

## **Course: Encouraging Expected Behavior**

### **Lesson: Introduction to Encouraging Expected Behavior**

## **Transcript**

This lesson describes the need for high rates of positive adult attention in response to appropriate student behavior. Non-contingent and contingent attention are two types of adult attention that have a positive impact on interactions in schools. This attention, paired with preferred adult behaviors, creates a positive school climate and promotes effective interactions between teachers and students when talking about behavior.

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain to others the importance and impact of both non-contingent and contingent attention on student behavior and school climate.
- Use preferred adult behaviors to build relationships and positive school climate and effectively interact with students when talking about behavior.

One of the outcomes schools seek when deciding to implement Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support is improvement of the school climate or environment. Encouraging expected behavior is crucial to help students learn the desired expectations and shift the focus from addressing misbehavior to responding with specific positive feedback for expected social behavior. Teacher and staff attention have a powerful influence on the behavior of individuals and small and whole groups of students. Adult attention helps create a positive and safe learning environment. All staff members help set the tone or mood of the school through relationships with students and families and frequently recognizing students' efforts to meet academic and behavioral goals.

**REINFORCEMENT**—overarching term for a contingently delivered consequence associated with an increased likelihood of future behavior.

**SPECIFIC POSITIVE FEEDBACK**—a form of social reinforcement that provides information on successful behavior while reinforcing or increasing the likelihood that behavior will be repeated; combines social attention, instruction, and reinforcement.

**TEACHER APPROVAL**—used in research to assess the relationship of teacher behavior to student learning; generally verbal praise and encouragement, but may also include non-verbal attention.

**PRE-CORRECT**—a reminder before entering a setting or performing a task to promote successful demonstration of expected behavior.

Before beginning to develop practices for encouraging expected behavior, it is important to revisit the A-B-Cs of behavior. Up to now, your work has focused on altering antecedents. We now turn to look at consequences, making adult attention contingent on the performance of the expected behavior. The consequences of behavior effect future performance of that behavior. One effect is an increase in the likelihood the behavior will occur again in the future, called reinforcement. The example provided illustrates this point by using a hallway behavior example.

The antecedents are hallway expectations that have been clarified and taught. Teachers then provide pre-corrects directly before the behaviors will need to be used by students. The behavior observed is that students follow those expectations and behaviors/rules – they keep voices quiet and walk. The consequence is the teacher responding to the appropriate behavior with feedback by saying, “Great job being respectful and safe in the hall by keeping your voices quiet and walking.”

List ways that your school reinforces students for academic performance. Now list ways your school reinforces students for social behavioral performance.

- How can you tie these together?

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

There are two types of adult attention and both have a positive impact on interactions with students – non-contingent attention and contingent attention.

Non-contingent attention is attention provided regardless of performance and includes such things as greetings, proximity, smiles, and conversations. Given that many instances of inappropriate behavior are based in a desire for attention, if we provide sufficient non-contingent attention, the frequency of behavior problems may decrease. As teachers report that positive student–teacher interactions increase, the numbers of disciplinary referrals students receive decreases. Also, students report an increase of positive quality in the student–teacher relationship, a decrease in the number of behavior referrals they receive and an increase in the amount of time they spend on-task. Finally, non-contingent attention provides students with role models of positive social interactions.

Contingent attention is provided based upon student performance of an identified expectation or behavior. The student must perform the expected behavior before a teacher responds with attention. Research shows that contingent attention increases academic performance and on-task behavior. We also want to use contingent attention when students display expected social behavior. A familiar saying is “You get what you pay attention to.” Specific positive feedback is one form of contingent attention that will be discussed more in depth in the next lesson. Contingent attention is essential to changing student behavior and creating a positive school environment.

Together, both types of attention create a positive school climate and build rapport and relationships, and help students learn social behavioral expectations.

Reflect on what you have learned about adult attention, both non-contingent and contingent. Tell

someone, or quickly jot down, the definitions of each and their power in working with students to create a positive school environment. List as many examples as you can of both non-contingent and contingent attention that are presently in place in your school.

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

In spite of the evidence that contingent attention can change the climate and learning conditions of the classroom, many teachers fail to take full advantage of this powerful tool.

Research has found that naturally occurring or typical teacher approval statements for academic responses far outweigh those for social behavior across all grade levels, with highest rates for each type of approval occurring in second grade and tapering off dramatically after that. In all grade levels, teachers respond to correct academic performance (20.36 per hour average) more frequently than disapprovals (7.56 per hour average). On the other hand, statements of disapproval for social behavior (19.20 per hour) were always more frequent than approvals (1.52 per hour).

Research has found one constant - academic behavior of students is more likely to attract positive teacher attention than is social behavior. In addition, teachers respond far more frequently to inappropriate social behavior than to appropriate behavior. The result of teachers giving more attention to misbehavior is that their attention may be unknowingly maintaining or increasing the misbehavior.

A schoolwide focus on all staff ensuring high rates of non-contingent and contingent attention is important because it can improve interactions between students and staff and therefore, improve the school climate.

Contingent attention increases academic performance, on-task behavior, and the likelihood students will continue to use the desired behavior in the future.

- Why do you think this powerful practice is so underused in our schools?
- Begin to consider ways to increase the use of encouragement in your school.

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

Related to teacher attention is the student-teacher relationship and preferred adult behaviors. There is a growing body of research that indicates academic achievement and student behavior are both influenced by the quality of teacher-student relationships.

Given these relationships, teachers and staff need to learn simple behaviors that will positively impact relationships.

Adult behaviors that build relationship include: 1) communicating privately, in close proximity with the

student, 2) listening, 3) eye contact, 4) pleasant voice tone, 5) smiles, 6) appropriate professional touch and 7) use of students' names.

These behaviors express warmth, care and concern for students while also communicating respect. They increase student affect (the likelihood that they will say they like school or their teacher), compliance (the likelihood that they will do as asked) and also enhance learning. Not only do these adult behaviors impact relationships, but they also set the stage for effectively interacting with students and delivering genuine feedback.

Review the list of preferred adult behaviors for building positive teacher-student relationships.

Preferred Adult Behaviors:

- Proximity
  - Listening
  - Eye Contact
  - Pleasant Voice
  - Smiles
  - Professional Touch
  - Use of Student Names
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- Do the staff in your school use these preferred adult behaviors when interacting with students?
  - How can you share what you have learned about teacher attention and preferred adult behaviors with your staff?

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

During this lesson, you learned about the need for high rates of positive adult attention in response to appropriate student behavior. Non-contingent and contingent attention were presented as two types of adult attention that have a positive impact on interactions in schools. This attention, paired with preferred adult behaviors, creates a positive school climate and promotes effective interactions between teachers and students when talking about behavior.

How can you share what you have learned about teacher attention and preferred adult behaviors with your staff?

Next steps include updating your Tier 1 Action Plan. Develop action steps and a timeline of completion for working with staff on the importance of providing positive attention to appropriate behavior and beginning to consider ways to increase the use of encouragement in your school.

Additional information about *Encouraging Expected Behavior* can be found in Chapter 5 of the *Missouri SW-PBS Tier 1 Team Workbook* which can be found at [www.pbissmissouri.org](http://www.pbissmissouri.org).

When you are ready, continue to the next lesson, *Specific Positive Feedback*, where you will learn how to provide effective, contingent attention that is essential to change and sustain behavior.

Here are the references for this lesson. If more references are needed, you can refer to the Reference section in the *Missouri SW-PBS Tier 1 Team Workbook* available on the Missouri SW-PBS website.

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