

## **Classwide Antecedent Modifications**

### *Function of Intervention:*

Reduces inappropriate behavior (and increases appropriate behavior) by altering antecedents. This intervention can have a behavioral or academic focus depending on the modifications made. Developing and teaching a child explicit classroom rules will address problem behaviors were the function is that the child has not learned the desired behavior. Setting appropriate task demands and structuring the class to increase interest should help when the function is that the child does not want to do the task or the task is too hard.

### *Brief Description:*

The context of the environment in which behaviors occur is not usually considered when analyzing a child's behavior. Instead, more attention is typically given to the consequences following that particular behavior (especially when it is a disruptive behavior being analyzed). While consequences of behaviors matter, what occurred BEFORE the problem behavior should also be considered when creating an intervention. Altering the antecedent of the target behavior has the substantial advantage of being proactive. As such, with appropriate modifications of the antecedents, a problem behavior (e.g. disruptive behavior or task demand refusal) can be avoided. This brief presents a series of classwide antecedent alterations that will change typical antecedents of problem behaviors to antecedents that prompt appropriate behaviors. See Kern and Clemens (2007) for an excellent through review of this class of intervention.

### *What "Common Problems" Does This Address?*

This classwide intervention is appropriate for settings where there are classwide behavior problems (e.g. disruptive behavior or task refusal). In such settings, antecedents that typically produce problem behavior (e.g. academic task demands too difficult results in students "acting out" and refusing to do academic activities) are altered and transformed into antecedents that produce appropriate behavior (e.g. appropriate academic task demands or choice of task sequence = increase of time on task) will greatly reduce problem behavior and increase academic engagement.

### *Procedures for Classwide Antecedent Strategies (Kern & Clemens, 2007):*

1. Set classroom rules.
  - a. Develop, model and post clear classroom rules
    - i. If some children don't have the skill to follow a rule, try using direct instruction to teach the skill.
  - b. Reinforce (e.g. praise or token) appropriate behavior as quickly as possible; minimize reinforcement (e.g. remove attention) for inappropriate behavior.
  - c. Have a consistent classroom schedule.
2. Appropriate task-demands.

- a. All instructional material should be appropriate for the student's current level.
3. Structure the class to increase interest.
  - a. Use a brisk pace with ample opportunity for student response.
    - i. Consider classwide response system such a choral responding or response cards to increases classwide response opportunities.
  - b. Include easy tasks among more difficult tasks.
  - c. Allow for student choice.
  - d. Use high interest materials/topics.

*Critical Components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:*

- Clear development of classroom rules
- Identification of student instructional level
- Appropriate task demands
- Accurate selection of reinforcer/s, and high interest material

*Materials*

- Reinforcers as necessary

*References*

- Kern, L, & Clemens, N. H. (2007). Antecedent Strategies to Promote Appropriate Classroom Behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 44, 65-75.