

Best Behavior

Jeff Sprague Annemieke Golly

*Building Positive
Behavior Support
in Schools*

Grades
K-12

Effective educators know that problem behavior and poor discipline are the greatest obstacles to academic achievement. Yet, schools often use an inconsistent and piecemeal approach to solving behavior problems, an approach that usually results in unhappy students, frustrated families, and teachers who feel discouraged and unsupported.

Best Behavior is an evidence-based discipline program that integrates family collaboration with proven, easy-to-implement interventions that can be used with the entire school, an individual classroom, or just one student.

Best Behavior is:

- **Adaptable.** The program can shrink or stretch to fit schools of every size and make-up.
- **Sustainable.** The comprehensive staff development system included in **Best Behavior** ensures that the program will run hassle-free for as long as you choose to use it.
- **Compatible.** **Best Behavior** can be used as a stand-alone program or as a supplement to an existing management plan.
- **Affordable.** Everything you need to train staff and implement **Best Behavior** is included when you purchase the program.



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Reflection

Personalizing Your Learning From *Best Behavior*

Please take a few minutes to write down your thoughts before you begin *Best Behavior*.

1. Things I would like to learn about effective positive behavior support practices are . . .

2. The most frustrating behavior I encounter is . . .

3. If I could have any resources for supporting a student, they would be . . .

4. Things that work when dealing with problem behavior are . . .

5. Things that don't work when dealing with problem behavior are . . .

6. Some ways to improve discipline consistency in my school are . . .

7. Some roadblocks to gaining discipline consistency in my school are . . .



Chapter 19: School/Home Collaboration. Parents are key partners in supporting school success and encouraging expected behaviors from their children. This chapter provides you with ideas and resources to communicate and work cooperatively with parents and/or caregivers. The first part of the chapter provides tips and effective strategies for teachers. The second part outlines effective parenting practices and includes reproducible sheets for parents to use.

Conclusion: Planning to Sustain and Improve Your Success.

In the conclusion we ask you to reflect on your learning and set goals for continued improvement of practices in your school.

chapter 1

Welcome to *Best Behavior*

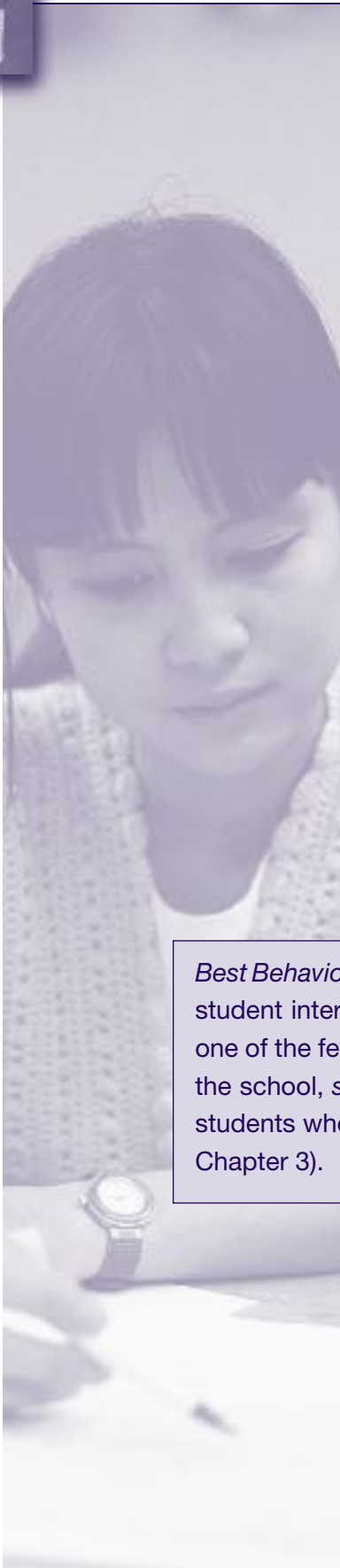
Chapter Objectives:

- Describe what *Best Behavior* provides
- Describe why *Best Behavior* is needed to improve discipline in schools
- Discuss how to use this guide

This integrated system of schoolwide, classroom management, and individual student supports is designed to give you simple but effective tactics and strategies to improve behavioral outcomes for the students you serve and their families. With this guide, you will gain a variety of new skills and knowledge that are based on the best research available.

Two issues are constant challenges to effective education: academic achievement and discipline. Students who are not safe, respectful, and responsible in schools impede the learning process for others. School personnel who do not work together and focus on outcomes will be frustrated, inconsistent, and ineffective. Parents who are not supported and encouraged to collaborate will feel left out and their children will not do as well in school. We will spend time together learning the most recent research-validated and evidence-based techniques for establishing a positive school climate where no child is left behind and no teacher is left unsupported.





What *Best Behavior* Provides

Best Behavior provides proven, effective management methods for students in school common areas (*all* students in the school), for those at risk of behavior problems (*some* students), and for the (*few*) students in your school who are already disruptive and undisciplined. This integrated approach has been shown to be effective in research (Walker et al., 1996) but has only recently been broadly adopted by schools and school systems. Without an integrated approach to melding school, classroom, and individual student supports, schools often use effective strategies in a piecemeal and inconsistent fashion.

Best Behavior provides a standardized staff development program aimed at improving school and classroom discipline and reducing associated outcomes such as school violence and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. It is based on the Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) approach (Sprague, Sugai, & Walker, 1998; Sprague et al., 2001; Sugai & Horner, 1994) developed at the University of Oregon and the National Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org), an Office of Special Education Programs–funded research center. The goal of *Best Behavior* is to facilitate the academic achievement and healthy social development of children and youth in a safe environment that is conducive to learning.

Best Behavior addresses schoolwide, classroom, and individual student interventions, as well as family collaboration, and it is one of the few programs that offers supports for *all* students in the school, *some* students with additional needs, and the *few* students who need the most intensive supports (as outlined in Chapter 3).

Evidence Based

Best Behavior includes intervention techniques based on over 30 years of rigorous research in school discipline from the education, public health, psychology, and criminology fields (Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 1999; Walker et al., 1996). Program components address schoolwide, common area, classroom, and individual student interventions and are intended to be used in combination with other evidence-based

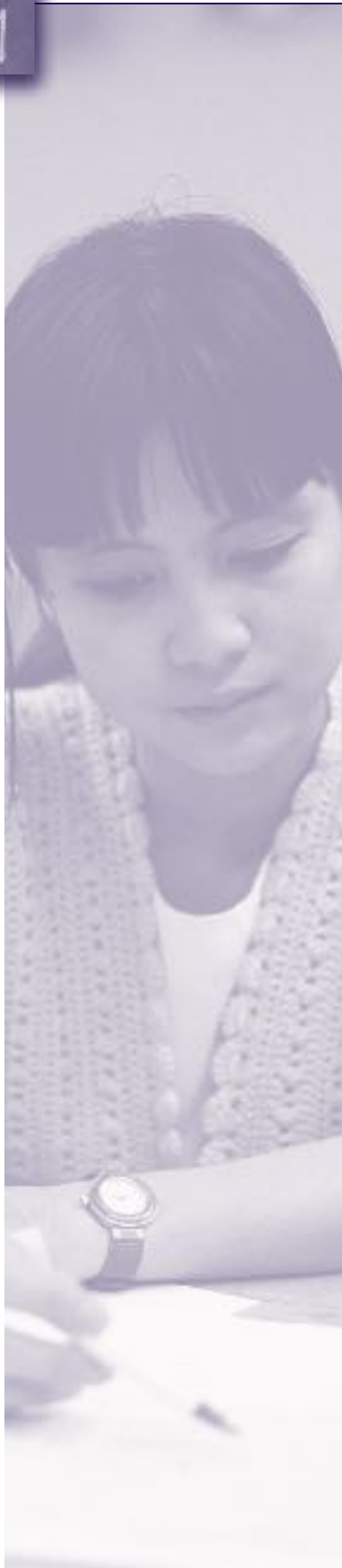
mation needed for a functional behavioral assessment, and discuss the logical link between functional behavioral assessment outcomes and positive support plan procedures. Thinking functionally works for special education students as well as typical students.

Chapter 16: Building Positive Behavior Support Plans for Challenging Students. We need to develop positive support plans that fit our skills, values, and resources. In this chapter you will learn to describe the logical link from functional assessment results to positive supports and discuss what changes adults can make to bring about change in student behavior. Positive behavior support plans help us make problem behaviors irrelevant, ineffective, and inefficient by teaching and encouraging replacement behaviors.

Chapter 17: Adapting Curricula to Prevent Problem Behavior. One of the principal reasons that students misbehave in school is instruction that is too difficult or poorly adapted. In this chapter you will learn to use instructional and curriculum adaptation to help students become more successful and behave better. You will learn to describe classes of adaptation that can prevent problem behavior, outline a process for adapting curricula and instruction, and develop and adapt a classroom lesson to prevent problem behavior.

Chapter 18: Teaching Students Who Are At Risk to Self-Manage Their Behavior. Many of us hope that our students will become self-directed, intrinsically motivated learners. Walker (1995) indicates that teachers value compliance to reasonable requests and students who are prepared for class and do their best to complete assigned work. Safe, respectful, and responsible students learn to self-manage their behavior. In this chapter we describe the purposes and benefits of teaching self-management, describe the core features of self-management programs, and illustrate how to design and teach a self-management program.





guide you to develop a few, positive classroom rules that are linked to the schoolwide system. We also describe how teaching and encouraging compliance to classroom rules contribute to effective classroom management.

Chapter 12: Preventive Interactions. If we want to change a student's behavior, we must change our own behavior. This chapter presents some very useful preventive interactions that can minimize problem behavior in your classroom. You will learn to use a consistent attention signal for the whole class and to use direct speech when giving instructions to students. We will teach you to present a specific predictable request sequence to noncompliant students and show you how to teach an on-task routine called the Concentration/Focus Power Game to use during disruptions.

Chapter 13: Using Consequences to Change Group and Individual Behavior. Effective teachers use a combination of positive reinforcement for expected behavior and firm but fair corrections for behavioral errors. In this chapter you will identify positive consequences to use in your classroom as well as effective corrective consequences. You will also design integrated motivational systems to teach and reinforce positive behavior change.

Chapter 14: Responding to Escalating Behavior and Verbal Harassment. Escalating behavior and verbal harassment exhibited by students seriously impact proper functioning of a school and classroom. Behaviors such as aggression, severe disruption, and acting-out can cause major problems for adults and students in terms of personal safety and stress, and significantly disrupt the teaching and learning processes in school. In this chapter we identify common assumptions that get teachers into power struggles and suggest procedures to de-escalate behaviors.

Chapter 15: Thinking Functionally About Behavior. Behavioral approaches to school and classroom management provide some of the most effective solutions to reducing problem behavior. Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) methods (O'Neill et al., 1997) provide an easy way to assess the motivation behind problem behavior and link our response logically to that motivation. In this chapter you will learn to define functional behavioral assessment, list the outcomes of a complete functional behavioral assessment, describe infor-

prevention programs, such as the Second Step violence prevention curriculum (Committee for Children, 1997) or Life Skills Training (Botvan, 1979).

Effective

Best Behavior and similar approaches (see Mayer & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1990 or Sprick, Sprick, & Garrison, 1992a, 1992b) have been tested and applied by other researchers and practitioners using the same and similar techniques. The effects of the program are documented in a series of studies conducted by researchers at the University of Oregon and elsewhere (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001; Sprague et al., 2001; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; see also www.pbis.org for the latest research studies and reports on positive behavior supports). Studies using *Best Behavior* have shown reductions in office discipline referrals of up to 50 percent, with continued improvement over a three-year period in schools that sustain the intervention (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, & Vincent, in press). In addition, school staff report greater satisfaction with their work compared to schools that did not implement *Best Behavior*. Comparison schools show increases or no change in office referrals, along with general frustration with the school discipline program (Sprague et al.).

In studies employing some or all of the components included in *Best Behavior*, reductions have been documented in antisocial behavior (Sprague et al., 2001), vandalism (Mayer, 1995), aggression (Grossman et al. 1997; Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998), later delinquency (Kellam, Mayer, Rebok, & Hawkins, 1998; O'Donnell, Hawkins, Catalano, & Abbott, 1995), and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (Metzler et al., 2001; O'Donnell et al.). Positive changes in protective factors such as academic achievement (Kellam et al.; O'Donnell et al.) and school engagement (O'Donnell et al.) have been documented using a positive school discipline program as set out in this book and in concert with other prevention interventions.





How **Best Behavior** Will Help You

The following points outline the key methods you can expect to learn from *Best Behavior*.

Improve Schoolwide Practices

You will learn to:

- Carry out strategies for improving the consistency and effectiveness of school discipline systems. We recommend that every school employ a representative team to implement each strategy in this guide.
- Assess the current status and needs of your school regarding discipline and safety and use that assessment to set goals. Interventions are more effective if they are based on a comprehensive and representative needs assessment.
- Develop a plan for choosing and teaching school rules and behavior expectations. Schools should use a small number of clear, positively stated rules to guide students and teachers alike.
- Develop a plan to directly teach expected behavior in your school. Students must be regularly taught expected behavior to assure maintenance.
- Develop a plan to actively supervise all students in common areas such as hallways, cafeterias, and playgrounds. Much problem behavior occurs in common areas of the school. *Best Behavior* outlines a simple but powerful strategy for improving common-area supervision.
- Use office discipline referral patterns and other data to continuously improve and share success with all adults in the school. School personnel perform better and “buy in” to program improvement if they get regular feedback on discipline patterns in the school.
- Work to build and sustain effective management practices in your school. Improving school discipline is an ongoing process.

Skills Training (Botvan, 1979), you will find that the recommendations in this chapter provide an excellent foundation for maximizing their effectiveness.

Chapter 7: Schoolwide Recognition and Reward Systems: Creating a Positive School Culture. In this chapter we list the components of effective reward systems, discuss facts and fiction about positive reinforcement, and present ideas for increasing consistency among the adults in the school. You also have the opportunity to build a schoolwide recognition and reward system.

Chapter 8: Active Supervision of Common Areas. Common areas such as cafeterias, playgrounds, or hallways are often overlooked as the source of many behavioral problems in schools. In this chapter we present four essential techniques of active supervision, including: (1) positive contacts with students, (2) positive reinforcement, (3) scanning and movement, and (4) correcting behavioral errors. We present a method for planning a strategy to make your common areas safer and more positive.

Chapter 9: Using Discipline Referrals to Diagnose Schoolwide and Individual Student Needs. Sprague, Sugai, Horner, and Walker (1999) suggest that analyzing office discipline referral patterns in schools provides a simple but useful source of data to make decisions about the effectiveness of schoolwide, classroom, common area, and individual student interventions. In this chapter we describe features of a good discipline referral system, provide model discipline referral forms, and offer a set of decision rules to detect school program improvement needs.

Chapter 10: Classroom Organization: The Foundation of Classroom Management. Chapter 10 is the beginning of a comprehensive approach to improving classroom management effectiveness. The techniques are simple and powerful when implemented consistently across classrooms in your school. We describe the organization of an effective classroom and provide a checklist to evaluate your classroom environment. You will be asked to set goals for improving your classroom environment.

Chapter 11: Designing and Teaching Classroom Behavioral Expectations. We recommend linking schoolwide behavior expectations and routines to those used in your classroom. As teachers, you have unique routines and expectations that fit your classroom and teaching practices. In this chapter we will





Best Behavior is organized into four sections: (1) Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports, (2) Classroom Management, (3) Individual Student Supports, and (4) Family Support. Each chapter is designed to be used to support team-based staff development at the building or school district level.

Chapter 2: Best Behavior Staff Development: What It Looks Like. This chapter describes the logistics of the staff development and technical assistance program. We outline recommended start-up procedures and tasks and provide sample training agendas to illustrate the approach.

Chapter 3: Introduction to the Challenge of Antisocial Behavior. We begin this chapter by outlining the challenge of school violence and discipline problems. It is of critical importance for educators to understand the prevalence of destructive life outcomes for children who are antisocial if they are not given positive behavior supports. We close by providing a review of evidence-based effective practices. Knowledge of what works and what doesn't can guide you and your school team as you build and implement your interventions.

Chapter 4: School Organization: Getting Started With Best Behavior. In this chapter we describe the components of a schoolwide positive behavior support system. Conducting a needs assessment is the first step in program development recommended by No Child Left Behind, and we present a self-assessment of the essential practices in your school and ask you to identify priorities for intervention. You will also develop three to four annual goals into an action plan.

Chapter 5: Defining Schoolwide Behavior Expectations. In this chapter you will learn how to define the behavior expectations (i.e., compliance to adult requests, positive peer-to-peer interactions, academic effort, and school safety) for your school and communicate them to all adults and students.

Chapter 6: Teaching Schoolwide Behavior Expectations. In this chapter you will learn the basics of teaching and communicating behavioral expectations and develop a sample lesson plan for teaching them. We present practical methods for increasing consistency of rule teaching and making it fun for both adults and students. As you consider adoption of research-validated social skills curricula such as the Second Step violence prevention curriculum (Committee for Children, 1997) or Life

- Achieve consistency between classroom and schoolwide discipline procedures. As schoolwide procedures are established, you link them to your classroom management routines and practices.

Improve Classroom Management Effectiveness

You will learn to:

- Decrease student misbehavior in the classroom. Prevent problems before they start by using your own behavior strategically.
- Effectively and consistently gain student attention. Using clear signals in the classroom minimizes disruption.
- Use effective systems to reward and maintain expected behavior. Students need clear, consistent encouragement.
- Foster cooperative, respectful, and responsible behavior between students by directly teaching and providing positive and corrective feedback. Predictable problems in classrooms can be solved by preventive teaching.
- Directly teach and support positive student social skills in the classroom. Expected behaviors need to be taught and reviewed.

Improve Support Systems for Individual Students

You will learn to:

- Objectively assess the reasons for student misbehavior and develop positive support plans for individual students. Thinking functionally about behavior will increase your effectiveness.
- Respond effectively to harassment, noncompliance, and escalating behavior. Use your behavior to defuse these challenges.
- Teach students to self-manage their behavior and learning. Self-control and intrinsic motivation are taught using simple procedures.



Collaborate Effectively With All Parents in the School

You will learn to:

- Develop strategies for positive communication with families. It is critical to inform families of your school-wide and classroom procedures.
- Collaborate with parents to support healthy and safe behavior at home and school. Parents are valuable partners in promoting student success.

Why Do Schools Need *Best Behavior*?

Many school practices contribute to the development of antisocial behavior and the potential for violence in schools. Because it has been common to place responsibility for behavior change on individual students or their families, such school practices are often overlooked as factors in a behavior problem. They include:

- Ineffective instruction that results in academic failure.
- Failure to individualize instruction to adapt to individual differences.
- Inconsistent and punitive schoolwide, classroom, and individual behavior management practices.
- Lack of opportunity to learn and practice prosocial interpersonal and self-management skills.
- Unclear rules and expectations regarding expected behavior in all school settings.
- Failure to correct rule violations in a firm but fair manner that emphasizes teaching rather than retribution.
- Failure to help students from at-risk backgrounds adjust to the schooling process.
- Failure to encourage active collaboration and cooperation with parents and families.
- Failure to sustain and consistently implement positive behavior support practices.

These factors are *all* amenable to change with a broad-based preventive approach (Mayer, 1995; Sprague et al., 2001; Sugai & Horner, 1994; Walker et al., 1996). Unfortunately, school personnel have a long history of applying simple and unproven solutions (e.g., office discipline referrals, suspensions) to complex behavior problems. They express understandable disappointment when these attempts do not work as expected (Walker et al., 1996). This practice is sustained by a tendency to try to remove the problem student via office referrals, suspension, or expulsion, rather than finding a way to reduce the administrative, teaching, and management practices that have contributed to the problem (Tobin, Sugai, & Martin, 2000).

How Do We Solve This Problem?

Educators in today's schools and classrooms must be supported to adopt and sustain effective, cost-efficient practices (Sugai & Horner, 1994; Walker et al., 1996). This approach, referred to as Positive Behavior Supports, includes (1) systematic social skills instruction; (2) academic and curricular restructuring; (3) positive, behaviorally based interventions; (4) early screening and identification for antisocial behavior patterns; and (5) preventive schoolwide discipline (Sprague, Sugai, & Walker, 1998; Sugai & Horner; Walker et al.).

Using This Guide

The materials included in this guide are designed to be used for both your own practice and to support team-based training. The best results are obtained when all adults in the school use the practices, all students are affected, and data are used continually to improve and sustain each school system (e.g., schoolwide, classroom, individual student) and intervention method (e.g., school rule teaching, self-management). Chapter 2 will outline our approach to providing team-based staff development.

