

Part 3: Prevention of Problem Behavior

The Preschool Life Skills (PLS) program is an approach to teaching critical social skills to preschoolers. These particular social skills were selected because they are similar to the functional skills taught following the development of problem behavior and because these are the same skills early elementary teachers have identified as being critical to early school success. The program begins as a class-wide approach to teaching thirteen skills in sequence. The program may then be individualized for small groups of learners of similar abilities. The initial evaluation of the program in 2007 showed that teachers were capable of implementing the program with high integrity, and that problem behavior was reduced by 70% while over a 400% increase was observed in the occurrence of the critical social skills.

Some Take Home Points Regarding the Preschool Life Skills Curriculum:

1. Do not avoid situations that are associated with problem behavior. Instead, introduce these challenging situations repeatedly, thoughtfully, and systematically to teach functionally equivalent skills.
 - a. Teach the 13 *Preschool Life Skills* (see next page) in order and to all children on a class-wide basis
 - b. Embed the teaching in all activities and interactions
 - c. Make it fun, and make it part of the classroom culture
2. To learn social skills that will take the place of typical or even extraordinary problem behavior, children need instructions, visual models, opportunities to role play the social skills, and feedback in the form of descriptive praise when they use the skill in the relevant situation or another practice opportunity when they do not use the skill in the relevant situation.
3. When children always emit the skills after a reminder but never the first time (independently), in other words, when children are “prompt dependent,” try alternating teachers and settings and use progressive inter-teaching intervals to help them remember how to behave in challenging situations whenever and wherever they may occur.
4. Teaching functionally equivalent skills will only take you halfway in preventing the development of problem behavior in the next classroom. Children need strong programming in the initial classroom and at least some programming in the next classroom for children to engage in important social skills that prevent the development of problem behavior.

The treatment commitments outlined in this part of the presentation are described in:

- Hanley G. P., Heal, N. A., Ingvarsson, E. T., & Tiger, J. H. (2007). Evaluation of a classwide teaching program for developing preschool life skills. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 40*, 277-300.
- Krauss, A. Hanley, G. P., Cesana, L., Eisenberg, D., & Jarvie, A. C. (2012). An evaluation of strengthening precursors to increase preschooler compliance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 45*, 131-136.
- Francisco, M., & Hanley, G. P. (2012). An evaluation of the effects of progressively increasing inter-trial intervals on the acquisition and maintenance of Preschool Life Skills. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 45*, 137-142.
- Beaulieu, L., Hanley, G. P., Roberson, A. (2012). Effects of responding to a name and group call on preschoolers compliance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 45*, 685-708.
- Luczynski, K. C. & Hanley, G. P. (2013). Preventing the development of problem behavior by teaching functional communication and self-control skills to preschoolers. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 46*, 355-368.
- Beaulieu, L., Hanley, G. P., & Roberson, A. A. (2013). Improving compliance by teaching preschoolers to help peers respond effectively to a name and group call. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 46*, 555-567.
- Luczynski, K. C., Hanley, G. P., & Rodriguez, N. M. (2014). An evaluation of the generalization and maintenance of functional communication and self-control skills with preschoolers. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 47*, 246-263.
- Hanley, G. P., Fahmie, T., & Heal N. A. (2014). Evaluation of the preschool life skills curriculum in Head Start classrooms: A systematic replication. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 47*, 443-448.
- Beaulieu, L. & Hanley, G. P. (2014). Effects of a class-wide teacher-implemented program to promote preschooler compliance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 47*, 594-599.

Preschool Life Skills Questionnaire

Child: _____

Interviewer: _____

Respondent: _____ Relationship to child: _____

Date: _____

Considering each situation, does your child engage in behavior A or behavior B? If B, provide # of most likely behavior.
Check one column for each situation using a number 2 pencil.

***** Instruction-Following Skills / Instruction-Following Skills / Instruction-Following Skills *****

| <i>Situation</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>B</i> |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Adult calls child by first name | <input type="radio"/> Stops competing behavior, orients towards speaker, and says, "Yes" | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 2. Adult provides a single-step instruction | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Completes single-step instruction following single prompt | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 3. Adult provides a multi-step instruction | <input type="radio"/> Completes multi-step instruction following single prompt | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |

***** Functional Language Skills / Functional Language Skills / Functional Language Skills *****

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 4. Difficult task or situation | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Completes task or requests assistance using appropriate tone & voice volume | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 5. Adult or peer attention is diverted to a task or another child | <input type="radio"/> Gains others attention by saying "Excuse me" using appropriate tone & voice volume | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 6. An area is blocked by another adult or peer | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Uses "excuse me" to gain access to the area | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 7. A preferred material is unavailable (i.e., another child is playing with it or it is in sight but out of reach) | <input type="radio"/> Uses "their words" to gain access to desired materials (e.g., "May I play with that") | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |

***** Tolerance Skills / Tolerance Skills / Tolerance Skills / Tolerance Skills / Tolerance Skills *****

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| 8. Adult tells child s/he will to wait for a requested material or event | <input type="radio"/> Waits patiently for adult-mediated event (e.g., their attention, materials) | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 9. Another child tells child s/he will to wait for a requested material or event | <input type="radio"/> Waits patiently for child-mediated event (e.g., their attention, materials) | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |

***** Empathy Skills / Empathy Skills / Empathy Skills / Empathy Skills / Empathy Skills *****

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| 10. Upon receiving something from another person | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Says, "thank you" | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 11. Another child enters the classroom or a play group | <input type="radio"/> Greets and/or compliments the child | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 12. Another child is without toys or activity materials | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Offers toys or other materials to peers | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |
| 13. Another person shows signs of pain or distress | <input type="radio"/> Helps or comforts the person | <input type="radio"/> Engages in problem behavior: _____ |

Common Preschooler Problem Behaviors:

- I. Ignoring adults or other children, noncompliance, not saying thank you upon receipt of something
- II. Saying, "No" to an adult instruction, yelling or screaming while indoors, swearing, rudeness, name-calling
- III. Throwing items, tearing books, swiping items off tables, kicking items, knocking over structures, grabbing materials from others, running away, standing on furniture, sitting on tables, opening classroom doors
- IV. Kicking, hitting, pinching, shoving, spitting, forceful grabbing, scratching, biting, throwing things towards people, spitting