



#TeamDCS

Behavior Strategy of the Month:

Tips for parents this up-coming holiday season

Even though everyone loves the break from school, let's be real, getting back in the "swing of things" doesn't always seem to be the easiest of tasks after a week-long of sleeping in, chowing down, and watching Netflix until our heart's content. To ease some of the transitional issues some of our students encounter, we recommend:

- Have a few "set" tasks for your student to take care of daily (feed the animals, straighten up the bedroom)
- Utilize a calendar for students to visualize how many days are left until it's time to return to school
- Closer to the end of the break begin discussing how many days there are until school is back in session.

Learn more about de-escalating students before behavior erupts.

Request the training in your school today by contacting your Positive Behavior Specialist!

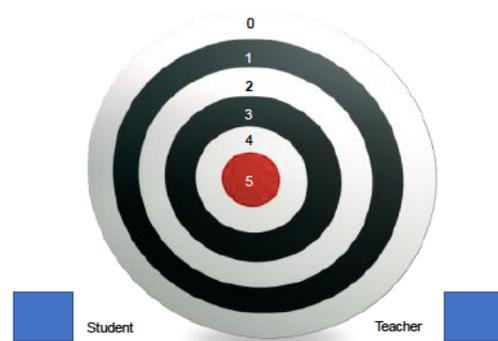
Targeting student self-evaluation of behavior

Student: The student will track the number of incidents (undesired behaviors/targeted behaviors) he/she displayed on the bull's eye within a specified period.

Teacher: The teacher will track the number of incidents (undesired behaviors/targeted behaviors) the student displayed on a separate bull's eye within a specified period.

At the end of the period, the student and teacher will compare the number of incidents on the bull's eye to determine if the student was able to correctly self-evaluate his/her behavior. If the student and the teacher have the same number of incidents the student will receive a reward. If the student and the teacher have a different number of incidents, they will problem solve the incidents.

Bull's EYE Game



"Education is a shared commitment between dedicated teachers, motivated students and enthusiastic parents with high expectations."

- *Bob Beauprez*



Address early depression to prevent later learning challenges

Children with mild to severe symptoms of depression in second and third grades are six times more likely to have skills deficits, such as social and academic difficulties, than children without symptoms of depression, according to a recent [study](#) by the [University of Missouri](#).

Young students with depression may have trouble processing information, said Benjamin Fernandez, coordinator of prevention services at [Loudoun County \(Va.\) Public Schools](#). They may also struggle with problem-solving, reasoning, and recalling information, making learning that much more difficult.

"Depressed students can be sitting in their chairs and be physically available in the classroom but emotionally be somewhere else," Fernandez said. "They may look inattentive or like they are purposely not completing their work, but they are emotionally unavailable."

After you explore the root of the behaviors and why the student may be depressed, you can help determine which strategies will help him continue to learn while he works through his emotional difficulties.

Review this chart to help elementary-school students with depression:

Strategy	How to implement it
Group counseling	<p>Bring students with depression together to work on coping skills and resiliency skills, Fernandez said.</p> <p>Teach children about feelings and encourage them to associate different colors with different emotions, such as red for angry and blue for sad, Fernandez said. Discuss what they can do if they feel sad. A student may want to slip a card to the teacher that represents when she needs a break to regroup, he said. The child may want to write in a journal or draw a picture in a quiet corner of the room. Another child may prefer to run around the playground for a few minutes to burn some excess energy.</p> <p>Emphasize students' empowerment by reminding them that they have the power to ask for help whenever they feel sad and they know who can help them, Fernandez said.</p>
Check-in/check-out system	<p>Encourage a student with depression to check in with you or a counselor in the morning then check out with you or a counselor at the end of the day, Fernandez said. The child may come to school in the morning distressed because his parents are contemplating divorce and share that he's angry. You can problem-solve together about the most important thing he has to accomplish in the first part of the day and focus on getting that one thing done. Once that is done, the student can build on that momentum to continue with his day.</p> <p>"It really starts with the relationship with that student," he said. "The student knows there's an adult he can trust when he's having a bad day to sit down and have a conversation with then get back to class to get started on some work."</p>
Assignment alteration	<p>Help the student's teacher come up with ways to lighten the student's load, such as having the student complete the first five math problems rather than a whole worksheet, if she's showing difficulty with initiation and is overwhelmed by her emotions, Fernandez said. "Once things improve, you can talk about bringing her back into regular class expectations," he said.</p>
Parent involvement	<p>Recognize that depression in children can ebb and flow, Fernandez said. Build a relationship with the student's family as well as the student to better respond when he is struggling emotionally.</p> <p>Know that the student's parents may also be struggling with mental health issues, Fernandez said. "I remember a student whose mother was struggling with significant depression," he said. "The student was struggling with an emotional weight on her shoulders. She would be in the classroom sometimes feeling horrible about herself and worrying about her mother."</p>

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