What is Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) and what does it look like in a preschool classroom?


PBS and assessment of the components:
- Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is a model for preventing and reducing challenging behaviors by teaching appropriate behaviors and providing supports necessary to sustain that behavior.
- PBS is not a curriculum- it is a data-based decision making framework for systems to identify needs, develop strategies, and evaluate practice toward success.
- PBS provides parent supports at home and in the community.
- How PBS was assessed in the classrooms:
  - Observations were completed in each agency classroom.
  - Using the PBS Components checklist, it was indicated which PBS components were in place in each room.

Structure of Consultation
- Settings: 8 classrooms were served at the Arlitt Child and Family Research Center at the University of Cincinnati and 5 classrooms were served at the University of Cincinnati Early Learning Center, totaling 13 classrooms across both agencies.
- Children in these classrooms were either Head Start or tuition enrollment.
- Consultation Team:
  - Two Master’s level School Psychology students supervised by a Doctoral level School Psychology student and a professor from the University of Cincinnati.
  - Additionally, the team met with the key stakeholders (i.e., teachers, parents, Director of Children’s Programs, Coordinator of Mental Health and Disabilities, and Preschool Coordinator).
- Consultation Process:
  - Universal PBS screenings were conducted twice a year.
  - Upon completion of the observations, teachers made either class-wide or individual child referrals for behavior concerns.
  - The team worked collaboratively to develop positive support plans and monitored progress utilizing data based decision making.
  - The team worked within a tiered model of services and provided Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports while referring to outside agencies when the addition of Tier 3 services were necessary.
  - At the end of the year, any additional concerns from teachers were consulted upon and plans specifically targeting the transition to kindergarten were discussed, if needed.

Arlitt Model of PBS Components
- Forming Relationships
  - The teacher is responsible for helping children and trusting relationships are formed. For example, the teacher greets children (at door, when possible) and has meaningful conversations with them.
- Guidelines of the Classroom
  - The key guidelines (i.e., safety and how to treat others) are in place from the first day children enter the program. These guidelines are stated, modeled, taught, and practiced for the children as needed. All staff are familiar and consistent with the guidelines.
- Classroom Schedule
  - The teacher follows the classroom schedule every day except in the case of unusual circumstances. When needed, the classroom schedule is posted in the classroom or in an individual book for a specific child. The schedule includes pictures and words.
- Classroom Matrix of Behavioral Expectations for Each Classroom Routine
  - Teachers develop a set of expectations for each area of the classroom and ways to teach these either in subtle or more explicit ways. This is shared with all staff in the classroom.
- Transition Signal
  - The children move in the smallest groups possible for the situation. A song may be used during transition time. Teachers may individualize for children who need another signal, such as eye contact, a card to represent the transition, or a visual schedule.
- Warning Prior to Transitions
  - The teachers provide a warning before a transition from one activity to another. As examples, teachers provide a specific warning for individual or small groups of children indicating that the activity will end soon (i.e., 5 more minutes, when you finish the puzzle…) prior to any child’s transition to the next activity.
- Acknowledgement System
  - All children’s accomplishments are encouraged and recognized throughout the day. When a systematic approach is needed for an individual child, the teaching team develops and implements a teacher reminder plan to achieve consistency. Genuine acknowledgement remains a priority as well as the effectiveness of the plan.
- Pre-Teaching
  - At least one teacher makes at least one statement of expected behavior in the absence of misbehavior when appropriate. For example, as children travel from the classroom to the muscle room and back, a teacher states, “Remember to walk quietly through the halls. People are working in the offices.” Practice opportunities are also available.
- Specific Verbal Encouragement
  - Specific verbal encouragement is defined as an encouragement system with focus on the child’s accomplishment. Examples: “You worked very hard on that puzzle and you finished it.” “Last week you couldn’t climb across the bars and now you can.” “You helped rebuild her block structure and now she feels better.” “You told me how you feel and now I can help you solve the problem.”
- Ratio of Positive Statements vs. Redirections/Planned Ignoring
  - Teachers aim to have a ratio of 4:1 positive statements to redirections, evenly distributed throughout the classroom. Planned ignoring of mild disruptive behavior is used when appropriate.

Case Example
Setting: A preschool classroom with 10 children (both Head Start and tuition enrollment)

The Referral: A 5 year old, female child (who was transitioning to kindergarten the next school year) was referred for aggressive and disruptive behaviors displayed during transitions between activities and during free choice time. The teacher was interested in increasing engagement and decreasing aggression and disruptions.

Intervention Package Designed:
- Using a 4:1 Positive Statements to Redirections Ratio
- Use of High Probability Request Sequences
- Helper Chart
- Visual Transition Timer
- Activity Schedule
- Rules Posted

Graphs indicate the child’s response to the designed intervention package