Dealing with Behavior on the Bus

Laura A. Riffel, Ph.D.
INTRODUCTION

• Adults in the school setting need to work together
  – Includes bus personnel, teachers and principals
• Students should be taught
  – To be safe while riding the bus
  – Appropriate bus behavior
• Positive interactions have tremendous power
• When misbehavior occurs intervene
  – Calmly
  – Consistently
  – Immediately
Wish you had one of these......
Other Myths

• Don’t Smile Until Christmas
• Let ‘em know who’s boss
• Kids should just know how to be good
Hard Facts

• Behavior is learned and serves a specific purpose.
• Behavior is related to the context in which it occurs.
• For every year a behavior is in place, it takes at least one month for that behavior to have a significant change.
• Children comply with the rules 80% of the time, however they are complimented for their behavior less than 2% of the time.
What is Needed to Address These Challenges?

We want to switch from a proactive approach to a reactive approach.
“Don’t be alarmed folks... He’s completely harmless unless something startles him.”
What Problems Do You Encounter?

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BEHAVIOR ON THE BUS

SURVEY OF 300 BUS DRIVERS

(Randall Sprick at the University of Oregon)

• Problems in Order of Frequency
  – Moving/ out of seat  68%
  – Noise/ rowdiness    64%
  – Rude/ disrespectful 43%
  – Fighting/ hitting    39%
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

From Spring 2003 – Spring 2005

124 Fulton County Bus Drivers were surveyed

RESULTS:
Experience
20 driving for 1 year or less
44 driving for 2 – 5 years
22 driving for 6 – 10 years
28 driving for more than 10 years
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

**Frequency of Behavior Problems**

48 drivers indicated that behavior occurred 2 times or less per week.

74 drivers indicated that behaviors occurred 3 times or more per week.
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

Behavior Problems
65 drivers indicated that out of seat behavior was their number one problem

28 drivers indicated loud talk was their number one behavior problem
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

Frequency of Problem Behaviors

149  Out of Seat/ Head and arms out the window

107  Loud talk, cursing, name calling, talking back, teasing
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

Frequency of Problem Behaviors

63  Fighting, horse playing, pushing, biting

44  Disrespectful

43  Eating, chewing gum, throwing trash on the bus floor
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

Frequency of Problem Behaviors

25  Spitting, throwing things out the window, making hand motions to the cars behind the bus

11  Issues with parents, being late to the bus stop
Fulton County Bus Survey Results

Infrequent but Serious Behaviors

2 Weapons
2 Smoking/drinking at the bus stop
2 Undressing/sexual misconduct
Behavior

- May be the result of problems from home
- Issues with peers at the bus stop
- Demands or problems at school
- Anxiety of the upcoming situation
- Boredom during the bus ride
Behavior

Generally, students use behavior to meet their needs
Conceptual Principles of SW-PBS.

- Behavior is learned and can be taught.
Possible Functions

• Positive Reinforcement:
  - Social attention or
  - Access to materials
  - Sensory Stimulation
  - Control

• Negative Reinforcement:
  - Escape from activities or people
  - Sensory/Pain attenuation
BUS POLICIES/PROCEDURES

• Transportation is part of the school day
• Behavioral expectations for the bus are defined as they are for any other school setting
• Goals are safety first
  – Direct relationship between good behavior and bus safety
• Structure is essential
  – Load and unload in an orderly fashion
  – Avoid congestion
  – Active supervision when possible (visual scanning)
  – Greet and chat with students
Question for you…..

• If a child has a problem with reading would you:
  – spank
  – badger
  – ridicule
  – Use time-out
  – yell
POLICIES/ PROCEDURES

• **Expected Behavior**
  – Express in positive and observable terms
  – State in language easy for parents to explain to their children

• **Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior**
  – Clear consequences for the rule violations
  – Hierarchy of responses to behavior

• **Consequences for Appropriate Behavior**
  – Recognize good behavior
  – Procedures for acknowledging expected behavior
Brandon & the Shoes
Choose 3-5 Behavioral Expectations for your bus

- These need to be stated positively
- Easy to remember
- Have a symbol to remind them
3-5 BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

RESPECT

*SELF

*OTHERS

*PROPERTY
• 3 Rs

⇒ Respect Yourself
⇒ Respect Others
⇒ Respect Property
1. Be **Respectful** of self, others, and surroundings.

2. Be **Responsible** and prepared at all times.

3. Be **Ready** to follow directions and procedures.
Be Respectful of:

Self

Others

Surroundings
Respect
Others
Self
Environment
3 R’s for Centreville Middle School

Be Respectful.
Be Responsible.
Be Resourceful.
School-wide Behavior Expectations

Nonexample:

Be obedient.
No fighting.
No drugs or weapons on the property.
Act responsibly.
School-wide Behavior Expectations

Example:

**PAWS**

Be **Prompt.**

Accept responsibility.

Work Hard.

Show respect.
School-wide Behavior Expectations

Non-example:
Exhibit respect for yourself and others.
Accept responsibility.
Give your best effort.
Look, listen, and learn to
Exceed expectations and
Soar to success.
School-wide Behavior Expectations

Example:

"Soaring to success at NCES!"

- Follow Directions
- Respect Others
- Accept Responsibility
- Keep our feathers to ourselves
School-wide Behavior Expectations

Example or Non-example?

1. Pride.
2. Respect.
4. Excellence.
Example:

Fern Ridge Middle School’s “High Five”

Be respectful.
Be responsible.
Be there and ready.
Keep hands and feet to yourself.
Follow adult directions the first time.
School Rules
NO Food
No Weapons
NO Backpacks
NO Drugs/Smoking
NO Bullying
COUGAR TRAITS
RESPECT RELATIONSHIPS
RESPONSIBILITY
Respect others,
Manage self,
Solve problems responsibly
Fairfield Schoolwide Rules

Be Safe
Be Respectful
Be Responsible

Sea Seguro
Sea Respetuoso
Sea Responsable
Reviewing Strive for Five

• Be respectful.
• Be safe.
• Work peacefully.
• Strive for excellence.
• Follow directions.

McCormick Elem. MD 2003
At MMMS

We are linking learning to life.
DCMS
The Formula 4 Success
Respect
Responsibility
Ready-To-Learn
Re-Think
BE • READY • RESPECTFUL • RESPONSIBLE
Respect Yourself
Respect Others
Respect Your School
Show Respect
Engage in Safety
Act Responsibly
Teach what we mean by:

• Being Respectful of Self on the bus
• Being Respectful of Others on the bus
• Being Respectful of Property on the bus.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example:</th>
<th>Loading and Unloading</th>
<th>When the bus is moving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect Self</strong></td>
<td>Stay where the bus driver can see you. Stay on the sidewalk until it is safe to load. Stay in your seat until the bus comes to a complete stop.</td>
<td>Keep body parts inside the bus. Keep two cheeks on the seat. Keep feet out of aisle. Watch for your stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect Others</strong></td>
<td>Stand at arm’s length behind the person in front of you. Load the bus by holding on to the handrail so you don’t trip on others.</td>
<td>Talk softly so others may hear directions from bus driver. Keep all belongings tucked in the seat with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect Property</strong></td>
<td>Keep bus stop clear of litter. Keep your belongings near you when waiting for the bus to load or unload.</td>
<td>Keep all belongings inside your backpack. Keep feet on floor. Keep hands in lap.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples from Monroe County
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education</th>
<th>Loading and Unloading</th>
<th>When the bus is moving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Helpful</strong></td>
<td>Stay in your seat</td>
<td>Stay seated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help each other to get on and off</td>
<td>Talk in a low voice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make sure bus driver can see you</td>
<td>Keep hands to your self</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give book bag to aid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Kind</strong></td>
<td>Talk in a low voice</td>
<td>Talk in a low voice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be nice to others</td>
<td>Keep bumper on seat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
<td>Keep hands and feet to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Safe</strong></td>
<td>Be visible</td>
<td>Keep your seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be on time</td>
<td>Use inside voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look both ways</td>
<td>Raise hand for help</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watch the driver</td>
<td>Keep seat belt fastened</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary Education/Middle</td>
<td>Loading and Unloading</td>
<td>When the bus is moving</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Be Respectful of Self**   | Listen to the bus driver and follow directions  
                            | Be safe                | Stay seated            
                            |                       | Keep body parts in bus  
                            |                       | Keep aisle clear        |
| **Respectful of Others**    | Share space with others  
                            | Be helpful to each other  
                            | Be nice and kind to others  
                            | Be on time             | Talk softly so others can hear directions  
                            |                       | Keep belongings to self |
| **Respectful Property**     | Clean your feet        |                        |                        |
|                            | Keep hands and feet to yourself and off seats | Keep trash off floor  
                            |                       | Keep belongings in backpack |
| **Be Safe**                 | Keep distance in line  
                            | Be visible             | Stay seated            
                            | Use handrail           | Keep backpack closed     |
|                            | Follow directions      | Sit on bottom with back against seat |
|                            | Watch driver for hand signals | Keep body parts inside bus  
                            | Look both ways when crossing in front of bus  |
|                            | Load from a single file line | Talk softly to friends in your seat |

- **Keep trash off floor**
- **Keep backpack closed**
- **Stay seated**
- **Sit on bottom with back against seat**
- **Keep body parts inside bus**
- **Keep aisle clear**
- **Talk softly so others can hear directions**
- **Keep belongings to self**
- **Be visible**
- **Use handrail**
- **Follow directions**
- **Watch driver for hand signals**
- **Load from a single file line**
- **Keep body parts in bus**
- **Keep aisle clear**
- **Talk softly to friends in your seat**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Loading and Unloading</th>
<th>When the bus is moving</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manners</strong></td>
<td>Wait your turn</td>
<td>Keep aisles clear</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be willing to share your seat</td>
<td>Be courteous</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Load in an orderly manner</td>
<td>Use positive words and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuality</strong></td>
<td>Be at your stop on time</td>
<td>Know when to be silent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exit bus safely and promptly</td>
<td>Watch for your stop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Follow rules the first time</td>
<td>Keeps hands to self</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Helpful</strong></td>
<td>Wake up neighbor if they fell asleep</td>
<td>Use inside voice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Boys help girls up the steps</td>
<td>Use appropriate language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help with book bags</td>
<td>Help other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show respect</td>
<td>Keep aisles clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick up trash on way out of bus</td>
<td>Help put windows up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help substitute driver with proper directions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety</strong></td>
<td>Keep aisle clear</td>
<td>Remain in seat until bus stops</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go directly to assigned seat and stay seated</td>
<td>Keep all food and drink in book bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face forward</td>
<td>Keep all personal items in book bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep all body parts inside the bus</td>
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Time to Work
RULES FOR THE BUS

- Have a clear understanding of the rules
  - Essential for new drivers
- Major rules should be the same from bus to bus
- Clear up the various interpretations of the bus rules
- Make sure students know the consequences
- Use a hierarchy of consequences consistently
  - Examples might include:
    - Change of seat
    - Last off the bus in the morning or last on the bus in the afternoon and discuss behavior with the student in private
    - Complete a behavior improvement plan
TEACHING THE RULES

1. State the rules positively
2. Limit the number of rules to less than 5 (2 or 3 are recommended)
3. Do not assume that students know or understand the rules
4. Teach the rules at the beginning of school
5. Work with teachers and principals to ensure the rules are taught
6. Students should actively participate (role play, demonstrate, explain the importance of the rule, etc.)
TEACH-MODEL-PRACTICE-REWARD
TIME TO WORK
Policies/ Procedures

- **Managing crisis and serious situations**
  - Clearly identify the behaviors in this situation
  - Identify the recommended response
  - Review periodically so you can respond automatically
  - Know when you should call for assistance and get the legal authorities involved

- **Monitoring & Record Keeping**
  - Accurate
    - Note any behavior that is of concern
    - Document what happened just before the behavior and your response
  - Procedures for reporting
    - Parents
    - School personnel
    - Supervisor
Misconceptions about Discipline

• Discipline is the same as punishment

• Consequences alone are effective
  – Results in frustration
  – Consequences are not enough for some students
  – Need various approaches
From the Student’s Point of View

Student’s day:
more than the time spent at school

day begins when they get on the bus

day ends when they get off the bus
Preparing Students for the Ride

- Leave time so loading/unloading can occur without hurrying
- Give positive feedback to students
- Provide reminders about expected behavior
- Review the rules periodically
- Actively supervise the loading and unloading
- Work with the staff on duty to insure adequate supervision
- Work with teachers and administrators to solve problems collaboratively
RAPPORT

Building rapport with students is one element that will increase a student’s willingness to follow rules and directives.

Avoiding interaction with students can create management problems.
COMMUNICATION

BUILD RAPPORT WITH BRIEF COMMUNICATION
• Verbal and nonverbal interactions
• Allows you to gather information
• Lets the students know that you care
• Initiating the interaction tells the student that you are in control
GREETINGS

• Make eye contact
• Greet student(s)
• Ask an open ended question
• Greet groups of students if it is too difficult to greet individuals
• Responses both positive and negative give you information about the student
One-Sentence Intervention
If a child is pushing your buttons…

- You are delivering goods.
If you say:

- Quit
- Stop
- Don’t
- No
What is discipline?
From same Latin root as disciple: 
\textit{discipere} 
“to teach or comprehend”
Best Information of the Day!!!

• Would you like to know what to say when kids try to push your buttons?
The answer is “Probably so”

You caught me walking around and told me to have my bumper meet the seat.

• The statement from me is:
  – Other bus drivers don’t make them
  – You’re mean
  – I’m telling my Dad
  – I’m telling my Mom
  – I’m telling my Grandma
  – I hate this
  – This is stupid
  – This sucks
Let’s Practice: I’m your kid and you just told me “throwing airplanes out the window will get me an office discipline referral”

• That’s stupid
• You’re mean
• Other kids just get to throw paper airplanes out of the bus because their bus drivers are nice
• I hate you
• This sucks
• I’m telling my Mom
• You don’t love me
That was a trick.....

• Would you like to hear how to handle them on that one?
Hold out your finger...... not that one

smile NICE TRY
Let’s practice again. For fun here’s a home example: I didn’t eat my dinner and you told me not to worry you’d be fixing me a big breakfast.

• This is mean
• Other parents let their kids have what they want for dinner
• Susie’s mom fixes two pots of chili; one with beans and one without
• I hate you
• I’m calling social services
Hold out your finger.....

smile  NICE  TRY

They open at 9:00 a.m. is that before breakfast or after breakfast?
5 Important Strategies for Supporting Appropriate Behavior

1. Be Positive and Professional
   - You set the tone
   - Get to know the students by name, their likes and dislikes
   - Interact with the students as often as possible
   - Positive relationships are essential
   - When a student has had a problem, re-establish rapport as quickly as possible
2. Acknowledge Responsible/Appropriate Behavior
   - Give positive feedback
   - Gear positive feedback to the age of the child
   - Give feedback to older students privately
   - Avoid embarrassing students
   - Don’t be put off by a student that does not respond
3. Use Consequences Calmly, Consistently, and Immediately
   - Avoid emotional reactions
   - Consistency reduces the need for students to test the limit
   - Solving small problems initially stops them from becoming bigger problems
4. Provide Continual Supervision
   - Give feedback to students regarding their positive behavior
   - Use visual scanning
   - As safety permits, scan as students get on or off the bus
   - Observe students getting on and off the bus
5. Anticipate: THINK AHEAD

- Use past experience to anticipate trouble
- Keep in mind potential problem areas/ times
  - Students at a particular stop
  - Day before or on specific holidays such as Halloween, Valentine’s Day, etc.
  - Last day of school
POSITIVE FEEDBACK

• Positive feedback reinforces appropriate behavior

• Too much negative feedback (correction, criticism, etc.) creates discord
  – Resentment
  – Anger
  – Feeling of failure

• Correction is appropriate and should be balanced with positive feedback
  – Most effective when positive feedback is heavily weighted
  – Ratio from 3 positive comments to 1 negative comment (minimum)
  – Directives are considered neutral
Giving Positive Feedback

• Focus on the student’s strengths
• Avoid general praise
  (such as “great job”)
• Be specific
• Use positive feedback to reinforce expected behavior
  – For example:
    Jason, I noticed that you talked quietly to Joe today. Thanks!
Positive Feedback Ratio

4 : 1

Minimum ratio of positive feedback statements to negative statements or corrections

Directives are neutral
Background Information

• Seven Middle Schools began SW-PBS at the same time in August of 2003.
• However, they did not begin their “gotcha” programs at the same time.
• Data indicate that instituting a “gotcha” program had significant results on decreasing office discipline referrals.
Yellow indicates when “gotchas” began for each school.
School B

August 2002-2003: 42% decrease
August 2003-2004: 6% decrease
September 2002-2003: 43% decrease
September 2003-2004: 43% decrease
October 2002-2003: 43% decrease
October 2003-2004: 43% decrease
This school did not begin “gotchas” until after December.
School E

- August 2002-2003
  - Decrease: 31%

- September 2002-2003
  - Decrease: 40%

- October 2002-2003
  - Decrease: 16%

- August 2003-2004
- September 2003-2004
- October 2003-2004
School F

- **August 2002-2003**
  - 27% increase

- **September 2002-2003**
  - 45% increase

- **August 2003-2004**
  - 3% decrease

- **September 2003-2004**
  - 27% increase

- **October 2002-2003**
- **October 2003-2004**

Graph showing the percentage increase and decrease in various months from August 2002 to October 2004.
School G

- August 2002-2003: 76% decrease
- September 2002-2003: 4% increase
- October 2002-2003: 34% decrease
- September 2003-2004: 
- October 2003-2004:
Discussion

• While some schools did enjoy a decrease when they did not have “gotchas” in place it did not maintain after the “honeymoon” period.
• No school that instituted “gotchas” had an increase in Office Discipline Referrals once their “gotchas” were in place.
TIME TO WORK
Giving Directives

1. Give a polite directive
   Use the student’s name if possible
   For ex., Anton, please lower your voice.

2. State the expectation positively
   For ex., Anton, you are expected to talk quietly.

3. Repeat the expectation
   Use a calm voice
   Do not react emotionally
4. State a reasonable consequence
For ex., Anton, if you cannot lower your voice, then you will have an assigned seat.

Presenting as a choice might be helpful.
For ex., Anton, if you cannot lower your voice, then you will have an assigned seat or you can lower your voice and continue to sit next to your friends.
Now that you have your expectations—How will you get their attention?

• I will be **happy** (key word) to take you (has to be somewhere)

• *Let's hear another example from Jim Fay.*
Investigating a problem

• **Why should I investigate?**
  – Student may need to tell you something
  – Helps you gather more information
  – May allow you to intervene effectively before a crisis erupts

• **When should I investigate?**
  – When red flags are observed
  – When you see unusual behavior that needs explanations
Steps for Investigating a Problem

1. Identify the observed behavior
   • Describe what you saw
   • “I noticed that (Observed Behavior).”

2. Ask open ended questions
   • “What is the problem or difficulty?”
   • Who, what, when, where, how much, or how often
     • Be direct and brief
     • Not judgmental
3. Listen and observe
   - Attentive silence
   - Look for
     - Body language
     - Behavior
     - Feelings

4. Empathy statements

5. If needed, give a short response
   Be careful
   - Not to over extend yourself or commit yourself
   Consider
   - Reminding students of the rules and expected behavior
   - Directing students to other adults
   - Directing students to think about possible solutions and discuss with other adults/appropriate peers
When Intervening

Remember to

• Treat all students politely
• Be fair
• Communicate (words…not emotions)
• Use incentives
• Use the student’s name
• Give directives
  – Choices- only if real ones are available
Dealing with Groups

• As a group
  – Individual students may give up their personal autonomy
  – Students may reflect the collective personality of the group
  – May be ineffective to rely on your relationship with an individual to try and direct or manage the group
  – May be more effective to talk with the group “leader”
  – If possible, isolate the student that is the source of the problem, before confronting them
    (reduces peer pressure and will more likely resolve the problem)
SOLVING PERSISTENT PROBLEMS

• Gather information
• Establish a quick and timely response
  – Involve others early in the process
• Problem behaviors should not be the occasion to blame
• Intervene early with low level problems
  – Types of problems
    • Noise, arguing, delay in getting to seat
  – Tips for managing problems
    • Increase positives, increase supervision/ structure
Solving Chronic Problems

• Work with others to develop a plan
  – Multi-dimensional plans
  – Conference planning form
  – Parent and student input

• Examine procedures
  Address other contributing factors if possible such as
  – Seating, peers, age groupings
  – Other contributing factors might be overcrowding, route too long, etc.

• View students as “needy” or “troubled”

• Use a problem solving strategy
If Problems Continue

- Is the plan being implemented?
- Is everyone consistent with the plan?
- Increase positives as a first response
- Try to determine the cause of the problem
- Remember- students with problem behavior need more help, not more punishment
WRAP UP

• How will you post your 3-5 behavioral expectations?
  – Poster
  – Coloring book
  – Notes home

• How will you teach your 3-5 behavioral expectations?
  – Video
  – Songs
  – Taking bus to school and role playing

• How will you do your gotcha’s?
  – Principal and teacher buy in?
Sources of information

Alderman, Terry, c. 1997. Discipline on the Bus: A Driving Concern, Resources for Professionals. (video and workbook)


Websites

www.pbsga.org

www.pbis.org

www.behaviordoctor.org

www.loveandlogic.com
E-mail

Laura Riffel
riffy@charter.net