# Positive Behavior Support in Preschool: A Model for Shaping Early Childhood Behaviors

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# SPED 432: Positive Behavior Support

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**Introduction**

Researchers and educators have long recognized positive behavior support (PBS) as an effective intervention tool for shaping students’ challenging behaviors into appropriate actions that are conducive to an overall increase in quality of life (Bambara & Kern, 2002; Carr et al., 2002). The method marries the ideologies of applied behavior analysis (ABA), the inclusion movement and person-centered planning (PCP) in order to develop specific, individualized behavior support plans which work towards altering a student’s environment to correct problem behaviors and better an individual’s life. In short, PBS breaks problem behaviors down into a four-stage contingency where setting events make way for antecedents to cause problem behaviors which are in turn followed with consequences. This progression of behavior and its acting and reacting stimuli occur in the confines of an individual’s quality of life (QOL). Together these elements are responsible for all behaviors, challenging or desired, and interveners can alter various elements of behaviors in order to develop ideal behavior.

Behaviors and their functions are often an area of concern and confusion for those attempting to shape them (Fischer, Piazza & Roane, 2011). Nonetheless, behaviors all serve the purpose to either acquire or escape from a given stimulus. For instance, a young student might cry in class to acquire teacher attention. Conversely, a student who has trouble with written assignments might throw a desk when presented with a written exam so that a teacher will send him or her to the principal’s office and where he or she can escape the task. Both behaviors cause a disruption to the class but classify into very basic behavioral functions. Despite this simplicity, categorizing behaviors into functions is quite difficult and requires a toolkit of empirical methods (Bambara & Kern, 2005). First, one must define an operational definition which is explicit and clear to any blinded party. Second, the experimenter must measure the behavior by recording relevant data. Third, one must analyze the data for trends which indicate the function(s) of the behavior(s). Finally, the experimenter can develop a hypothesis, or hypotheses, which defines all the components of the four term contingency for the given behavior and predicts the proper function. With this hypothesis, supports and interventions are implemented to shape the problem behavior and data is collected to determine the efficacy of those supports.

There are a variety of settings and age groups where PBS is effective (O’Dell et al., 2011). PBS displays great strides in shaping behavior of those with and without disabilities from preschool to adulthood. In fact, preschool settings allow PBS to transform problematic behaviors into social skills a student may use throughout his or her life (Blair, Fox & Lentini, 2010; Duda, Dunlap, Fox, Lentini & Clark, 2004). Moreover, PBS teaches new, acceptable behaviors which often continue to act as replacement behaviors indefinitely (Dunlap et al., 2010). With such promising results, one cannot ignore the strength of PBS in early childhood educational settings. Nevertheless, many preschool teachers and staff often do not have the required training to implement PBS or fear implementation of student-specific supports (Snell, Berlin, Voorhees, Stanton-Chapman, & Hadden, 2012a; Snell et al., 2012b).

Perhaps, preschool educators do not realize they are already using elements of PBS in their day-to-day teaching. Strategies such as praise and precorrection are often already used in preschools and are effective program-wide PBS strategies (Stormont, Smith & Lewis, 2007). Moreover, preschool settings often teach basic manners and social skills which are standard components of replacement behaviors taught to children displaying problem behaviors. Some PBS elements are as simple as changing environments or adding classroom management strategies (Kern, Choutka, & Sokol, 2002). These antecedent interventions are easy to implement and often show the most substantial changes to levels of problem behaviors seen in young children. Even consequence interventions frequently appear as replacing nos with yeses (Kersey & Masterson, 2011). By replacing negative feedback with positive and correctional feedback, teachers easily shape behaviors by reminding young students to discontinue inappropriate behaviors and guiding them to use appropriate behaviors. Clearly, PBS supports are already being used in preschool setting but often not in the structure of an individualized PBS intervention plan.

With the efficacy and ease of implementation of PBS in preschool environments established, teachers have little reason not to consider PBS solutions to behavior problems. Moreover, early education instructors report considerably challenging behaviors (Snell et al., 2012a; Snell et al., 2012b) especially during transitions (Rae, 2010). Furthermore, transitions requiring movement between locations within preschools often tend to have high rates of problem behaviors. By simply pre-planning and teaching behaviors necessary for successful transitions to young students, many or all problem behaviors are avoided. PBS inherently includes such planning and teaching as well as appropriate reactionary methods; therefore, preschools have little to no reason to disagree to PBS interventions.

With the justifications for using PBS in the preschool setting delineated, one must next consider methods for functionally assessing problem behaviors. Due to the age of students in preschool, assessments should include both direct and indirect observations (Snell et al., 2012b). Furthermore, using an organized method to collect direct observational data allows observers to gather more specific and informational data despite distractions in the classroom. One structure of data collection, the antecedent-behavior-consequence chart (ABC chart) allows the observer to write down the behavior of concern, the antecedent or immediately preceding stimulus, and the consequence or possible function of the behavior (Bambara & Kern, 2008; Kelly, 2008). This method is easily adapted to include even more information such as time/date or setting event of behaviors and presents data in a format which is simple to refer to for analysis.

Indirect observation can come from a variety of sources in preschool settings but is derived mostly through interviews due to a lack of documentation and academic records at this age (Snell et al., 2012b). The teacher interview presented by O’Neill, Horner, Albin, Storey and Sprague (1990) provides a thorough yet straight-forward assessment which documents a series of information such as frequency, time of day and triggers of problem behaviors and the strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes of the student. Nonetheless, it is advisable to include an interview with the student—despite age level—in order to formally assess his or her functioning and personal views of strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. With this collection of thoughtfully collected data, staff can form hypotheses and implement related interventions that are sure to produce desirable behavioral effects. Clearly, PBS is a powerful strategy that is possible, effective and sensible to implement in a preschool setting.

In the present study, a preschool student with problem behaviors similar to that of many students his age was evaluated for a PBS intervention. A hypotheses and related supports were developed and implemented, respectively. Mock data is presented based on possible results of a PBS intervention conducted in this style. The data show efficacy of the supports and reflect anecdotal results reported to the experimenter by the teacher implementing the interventions.

**Method**

**Participant and Setting**

Christopher, a 5 ½ year old male student at Lehigh Valley Children’s Centers (LVCC) in an upper level preschool classroom, attends school/day care from 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday and has been in this routine since January 2012. Academically, Christopher performs on grade level and is able to recite the alphabet, identify letters and their sounds, count and identify shapes and colors. According to school staff when Christopher started at LVCC he spoke mostly Spanish, but advanced very quickly and currently is basically fluent in English. He understands spoken English and Spanish and always responds in English at school. Although Christopher is able to communicate, he often exhibits problem behaviors such as whining or shoving rather than using words to ask others to move when they are in his way. Additionally, Christopher taunts other students to initiate play by saying phrases such as, “Look at me and what I have,” or “You can’t get me.” Christopher appears to enjoy school and strives to always give the correct answers first, get the first position in line to wash his hands for lunch, look at the most books at library time and manage other students’ behavior.

It is currently June and Christopher is entering kindergarten in September 2012. Christopher’s parents and teachers are concerned about his behavioral school readiness. His teacher, Miss Colleen, is fretful of Christopher’s touching behaviors with other students such as light hitting, poking and shoving. According to Miss Colleen, Christopher and his mother play in this way and she is unsure whether Christopher understands the differences between family play and school play. Miss Colleen is more concerned with Christopher’s use of whining and shoving to move students out of his way during play, transitions or when waiting on lines. Operationally defined, Christopher whines by making a non-verbal high-pitched squealing sound or pushes/shoves by physically moving other students by using his arms or whole body during transitions or when waiting in line. Christopher always wants to get to an activity first and needs help to reduce his problem behaviors (whining, pushing, shoving) which occur when that is not possible. In order to prepare Christopher for success in kindergarten and facilitate less dangerous and more appropriate student-peer interactions, staff must implement positive behavior interventions and supports to shape his behaviors to those most appropriate for kindergarten-aged children. Current behavior management techniques such as reactionary sitting (included time-out) or verbal reprimands are not working towards manipulating Christopher’s behavior, so use of a positive approach will offer a new solution and allow for a natural and proactive mechanism to monitor and improve Christopher’s behavior. Staff will implement this intervention in the classroom, especially during transitions and situations where lines are needed, in order to allow Christopher to learn these behaviors in the most naturalistic and ecologically valid setting.

**Functional Assessment Methods**

Direct and indirect observations of the student, Christopher, were conducted in the natural settings of his preschool classroom or preschool playground by the experimenter, Gina Ciani. The experimenter was not previously known to the student or staff at the school prior to data collection. Direct observations were recorded via paper and pencil using anecdotal notes (see [Appendix A](#Appendix_A)) and an adapted Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) Chart (see [Appendix B](#Appendix_B)). The adaptation to the chart was to include the setting location or activity and, during the last data collection interval, the time of behavior. All possible problem behaviors exhibited by the student were recorded when possible, but special attention was made to observe those behaviors which met the criteria for the operation definition of the student’s problem behaviors (Operational definition: Christopher whines by making a non-verbal high-pitched squealing sound or pushes/shoves by physically moving other students by using his arms or whole body during transitions or while waiting in line.) Direct observations were conducted during four sessions occurring between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. on Monday, Wednesday or Friday. Activities during this time were mostly free play and playground/gym time (depending on weather) but also included approximately 15 minutes of circle time, 20 minutes of library time and 20 minutes of lunch time depending on the particular day and hours of the observations. The first day of observation occurred on a Monday for 3.5 hours and included only anecdotal notes. The succeeding sessions included primarily ABC data collection and occurred on the subsequent Wednesday, Friday and Monday for 3.5, 2 and 3 hours each, respectively.

Indirect observations were conducted using interviews with both the teacher (Miss Colleen) and the student (Christopher). The interview used with the teacher was an adapted version of the Functional Analysis Interview Form (O’Neill et al., 1990) with precise questions added in order to gain behavior-specific information. The teacher interview was conducted in the classroom during lunch time and took approximately 40 minutes to complete. An estimated transcript of the interview is presented in [Appendix C](#Appendix_C) and audio files are available by contacting the author. The interview and ability inventory used with the student was created by the experimenter in order to collect detailed information that would help facilitate the intervention. This interview took place while the student was drawing during free play and is summarized in [Appendix D](#Appendix_D).

**Functional Assessment Results**

According to indirect assessments, Christopher is a bright, intelligent student that essentially enjoys school. He has many more preferred activities than non-preferred activities and often is quite anxious to get to these activities. He exhibits most of his problem behaviors in an effort to get desired activities sooner and often wants to be first in line or keep other students’ behavior managed, in order to make sure all rewarding and preferred activities are acquired. His teacher believes that he is testing to see how much he can get away with at school and that his behavior is often influence by other students and what they can and cannot get away with. Although Christopher gets to school very early and is primarily a Spanish speaker at home, Christopher doesn’t appear to have any academic, language or physical deprivations which initiate his problems behaviors.

Direct observation of Christopher is much more revealing than indirect observation and helps to clarify his behaviors. As can be seen in [Table 1](#Table1), Christopher exhibits pushing or shoving problem behaviors more often than whining behaviors. Moreover, problem behaviors of interest (pushing/shoving or whining) are seen more often during transitions as seen in [Figure 1](#Figure1). When transition behavior is further analyzed, data display a higher percentage of problem behaviors when the student is transitioning to preferred activities with the most notable difference seen in pushing behaviors (see [Table 2](#Table2) and [Figure 2](#Figure2)). Nevertheless, teacher interview suggests that there are no problem behaviors when transitioning to preferred activities.

Despite this inconsistency, teacher interview noted that Christopher is very driven to be around peers and be first whenever there is a preferred activity available. With such a desire, it is not surprising that data suggest delayed access to preferred activities is a challenging and possibly aversive stimulus for the student. When ABC Chart data is summarized by function, expedited access to activities accounted for approximately 30% of all original behavior functions and approximately 50% of all preferred activities’ behavior functions (see [Figure 3](#Figure3)). Reconsideration of ABC chart data where any function which allowed quicker access to a preferred activity or helped prevent a possible access delay was re-categorized as escaping delay, showed 16 out of 26 or 61.5% of all relevant behavioral data may be attributed to this function. [Appendix B](#Appendix_B) indicates consequences which could be reclassified with an asterisk and values are shown in [Table 3](#Table3).

With the analysis of all data, it is clear that Christopher’s behavior function must be to escape delay to preferred activities. This leads to the following hypothesis for Christopher’s problem behaviors: During transitions and lining up, Christopher pushes/shoves other students or whines (see operational definition) in order to escape delayed access to preferred activities.

**Intervention and Support Plan**

Christopher exhibits problem behaviors, such as whining and shoving when presented with delayed access to preferred activities, which require implementation of a multi-component positive behavior support intervention (see [Appendix E](#Appendix_E)). The system of supports for Christopher began with a series of antecedent interventions for classroom management that helped manage all students’ behaviors. First, a numerical line-up system was implemented. In this system, the teacher assigned students line-place numbers on a weekly basis and posted this information on the wall (student name and line-place number). When students lined up, they stood on the number that they were assigned (also their place in line). For example, Student A was assigned number three for the week. When asked to line up for a transition or turn-based activity, Student A stood on a number three adhered to the floor which was also the third spot in line. During the initiation of this procedure, students were taught how to line up and had multiple opportunities to practice this behavior. This helped reduce fighting over spots in line, accelerated lining up and decreased transition time. Second, a rule-based classroom reward system was initiated where students received stickers for following specific rules. This system helped the teacher give more praise with more specific reinforcement by providing a reinforcer (the stickers) and rules for which to praise. The rules were teacher defined and posted in the classroom. The teacher was requested to include a rule for keeping hands and feet to oneself, using words to communicate and using walking feet. Each rule was specifically taught to the students and when stickers were rewarded, the teacher praised the students for following the specific rule (e.g. Thank you for keeping your hands to yourself, Johnny). Finally, a visual schedule was posted for students to refer to with pictures of an analog clock showing times of new activities and an image of each activity. For example, there was a clock face for 9:00 showing a picture of toys for playtime and a clock face for 10:30 showing a picture of a book for story time. Students were shown this schedule and taught how to use the schedule to tell the order of activities and match the clock face pictures to the actual clock to know when a new activity was approaching.

The next element of the supports focused on developing a set of tools which Christopher could use to replace his problem behaviors with more appropriate reactions. First, Christopher was taught to say, “excuse me,” when someone was in his way. During instruction, the teacher focused on how to say the phrase, when to use it and the proper vocal tone when saying, “excuse me.” Instruction specifically focused on times when Christopher could replace shoving or whining with the phrase. Additionally, peers were taught the same social skill (this is an appropriate social instruction for preschool) and taught that it is good manners to move when asked appropriately. Second, Christopher was taught about tattling or ignoring students’ behaviors when they are not following teacher instructions. Often, Christopher used pushing or whining to redirect students to on-task and appropriate behaviors when their actions caused a delay to activities he preferred. Christopher was instructed to tattle on a student when their behavior was dangerous or inappropriate, or to ignore a student when their behavior was simply distracting. Christopher was taught to distinguish between behaviors that are worth tattling on and those which should be ignored as well as techniques for telling teachers about inappropriate behaviors and techniques for ignoring other students. Finally, Christopher was taught strategies to increase patience and anxiety management skills. Christopher was instructed how to use the visual schedule to recognize that a desired activity would come at a specified time and learned ways to manage his excitement for these activities.

The next element of Christopher’s support intervention was appropriate consequence interventions. Previously, Christopher’s teacher had him sit for any inappropriate behavior. Although this was a good consequence, it had potential to be implemented more effectively by specifically delaying access to preferred activities with the sit technique, and only being used as an extreme consequence. In order to more effectively and efficiently respond to Christopher’s problem behaviors, teachers used a multi-leveled approach to consequence implementation. When Christopher’s actions were potentially dangerous (i.e. pushing a student hard enough to displace them or knock them over), teachers were asked to end the behavior immediately by taking him out of the line or situation. When possible, the teacher was requested to subsequently have Christopher sit for two minutes prior to engaging in the next activity after the transition or the activity he was misbehaving during. When Christopher’s actions were not dangerous (mild shoving or whining), the teacher, on first offense, reminded Christopher to keep his hands to himself and say, “excuse me.” in place of shoving or use his words in place of whining. The experimenter also asked teachers to tell him that if he repeats the inappropriate behavior the teacher would reassign him to the back of lines for the rest of the day. If Christopher displayed a problem behavior again, the teacher would send him to the back of the line and ask him to tell the teacher what the appropriate behavior would have been. If Christopher could not tell the teacher what he should have done, that teacher should tell him the behavior and reteach the corresponding skill. Each day began with a clean slate for Christopher and he was able to return to his assigned line position for that week. Finally, when Christopher engaged in desired behaviors, such as saying, “excuse me,” rather than pushing a peer, the teacher was asked to give him specific verbal praise for the behavior. For example the teacher might say, “Thank you for saying excuse me rather than pushing Janet when she was in your way, Christopher. That was very good and I’m proud of you.” These positive remarks reinforced Christopher’s good behaviors and highlighted correct actions.

The last element of Christopher’s intervention was lifestyle and long-term supports. These began by increasing Christopher’s desired activity participation at home in order to increase his QOL and tone down his anxiety for in-school involvement. Staff suggested that Christopher’s parents enroll Christopher in an after-school or weekend activity such as bowling or little league. This would encourage friendships with non-disabled peers, model appropriate behavioral interactions and allow Christopher to participate in activities that are fun for him outside school. Next, staff suggested that Christopher’s mother schedule mother-son outings to desired locations such as the park or movies. On these outings, Christopher could receive one-on-one attention from his mom, time participating in fun activities outside school and modeling of appropriate behaviors from someone that he trusts. Together these lifestyle interventions should increase Christopher’s overall QOL by allowing him to engage in desired activities inside and outside of school and develop a stronger, healthier relationship and bond with his mother. Finally, staff planned to give this PBS plan to Christopher’s kindergarten teacher at the start of the school year in September. This would ensure that Christopher continued to receive the supports he needs and that his behaviors were adequately and fairly managed.

**Data Collection**

Data collection indicating changes in Christopher’s behaviors was collected in order to determine the efficacy of the intervention. First, teachers and preschool staff used paper and pencil to record a frequency count of Christopher’s pushing or shoving behaviors. Staff was instructed to record one tally each time Christopher used his limbs or whole body to displace another student. Conversely, staff was asked to also record each instance that Christopher said “excuse me” in order to make a student move. In order to make data collection manageable, frequency data for both pushing/shoving and excuse me was only collected between 9:00 A.M. and lunch (usually occurring at 12:00 pm). Data was collected to determine baseline for 3 days prior to the implementation of the supports and for 10 days after supports were implemented.

Staff also recorded whining by Christopher using time sampling. A timer sounded every 15 minutes between 9:30 A.M. and 11:30 P.M. Teachers were asked to record whether or not Christopher whined (made a high-pitched vocalization without words) during each interval. Again, this data was recorded for 3 days of baseline prior to support implementation and 10 days after implementation.

Finally, the experimenter examined permanent products displaying good behavior by counting the number of stickers Christopher earned each day for the following rules of concern: (1) keeping hands and feet to oneself and (2) using words to communicate. Because the sticker reward system was part of the supports, no baseline data could be collected. Data was collected for 10 days following the implementation of the reward system.

**Results**

Prior to the intervention, Christopher displayed pushing behaviors 7 to 8 times per day and never used the alternative behavior of saying, “excuse me.” [Figure 4](#Figure4) displays a substantial decrease in levels of pushing and increase in levels of saying, “excuse me,” after the intervention with no overlap. Furthermore, trends changed from static on both measures to positive on frequency of “excuse me” saying and negative on pushing. On both measures, variability of behaviors increased after the intervention. Similarly, whining behaviors occurred during 80% of sampled intervals prior to the intervention and immediately decreased in level to 60% afterward implementation. Whining behaviors continued to decrease with a negative trend as shown in [Figure 5](#Figure5). Again, variability of the measure increased after the interventions. Data in [Figure 6](#Figure6) display that Christopher began to exhibit appropriate replacement behaviors and decrease inappropriate behaviors as demonstrated by stickers received each day after the implementation of the intervention.

**Discussion**

Findings revealed that Christopher’s PBS intervention plan was successful and resulted in substantial decreases in problem behaviors such as whining and pushing and increases in desired behaviors such as saying, “excuse me,” and using words to communicate rather than whines. Furthermore, the delay in onset of the full effects of the interventions suggests Christopher was learning and implementing new skills. Increased variability after the intervention implies that Christopher was acquiring a new skill and learning how and when to use and not use his behaviors. Most convincing is the steady decline of whining behavior, as seen in [Figure 5](#Figure5), which suggests that Christopher may have employed techniques such as ignoring or tattling rather than whining. Furthermore an interaction is evident in the trendlines of [Figure 4](#Figure4) where as pushing decreased, saying, “excuse me,” increased. Clearly, Christopher deployed new skills as replacement and possibly coping mechanisms in order to exhibit more desirable behaviors after implementation of supports.

Additionally, sticker administration data not only indicate positive behavioral trends for Christopher but also effective implementation of supports by the teaching staff. It is unclear whether Christopher was displaying more appropriate behaviors or if teachers were distributing stickers at higher rates from the data presented in [Figure 6](#Figure6); nonetheless, the numbers suggest efficacy of the PBS plan in modifying the behaviors of both the target student and related teachers. Furthermore, other behavioral data display similar trends in Christopher’s behaviors to that suggested by the reward system, which second the implication that the stickers were properly administered for Christopher’s presentations of appropriate behavior.

A slightly disturbing data consistency is a dip in appropriate behaviors and burst of inappropriate behaviors on day 6 after implementation of supports, which is highly related to the overall jump in variability seen after implementation. This is possibly due to a “Monday Effect,” due to the school schedule. Days 1-5 after implementation occurred from Monday to Friday of the given school week. The students went home for the weekend and returned to school on Monday for days 6-10 of the data collection period. With the 2 day absence from the PBS plan, Christopher may have forgotten some of the changes or was inadvertently reinforced for inappropriate behaviors during the weekend at home. With this vacation from the plan, behaviors were altered towards pre-implementation rates. Staff must continue to collect data for a few weeks to determine if this “Monday Effect” is present only in the early phase of implementation or if it will continue to occur later in the process. If behaviors continue to trend towards this pattern, staff must consider new supports that will manage behaviors on Mondays or maintain PBS implementation over the weekend.

This plan is easily altered to remove the aforementioned “Monday Effect” by continuing implementation in the home setting. Christopher’s parents may be made aware of the supports and have each manipulated for efficacy at home. For instance, Christopher’s family might create home rules and use sticker rewards to specifically praise Christopher’s adherent behavior. His parents could use a sitting system where if Christopher pushes he must wait 2 minutes before beginning a desired activity. Also, Christopher’s family can continue to teach alternative skills at home and praise Christopher when they are displayed. By bringing the implementation of the PBS plan into the home, Christopher will have access to continuous supports and reinforcement on these newly acquired behaviors.

Despite minor setbacks in the data, Christopher’s PBS intervention was an overall success with immediate results. All measures displayed a decrease in Christopher’s problem behaviors on day one after implementation and a downward trend thereafter. In fact, by day 10 every measure showed very low or no problem behaviors at all. Similarly, appropriate behaviors were present from day one after implementation as well. These behaviors continued to rise to rates where they were effectively acting as replacement behaviors for previously challenging behaviors by day 10. Without doubt, PBS was an effective and immediate strategy for Christopher’s challenging behaviors.

This data and the present study support the notion that PBS is an efficient and effective method for shaping challenging behaviors into more appropriate behaviors and resulting easier-to-manage students. The intervention was successful in the preschool setting, well received by staff and quite easy to plan and implement. With such positive results, preschool staff should definitely consider use of PBS interventions and strategies for their early childhood classrooms. The technique works and often manages not only target student behavior but that of all the students. In the present study, almost all of the supports implemented were class-wide management strategies which were sure to shape the behaviors of all the students in Christopher’s class. Similarly, replacement behaviors are often discrete social techniques which are supremely helpful to teach to all preschool-aged students despite behavioral profile. PBS is perfect for all students when individualized to their needs and works seamlessly in the preschool setting. It needs to be a top choice for professionals working with children in early childhood educational settings. Christopher’s PBS plan is a model of ease and success to be taken by preschool staff as a first step in choosing to use PBS with their own students.

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**Appendix A**

**Anecdotal Notes on Christopher:**

Teacher given information:

* Will enter Kindergarten in Fall 2012 (passed entry test on Thursday, June 7, 2012)
* He is 5 ½ years old with a birthday in late September
* He is an advanced ELL student with very good academic skills
* He lacks social skills and often says no to authoritative “no’s”

Observed information:

* Often initiates play using teasing or mild taunting of peers
* “Look over here at what I have”
* During circle time he often touches other student when they move around
* Seems very concerned with other students’ behavior
* When he wants to yell at someone he says, “You’re fired”
* He always wants to be the first kid to give the correct answer
* Sometimes he just vocalizes loudly when he doesn’t know an answer right away to prevent others from answering before him.
* He is perfectly behaved during independent play
* He almost always looks to see if a teacher is watching before exhibiting a problem behavior (as if he doesn’t want to get caught or in trouble)
  + Makes me think he is not trying to get teacher attention
* Teacher tries to reward students with stickers, but just gives the stickers to every student (doesn’t really work at all)
* Choices for students really work well and keep them calm
* The teacher has very little classroom management in place although tools for classroom management and evidence of classroom management plans are all over the classroom.
* At and after lunch the level of problem behaviors is much less
  + After lunch has less desirable activities

**Appendix B**

BASIC ABC RAW DATA

**Wednesday, June 6, 2012**

| **Setting or Activity** | **Antecedent** | **Behavior** | **Consequence** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Clean-up time before circle time (transition) | Teacher not looking | Grabbed toy from peer | Teacher attention |
| Clean-up time before circle time (transition-NP) | Teacher looked away | Touching/shoving peer | Teacher attention |
| Sitting down for circle time (transition-NP) | Another student tried to take his place in the circle (on blue square) | Student shoved peer | Peer moved out of student’s seat\* |
| Sitting down for circle time (transition) | Lost chair in circle | Student tantrum and crying | Teacher attention and helped him find another seat |
| Circle time | Group choral responding | Taunting | Peer Attention |
| Circle time | Teacher praised student’s peer | Mimic/yell at peer | Teacher smile |
| Walk to playground  (transition) | No problem behaviors | | |
| Playground-P | Waiting in line for slide | Student shoved peer | Got down slide sooner\* |
| Playground | Saw peers coming to slide | Student taunted peers | Some peers came to play with him |
| Playground-P | Peer climbing up slide when student wanted to go down it | Yell/whine | Peer moved and teacher reprimanded peer\* |
| Playground-P | Peer in the way for the slide | Yell/whine | Peer moved\* |
| Playground-P | Racing for first on slide | Push/shove | Student got on slide first\* |
| Line up to leave playground (transition) | Bryce did not want to hold student’s hand | Student refused to hold different peer’s hand | Student escaped holding different peer’s hand |
| Walking home from playground (transition-NP) | Alex (peer) hit student | Whine | Alex reprimanded and student escaped Alex’s hitting\* |
| Walking home from playground (transition-NP) | Alex (peer) not holding student’s hand correctly | Shove | Alex held student’s hand appropriately. \* |
| Walking home from playground (transition-NP) | Alex (peer) did not follow teacher’s directions | Student shoved Alex | Alex was reprimanded and student escaped Alex’s bad behavior\* |
| Library Time | Student lost exclusive teacher attention | Student dropped several books on the floor | Student attention |
| Hand washing prior to lunch (transition-P) | Time to wash hands | Student shoved peers | Got to the sink sooner\* |
| Hand washing prior to lunch (transition-P) | Student was not first in line for hand washing | Whining | Teacher moved him to the third spot in line rather than the last spot he would have got on his own\* |
| Hand washing prior to lunch (transition-P) | Taunted by peers for taking two paper towels rather than one to dry hands | Student shoved peers | Student escaped peers’ teasing (peers stopped taunting) |
| Hand washing prior to lunch (transition-P) | Teacher reprimanded student and peers mimicked reprimand | Student taunted others and whined | Student escaped peers’ mimicking (peers stopped) |
| Lunch time-P | Alex (peer) left table | Student shoved Alex towards seat | Alex was moved to new seat and student escaped Alex’s bad behavior\* |

**Friday, June 8, 2012**

| **Setting or Activity** | **Antecedent** | **Behavior** | **Consequence** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Clean-up time before library time (transition-NP) | Teacher reprimand | Student shoved peer | Teacher attention? |
| Library time | Peer interrupted student | Student closed a book on the peer | Student escaped peer (Peer ran away) |
| Clean-up time before playground  (transition-P) | Student was cleaning up slowly | Student shoved peer | Student got peer’s toys put away faster\* |

**Monday, June 11, 2012**

| **Setting or Activity** | **Actual Time** | **Antecedent** | **Behavior** | **Consequence** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Line up for gym  (transition-P) | 10:34 | Peer cut student in line | Student pushed peer into place lightly | Peer in right place in line behind student\* |
| Gym-P | 10:37 | Peer tried to take two turns during bowling | Whine | Student escaped delayed turn (peer directed to end of line) \* |
| Gym-P | 10:41 | Peer cut student in line to get to his correct spot | Student shoved peer | Peer reminded student that it was his original spot |
| Gym-P | 10:48 | Peer slid in front of student in line | Student pushed/wrestled with peer | Peer moved behind student in line\* |
| Clean up in gym to go back for lunch  (transition-P) | 11:01 | End of gym/ Clean up time | Student shoved peer | Teacher attention, student escaped cleaning up (time out) \* |
| Clean up in gym to go back for lunch  (transition-P) | 11:01 | Student yelled at by teacher | Whine | Student escaped yelling (teacher stopped) |
| Clean up in gym to go back for lunch  (transition) | 11:03 | Peer hit student | Student attempted to hit peer | Student escaped peer (Peer ran away) |
| Line up for hand washing prior to lunch (transition-P) | 11:06 | Peer tried to cut student in line | Student shoved peer | Peer went back to original place in line behind student\* |
| Line up for hand washing prior to lunch (transition-P) | 11:07 | Student finished washing his hands | Student pulled on peers arm | Peer attention? |
| Lunch-P | 11:14 | Older student interfered with student passing the milk to a peer | Whine | Older student attention (explained she was trying to help student) |
| Lunch to playtime  (transition) | No problem behaviors | | | |
| Playtime | No problem behaviors | | | |
| Playtime clean up prior to nap time (transition-NP) | 12:15 | Clean up time | Whine | Student escaped cleaning up (time out) |

\* indicates that consequence may be re-categorized to escape delay to preferred activity.

NP = Non-preferred activity; P = Preferred activity

**Appendix C**

PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT SURVEY

*Adapted from the Functional Analysis Interview Form (O’Neill, Horner, Albin, Storey, & Sprague, 1990)*

Student: Christopher Age: 5 ½ Sex: Male

Interviewer: Gina Ciani Date: June 6, 2012 Respondent: Miss Colleen (teacher)

1. **List and describe behavior(s) of concern:**

The behaviors I’m concerned with are that he is touching other children, he has to be first all the time and he pushes.

1. **Prioritize these behaviors (which is the most important?):**

The touching and the pushing because that leads to the other problems.

1. **What procedures have you followed when the behavior first occurred?**

Well, when I first saw it I would make him sit, to at least get him away from the situation. Then he would sit by himself and then I would talk to him, “Why are you sitting?” You know, ask him what did he do that I made him sit. Then either make him go back and either apologize if he hit someone, that was usually the case, and then go to a new area.

1. **What do you think caused (or motivated) the behavior?**

He just wants to have a lot of people around him, he just doesn’t know how to direct his movements. He wants to have a lot of friends. He loves it. He just doesn’t know how to direct his movements?

1. **When do these behaviors occur?**

For him it is all day long. It’s consistent all day long. I see it the most during free play, which I understand but he’s still not—he’s always. I don’t see it if he’s engaged in something he really likes, like the Dr. LEGOS, and when he’s by himself.

1. **How often do these behaviors occur?**

I would say roughly that I’m making him sit on an average day four times an hour.

1. **How long has this/these behavior(s) been occurring?**

He started in, I want to say January, and it’s been happening ever since.

1. **Is there any circumstance under which the behavior does not occur?**

*From question 5:* I don’t see it if he’s engaged in something he really likes, like the Dr. LEGOS, and when he’s by himself.

1. **Is there any circumstance under which the behavior always occurs?**

I know he’s going to misbehave or do the behavior I don’t want to see when someone else approaches him. (Do you mean students or adults) A student. Like if the student has an interest in what he has, I know there’s going to be a problem. (I saw it happened before lunch when they lined up for the sink; does that always happen?) Yes, again because he always wants to be first.

1. **Does the behavior occur more often during certain times of day?**

It’s more before lunch and during, after nap he’s pretty calm.

1. **Does the behavior occur in response to the number of people in the immediate environment?**

It’s more when there are more people around. When he’s by himself, he’s fine.

1. **Does the behavior occur only with certain people?**

It’s the same people because some of the other children know to stay away from him. But there’s some of the others that don’t know. It happens with every staff member, in every room and in every circumstance. It happens with all the kids, like there was one time where there was a student next to him that he just slapped in the head for no apparent reason.

1. **Does the behavior occur only during certain subjects?**

Most of the time, during circle time it happens the most. I did an afternoon circle time today and he was attentive. That is not the case all the time, but morning circle is the worst. He loves doing like gym or music, but the behavior happens when it’s getting him to stop that. It’s more of the transitions.

1. **Could the behavior be related to any skills deficit?**

He in the beginning when he was still learning English, he had trouble behaviors due to that. Now that he’s been here a few months now, he knows the routine, he knows the transitions, he just wants to see what he can get away with—because I have others who are still struggling with transitions and he thinks he can. So, he knows, he knows. It has improved when his English improved, but since I’ve got a few specific students he’s gotten worse. But unfortunately I can’t do anything about that.

1. **What are identified reinforces for this student?**

He loves getting stickers and he also loves to draw, so when I can I’ll sit him in an area by himself and let him draw. Since, I know he loves that. He loves drawing pictures for mom or whatever. Oh yea, he loves the Dr. LEGOS too. But they are all draw to them, so if I give access to one, they all want them and it’s a nightmare.

1. **Is the student taking any medications that might affect his behavior?**

He’s not taking anything (school policy).

1. **Could the student’s behavior be signaling some deprivation condition (e.g. thirst, huger, lack of sleep)?**

No, (Elsewhere Miss Colleen noted that Christopher comes in at 6:30 in the morning so he doesn’t get enough sleep and that he is much calmer after nap time, so this may be a possibility.)

1. **Could the behavior be the result of any form of discomfort (e.g. headaches, stomachaches, blurred vision, ear infection, etc.)?**

Nothing common.

1. **Could the behavior be caused by allergies (e.g. food, materials in certain environments, etc.)?**

He has seasonal allergies, like when the seasons changed it was bad for him because he was always sneezing and coughing. His behavior is the same despite them, nothing slows him down.

1. **Do any other behaviors occur along with this behavior?**

Yes, sometimes whining and the touching and shoving are normally together.

1. **Are there any observable events that signal the behavior of concern is about to occur?**

Sometimes, well, he gets dropped off at 6:30 in the morning, so that in itself, he doesn’t get much sleep. Mom will tell me if he’s having a bad day in the morning. Like, she’ll call since I don’t come in until 9 and so there are almost 3 hours that he’s in here. Usually, he’s the same when he comes in.

1. **What are the consequences when the behavior(s) occur?**

When he shoves a child, he children usually fight him back. A teacher will normally come over too.

1. **Added Question: Do you think the student gets anything from the touching?**

No, when I talked to mom, because I was concerned that he was just impulsive and rough hands, mom said he plays like that at home with her, he is an only child so he’s still learning its acceptable with mom and it’s not acceptable here. But we’ve been going for a couple months though and it’s been getting better but it’s getting worse again.

1. **Added Question: Does it still happen in transitions where he likes the activity?**

If he likes the activity, no, it’s a smooth transition. (Direct observation suggests otherwise)

1. **Added Question: Do other students touch him too and do they have the same consequences?**

Yes, they touch him too. Yes, if someone touches him they sit and if he touches someone they sit.

1. **Added Question: Are there any kinds of different levels of his or other student’s touching?**

He’s more pushing and the others are more hitting. So he’s more pushing and the others are like everywhere

1. **Added Question: Have you tried any social skills training, like telling him to say, “excuse me?”**

If I tell him say excuse me or something, he’ll say it and it will work for about 5 minutes. Because he knows right from wrong. Like when we were walking back from the park he was telling Alex, no, Alex, no. So, he knows.

**Appendix D**

STUDENT PREFERENCES AND ABILITIES INTERVIEW

Student: Christopher Age: 5 ½ Sex: Male

Interviewer: Gina Ciani Date: June 8, 2012 Respondent: Christopher (student)

**Part 1: Student Responses**

1. **What are your three favorite things at school?**
2. Coloring/drawing
3. Playing with the race cars
4. The afternoon
5. **What are your three least favorite things at school?**
6. Dolls
7. When it’s raining
8. Being last in line.
9. **Miss Colleen says you can speak Spanish and English. Which language do you like better?**

I like Spanish more because it’s like my mommy.

1. **If you could skip anything in the school day what would you skip?**

I would skip library time and going to circle.

**Part 2: Student Abilities**

Student can count to 5 without prompting and can count to 23 with prompting.

Student can write his entire first name (with capital letter at the beginning and lower case elsewhere) independently and identify each letter in his name.

Student can speak and understand English based on interview content and direct observations.

Student can identify all basic colors and shapes.

Appendix E

**BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN**

**Hypothesis:** During transitions and lining up, Christopher pushes/shoves other students (physically moves others by using his arms or whole body) or whines (makes a non-verbal, high-pitched squealing sound) in order to escape delayed access to preferred activities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ANTECEDENT INTERVENTIONS** | **REPLACEMENT/**  **ALTERNATIVE SKILLS** | **CONSEQUENCE**  **INTERVENTIONS** | **LIFESTYLE INTERVENTIONS** |
| * Implement a line-up system where students line up in positions based on weekly selected numbers. * Implement a classroom management system where students are rewarded with stickers for specific desired rule-following behaviors (i.e. keep hands and feet to selves, use walking feet) * Create a visual schedule that displays all the activities during the day with pictures of the clock at the times they will begin (Christopher must be taught to refer to this schedule as well). | * Teach Christopher to say “excuse me” when he would like other students to move. * Teach Christopher when it is appropriate to tattle on other students**’** behavior and when it is appropriate to ignore other those behaviors * Teach Christopher techniques for how to appropriately tell teachers when other students are misbehaving. * Teach Christopher techniques for ignoring other students. * Teach Christopher patience skills. | * When Christopher pushes/shoves another student, the teacher will first remind him that he needs to ask students to move and that if he does pushes again he will need to move to the end of the line and second move the student to the end of the line and ask him what he should have done. * When Christopher whines, the teacher will ask him to use his words. * When Christopher pushes/shoves in a violent or possibly injurious manner, the teacher will have him sit down prior to beginning the preferred activity for 2 minutes. * When Christopher says “Excuse Me” successfully the teacher will praise him specifically for saying “Excuse Me.” | * Christopher will enroll in a desired after school or weekend activity (e.g. bowling league) in order to have more access to desired activities and develop social and patience skills. * Christopher’s mom will plan outings for Christopher to parks or other desired placed where she can spend time doing preferred activities with Christopher and he can naturally develop skills for unstructured play. * Christopher’s kindergarten teacher will be given a copy of his PBS plan in order to continue the intervention. |

**Tables**

Table 1

*Frequency and Setting of Christopher’s Problem Behaviors*

Transitions Non-Transitions

Behavior Frequency Frequency Total

Whining 6 5 11

Pushing/Shoving 12 5 17

Table 2

*Percentage of Christopher’s Problem Behaviors Based on Transition Preference*

To Preferred Activities To Non-Preferred Activities

Behavior Percent Percent Total Frequency

Whining 50.0 50.0 6

Pushing/Shoving 63.6 36.3 11

Combined 58.8 41.1 17

Table 3

*Functions of Problem Behaviors by Setting Activity*

Non-Transition Activities Transitions To

Function Preferred Non-Preferred Preferred Non-Preferred

Attention 1 0 2 2

Behavior Modification 3 0 3 3

Activity Access 5 0 4 2

Other 0 0 1 0

Totals 9 0 10 7

Escape Delay? 6 0 6 4

*Note:* Frequency counts of original classifications of problem behavior functions are noted above totals and counts of functions that could be reclassified as an escape from delayed access to a preferred activity is noted below totals. Functions were reclassified if the consequences in the ABC chart allowed the student quicker access to a preferred task or prevented others from delaying the task (e.g. managing peer behavior to avoid teacher delaying task implementation).

**Figures**

*Figure 1.*Frequency of Problem Behaviors in Transition and Non-Transition Settings.

*Figure 2.*Percent of Problem Behavior Types during Transitions to Preferred or Non-Preferred Activities.

*Figure 3.*Frequency and Distribution of Behavioral Functions by Activity Type.

*Figure 4.* Frequency of Pushing and Excuse Me Behaviors Before and After Implementation with Trendlines.

*Figure 5.* Percentage of Intervals with Whining Before and After Implementation.

*Figure 6.* Count of Sticker Rewards for Desired Behaviors by Day of Intervention.