An Introduction to Positive Behavior Support
(Better known as PBS)

What is PBS?

Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) is a function-based approach to decrease challenging behaviors in the classroom and replace them with positive social skills. Use of PBS reduces the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both school-wide as well as individualized change.

PBS is based on **behavioral theory**; problem behavior continues to occur because it is consistently followed by the child getting something positive or escaping something negative. By focusing on the **situations** and **results** of the behavior, it is possible to determine the **functions** of the behavior, make the problem behavior less effective and efficient, and make the **desired behavior** more functional. This often involves changing classroom systems, altering environments and teaching new skills, as well as focusing on the problem behavior.

Basics of PBS:

Positive Behavioral Support is made up of many different components ranging from classroom environment to emotional literacy. Right now, we will be talking about three of the basic components of PBS that can be implemented right away in any classroom. Behavioral expectations are the code of conduct for the classroom, Building Relationships is integral for a positive and supportive classroom and Positive Language is a way of clearly stating what we want the child **to do**. While these are just a few of the pieces of PBS, they are the foundation to a strong and welcoming classroom.

What are Behavioral Expectations?

Students need clearly defined expectations for their behavior. Behavioral expectations are a general code of conduct that all students and adults in the classroom follow. It provides everyone with direction and guidance for what they SHOULD be doing.

What are some Expectations?
-**Be Safe**
-**Be Respectful**
-**Be a Team Player**

How do I teach them?

Behavioral expectations are only useful if your students understand them. Thus, it is important to take the time and teach each of the expectations as you would a math or science lesson. To teach your students the behavioral expectations develop short lessons that:

- Define the expectations in concrete terms
- Discuss what the expectations mean
- Demonstrate what the expectations look and sound like
- Practice when, where, and how to do it
- Engage the students in a cooperative activity

Once the expectations are taught, the next step is to recognize students individually and as a class for following the expectations. Student recognition systems are important because it helps us shift our actions to focusing on what students are doing right as opposed to catching students doing something wrong. A student recognition system is the presentation of highly motivating positive consequences to develop a desirable pattern of behavior (i.e. a marble jar, sticker chart, etc). Through instruction and reinforcement you are helping your students to develop positive habits in the classroom.

Building Positive Relationships:

Building strong relationships with the children and parents is key to having a positive and productive classroom. When we take the time to get to know each child and build a trusting and supportive relationship, then we:

- Help each child feel accepted in the group
- Assist children in learning to communicate and get along with others
- Encourage feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults

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- Provide a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group

Why is Building Relationships important?
- The relationships that we build with children, families, and colleagues are at the foundation of everything we do. It is important to build these relationships early on rather than waiting until there is a problem.
- Children learn and develop in the context of relationships that are responsive, consistent, and nurturing.
- ***Children with the most challenging behaviors especially need these relationships, and yet their behaviors often prevent them from benefiting from those relationships.***
- Adults' time and attention are very important to children, and we need to be sure that we are giving them that time and attention at times other than when they are engaging in challenging behavior.

How to build relationships?
- One of the best ways to build a positive relationship with children is to play with them! Don't be afraid to get down on the ground and play!
- Follow the child's lead.
- Talk, talk, talk about what the children are doing. Take the time to have good, supportive conversations with the children in the classroom.
- Watch for the children's cues. Look at what they are interested in and especially what motivates them.
- Avoid power struggles. Look at what is really important and ask yourself "Is it necessary that they always do it our way?"
- Make it a GOAL to have more positive interactions with the children in the classroom than negative ones!

Using Positive Language
Positive language is another focus of PBS. It encourages the teacher to tell the child exactly what we want them **to do** and avoid negative statements like "No, Stop or Don't!" Using positive statements doesn't mean that we never use the words "no" or "stop" but that we find more was to clearly state specifically what we want the child to do. When we just tell a child to stop, we haven't taught them what the appropriate behavior is.

When using positive language you want to make sure that you are:
- Telling the child what **to do** instead of what not to do.
- Clearly and simply state what you want the child to do.
- Have age appropriate expectations.
- Use age appropriate language. Young children have difficulty with contractions (two words combined together to create one word i.e. don't or can't)

Avoid Saying	Say
- Don't run!	- Walk - Use walking feet - Stay with me - Hold my hand
- Stop climbing!	- Keep your feet on the floor
- Don't touch!	- Keep your hands down - Look with your eyes
- No yelling!	- Use a calm voice - Use an inside voice
- Don't hit!	- Hands down - Use a gentle/ nice touch - Use your words (then give the child the appropriate words to use)
- Don't throw your truck!	- Roll your truck on the ground