

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom through Collaborative Relationships

July 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems
Practice: Collaborative Relationships

Highlights

- Teachers are better equipped to address behavior problems in their classrooms when they have opportunities for informal and formal collaboration with other teachers, behavior specialists, and parents.
- The principal can establish a regular meeting time for teacher collaboration. During the meetings, teachers can describe their challenges, seek feedback, and develop actionable steps to improve the behavior.
- Working with a behavior specialist can help teachers understand the problem behaviors and learn strategies to address them.
- Parents can collaborate with teachers to share ideas and strategies that they have tried at home. Teachers and parents can serve as partners in improving a child's behavior.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom Through Collaborative Relationships.

Slide 2: Together but alone

Everyone in the teacher's lounge is edgy and exhausted after dealing with the daily stresses of teaching while trying to cope with constant disruptions from unruly students. Ms. Morita doesn't know how to handle all the misbehavior in her classroom and doesn't know who to turn to for help. Ms. Russell knows quite a few ways to deal with behavior problems but feels isolated and unsupported in her efforts by the school at large. Even though the lounge is full of educators, all of them feel alone.

Slide 3: Benefits of collaboration

While student behavior and academic performance go hand in hand, many teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to collaborate on addressing behavioral issues. When teachers are able to work with colleagues, parents, and district specialists to address behavior issues, they are better equipped to deal with those issues.

Slide 4: The special need for collaboration

As teachers share effective strategies and discuss what is happening in their classrooms, a more unified approach to classroom management can develop. This unified, schoolwide approach provides consistency and stability for students and can increase time spent on instruction.

Slide 5: Mentors and coaches

Schools can facilitate collaboration in a number of ways. By selecting experienced staff to serve as peer coaches and mentors, a school can provide a clear and consistent source of support for its teaching staff. These coaches can observe their colleagues and provide constructive feedback on ways to enhance classroom management. The school needs to ensure that these coaches and mentors are properly trained in supporting adult learners. Further, the school schedule can be adjusted so teachers can spend time with the coach discussing feedback.

Slide 6: Collaborative learning teams

Schools can also organize teachers into collaborative teaching teams and provide them with regular time to meet. Such teams give teachers the chance to openly reflect on behavior management challenges they are experiencing in their classes, specific students who are particularly troubling, and actionable steps that can be taken to help the situation. Principals can also share information with teachers to help them understand school policy issues on behavior.

Slide 7: Behavior experts

Teachers can also work closely with behavior specialists, such as school psychologists, counselors, district personnel, and experts from the local community or university.

Slide 8: Expert contributions

These behavior experts can help identify which research-based strategies are relevant to each situation and how to adapt them as necessary to meet individual student, whole classroom, or even schoolwide needs.

Behavioral specialists can offer technical assistance and monitor implementation in order to identify areas for improvement or ways to adjust strategies to make them more effective.

Specialists can draw attention to things a teacher might miss while immersed in the daily routine of the class. Conversely, the teacher can bring perspective to the expert's observations, giving a historical context to any particular incident. Together, teacher and specialist can forge a more comprehensive picture of what is happening in the classroom and how to implement positive strategies for improvement.

Slide 9: Reaching out to families

Close collaboration with families is useful for addressing all student issues but is especially important for students with special needs. Parents' active cooperation and involvement can yield improved student behavior and academic performance. However, old resentments or suspicions from their own days in school can make some families resistant to collaboration. A proactive and welcoming approach, including friendly emails, notes, invitations to school functions and conferences, and other contact points can build a good foundation between the school and family. Explaining behavior expectations in the classroom and asking parents for their input on how to encourage positive behavior strengthens their sense of involvement. Families can even be encouraged to maintain classroom behavior standards in the home.

Slide 10: Parent conferences

Prior to parent conferences, teachers can review the student records to see if any life events may have contributed to behavior issues. This understanding of a family's situation can be a great help in building collaboration. Keep things positive, pointing out at least three behavioral and academic strengths the student has displayed before addressing one or two key problems. Talk about the nature of the incidents and their frequency, as well as what strategies have been used to try to resolve them. Ask the family for help in dealing with these behavioral problems. Conferences should be about finding solutions together, not just informing parents of problems.

Teachers may want to provide families with information on additional school or community resources, such as intervention services or parent education programs.

Slide 11: School and district support

Schools and districts can help by making vital resources available. District contributions could involve personnel, such as interpreters or family advocates, or technological tools, like a database of management strategies, lesson plans, and curriculum modifications that have proven useful in the past. School administrators can foster a culture of collaboration by working with teachers, experts, and families to ensure that the time and resources are available to meet and find solutions.

Slide 12: Working together

The teacher's lounge isn't full of exhausted people any more.

Ms. Morita talks to Ms. Russell about her meeting with the behavior specialist while other teachers use laptops provided for them to search the district's resource database. The principal has adjusted the school schedule and set aside time for teachers to work together on a regular basis. At this school, the teachers now feel supported as they work to help their students both behaviorally and academically.

Slide 13: Learn more

To learn more about Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom Through Collaborative Relationships, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.