



*Tips for Effectively Using Behavior Plans
In the Incredible Years (IY) Teacher Classroom Management,
Incredible Beginnings & Autism Teacher Programs*

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Overview

Throughout the Incredible Years Teacher Training Programs participants engage in self-reflection inventories and have opportunities to set specific professional goals. These goals encourage them to refine their teaching practice, incorporate new strategies, and help embed Incredible Years principles in their daily teaching work. The Incredible Years behavior plans provide an additional self-reflection and goal setting process that encourages the teachers to consider the specific needs and strengths of an individual child, rather than a group of children. This document explains how IY group leaders can introduce the concept of developing behavior plans to teachers and childcare providers for a selected student.

Step 1: Benefits and Barriers of Behavior Plans

Start your discussion of behavior plans with the Benefits and Barriers exercise as you do for introducing other IY curriculum topics. This will help you know which workshop participants have had experience using behavior plans, what they see as their value, and what have been the barriers they have encountered.



All teachers are aware of the need to individualize academic goals and teaching approach for children with additional needs. Social, emotional, and behavioral interventions also need to be tailored.

- Behavior plans help teachers plan interventions that will support children's social, emotional, behavioral, and academic goals.
- Teachers work on plans in each session, adding new strategies
- Teachers solicit parent input and select strategies relevant to the layer of the pyramid being worked on
- Teachers use behavior plan templates to record strategies
- At end of the year the behavior plan can be used to support the child's transition to a new teacher and classroom
- These plans are teacher led. They are not a substitute for a more comprehensive evaluation and specialized help for a high-needs child



Step 2: Group Leaders Model and Collaborate with Workshop Participants on a Sample Behavior Plan

One of the classroom assignments for every workshop is for participants to develop a child behavior plan for one of their students. You will explain this process in the first workshop by developing a sample behavior plan together as a group in a collaborative way. This can be a student you have worked with in the past, a composite hypothetical child, or a current student of one of the workshop participants. If a current student is used for the group planning be sure to remind everyone that confidentiality is essential. The benefit of using a hypothetical child is that the process can be simpler and easier to control. However, using a current child or child derived from the group is often more engaging. For this section the most important consideration is to choose the method that will result in the best example for the group, where they will go away with a clear understanding of the process and the steps involved in a well developed plan.

For the first workshop it is important to spend considerable time walking through the behavior of concern., the possible function(s) of the behavior and the positive opposite behavior. It is important to select behaviors that match with the stage of the pyramid. Present this example behavior plan in a way that everyone can see it. It can be helpful to project the editable plan on the whiteboard or use flip chart paper to record the group's ideas. Once the teachers are clear on the behavior of concern, the function of the behavior and the positive opposite behavior you then brainstorm the strategies for this student. After this creative brainstorm spend time deciding which are the most important or realistic strategies to try in the next weeks.

Behavior You want to See Less of: Clearly establish the focus of the behavior plan remembering to emphasize the importance of precise, observable behaviors you want to see less of. Record the group's ideas on the shared chart. For example, student engages only in solitary play, or student does not use verbal and nonverbal language with peers. Follow this by discussing background information such as the function of the behavior issue and when or where it happens.

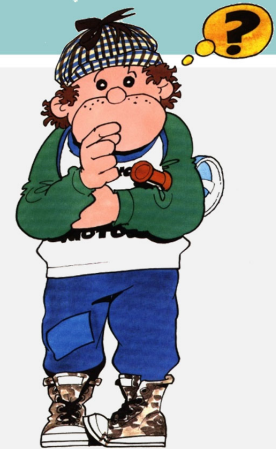


When/Why: Functional Assessment

When is the behavior occurring?
Why is the behavior occurring?

Is the behavior happening because:

- It provides the child with reinforcing attention?
- It allows child to avoid unpleasant task or situation?
- The child doesn't have developmental ability for situation?
- Child has not been taught appropriate behavior?
- The behavior is fun in and of itself?



1 What is my problem?

There are other possible functions of behavior, and behaviors may have more than one function, but the above list are common functions. Understanding the function of the behavior will help guide the appropriate response.



Establish Positive Replacement Behavior: Next determine a related developmentally appropriate goal, known as the “positive opposite” behavior for the student, and record it on the chart. For example, when the child sits close to another child and initiates an interaction, or uses a nonverbal or verbal signal to indicate what is wanted.

List strategies or scripts that the teacher can use to help establish the replacement behavior: Finally, brainstorm with the group strategies or specific scripts that could be used by the teacher to help the student achieve the goal and record these in the appropriate column. For example, saying, “*Seth your friend is sharing his truck with you*” or, “*Great pointing and using a word to ask for his truck.*”

After the list of possible strategies or scripts has been completed discuss which one or two might be the best choice or a priority for this student at this time. It is important for the participants to consider a range of choices but then narrow down the list, so the plan is realistic and manageable.



Note: When scripting be sure to ask for teacher language, not generalities. For example, “*You are sharing with your friend*” rather than, “*I will use social coaching.*”

Step 3: Work on Specific Behavior Plans

Ask teachers or childcare providers to choose a student they are currently teaching who could benefit from some of the behavior management strategies they are learning in the IY workshop. Form pairs or triads based on the age group, or developmental status of the children the teachers work with. For example, you can pair up teachers who primarily work with toddlers, or with preschoolers or, have similar goals regarding helping a child with limited language, or particular social, or emotional difficulties. At this time, the participants work together to discuss their own behavior plans with each other. Each teacher will introduce their selected child and state the behavior of concern and goal. The partners then discuss possible strategies or scripts and help refine the plan. You may wish to use a timer to ensure that all teachers get equal time discussing their student and the plan. Circulate as the plans are being discussed and provide support or prompts as needed. Try not to get stuck in the expert role.

Afterwards, participants will briefly share with the whole group their goal for their behavior plan over the next few weeks before the next workshop. These will be recorded on the flip chart to be referred to at the next meeting. At the end of this section spend a little time processing the plans they have been working on. Structure this by selecting one or two teachers to share their plan. Have your opening question to focus on the teacher (e.g., *name the behavior you want to see*), follow with some probing questions (e.g., *why do you think the child is displaying this behavior, what is the function?*), ask them to name a strategy at each pyramid level and get them to name them the level of the pyramid they have added. Praise their efforts and if required guide them to add some more details. Set the expectation that they will all work on the plan in the coming weeks and that the group will all be interested in hearing their progress at the next workshop.

Step 4: Follow Up and Discuss Behavior Plan Progress



When taking feedback in the large group carefully consider which teachers to ask to share who will be clear, concise and positive. From circulating around the groups you will have an idea which teachers might provide good examples. If group leaders are able to do classroom observations, they can explore with teachers how they are doing with implementing their behavior plan. Or, they can send them emails, or make a call to see if they need support. During the subsequent workshop group leaders will start the session by breaking up participants with their buddies or small groups to share their successes and challenges implementing their behavior plan. Afterwards select a few people to share with the whole group. Ask follow-up questions to elicit more details, explore barriers and solutions, and link to key principles. It is very helpful to ask for a quick demonstration of a success a teacher has had with using a particular strategy or to problem solve a difficult interaction challenge and then set up a role play to try out alternative action or response.

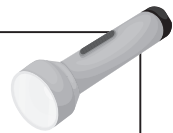
Step 5: Continue the Behavior Plan Process at Every Workshop

Towards the end of each workshop, you and the teachers or day care providers will work through the behavior plan process again incorporating new learning from the day’s workshop. Model the thinking every time. This helps the teachers summarize their learning as well as consider the links and benefits of new approaches to their goals for their student’s behavior. Establish any new goal to be added to their behavior plan. In each workshop it is important to spend time modeling the process of expanding on the plan to help ensure that at the end of six days the teachers leave with an understanding of what constitutes a comprehensive plan.

Additional Considerations for Incredible Beginnings and Teacher Autism Participants:

Most Incredible Beginnings and Teacher Autism behavior plans focus on one child and one specific topic. Teachers may choose to select a different child for each behavior plan. Alternatively, they may focus on one child several weeks in a row. Below is an example of a behavior plan from both teacher programs.




 <div style="text-align: center;"> BEHAVIOR PLAN RECORD SHEET <i>Promoting Language Development</i> </div> <div style="text-align: right;">  Date: _____ </div>		
Child Behavior I want to see less of:	Positive Opposite Language Behavior I want to see more of:	Language Scripts:
<p><i>Examples: Seth engages in solitary play, no response to peers, no peer social communication. (Does have language skills but doesn't use them to interact with others.)</i></p> <p>Target Child (nature of language problem):</p>	<p><i>Example: Seth plays sitting next to 1-2 children, notices what another peer is doing, initiates social communication to ask for help.</i></p> <p>Developmentally Appropriate Language Goal for Child:</p>	<p><i>Example: When sitting next to Seth use intentional commenting to help him listen to a peer's request or notice what another child is doing. Model and prompt social communication he can imitate and use with peers. Praise social language.</i></p> <p>Language Building Strategies:</p>



Child's Name: _____
Date: _____

BEHAVIOR PLAN RECORD SHEET

Coaching Self-Regulation

 Child behaviors I want to see less of:	 Positive Opposite Emotion Behavior I want to see more of:	 Emotion Coaching Scripts:
<p><i>Examples: Joshua has angry outbursts, is easily frustrated, impatient, often sad.</i></p> <p>Target Child (nature of problem):</p>	<p><i>Example: Learning to take deep breaths, count, or use the thermometer or feeling picture to express feelings. Recognizing when he is calm, happy and patient.</i></p> <p>Developmentally Appropriate Emotion Goal for Child:</p>	<p><i>Example: "I see you are frustrated but you are staying calm." Or, "Your friend is happy you shared the truck." Or, "You took deep breaths to calm down, that is so strong. I am proud of you."</i></p> <p>Emotion Coaching Strategies (your examples):</p>

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Spotlight your child's self-regulation skills

In addition to the individual stand-alone behavior plans for specific topics as shown above, there is also a 7-step cumulative behavior plan that you may want to explore with some teachers. See the 7 step behavior plans below.

Alternative Behavior Plan Formats

The IY Teacher Classroom Management (IY-TCM) behavior plans are slightly different from the Incredible Beginnings Behavior and Teacher Autism Forms. The TCM behavior plan is cumulative and can also be used for the IB and Teacher Autism Programs. Each week the teachers will add new strategies to their plan building on the ideas and goals of previous weeks. It is important to review the problem classroom behavior, its function and its positive opposite behavior before discussing the new set of strategies for the particular workshop. Be sure to remind the teachers to think about whether the strategies they are considering respond to the function of the behavior and the context. Each behavior plan used in workshop is set up according to the IY Teacher Program Topic.

The IY-TCM program uses a 7-step approach adding sequentially to each child's evolving behavior plan:

- Step #1: Negative Classroom Behaviors
- Step #2: Where & Why of the Behavior (Functional Analyses)
- Step #3: Identifying the Positive Opposite Behaviors
- Step #4: Select Proactive and Relationship Building Strategies
- Step #5: Praise and Encouragement
- Step #6: Specific Reinforcers
- Step #7: Positive Discipline


Below is an example of this step approach. In IY-TCM and Incredible Beginnings workshops the teachers add a new step to their behavior plan at each workshop and build a comprehensive plan around one student.




Note: Let teachers know that the purpose is for them to become skilled on the steps involved in devising a comprehensive support plan so it is often best not to start with a child with the most complex needs. Start simple and build in complexity over the workshops.

Be aware that your teachers may have behavior plans that are mandated by their employers or legislation. It is important to help them recognize how the Incredible Years plans work alongside the mandated documents. Building an Incredible Years Behavior Plan can help educators reflect on the whole child, not just the problem behaviors. It can also encourage a team approach as teachers are encouraged to work together to address the student’s needs. The process also helps educators explore clear and objective ways to discuss the strengths and needs of the child in team meetings and with caregivers. It provides a record of the child’s progress and response to intervention. And they prepare the educator to offer powerful strategies and next steps for the formal behavior plan.


See IY web site for editable versions of these behavior plans.
<https://incredibleyears.com/resources/gl/teacher-program/>



Behavior Plans




**Preventing Problems—The Proactive Teacher
Behavior Plan**



Example of Behavior Plan: Jenny, Grade 1

Step #1 <i>Negative classroom behaviors</i>	Step #2 <i>Where & Why?</i> <i>(functional assessment)</i>	Step #3 <i>Positive Opposite behaviors</i>	Step #4 <i>Select Proactive and Relationship Building Strategies (with Child and Family)</i>
Poking, touching Speaks without raising hand Talks while directions are given Off-task, day dreaming	Child impulsive, inattentive temperament (during circle time) Misbehavior gets attention from teacher and peers (playground and free time)	Keep hands to own body Raise a quiet hand Listen quietly when directions are given Pay attention and concentrate	Use listening and quiet hand up rules cue cards and “give me five” signal Seat close to teacher, during circle time Give opportunities to move by helping teacher Get eye contact before giving directions. Use positive redirects. Ignore blurting out and wiggling.



Behavior Plans

Strengthening Prosocial Skills - Praise, Incentives and Positive Discipline
 Behavior Plan for _____



Step #5 <i>Praise and Encouragement</i>	Step #6 <i>Specific Reinforcers</i>	Step #7 <i>Positive Discipline</i>
<p>Coaching statements: <i>You are waiting so patiently. Your body is calm. You are in control!</i></p> <p>Praise: <i>Thank you for your quiet hand. You are sitting in your own bubble so well! I love how you are waiting.</i></p>	<p>Small reinforcers for quiet hand up: hand stamp, sticker, gold-fish cracker, thumbs-up</p> <p>Special privilege for raising hand—have him come up to help</p>	<p>Ignore calling out and wiggling.</p> <p>Use redirection and proximal praise.</p> <p>When/then commands: <i>“when you are raising your hand, I will call on you.”</i> <i>“when you are sitting, you can have a turn.”</i></p>



Behavior Plans: Group Leader Skills

What group leader skills are important for structuring behavior plans?

- Do sample plan in large group
- Keep each step well defined and small
- Encourage teachers to pick a middle-of-the road child, or a small program for a more challenging child
- Make sure that teachers have thought about the “why” and the positive opposite behavior
- Encourage teachers to be very specific with their plans (what words will they say? what will that look like?)
- Set reasonable expectations—won’t fix all problems with one month of a plan

