








Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom (Summary)

1 Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it.  MODERATE EVIDENCE	2 Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.  STRONG EVIDENCE	3 Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.  STRONG EVIDENCE	4 Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students' families for continued guidance and support.  MODERATE EVIDENCE	5 Assess whether schoolwide behavior problems warrant adopting schoolwide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative and foster positive interactions.  MODERATE EVIDENCE
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1 Every teacher experiences difficulty at one time or another in trying to remedy an individual student's behavior problem that is not responsive to preventative efforts. Because research suggests that the success of a behavioral intervention hinges on identifying the specific conditions that prompt and reinforce the problem behavior (i.e., the behavior's "antecedents" and "consequences"), we recommend that teachers carefully observe the conditions in which the problem behavior is likely to occur and not occur. Teachers then can use that information to tailor effective and efficient intervention strategies that respond to the needs of the individual student within the classroom context.

2 Many effective classroom-focused interventions to decrease students' problematic behavior alter or remove factors that trigger them. These triggers can result from a mismatch between the classroom setting or academic demands and a student's strengths, preferences, or skills. Teachers can reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behavior by revisiting and reinforcing classroom behavioral expectations; rearranging the classroom environment, schedule, or learning activities to meet students' needs; and/or individually adapting instruction to promote high rates of student engagement and on-task behavior.

3 We recommend that teachers actively teach students socially- and behaviorally-appropriate skills to replace problem behaviors using strategies focused on both individual students and the whole classroom. In doing so, teachers help students with behavior problems learn how, when, and where to use these new skills; increase the opportunities that the students have to exhibit appropriate behaviors; preserve a positive classroom climate; and manage consequences to reinforce students' display of positive "replacement" behaviors and adaptive skills.

4 Social relationships and collaborative opportunities can play a critical role in supporting teachers in managing disruptive behavior in their classrooms. We recommend that teachers draw on these relationships in finding ways to address the behavior problems of individual students and consider parents, school personnel, and behavioral experts as allies who can provide new insights, strategies, and support.

5 Classroom teachers, in coordination with other school personnel (administrators, grade-level teams, and special educators), can benefit from adopting a schoolwide approach to preventing problem behaviors and increasing positive social interactions among students and with school staff. This type of systemic approach requires a shared responsibility on the part of all school personnel, particularly the administrators who establish and support consistent schoolwide practices and the teachers who implement these practices both in their individual classrooms and beyond.