

SPECIAL REPORT

The **E**ducation Company

*Solving school discipline problems
one intervention at a time*



PBIS-EDCO Alignment and Support

What is Positive Behavioral Support?

Positive Behavioral Support (PBIS) is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with prosocial skills. Use of PBIS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change.

PBIS can target an individual student or an entire school, as it does not focus exclusively on the student, but also includes changing environmental variables such as the physical setting, task demands, curriculum, instructional pace and individualized reinforcement. Thus it is successful with a wide range of students, in a wide range of contexts, with a wide range of behaviors.

Blending behavioral science, empirically validated procedures, durable systems change and an emphasis on socially important outcomes, PBIS always involves data-based decision making using functional behavioral assessment and ongoing monitoring of intervention impact.

According to IDEA '97, PBIS is the recommended form of intervention for dealing with challenging behavior in children with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 1999, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs in collaboration with Safe and Drug Free Schools supported a Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with a grant of almost \$600,000. Information from this center is available at www.pbis.org. Additionally, the U.S. government continues to support a project at the University of Kansas (Beach Center on Families and Disability) to promote programs related to the personal needs of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities; this program supports the use of PBIS to help children with disabilities who demonstrate challenging behavior.

Why Do We Need PBIS?

- Problem behavior is the single most common reason why students are removed from regular classrooms. Even though students with extreme problem behavior represent only 20% of school enrollment, they can account for more than 50% of behavioral incidents.
- Harsh punishment and zero tolerance policies have not been effective at either improving behavioral climate in schools, or preventing students with problem behaviors from entering the juvenile justice system.
- Three years after being excluded from school, almost 70% of these youth have been arrested.

Failure to implement IDEA, due to a lack of incentives or negative attitudes toward children with challenging behaviors by administrators, policy makers and school personnel, is unacceptable. Students should not be excluded from school based solely upon inappropriate social behavior. Appropriate services can readily address and modify many of these behaviors, leading to more positive outcomes than simple punishment.

How is PBIS Implemented in School Settings?

PBIS is based on behavioral theory; problem behavior continues to occur because it is consistently followed by the child getting something positive or escaping something negative. By focusing on the contexts and outcomes of the behavior, it is possible to determine the functions of the behavior, make the problem behavior less effective and efficient, and make the desired behavior more functional. This often involves changing systems, altering environments and teaching new skills, as well as focusing on the problem behavior.

The most crucial part of devising PBIS plans is the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), which reveals information about the antecedents, consequences, and frequency of challenging behavior. FBAs also help to identify any co-occurring variables. Conducting FBAs doubles the success rate of an intervention.

PBIS plans are individualized and data-based and include procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reassessing the process. PBIS should be a collaborative effort among parents, school psychologists, teachers, counselors and administrators; all partners should be committed to the plan and its implementation. PBIS is more effective when it includes the target individual as well as other significant individuals (i.e., peers, teachers, and parents).

High fidelity of implementation is required to maximize outcomes; therefore, interventions should be applied by educators in the school environment. School psychologists are ideally qualified to conduct FBAs, implement PBIS plans and train other educators and parents in behavioral intervention techniques.



What Are the Benefits of PBIS?

All students, both disabled and non-disabled, can benefit from PBIS:

- Research conducted over the past 15 years has shown that PBIS is effective in promoting positive behavior in students and schools. Use of PBIS as a strategy to maintain appropriate social behavior will make schools safer. Safer schools are more effective learning environments.
- Schools that implement system-wide interventions also report increased time engaged in academic activities and improved academic performance.
- Schools that employ system-wide interventions for problem behavior prevention indicate reductions in office discipline referrals of 20-60%.
- Appropriately implemented PBIS can lead to dramatic improvements that have long-term effects on the lifestyle, functional communication skills, and problem behavior in individuals with disabilities.
- A review of research on PBIS effectiveness showed that there was over a 90% reduction in problem behavior in over half of the studies; the problem behavior stopped completely in over 26% of the studies.

How Can We Improve Implementation of PBIS?

Although it is commendable that many states require functional behavior assessments before the development of significant behavioral interventions, they often occur reactively, or after the behavior has become a significant problem (i.e., after a student's behavior results in multiple suspensions or a drug/weapons infraction). After a crisis occurs, the focus is on punishment and exclusion. Additionally, school-based interventions commonly consist of unproven strategies and are implemented by staff who lack the training to deal with the problems effectively. When coordination is lacking among schools and other agencies, the primary responsibility for behavior is placed on families, who receive little support. Effective implementation of PBIS includes:

- An FBA, conducted when the problem behavior is first observed or as a proactive activity.
- Focus both on prevention of problem behaviors and early access to effective behavior support.
- Culturally competent, family-friendly behavior support.
- Implementation with sufficient intensity and precision to produce behavioral gains that have a significant and durable impact on the academic, social and living options available to the student.



How Can The Education Company Assist In The Implementation of PBIS?

To aid in the implementation of PBIS and the evolving strategy for implementing PBIS in local schools and districts, The Education Company has an implementation plan that builds on the procedures that have been successful in other school systems. This plan describes procedures that could be used to implement PBIS in a local school or district.

School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a systems approach to discipline that emphasizes:

- 1) Prevention of problem behaviors by providing proactive instruction of desired behavioral expectations, reinforcement of appropriate behavior, and monitoring and correction of problem behavior;
- 2) On-going collection and use of data for decision-making;
- 3) Application of more intensive and individualized support for students who do not respond to the universal system.

The implementation of PBIS includes the following seven critical features:

- 1) a system-wide/local school PBIS Implementation Team and EDCO Consultant;
- 2) a school leadership team;
- 3) clearly identified expectations for student behaviors that are known by all staff and students;
- 4) expected behaviors taught to all students;
- 5) a school-wide system exists to positively reward expected behaviors; (6) procedures to respond to behavioral violations;
- 7) a formal system to collect, analyze, and utilize disciplinary data.

In order to accomplish these seven critical elements, EDCO will assist the school to develop an organizational structure for supporting PBIS. School teams need to be trained, undertake the planning process outlined below, and be supported by school-level coaches, a lead coach located within each of the administrative areas, a PBIS coordinator, the PBIS implementation team, and the State PBIS Leadership Team, where applicable.

EDCO will assist in supporting and training the local PBIS Coordinator who needs to be someone who is knowledgeable about PBIS, proficient in functional behavioral assessments, and aware of the resources available.

Implementation of a school-wide approach to PBIS also requires investments in

- A long term implementation (3-4 years)
- Efficient team based decision making and problem solving
- A common approach to building a positive school culture agreed upon by a majority of staff members
- Building behavioral competence and fluency
- Active administrative leadership and involvement
- A preventive approach to problem behavior
- Directly teaching and encouraging school-wide social skills

A systems approach to school-wide PBIS considers multiple points of support in schools:

- **Individual Student:** intensive and individualized behavior intervention planning and implementation for students who are unresponsive to school-wide (primary) interventions and that use functional behavioral assessments.
- **Classroom:** expectations, routines, structures, and practices for presenting curriculum, designing instruction, and managing social climate of classroom environments that serves as the basis for individual student behavior support planning.
- **School-wide:** behavioral expectations and supports (i.e., proactive school-wide discipline) for all students and staff, across all school settings that together serves as the foundation for classroom and individual student PBIS.
- **District:** specialized behavioral supports, organizational leadership, and implementation resources that as a unity serves as the foundation for implementation of school-wide PBIS.
- **State:** behavior support policy, organizational leadership, and resource management that collectively serve as the foundation for district and school-wide implementation of PBIS.

The EDCO Consultants will provide technical assistance and support to local school systems invested in designing and developing local capacity. School teams need to be trained, undertake the next planning process outlined below, and be supported by school-level coaches and any district staff.



Sample Steps Toward Implementation

Step 1. Establish a PBIS Implementation Team.

Implementing PBIS in multiple schools requires the support of school system leadership, as well as linkages with families and other service providers. If system policies and practices do not support implementation of PBIS within the targeted schools, positive outcomes will be difficult to achieve or maintain.

Step 2. Establish a School PBIS Team.

Each school will establish a school-level PBIS Team composed of 6 or 7 individuals who are representative of the school (e.g., by grade level and department), respected by their colleagues, collectively have behavioral competence, have a regular and efficient means of communicating with other staff members, and are endorsed actively and vigorously by their principal. Principals must be members of the team. Parents are recommended to serve as team members. In many schools, the PBIS Team will be a team already in existence. The PBIS team attends the PBIS training. During the school year, the PBIS Team meets weekly initially and then after the program is well established at least monthly. Meetings are guided by data and a proactive problem-solving approach. This team has the responsibility for reviewing school needs and establishing staff and school improvement action plans. Schools implementing PBIS are paired with an EDCO Consultant/Coach. The coach will mentor the school, help schools plan for and implementation program elements, and monitor the fidelity of this implementation. While the responsibility for PBIS implementation resides with the school and the PBIS school team, the coach acts as a cheerleader as well as a resource for solving problems. The EDCO Consultant will provide feedback to the local school principal and district staff, where appropriate, regarding implementation and technical assistance.

- Setting PBIS implementation as a priority
- Allocating time and other resources for the program
- Maintaining staff and student morale for the program
- Sharing program successes with the school
- Regular attendance at team meetings
- Setting a personal example for PBIS implementation
- Acknowledging staff for good implementation
- Acknowledging students for good conduct.



Step 3. Secure School-wide Agreements and Supports.

The PBIS team with the strong support of the principal secures staff agreements regarding the (a) nature and priority of staff development efforts and needs in order to support full implementation of PBIS, (b) long term commitment and investment in the PBIS effort, and (c) importance of taking a preventive and instructional approach to behavior management and school-wide discipline. The team also arranges for fiscal support, implementation materials, on-going training opportunities for staff, and staff time to develop and implement procedures for teaching behavioral expectations.

Step 4. Develop a Data-based Action Plan.

The use of data in decision-making is critical for the success of PBIS. Teams must develop an action plan including (a) measurable outcomes – specifically what does the team hope to accomplish over a specific period of time (e.g. decreased office referrals/ decreased disruption in the cafeteria), (b) a timeline of events for accomplishing the 6 critical features, (c) responsibilities of staff members relative to teaching behavioral expectations, applying the school-wide reinforcement system, and following discipline procedures for problem behaviors, (d) specific activities that lead to measurable outcomes, (e) staff development and training activities so that staff develop skills and knowledge related to behavior management practices, and (f) resources and support needs for executing established systems and procedures. Teams begin to develop their initial action plan during the training as a resource for solving problems. The EDCO Consultant will provide feedback to the local school principal and district staff, where appropriate, regarding implementation and technical assistance.

Step 5. Arrange for High Fidelity of Implementation by School Staff.

This step expands step 2 by ensuring that (a) practical and efficient aides for implementation are in place (e.g. checklists, lesson plans for teaching expected behaviors, etc.), (b) sufficient professional development and training opportunities for school staff have occurred and are planned, and (c) high levels of positive reinforcement for staff implementation efforts and success exist.

Step 6. Conduct Formative Data-based Monitoring .

The EDCO Consultant will assist each team in collecting and monitoring student data on an ongoing basis. The local school will be required to track discipline incidents, the use of tools, and the use of positive incentives.

In addition, the fidelity of the program will be monitored by the EDCO through site visits and regular reviews of team implementation checklist and reviews of the administrative logs. In addition, the EDCO Consultant functions as additional support personnel, similar to the use of staff in primary care interventions, by providing assistance in data-based decisions making.

Technical Assistance/Monitoring by EDCO Consultants

A local school liaison, who is a school system employee selected by the for the PBIS program and agreed upon by the principal and assists the PBIS school team. Local Liaisons may be released from some of their other responsibilities to assume this new role. Local Liaisons have been a component of the PBIS system since its inception but the importance of these individuals for the success of PBIS (or any school-based intervention) is becoming clearer as program evaluations document a strong relationship between the quality of technical assistance and program fidelity and outcomes. Local Liaisons work with school teams to interpret the disciplinary data.

Eligibility requirements for Local Liaisons include (a) experience conducting small group skill training sessions with adults, (b) familiarity with typical classroom and school structures and operations, (c) familiarity with general discipline, classroom, behavior and instructional management and curriculum, (d) history of consistent follow through with tasks, (e) experiences working with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds, (f) ability to facilitate team meetings, and (g) basic computer hardware and software skills.

EDCO School Training

The Education Company has provided training to more than 75 schools over the past five years. EDCO is able to offer training to any school wishing to implement PBIS. The PBIS training and technical support provided include:

- (a) components and processes of school-wide discipline,
- (b) strategies for beginning the school year using PBIS,
- (c) procedures for teaching behavioral expectations to students,
- (d) behavior management in nonclassroom settings,
- (e) data-based decision making,
- (f) developing action plans,
- (g) understanding and managing escalating behaviors.

Additionally, teachers, team leaders, coaches, and principals may participate in local training sessions at least three times a year during the fall and spring. These sessions include presentations and engaging professional development, problem solving around barriers to implementation, and identification of additional types of support that team members and coaches might find helpful. Periodic conference calls, email exchanges, and informal meetings between the local school and the EDCO Consultants will also take place.

Monitoring Fidelity of PBIS

All school staff in all schools will complete the PBIS Staff Survey as a baseline measure annually. This survey examines the current status and need for improvement of four behavior support systems: (a) school-wide discipline systems, (b) non-classroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, and playground), (c) classroom management systems, and (d) systems for individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors. Schools use survey results for decision-making and designing their annual action plan for positive behavior interventions and support. Teachers report on their own classrooms and other staff report on classrooms in general.

Educators learn how to create a safe, positive learning environment where students behave responsibly and take accountability for their conduct. They explore strategies to organize and manage the classroom with increased confidence and a calm sense of control. Through professional development, educators discover how to create a learning environment in which their students can excel, and in which they can go home feeling a sense of accomplishment.

This professional development is designed for K–12 teachers, special-subject teachers, administrators, counselors, resource teachers, and substitutes. Contact the Education Company for a Free Discipline Discussion.

Call us today at 800-294-9009.