of school representatives, parents, local business people and other community members meets quarterly to ensure that Linkages to Learning responds effectively to the needs of the community.

Establishing school-family-community linkages is just one of the components of a preventive school. Other USDE/OSEP funded research projects focus as well on classroom based and schoolwide prevention. You can read more about all six elementary and middle school projects\* by logging onto our website at <<http://www.air.org/cecpc/preventionstrategies>>.

\* The Achieving Behavior Caring Project, Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Project, Improving the Lives of Children, Linkages to Learning Program, Behavior Prevention Program and Project SUCCESS.

### For further reading about the Achieving Behavior Caring Project

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For more information about Linkages to Learning, contact Rika Granger, the Linkages Resource Team Representative, at (240)777-1109.

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# Bullying Fact Sheet

by George Batsche & Benjamin Moore

**Definition of a “Bully”** — A bully is a child who fairly often oppresses or harasses someone else; the target may be boys or girls, the harassment physical or mental (Olweus, D.). Bullies are usually boys, although girl bullies do exist.

**Definition of a “Victim”** — A child who for a fairly long time has been and still is exposed to aggression from others; that is, boys or possibly girls from the child’s own class or maybe from other classes often pick fights and are rough with them or tease and ridicule them. Two types of “victims” emerge:

- “Passive Victims” — Anxious, insecure, appear to do nothing to invite attacks and fail to defend themselves.
- “Provocative Victims” — Hot-tempered, restless, create tension by irritating and teasing others and attempt to fight back when attacked.

## Some Facts About the Bully Problem

- Approximately **one in seven** school children is either a bully or a victim.
- This affects approximately 5,000,000 elementary and junior high school students in the United States.
- Approximately 282,000 students are physically attacked in America’s secondary schools each month.
- An estimated 525,000 attacks, shakedowns and robberies occur in an average month in public secondary schools.
- In a typical month about 125,000 secondary school teachers (12 percent) are threatened with physical harm and approximately 5200 actually are physically attacked.
- **Almost 8 percent of urban junior and senior high school students miss one day of school each month because they are afraid to attend.**

## Why Do Some Children and Adolescents Become Bullies?

There is no one reason why a child might become a bully. However, we do know what types of circumstances will likely help a child develop bully behavior. Bully behavior is developed mainly as a result of factors in the en-

**vironment.** This environment includes the home, the school and the peer group. **Bully behavior is learned.** The good news is that because the bully behavior is learned, it can be unlearned, particularly if we do something about it when children are young.

## What Factors in the Environment Will Likely Contribute to a Child Becoming a Bully?

- **Too little supervision of children and adolescents.** Without supervision, children do not get the message that aggressive behavior is the wrong behavior to have.
- **Bullying pays off.** Many children learn at a very young age that when they bully their brother sister or parents that they get what they want. Often we are too busy or too tired to “fight” with the child so we just give in. Each time we give in when the child is aggressive or just plain obnoxious, we are giving the child the message that **bullying pays off.**
- **Do as I say, not as I do.** Some children seem more likely to imitate adult aggressive, bullying behavior than other children. In some families, when children are punished for aggressive behavior (even if they see it in their home) they stop being aggressive. For most children, however, if they see aggressive behavior they will imitate it. When parents fight and one parent intimidates the other and “wins,” the child gets the message that intimidation gets you what you want.
- **Harsh, physical punishment.** Although spanking a child will often put a stop to the child’s behavior, spanking that is too harsh, too frequent or too physical teaches a child that it is OK to hit other people. In particular, this teaches a child that it is OK for bigger people (parents) to hit little people (children). **Bullies usually pick on younger, smaller, or weaker children.** They model, in their physical attacks, what happened to them **personally** in the home. **The worst thing that can be done is to physically punish a bully for bully behavior.**
- **Peer group that supports bully behavior.** Many parents do not know what their children are doing with the peer group. Their child may be running with other children who advocate bully behavior. In order for the child to “fit in,” the child must bully like the peers.
- **Getting more negative than positive messages.** Children who develop bully behavior feel that the world around them (home, school, neighborhood) is

more negative than positive. These children have more negative comments (get yelled at, told that they are wrong) than positive comments. They expect the world to be negative with them so they attack first. By picking on others, they feel more important and powerful. If they cannot feel important because parents and teachers make positive comments and “reinforce” them, then they will feel important in negative ways.

- **Poor self-concept.** Children who get more negative comments given to them than positive ones will develop a poor self-concept. These children then believe that the only way to be “accepted” is to pick on others.
- **Expecting hostility.** Because of the negative messages received and the poor self-concept, bullies expect their parents, teachers and peers to pick on them, blame them or otherwise humiliate them. Therefore, they attack before they are attacked, even when in reality they were not about to be attacked. They assume hostility when none exists. In many ways, the bully’s philosophy is, “**The best defense is offense.**”

### *School Factors*

- Larger schools report a greater percentage of violence.
- Schools with clear rules of conduct enforced by the principal report less violence.
- Schools with students that report fair discipline practices report less violence.
- Small class size relates to less violence.
- Schools where students mention that they are in control of their lives report less violence.
- A principal who appears to be ineffective or invisible to students reports more violence in that school.
- Schools with principals that provide opportunities for the teachers and students to be participatory members of decision-making report less violence.
- Cohesiveness among teaching staff and principal relate to less violence.

### **Why Do Some Children and Adolescents Become Victims?**

Less is really known about “victims” but there is some information which will help us understand the vic-

tim situation to some extent.

- Most victims are anxious, sensitive, and quiet.
- Victims generally do not have many, if any, good friends at school.
- Victims seem to signal to others that they are insecure and worthless children who will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted.
- Bullies often target children who complain, appear physically weak, seek attention from peers and adults and seem emotionally weak.
- These children may be overprotected by parents and school personnel and are therefore unable to develop coping skills on their own.

### **What Can Be Done About the Problem?**

#### *In General*

- A strong commitment is needed in the home and school to change the behavior. Parents need support from school and mental health/community workers to enforce positive behavior patterns. **Parent training is essential.**
- Specific training is needed in the social skills that the child lacks to get along with other children. This can be done in school through social skills training and in the home through increased supervision, more positive discipline and modeling.
- Increase, significantly, the amount of positive feedback that the child gets in the home and the school.
- The pattern of bullying begins at an early age; as early as age 2. Early intervention is essential. The older the child becomes, the more difficult change will be. After age 8-10, change is very difficult.
- Develop a strong value system in the home and in the school that gives a clear message that bully behavior is completely unacceptable.

#### *Specific Things To Do in the Home*

If you have a serious bully or victim problem, contact the school psychologist in your child’s school building and ask for help. In the meantime, the following steps will significantly help the problem:

- Be sure that you are being as positive as possible with your child. Shoot for 5 positive comments for every

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**BULLYING** *continued from page 11*

negative one that you direct to your child. You will have to work very hard and “catch them being good.”

- Do not use physical punishment. Instead, use removal of privileges, time spent in their bedroom, work tasks around the house or helping younger children in the neighborhood or in the home as a consequence for bully behavior.
- When you see your (or another) child engaging in bully behavior, put a stop to the behavior immediately and have the child practice a more appropriate behavior instead. For instance, if you have a child who pushes his sister away from a toy in order to play with it, have the child practice (at least 3 times) asking for (and receiving) the toy the correct way.
- If the child is a victim, have the child practice telling the bully to, “stop bothering me” and then have the child walk away. The parent should be there to supervise the behavior of the bully and the victim.
- Parents must model, or show, the children in the home behavior between adults or between adults and children that is not bully behavior. If the children see parents yelling and bullying each other or if this is how the parent talks to the children, then the child will do that behavior as well. Remember to operate from the “**Do as I say AND as I do**” point of view.
- Supervision is of great importance. If you can, supervise the situations in which your child will have the opportunity to become either a bully or victim. If you cannot supervise the children under those circumstances, try to find someone who can. If you cannot supervise and cannot find someone, then do not allow the child to participate in that situation.
- Discipline practices should emphasize restitution and positive practice rather than expulsion, paddings and humiliation. That is, when students are caught bullying they should apologize, demonstrate the correct behavior, and then have to spend a specified period of time helping (public service) younger, less able children.
- Teachers and administrators should work to increase the number of positives directed toward children on a daily basis. The ratio, just as in the home, should be approximately **5** positives for each negative. Teachers must “**catch them being good.**” This may be difficult but the teacher will have to give positives for behaviors they usually take for granted. The situation may occur where the teacher will have to “set up” a situation in order to give positives. This might include sending an older “bully” to a younger class in order to help a particular student with an academic exercise. The “bully” can then receive recognition for this behavior.
- In classrooms where there are a number of students with the “bully” problem, the use of social skills training sessions throughout the year may be necessary. If the teacher is unfamiliar with these skill training sessions, a call to the school psychologist can help with materials and technical assistance.
- On a building level, the establishment of a “discipline” committee is suggested. The purpose of the committee would be to identify the five top discipline problems in the school and to develop intervention plans that will be implemented regardless of where in the school the problem behavior occurred. The discipline measures should emphasize restitution and positive practice, not physical punishment, exclusion or humiliation.
- Although it is very difficult to justify, bullies should not be removed from the school setting unless absolutely necessary. The teaching of social skills, the value campaign against bully behavior and the increased number of positives directed toward bullies for appropriate behavior are more productive, in the long run, than exclusion.

*Specific Things to Do in the School Setting*

- Establish a school climate that clearly and emphatically disapproves of bullying. This can be accomplished through school-wide campaigns (including contests, posters, parties, dances, school events) that support behaviors which are the opposite of bullying. These behaviors can include “buddy systems,” cooperative learning, peer tutoring, big brother-big sister programs and others.
- Establish a climate in which rules of conduct are enforced and are developed by the students and teachers cooperatively.

The above are only examples of where to begin thinking about and acting on the problem.

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## Position Statement: School Violence

Children and youth are the victims of more crimes than any other age group in the United States today. Violence against children in any setting is disturbing; when it occurs at school, it is especially destructive, and swift action must be taken to ensure the safety of all students and the staff who care for them. The National Association of School Psychologists resolves to help rid America's schools of the destructive influences of violence in all its forms. This can be accomplished through prevention programs, through direct assistance to victims of school violence, through efforts to reduce the incidence of future violence by perpetrators, and through joining other community groups to sponsor anti-violence initiatives.

Violence in schools violates fundamental assumptions that society holds about the role of schooling in the lives of children and youth. When parents leave their sons and daughters at the schoolhouse door each day, they trust that their children will be cared for and safe. When violence occurs at school, this trust is broken in profound and permanent ways. For this reason, NASP believes that schools are rightfully held to a stricter standard than are other segments of society.

School violence threatens the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of students and school staff. These threats may occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, and they include but are not limited to physical assaults with and without weapons, bullying, and social isolation. To reduce school violence, schools must ensure that no harm comes to anyone on school campuses at any time. To achieve this goal, efforts must be made to reduce obvious aggressive and illegal behaviors as well as other behaviors that, while not illegal, may damage a student's development and negatively affect school climate.

### Creating Safe Schools

Schools must maintain campuses that are safe and conducive to learning. NASP believes that efforts to create safe schools can take many forms. Essential actions include but are not limited to intervening with aggressive students, implementing victim support programs, establishing school-wide violence prevention programs, and improving school climate.

**Intervening with aggressive students:** As a result of public demands to respond punitively to threats of violence at school through "zero-tolerance" programs, schools often focus disciplinary actions on perpetrators of violence. Policies that focus only on catching and punishing violent behaviors fall far short of the goal of creating a safe school environment. As alternatives to practices such as corporal punishment and ceasing educational services, NASP promotes the use of positive methods of school discipline such as crisis intervention and the application of behavior management principles and strategies.

Schools must also make efforts to modify the behavior of students who have engaged or are at risk of engaging in violent behavior. NASP strongly supports systematic efforts to teach social skills and self-control to children and youth as part of a school-wide plan to create a safe and healthy climate conducive to learning.

**Implementing victim support programs:** Meeting the needs of victims appears self-evident. However, survey data show that most schools respond to antisocial and aggressive behaviors through disciplinary action against the perpetrators, while neglecting to provide appropriate support and counseling for victims. Children who have been the victims of school violence perceive schools as failing to protect them, and as a result they may feel threatened and unsafe while at school. These children display many characteristics common to individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including blocked learning and symptoms of serious emotional problems. NASP strongly supports the availability of counseling and recovery programs for victims of school violence.

**Establishing school-wide violence prevention programs:** NASP encourages the implementation of programs designed to teach peacemaking, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. Such programs are natural bridges between interventions that focus on individual change and those seeking to change the ecology of the school at the organizational level.

**Improving school climate:** A comprehensive program to reduce school violence includes efforts to affect the general climate of the school itself. Such programs may not focus on specific violent behaviors directly but seek to change the conditions that are, directly or indirectly, conducive to violent acts. Individualized instruction and remedial support where needed can reduce academic failure and frustration that may contribute to violence. Programs to decrease racism and other forms of intolerance, increase appreciation of diversity, and improve levels of trust can also decrease violence by creating a climate of acceptance and understanding and by improving the quality of the relationships among and between students and staff.

While school violence may engender a desire to discipline the aggressors harshly, NASP urges school personnel to temper disciplinary responses with efforts to promote cooperation, positive social skills, and peaceful means of resolving conflicts. Addressing school violence must go beyond increasing campus security and establishing procedures to apprehend and punish students who have violated school rules. A comprehensive campaign to end school violence must also encompass efforts to increase support, trust, and caring among students and staff.

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# How to Build Your Child's "EQ": A Guide for Emotionally Intelligent Parenting

by Maurice J. Elias, Steven E. Tobias,  
& Brian S. Friedlander

## Why "Emotionally Intelligent Parenting"?

### What's Different About This?

This is a very demanding time to be a parent. Maybe the only thing more difficult is to be a child. There are more influences than ever on children and more sources of distraction. James Comer, M.D., renowned educator and author of "Waiting for a Miracle: Schools Can't Solve Our Problems, But We Can," observed that never before in human history has there been so much information going directly to children unfiltered by adult caregivers. Cornell child development specialist Uri Bronfenbrenner says that we are in the age of hecticness; we are busy planning how to get our kids to where they have to be next, to get ourselves where we have to be, rushing and worrying if all of our arrangements will work out.

Now, parents have the added concern about school safety. It is important for parents to realize that schools share this concern. But schools continue to be among the safest places for children to be. Nevertheless, inappropriate expressions of anger and a climate of disrespect are highly damaging to academic learning and send the

wrong messages to the children we all want to prepare for adult roles. Disruptions of learning are more likely to take place when children are out of control and lack responsibility and self-discipline; they are more likely when children lack the ability to separate out what is genuinely in their interest from what is peer pressure, media and Internet influence. And children who get "hijacked" by strong emotions are not able to focus on schoolwork or household responsibilities. To a greater and greater extent, schools are recognizing that they must attend to children's life skills; as children's first and most lasting teachers, can parents do any less?

### What Do We Want for Our Children?

We want our children to grow up to be knowledgeable, responsible and caring. We don't want intellect without compassion; we don't want responsibility without skills; and the world can't run on caring alone, unfortunately. What is needed is Emotionally Intelligent Parenting, and these are the principles:

1. Be Aware of One's Own Feelings and Those of Others
2. Show Empathy and Understand Others' Points of View
3. Regulate and Cope Positively with Emotional and Behavioral Impulses

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## POSITION STATEMENT *continued from page 13*

### Role of the School Psychologist

First and foremost, school psychologists can take a leadership role in encouraging schools to develop a comprehensive approach to violence reduction. School psychologists are trained to a) respond to crises spawned by violence; b) counsel victims; c) implement prevention and intervention programs designed to reduce aggressive behaviors among youths and others; and d) consult with school staff implementing social skills programs and other programs designed to teach peaceful ways to resolve conflicts. These are essential components of a comprehensive school safety plan.

### Summary

NASP recognizes that violent acts, wherever they occur, have complex origins and consequences. Efforts to reduce violence at school, therefore, must be multi-faceted. A successful program will ensure the ongoing safety of all students and staff both by creating conditions that discourage violence and by responding quickly and effectively when violence occurs. To be truly comprehensive, however, a violence reduction program will seek to influence student attitudes toward violence, teach students

and school staff effective conflict resolution skills, and work to create a climate that promotes tolerance and understanding among students and staff. Such a program will be most effective when blended within broader violence prevention efforts involving local law enforcement, juvenile probation, public health personnel, and other parent and community groups. When an entire community commits itself to reducing violence, the future health and well-being of its children and youth can only be enhanced.

— Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly, July 14, 1996

### Supporting Information

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**PARENTING** *continued from page 14*

- 4. Be Positive Goal and Plan Oriented
- 5. Use Positive Social Skills in Handling Relationships

Parents who are engaged in Emotionally Intelligent Parenting focus on the above principles in their own parenting and encourage their development in their children, both at home and in school. They are concerned about giving children the skills needed for success in life, not just in academics. There are specific, simple techniques that draw strength from the way they lead to small, positive changes in our relationships with our children that are repeated day after day. The techniques reflect tremendous advances in understanding how the human brain works and the role of emotion in learning and memory.

**How Will It Help Them Learn Better?**

We know that strong anger, frustration, anxiety and sadness, and similar emotions, interfere with learning. Children who hurt are less able to learn than those who do not. But these hurts can be offset by strong positive feelings, by children having, using and being recognized for valued strengths. Emotionally Intelligent Parenting involves encouraging strengths and giving children the skills needed to manage impulsive behavior, relate positively to others individually and in groups, and to develop empathy and the ability to take others' perspectives. These are skills essential to academic, career and life advancement.

**Is This Relevant to Special Education?**

Many children who find their way into special education would benefit from instruction in social and emotional learning in school, as well as related parenting approaches in the home. Whether or not children are labeled as "emotionally disturbed," the problems of their lives, as well as the sometimes unpleasant circumstances in which they find themselves in school, invoke strong feelings that make learning and retention of learning difficult. Parenting with emotional intelligence means that you are concerned with your child's mind and your child's heart.

It takes Emotionally Intelligent Parenting to stay focused when there is so much distraction around us. But this is what children need from parents, especially when they are having difficulty. Emotionally Intelligent Parenting is about building a positive identity for being a part of one's family, and for families to realize that fun is an essential part of well-being and learning. The time to start is now!

**An Informal Measure of Family Members' Emotional Intelligence**

To help you better understand how to apply Emotionally Intelligent Parenting to your everyday family issues, take a moment to assess your Emotional Intelligence and that of your children. Ask yourself the following questions:

**My Emotional Intelligence:**

1. How well do I know my own feelings? How well do I know the feelings of my family? Think of a recent problem in the family. How were you feeling...your children feeling...others involved feeling?
2. How much empathy do I have for others? Do I express it to them? When was the last time I did this? Am I sure they are aware of what I am doing? Am I able to understand another's point of view even during an argument?
3. How do I cope with anger, anxiety and other stresses? Am I able to maintain self-control when stressed? How do I behave after a hard day? How often do I yell at others? When are my best and worst times, and do these vary on different days?
4. What goals do I have for myself and my family? What plans do I have for achieving them?
5. How do I deal with everyday, interpersonal problem situations? Do I really listen to others? Do I reflect back to people what they are saying? Do I approach social conflicts in a thoughtful manner? Do I consider alternatives before deciding on a course of action?

**My Child's Emotional Intelligence:**

1. How well can my child verbalize feelings? If I ask her how she feels, can she respond with a feeling word or does she tell me what happened? Can my child identify a range of feelings with gradations in between? Can my child identify feelings in others?
2. How does my child show empathy? When was the last time he seemed to relate to another's feelings? Does he show interest in others' feelings? When I tell him stories about others' misfortunes, how does he react? Can he understand different points of view? Can he see both sides of an argument? Can he do this when in a conflict situation?
3. Can my child wait to get what he or she wants, especially when it is something he really wants? Can my child wait to get something that is right there in front of him that he can't have? How well can he tolerate frustration? How does he express anger and other negative feelings?
4. What goals does my child have? What goals would I like her to have? Does my child ever plan things out before doing something? Have I ever helped her develop a plan for achieving a goal?
5. How does my child resolve conflicts? How independent is she in resolving conflicts? Does she listen, or turn others off? Can she think of different ways of resolving conflicts?

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**PARENTING** *continued from page 15*

**Strengths:** For both yourself and your children, think about areas of strength, the areas you and they are really good at. Give yourself pat on the back for having these — we mean it! — and praise your children for theirs as soon as you can. Also think about areas you would like to focus on for change. Think of what times of day you are most likely to show these skills, and when you are less likely to show them. These patterns are very important, because we help ourselves when we try to swim with the current, as opposed to going against it.

**Find the answers:** You may find you are not sure of some of the answers to the questions we pose. This is more common than not, because we are asking parents to think about things a little differently than they are used to doing. One way to get some answers is to videotape a (non-offensive) sitcom and then watch it with your child. Or, read a story to your child. At various points in the tape or story, pause and discuss the following:

- How the main character is feeling.
- How the other characters are feeling and what they are thinking.
- How your child feels about the characters' feelings.
- What the different characters' goals are and what they think the characters' plans might be.
- How your child thinks the characters handled the situation.
- What your child thinks was good about how the characters handled the problem and what the characters could have done better.

### The Top Ten List of Ways to be a More Emotionally Intelligent Parent

10. **Expect your children to do as you do, not as you say.** Modeling EQ skills is extremely important if you really want your children to use them. Show them how to regulate their feelings and express their anger appropriately by doing so yourself. When problem solving an issue of your own, think out loud so your children can hear you reflect, set goals, evaluate alternatives, plan and anticipate roadblocks. If you want your children to listen to you, listen to them.
9. **Remind them, remind them, remind them.** How many times is a child exposed to the letter "A" before they are expected to read it? Self-control and problem solving skills are a lot harder to learn and children need a lot of prompts and cues before they will begin to use the skills independently.

8. **Use active listening.** Everyone wants to be heard and understood. Paraphrasing back to children what they are saying to you reinforces them for communicating to you. It also allows you to gently rephrase their statements into more appropriate or accurate language. For example, when you ask how a child feels and her reply is that her sister is an idiot, you can help her clarify her feelings by saying, "Gee, it sounds like you are really upset with her." This opens the door to communication rather than shutting it with criticism.
7. **Ask open-ended questions.** Avoid making accusations such as "Why did you hit him?" Ask what happened, what was he doing, what did he want to have happen? Open-ended questions encourage the child to talk openly.
6. **Ask a question, ask another question.** It is important to stay in a questioning mode. If you follow-up a question with another question, you will get more information, encourage the child to think more and avoid a lecture on your part (which will certainly end communication).
5. **Sometimes appear to know less than you do.** Ask questions as if you do not understand. Instead of "Why did you fail that test?" ask, "I don't understand how you got this grade. What happened?" When the child says he studied, ask, "That doesn't seem fair... what could have happened so that the studying did not work?" This gets the child to think in a nondefensive manner.
4. **Be patient... be VERY patient.** Learning the skills necessary to get along in all kinds of social situations and to manage strong feelings is not easy, especially if the skills don't appear to come naturally for your child. It can take a long time, both when teaching it and when children are learning it. Fortunately, childhood lasts a long time. Be patient with them and with yourself. Look for small improvements, starting in certain situations or with certain people. Build on these improvements and you will find it easier than expecting miracles. Skills take time to learn but then last for a lifetime.
3. **If you bend, you won't break.** Be flexible in the way in which you try to build your child's EQ. Look for a variety of opportunities to teach and reinforce these skills. Above all, do not expect perfection in yourself or others.
2. **Know your child.** Some children learn quickly, others take more time. Generally, as children get older



they can handle more independence and responsibility but only give as much independence as the child can take responsibility for.

1. **Have fun!** Enjoy your children. Have a sense of humor. Situations usually aren't as bad as you think at first. Even when things are especially troubling, being depressed about it and angry at your child all the time will definitely not help. Children learn best when they have a close, loving relationship and when they are having fun. Make learning the skills of Emotional Intelligence fun. Your whole family will benefit.

### Resources for Building Emotional Intelligence in Your Family

Elias, M. J., Tobias, S. E., & Friedlander, B. S. (1999). *Emotionally Intelligent Parenting: How to Raise a Self-Disciplined, Responsible, Socially Skilled Child*. NY: Harmony/Random House.

Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., & Associates. (1997). *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (<[www.ASCD.org](http://www.ASCD.org)>)

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. NY: Bantam.

*Lessons for Life: How Smart Schools Build Academic, Social, and Emotional Intelligence*. (1999). A Video Inservice

Kit created by the National Center for Educational Innovation, distributed by the National Education Service. (<[www.nesonline.com](http://www.nesonline.com)>)

Salovey, P., & Sluyter, D. (Eds.) (1998). *Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Development*. NY: Basic Books.

### Web Sites Related to Social and Emotional Intelligence

< [www.CASEL.org](http://www.CASEL.org) > — Leading site for EQ in the Schools

<[www.6Seconds.com](http://www.6Seconds.com)> — Leading provider of materials for teachers and parents related to EQ

<[www.EQParenting.com](http://www.EQParenting.com)> — Leading site for parenting information related to EQ

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**National Mental Health and Education  
Center for Children and Families  
[www.naspweb.org/center](http://www.naspweb.org/center)**

## Video Reviews

**Break It Up— Managing Student Fights**  
Research Press, 1995  
Reviewed by Elaine Lukenda

Narrated by Arnold P. Goldstein, the video offers an opportunity to observe and model the application of nine steps designed to focus teachers' attention and actions in the high pressure, emotional situations that characterize student fights. Based upon the review of research on aggression management and anecdotes of in-school fights described by teachers from across the country, the sequence of steps clarifies what to do as well as what not to do to deescalate student aggression. The nine steps consist of (1) Making a Quick Assessment of the Fight Situation; (2) Calling for Help; (3) Using Defusing Tactics to Calm Disputants; (4) Separating Disputants Safely; (5) Controlling the Fight Scene Crowd; (6) Interviewing the Disputants; (7) Taking Appropriate Disciplinary Action; (8) Debriefing Student Bystanders; and (9) Attending to Your Own Emotional Needs. Explicit and realistic examples of the technique are presented for each of the three grade levels (elementary, middle and high school) of students in different settings (school hallways, classrooms and cafeteria). The actors represent both genders and a diversity of racial backgrounds.

**Positive Adolescent Choices Training— PACT**  
**A Model for Violence Prevention Groups**  
**with African American Youth**  
Executive Producer, W. Rodney Hammond, Ph.D.  
Associate Producer, Betty R. Yung, Ph.D.  
Research Press

The PACT program is a culturally sensitive video which provides a detailed model for planning, organizing, and conducting violence prevention groups specifically designed for African American youth.

PACT focuses on the problem of expressive violence, which often involves physical conflict between family, friends, or acquaintances. This type of violence is preventable and yet represents the greatest threat to adolescents. It is frequently triggered by trivial arguments over clothing, boyfriends, girlfriends, or perceived insults.

The PACT program was developed to help reduce youth violence by teaching adolescents the skills they need to deal calmly and effectively with anger-provoking situations. It is an excellent prevention program for all students, including those who exhibit behavior problems or those with a history of victimization or exposure to violence.