# Basic Behavior Interventions Menu

This menu may be used to help teams select interventions for Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs). All interventions should be individualized to match the function of the behavior(s) and the profile of the student. Consult evidence-based resources to learn more about any of the interventions listed here.

*Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and that there are many other behavior interventions that may be appropriate. The intervention descriptions in this guide are brief and meant to provide only a high-level overview. Additional step-by-step procedures for interventions should be included within a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).*

## Antecedent Strategies

Antecedent strategies are used to modify the student's environment or routine by reducing "triggering" stimuli and enhancing the student's opportunity to understand expectations and engage positively in routines.

❏ **Visual Schedule**
A visual schedule shows each part of the student's day represented by a picture, word, or symbol on a physical or digital display. One column represents "To Do" and one column represents "All Done." All visuals start in the "To-Do" column. Staff review the upcoming activity with the student prior to a transition and then prompt the student to move the icon to the "all done" column at the end of the activity. Staff gradually fade the prompting of this strategy, so the student learns to independently check their schedule prior to a transition.

❏ **Task Analysis (Visual or Written)**
Similar to a visual schedule, the task analysis is for specific tasks that require multiple steps, such as completing a worksheet. A task analysis includes a visual or written description of each small step of a process.

Example: Pick up pencil, write your name, begin working on #1, ask for help if needed, repeat for all problems, put away pencil.

❏ **Visual Timer/ Audio Timer**
Timers may be used to support work/break cycles or to signal other transitions. They are often used to provide a warning that a break is ending, helping to ease the shift from preferred to nonpreferred tasks. However, timers can be adapted for a variety of purposes.

❏ **Work/Break Rotation**
The work/break rotation modifies the student's schedule to reflect a more favorable balance of nonpreferred versus preferred tasks/activities.

Example: The student completes one task box and then has a 5-minute break. The student completes one worksheet with prompting and support from an adult and then has another 5-minute break. As the student gains skills and tolerance, the team can gradually add in more work tasks while gradually reducing the length of breaks.

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❏ **Priming and Check for Understanding**

Staff verbally and/or visually review expectations prior to activities and transitions. Staff check for understanding by having the student repeat the expectations back to them or having the student imitate the expectations as appropriate.

Example: One minute prior to circle time, staff will use prompt cards and say, "We are going to circle time. Remember, at circle time, we sit in our square, we have a quiet fidget toy, and we raise our hand to get help."

❏ **Sensory Supports**

Sensory supports help the student stay regulated and calm. These may include fluorescent light covers, sensory diets, fidget items, sensory beans/sand/etc., bouncy chairs, brushing protocols, headphones, sunglasses, gross motor routines, among others. Intervention descriptions should describe the items needed and the procedures that accompany their use. If the student receives Occupational Therapy (OT), the OT should be consulted about sensory supports within the classroom.

❏ **Behavior Momentum**

Behavior momentum increases the probability that a student will cooperate with a non-preferred directive or task. Present 2-3 directives that the student is **likely** to cooperate with prior to giving a directive that they are **less likely** to cooperate with.

Example: Clap your hands, give me a high five, tap your head, now sit in your chair.

❏ **Social Stories**

Social stories can be created and used to teach behavioral expectations, social norms, or help orient students to unfamiliar experiences. Social stories should be reviewed frequently and paired with practice of the skill or topic that they are teaching.

❏ **Environmental Modifications**

Environmental modifications help the student know what to do and what not to do. Furniture may be arranged to minimize distractions and show boundaries. Painter's tape may be used to provide visual boundaries around desks, walking lanes in back of the classroom, or other areas as needed. Adding visual task analyses to common routines such as handwashing can also help to clarify expectations in the environment.

❏ **Providing Choices and/or Choice Menu**

Providing choices helps students have more control in their learning environment. Staff provide the student with choices about which tasks to complete, which order to complete them in, and/or which types of breaks/rewards and preferred activities they can earn. If the student proposes a choice that wasn't offered, staff should consider it and honor the request when feasible. A visual choice menu is often helpful when students have language limitations.

❏ **Noncontingent Reinforcement**

Noncontingent reinforcement allows the student to have what they want without having to earn it. The student accesses preferred items, activities, and high-quality attention from staff with "no strings attached." This intervention can be modified to provide some preferences/reinforcers non-contingently and others contingently upon work completion, communication, other skills/preferred behaviors, or on a specific schedule.

## Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies are intended to teach replacement behaviors and should almost always include some form of modeling, role-play/rehearsal, interactive feedback, and generalization practice. Specifying when and how often the teaching and practice will take place is essential for success. When a student needs to be taught a new behavioral skill, service time may need to be added to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure that there is time for the skill to be taught.

❏ **Functional Communication Training**
The student is taught to request preferred items, activities, attention, and breaks from work using prompting and reinforcement. Staff respond to requests immediately and reinforce requests whenever feasible. This intervention can be used regardless of a student's communication modality.

❏ **Self-Regulation Training**
The student is taught a variety of self-regulation strategies including breathing techniques, identifying emotions, communicating needs, rhythm techniques, and sensory techniques. Staff may use a curriculum that teaches regulation zones and strategies, and the student receives opportunities to practice techniques routinely. Practice should occur when the student is not escalated so that they may be more likely to use the techniques when escalations begin. Staff may provide a visual menu of self-regulation techniques to assist the student in choosing regulation strategies when escalations begin.

❏ **Social Skills Training**
The student is taught social skills such as turn-taking, sharing, cooperation, appropriate waiting, and other relevant behaviors. Staff may use video modeling, social stories, in-person modeling, and prompting with reinforcement to teach these skills both in a structured setting and naturalistically throughout the school day.

❏ **Tolerance and Cooperation Training**
The student is taught to tolerate waiting or hearing "no," and to cooperate with expected transitions, work demands, and other non-preferred activities through the strategic use of prompting, reinforcement, shaping, and fading.

## Reinforcement Strategies

Reinforcement strategies help students learn that their needs and wants can be met through communication, cooperation, and self-regulation. Getting the reinforcement system matched correctly to the function of the behavior and the preferences of the student is one of the most important influences on behavior change.

❏ **Token Board**
Token boards help students learn the connection between their actions and the consequences (rewards) they receive.

A token board shows spaces where tokens (like stickers, coins, or pictures of rewards placed with Velcro. Tokens are earned by engaging in preferred behaviors that are already within the student's repertoire. Once a designated number of tokens are earned, a preferred reward or activity is presented. In the intervention description, be sure to include the preferred behaviors that will result in a token being awarded, as well as the specific reinforcers that can be earned through the token system. Also include when tokens should be awarded (i.e., time-based or response based).

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❏ **Point Sheet/ Point System**

A point sheet allows a student to earn points for preferred behaviors, with the points then being exchanged for specific preferred items or activities. Preferred behaviors are often grouped into a few general categories (e.g., responsible, respectful, safe) but may be more specific or individualized (e.g., safe hands, complete task, ask for a break). Be sure to specify in the intervention description how many points are needed to earn a reward and how often staff should provide rewards (e.g., after each class, mid-day, end of day). Pairing a point sheet with goal-setting and daily progress monitoring/goal adjustment is ideal.

❏ **First/Then**

A first/then board presents a visual of a non-preferred task or activity followed by a preferred activity or reward. Staff should present the first/then board to the student, state the strategy aloud, ensure the "first" task is within the student's abilities, and immediately provide the "then" reward upon task completion. First/then boards should not be used as a visual schedule, and the process should not take longer than a few minutes to execute.

Example: First do task box, then blow bubbles.

❏ **Behavior Contract**

A behavior contract is an agreement signed by staff and a student that specifies a behavioral goal and the reward that the student will earn when the goal is met. Behavior contracts are often paired with mentoring or other strategies that lend themselves to setting goals and building relationships

❏ **Check in/Check Out (CICO)**

Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) is a structured system in which students check in with staff each morning to set a goal using a point sheet or other goal-setting tool. At the end of the day, they check out to review their progress, receive feedback or coaching, and earn a reward if the goal was met. CICO can be used somewhat generically as a group intervention or can be highly individualized and intensified as needed.

❏ **Differential Reinforcement**

Replacement and/or preferred behaviors are consistently offered while rewards are withheld or diminished in the presence of target behaviors. This strategy is ideal to help staff increase reinforcement of preferred behaviors and communication, while decreasing inadvertent reinforcement of target behaviors. Be sure to specify the student's function-based reinforcers when using this intervention.

Example: The student will receive high-quality, "fun" attention and take a walk to the office both when they request it and when they earn it through the token board system. When target behaviors occur, the quality of attention will shift from "fun" to "calm and directive," and a walk to the office will not be offered.

❏ **Behavior-Specific Praise**

Frequent verbal praise for specific behaviors is given to the student. Pairing the verbal praise with a visual can enhance the effectiveness of this intervention for learners with language delays.

Example: "Great job having safe hands!" (shows visual of safe hands and gives a thumbs up or high five to the student)

## Reactive Strategies

Reactive strategies are the procedures that staff use to respond to precursor and target behaviors. These strategies help everyone stay safe and get back to a place where learning can occur. For dangerous behaviors, crisis/safety plans should accompany the BIP.

❏ **Reinforcing Precursors**

Staff monitor for early warning signs (i.e., precursors) of escalation and provide reinforcers (i.e., preferred items, activities, attention, escape) when the student engages in precursor behaviors. This strategy allows the student to get their needs met through non-dangerous behavior rather than through dangerous behavior.

❏ **Response Interruption and Redirection**

When a student engages in a precursor or target behavior, staff interrupt or block the behavior and redirect the student by prompting communication or cooperation, or by offering an alternative activity or routine that positively engages the student's interest.

❏ **Co-regulation**

When a student engages in a precursor or target behavior, staff provide a calm tone and supportive presence, modeling and prompting self-regulation strategies such as going for a walk, deep breathing, using putty or kinetic sand, listening to white noise, rocking or tapping, or other relevant regulation strategies. This procedure begins with staff initiating and modeling the strategies with the goal of the student learning to initiate and engage in self-regulation over time.

❏ **Verbal De-escalation**

When a student engages in a target behavior, staff use the following de-escalation phrases and/or script:

(insert phrases and script approved by district safety protocol and/or deemed appropriate by IEP team).

Example:
» I see you are (crying). Are you (angry)?
» I can tell you're (angry). What are you (angry) about?
» So you're (angry) about (event) – is that right?
» I understand and I am here for you.
» How can I help?