Positive Behavior Supports: Implementing the Behavior Side of the RtI Triangle

Tier I – Primary Interventions

Prevention of behavioral problems is the focus of the Tier I behavior supports, includes defining and systematically teaching the core behavioral expectations such as school rules and procedures that create a safe learning environment. A general rule framework supports the wide implementation of appropriate and positive behaviors. Teachers then define these broad rules and directly teach lessons through the year on the behaviors related to these rules. Consistent systems of reinforcement are developed and implemented, ensuring that there is enforcement, monitoring and positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors. When schools are consistent with stated expectations and the rules are applied fairly, students develop a respect for the rules and believe and trust in the system to work. The implementation of feedback and recognition support the long-term development of pro-social behaviors in settings that include all students. In most cases 80% of the school population fit into this tier. These are the students who do believe that the rules pertain to them.

School-wide and Classroom-wide Systems in Tier I- Evidence-based Practices
- Identify a common purpose and approach to discipline
- Define a clear set of positive expectations and behaviors
- Implement procedures for teaching expected behavior
- Differentiate supports from a continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behavior
- Differentiate supports from a continuum of procedures for discouraging inappropriate behavior
- Implement procedures for on-going monitoring and evaluation

Tier II- Secondary Interventions

 Even with an effective primary tier intervention in place, a group of students, approximately 11%, 26% and 29% of elementary, middle, and high school students respectively, will require additional behavior support to experience success. (Horner, 2007). This second tier of intervention is designed to support a targeted group of students who have not responded to the primary interventions, but whose behaviors do not pose a risk to themselves or others.

These students are primarily involved in relatively low-level disruptive behaviors such as blurting out, irregular work completion, tardiness and off task behaviors. The focus of intervention for this group is the prevention of these behaviors from becoming chronic. The development of these targeted interventions are based on data related to these low-level disruptive behaviors. These secondary practices focus on intensifying the supports provided in the primary tier. These might include increasing classroom structure, providing more intensive social skills instruction, provision of more frequent behavioral prompts and the delivery of more frequent reinforcements. These types of interventions usually require minimal time to implement, and are very similar to implement from student to student (Fairbanks, S., et.al., 2008), and typically result in problem behavior reduction.

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Secondary Intervention Systems in Tier II- Evidence-based Practices

- Instruction on targeted skills
- Self- monitoring strategies
- Acknowledgements for appropriate behavior
- Regular performance feedback concerning target behaviors
- Peer tutoring

(Fairbanks, Simonsen, Sugai, 2008)

Tier III- Tertiary Individual Interventions

Tertiary tier interventions are designed to support individual students who require additional support to benefit from the primary and secondary intervention, or whose behaviors are serious enough to require more immediate intensive support (Simonsen, Sugai, Negron, 2008). These students make up approximately 3-5 % of the population who require this highly individualized attention. These interventions involve an individualized assessment followed by an individualized intervention plan, which is an important foundation for tertiary tier support.

According to Fairbanks (2008), and her colleagues, most of these function based interventions include providing more teacher attention, an increase in self-monitoring and further development of these skills, the direct teaching of social skills, breaking tasks down into smaller parts to reduce task duration and scheduled breaks to get to work adults or peers. Also effective in these plans is interspersing instruction between preferred activities.

Students whose behavior problems are not reduced by secondary interventions, or who engage in dangerous or severe behavior will need the development of a function based behavior support plan (BSP, Horner, 1994).

Tertiary Individual Student Systems in Tier III- Evidence-based Practices
- Support behavioral competence at school and district levels
- Tailor function-based behavior support planning
- Use team and data-based decision-making
- Utilize comprehensive person-centered planning and wraparound processes
- Deliver secondary social skills and self-management instruction
- Implement individualized instructional and curricular accommodations