

Ohio Literacy Conference for K-3rd Grade Teachers

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D-3 Special Needs: Fitting Big Personalities in a Small Classroom (Gr. K-3)

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When you suspect a child may have issues in the classroom with academics or behavior, begin a running record and collect measurable data to compare with typical peers and share with your intervention team.

Observation Checklist

- Record number of incomplete activities in a day and note what type of activities (writing, problem solving, auditory skills, following directions, etc.)
- List behaviors most noticed in the classroom setting
 - cannot sit still or often falls out of seat
 - always has objects in hands or mouth
 - cannot keep papers and supplies organized
 - excessive talking, vocal noises
 - outbursts of crying, yelling or screaming
 - excessive tapping, ticks, or obsessive compulsive behaviors (hair twirling or pulling, nose picking, blinking, etc.)
- Track time off task and describe off task behavior
- Note behavior issues that interfere with learning
- List triggers during the day that may lead to off task behaviors
- Try interventions one at a time and record results
- Create a behavior plan and track improvements as well as strategies that do not work for the student

Strategies For:

"Fidgety Frankie", "ADHD Aiden", "Loud Lucy", "Outburst Owen", "Sensitive Suzie", and "Interrupting Ian"

- Silly putty
- Velcro
- Beans
- Wiggle Cushion
- Fidgets
- Sock buddy
- Using a microphone system in the classroom
- Encourage student to restate thoughts slowly
- Allow student to use headphones or ear plugs throughout the day
- Be aware of unnecessary noises in the classroom
- Use natural lighting as often as possible
- Open blinds and turn out half of the overhead lights
- Allow student to take small breaks from reading and focusing on whiteboard, SMART board, etc.
- Gum/taffy/gummy bears/licorice
- Lollipops
- Sports bottle with straw

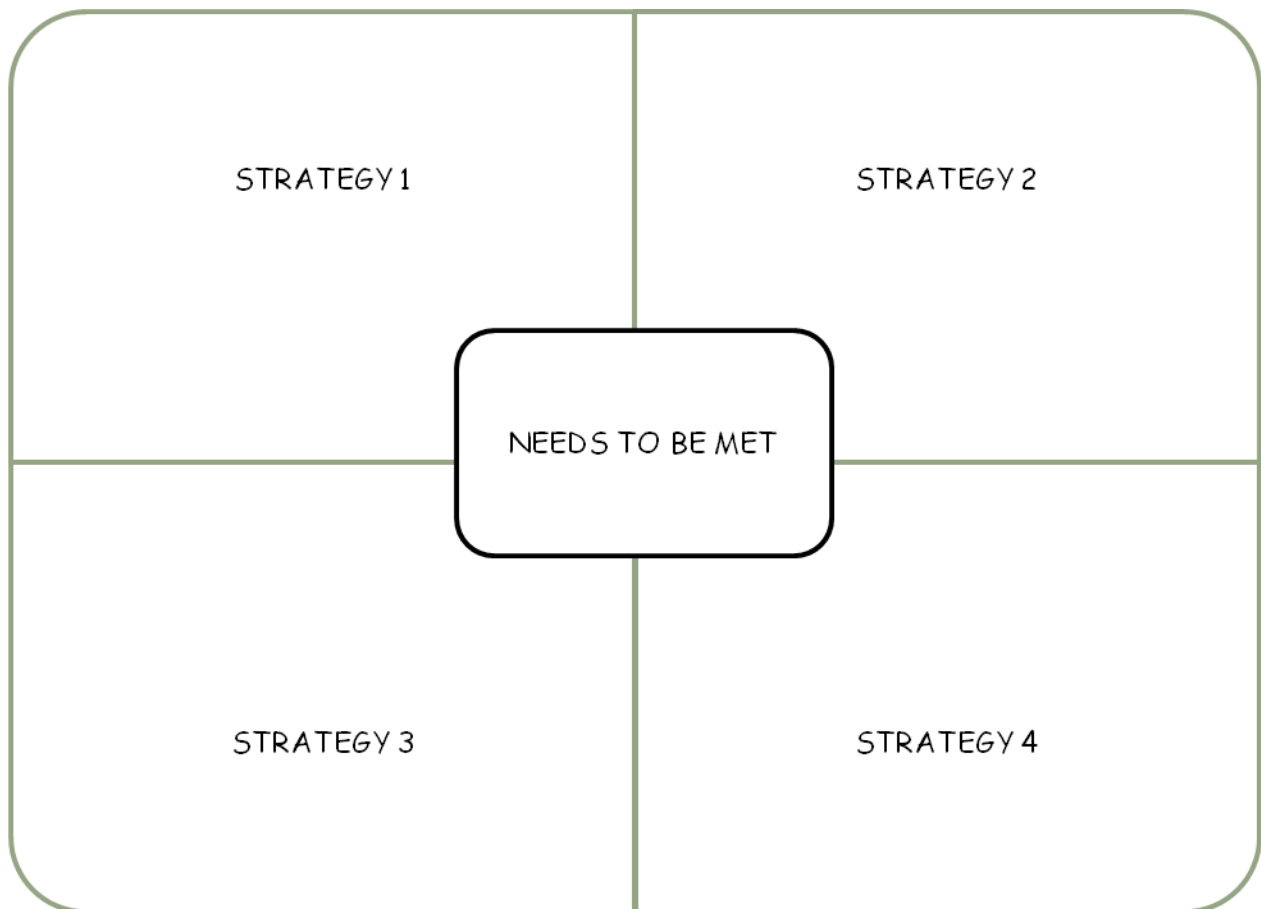
Strategies for Students Continued...

- Be aware of smells that may trigger behaviors from cafeteria, other students, etc.
- Do not use candle warmers, spray cleaners and deodorizers, etc. during the school day
- For hyposensitivities scented oils can be rubbed on the back of the neck to increase attention
- Heavy lifting
- Weighted vests
- Therapy band on chair legs
- Allow student access to railings and use caution on play equipment
- Have student positioned at the end of the line at a slower pace to move about the school
- Brain Gym activities
- Large pencil/weighted pencil
- Slant board/Raised lined paper/footstool for stability
- Dry erase marker on clear plastic report pocket
- Handwriting Without Tears Program

CREATE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR PLAN

1. List the most important needs this student must have met in order to succeed in the classroom.
2. Create a list of activities you could implement into the student's day.
3. Be prepared to change your plan and implement new interventions until you find the right combination for the school day.

EXAMPLE



Community Building Ideas for Your Classroom

Live by 3 simple rules: **Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be a Problem Solver**

- As a school, classroom or person these 3 rules are posted in the classroom to cover all situations
- Teach these rules as a part of being a student, community member, and caring person from the first day of school
- Incorporate these virtues into every part of the school day no matter the location

Be a **Bucket Filler**, not a Bucket Dipper

- Invest in the book by Carol McCloud *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids*
- Introduce this book as an initial activity for your school year
- Adopt your own buckets for a positive classroom behavior reinforcement

Cook up a **Friendship Mix**

- Being cautious of allergies, discuss with your class in the beginning of the year what it means to be a good friend
- As you discuss add snack mix ingredients together in a large bowl for a snack to share with new friends
- As you mix your yummy snack together, start discussing what a "not so good" friend might do or sound like and begin peeling a rotten banana over the snack mix
- Talk about how good the friendship mix looks and what would happen if you added a rotten banana to the mix
- Finish by sharing the mix, minus the rotten banana!

Develop classroom **Hand Signals** to communicate with students non-verbally

- Use a simple system to communicate everyday needs between teacher and students that minimize interruptions during teaching
- Finger system to relay what is needed from students
 - 1 finger conveys a need to speak out
 - 2 fingers relays that the student needs to leave his or her seat
 - 3 fingers signals student needs help with work
 - 4 fingers means student needs a restroom break
 - 5 fingers is the quiet sign

Implement a Positive Reinforcement System like **Caught You Being Good**

- Using the Bucket Filler concept, create a system to praise the everyday goodness that happens in your classroom by your students.
- Once a reasonable number of deeds has been reached reward student with special activities in the classroom.

Another option is **Bank Your Behavior**

- Use a piggy bank template and reward your students with coins and when they reach a certain amount coins can be cashed in for rewards

Assign **Non-Tangible Items for Rewards** in the classroom

- Create a list of activities as rewards for good behavior in the classroom
 - Computer for Morning Work
 - Lunch with a friend
 - Lunch with the teacher
 - Read or be read to by anyone in the school
 - Beanbag chair for the day

Introduce the **Tattle Tale Ear**

- Google images for an ear and post in the room
- Explain the differences between a good tattle and a bad tattle
- Teach the student appropriate times to visit the ear

Initiate a **Character Counts** program in your school

- Assign one character a month to discuss and "catch your students" exhibiting that character during the month
- Find a system to reward students with dog tags, tokens, or a passport stamp to communicate with parents and students the importance of these characters

Maintain excellent **Family Communication**

- Inform parents by email, newsletter and by utilizing parent volunteers in the classroom to show students the family link between school and home

Create a **Classroom Reward System** dependent upon classroom behavior

- Set up a class reward for good behavior by all students
- Examples: chewsday, popcorn party, pajama party, hot chocolate day, ice cream party

List of Related Citations

“Fitting Big Personalities into a Small Classroom”

Presented by Staff Development for Educators (SDE)

Brooke Houillion

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