

**Making Order out of Chaos:
An Example of Positive Behavior Support Implementation**

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This case study provides an example of designing a team-based and data-based behavior support plan by using a compilation of tools. This example covers a full school year. As a result of organizing around a team, using functional assessment, and regular meetings, a process developed that guided the team to arrange effective support in on-going data collection for decision making toward Hannah's school day, curriculum, and daily educational opportunities. Necessary revisions were made at meetings based on accurate data. Most often the revisions were small in nature and did not take a whole lot of time to implement. Other, less frequent, events gave rise to the need to begin with problem identification and moving through the process of revising the behavior support plan to match student needs.

Statement of the Problem

Hannah, a pseudonym chosen by Hannah's mother, was a fourth grader at a local elementary school. She had a diagnosis of Down Syndrome and received specially designed instruction as defined on her IEP. Hannah had been attending the school since first grade and knew several of the other students. Hannah received most of her instruction in the special education class. It was located several doors down from the fourth grade class. The teachers described Hannah's problem behaviors as off task and disruptive to instruction and other activities. Her off task and disruptive behaviors included excessive giggling, sticking out tongue, doodling, prolonged waving and pointing at peers, and excessively long transitions from one location to the next. Hannah also received 5 office discipline referrals for inappropriate touching of peers (touching students in private areas). Hannah did not complete assigned work, she spent her work time engaged in the defined off task and disruptive behaviors. Staff described instructional situations when there are 5 or more students per teacher as more problematic

than individual or smaller group compositions (up to 4 students per teacher). Her teachers referred her to the schools Teacher Assistance Team by completing the [Request for Assistance Form](#) (Appendix A/ link) and formed an Action Team to work on the problem.

Understanding the Problem and Organizing Support

An Action Team was formed to focus on the problems and solutions using a problem-solving and data-based approach. The team was composed of Hannah's mother, Hannah's special education teacher, the behavior support coordinator, and the fourth grade teacher. The Action Team met, initially, three times to understand the problem and to get the behavior support plan organized and ready for implementation. A brief description of each of these team meetings follows.

[Action Team Meeting #1](#). Using the Action Team Plan (Appendix B/ link) the team organized the activities that needed to be accomplished in order to get a clear understanding of the problem. *The goal of this meeting was to complete a functional behavioral assessment and determine a summary statement of the problem prior to team meeting #2.* The team used the activities outlined in the Action Team Plan to determine what they needed to do. Prior to team meeting #2, three activities needed to occur including: (a) interviews with family members and teachers, (b) direct observations in a variety of settings, and (c) initial summary of the problem and considerations for adjusting predictor, instructional, and consequence strategies.

Hannah's Special Education Teacher completed the [FACTS](#) (Appendix C/ link), the brief [Functional Assessment interview](#) was completed by Hannah's mother (Appendix D/ link), [direct observations](#) we conducted by the behavior support coordinator (Appendix E/ link)

[Action Team Meeting #2](#). The goal of the second Action Team Meeting was to determine five things: (a) an agreed upon summary statement, (b) defined desired behaviors, (c) defined positive alternative behaviors to teach to replace the problem behaviors, (d) a list of appropriate positive and corrective consequences, and (e) a list of possible instructional, environmental and consequence strategies that would fit.

(a) Summary Statement of the Problem:

1. Given independent seatwork and group instruction activities with more than 5 students, Hannah engages in high rates of off task behavior including ignoring directions, doodling, talking to peers, making silly faces to get peer attention.
2. Given lack of supervision in hallway, Hannah is likely to touch peers inappropriately to get peer attention.

Each of these problems occurs more frequently when Hannah is not feeling well or has not gotten enough sleep. The team agreed that the summary statements closely matched the problems that had been happening. Since both summary statements involved the need for peer attention, the team decided to focus on on-task behaviors. By including keeping hands to self as a criteria for on-task behavior was the strategy used to reinforce that behavior.

(b) Desired Behaviors: The team agreed that under the same circumstances, the desired behaviors to be taught included work completion, quiet working, and direction following.

(c) Positive Alternative Behaviors: The team agreed that self-management behaviors were highly important to teach. The specific self-management behaviors included work completion, working quietly, and self-monitoring work performance.

(d) Consequences for engaging in appropriate behavior include opportunities to spend time with peers. Appropriate work performance (as measured by the self-manager card & permanent products) gains points that add up for social opportunities with peers. Consequences due to problem behavior include not earning points on the self-manager card.

(e) Strategies

Structural and Environmental Strategies include (a) use of picture schedule throughout the day, (b) use of pre-correction for expected behaviors, and (c) use of pre-correction of peers to ignore silly behaviors and pay attention to appropriate behaviors.

Instructional Strategies include (a) teaching on-task behavior for group instruction and seatwork, (b) teaching the use of a self-monitoring system, (c) teaching Hannah to self-recruit teacher help by raising her hand and waiting quietly, and (d) teaching the use of a picture schedule system.

Consequence Strategies include (a) giving self pluses on self-manager card, (b) trading pluses for class points, (c) inviting a friend for free time, (d) positive teacher attention for appropriate behaviors, and (e) giving self zeros on self-manager card when not on-task.

Monitoring and Evaluation activities include (a) weekly meetings initially, shifting to monthly meetings, (b) a review of student progress data at each meeting, (c) use of [Weekly Record](#) (Appendix F/ link) to keep track of progress in curriculum and as a communication record between school and home.

The remaining part of Action Team Meeting #2 was spent brainstorming ideas for the four categories of support for Hannah including setting event strategies, predictor strategies, instructional strategies, and consequence strategies.

The behavior support coordinator translated the meeting minutes into the [Competing Behavior Support Plan](#) (Appendix G/ link).

Action Team Meeting #3 and beyond. The goal of future meetings is to use accurate data for decision making. The team agreed to a three part meeting process beginning with (1) review of the data and follow up on issues from the previous meeting, (2) a discussion of topics needing revision, and (3) a confirmation of the next meeting with tasks and responsibilities assigned for completion prior to the meeting. They also agreed to use a [meeting agenda format](#) (Appendix H/ link) that specifies the critical decisions made at the meeting and the tasks and responsibilities that were assigned.

Regular Action Team Meetings are scheduled from this point forward, with the three part meeting process being followed. Over time, the time between meetings

increased to a four week period, unless major changes (i.e, change in staff/schedule) occurred.

At each meeting, data was reviewed that included overall [weekly progress](#) (Appendix F/ link), progress on [self-management goals](#), and academic progress (Appendix I/ link). Specific curricular areas are discussed with progress specified, errors analyzed, and necessary adaptations.

Making data based revisions. As with any behavior support plan, there are times when little or no adjustments are needed, there are times when minor and simple adjustments are necessary, and there are the times when things just don't seem to be making sense, progress slows down, and little problems occur more frequently and/or increase with intensity and chaos erupts. It is critical that teams have a leader and an organizational structure to help identify these situations.

After the spring vacation, Hannah's problem behaviors looked and sounded different. Her problem behaviors were increasing, but she was engaging in more escape-type behavior than attention getting behavior. Hannah's schedule had changed and instructional demands were increasing due to an individual instructor getting assigned to work with Hannah in all academic areas. The team met to discuss what was going on. It was determined that Hannah was engaging in problem behaviors this time to escape instructional demands. This information was summarized from another version of the FACTS and direct observations. The team followed the same process as outlined early, but focused the problem-solving discussion around escape motivated behavior during instructionally demanding situations. The [Competing Behavior Support Plan](#) was completed at a team meeting (Appendix G/ link).

Important points to notice.

1. Problem behaviors, their predictors, setting events and their maintaining functions, change over time. Periodic assessment and continual data-based decision making is critical.

2. Schedule changes may result in the need to reorganize a behavior support plan to match student needs.

Revisions in the behavior support plan may be necessary.

In Hannah's situation, her schedule changed to include more individualized instruction. She engaged in problem behaviors to escape task demands rather than engaging in problem behaviors to get peer and adult attention. The first version of her support plan was created based on the decision that Hannah was engaging in problem behaviors to get peer and adult attention. As the context and behaviors change so must the support that goes with it. As the support changes, the written support plan needs to be revised to reflect those changes.

Regular team meetings and use of accurate data for decision making need to continue. The Action Team structure has worked for Hannah's team for the past 1 ½ school years. Across that period of time, there have been four different instructional assistants, an extended school year program, a change in regular education teachers (from 4th grade to 5th grade). With each of these events, the Action Team structure and accurate data facilitated successful problem solving. Chaos was prevented as a result of the order that was established for organizing team support and monitoring student success.

For more specific information on this specific plan, go to the available links or contact Anne W. Todd at awt@uoregon.edu