

# Back-to-School Behavior Checklists

As we gear up for the return of the school year, it is easy for much preparation to be spent addressing the physical components of a school and/or classroom (Is the classroom decorated? Do we have enough desks? Is the school presentable?), rather than designing systems to support the social-emotional learning of students. In order to create effective classroom and school-wide systems, it is important that the implementation is simple but intentional. If not, the overwhelming feeling of quickly getting behind will gain control once the back-to-school excitement is gone. See the back-to-school administrator and teacher checklists below as a guide to help prepare for effective school-wide and classroom behavior systems to start the school year strong:

*Note: This is not an exhaustive list, but a key checklist of items for administrators and teachers found to be effective from the strongest behavior schools we work with.*

## Administrator Checklist

- Welcome your staff in a positive way.
- Review the ten critical markers of PBIS implementation (See [\*The PBIS Tier One Handbook\*](#)) as a guide.
- Identify and communicate your behavior SMART goals with your staff.
- Provide time for the PBIS team to meet and help present information.
- Calendar monthly PBIS team meetings for the year.
- Give teachers time to plan and prepare their classrooms.
- Provide teachers with important information about students they will have in their classrooms (*Note: This is not to judge the student for past behaviors; this is so the teacher can be preventive in giving the student a clean slate*).
- Ensure staff have a clear understanding of the school-wide behavior systems (e.g., what is offered in each tier of behavior support at the school).
- Classroom management expectations and rules are established incorporating Tier 1 – best classroom management strategies (e.g., routines, procedures, incentives, progress monitoring, positive language, etc.).
- School culture expectations are made clear to your staff (e.g., create a family environment with the belief in all students).
- Educate your staff on the meaning and purpose behind alternative discipline (See [\*Don't Suspend Me! An Alternative Discipline Toolkit\*](#)) as a reference.
- Educate new staff members on the critical markers of PBIS implementation (e.g., referral forms, positive incentives, interventions offered, classroom management systems).
- Update teachers on behavior accommodations and interventions in place from the previous school year that need to be continued.

- Plan and schedule the school-wide behavior teaching days for the school; make sure the teachers understand the importance of teaching behavior similar to academics.
- Develop a plan to present the behavior expectations and rules to the families (e.g., phone calls, emails, website, newsletters, back-to-school night, etc.).
- Meet with classified staff and noon aides/liaisons to review the school-wide behavior rules and expectations in each location, review the proper use of behavior forms, use of positive language and incentives, and active supervision expectations.

### Teacher Checklist

- Welcome your students in a positive way. Continue using positive language with your students with the 4:1 rule (4 positive comments to every negative comment).
- Have procedures and routines for your classroom (intentionally teach them throughout the school year).
- Select a classroom management system that will be implemented class wide; have a plan to teach the students what is expected from this system. Set up a strong system for monitoring and communicating student behavior progress aligned with classroom incentives and consequences.
- Select additional classroom behavior interventions to be used for students who are not responding to classroom management system alone; work with administrator, lead teacher, support staff if you need support.
- Get to know your students (e.g., make time to have one-on-one or classroom meetings with students discussing social-emotional topics – scheduled weekly); incorporate in your lessons and throughout your curriculum.
- Mentally prepare to be back in school (e.g., take the time to reflect each day on your attitude).
- Be organized and know what you are going to teach starting from day one.
- Communicate your classroom expectations and rules with families. Know which families have language barriers that could impede communication; ensure they have equal access to all information.
- Make sure your lessons are engaging and minimize downtime during transitions.
- Review your class roster(s) to identify students who need special accommodations or interventions starting from the first week of school (e.g., work with administrators and support staff to understand the needed supports before the first day of school).
- Know which students have behavior support plans in place (e.g., read them; ask questions if you do not understand how to implement).

Back-to-school is always an exciting time, however, it is essential that systems for behavior are put into place and consistently maintained from day one. Establishing behavior systems is sometimes overlooked until after undesirable behaviors arise. It's always better to have more structures and systems in place early in the school year, then gradually release students toward independence than not and trying to add it in later. Remember, what you permit, you promote; if you allow undesirable behaviors

to go unaddressed or to not follow through/monitor your system consistently, you are communicating to your students that you will tolerate these behaviors on your campus or in your classroom. If behavior systems are not in place, minimal teaching will take place. In our next article, Bridging PBIS and MTSS, we will provide tips on how to connect your school's academic and behavior systems.