Effects of a Tier 2 Intervention with Young Children
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Background
High rates of problem behavior are seen in early childhood classrooms (Hemmeter, 2007; Hemmeter, Fox, Doubet, 2006). The preschool expulsion rate is 3.2 times the rate for school-aged children (Gilliam, 2005). Preschools recently have adopted a tiered framework of prevention. Although emerging research exists examining universal and tertiary supports, few studies have investigated tier 2 intervention with young children. This study investigated a self-control intervention, the Turtle Technique, as a tier 2 intervention with preschoolers.

Purpose
The purpose of this investigation was to examine the effectiveness of the Turtle Technique as a tier 2 intervention utilizing a single-subject multiple baseline across participant effectiveness of the Turtle Technique as a tier 2 intervention. The purpose was to determine whether the technique had an effect on children’s self-control.

Participants/Setting
Participants: 3 young children; Connor, Lynn, and Anna 3-4 years of age
In need of tier 2 intervention
Preschool Setting: 3 classrooms currently employing universal supports

Overview of Procedures
The four steps of the Turtle Technique were coded and were operationally defined as: (a) stop, (b) go into shell, (c) take three deep breaths and (d) calm to think of a solution to the problem.

Measurement
Direct observation during 30-minute play session using 15-second partial interval recording.
Problem behavior was operationally defined as:
- Physical aggression toward another person
- Verbal aggression in the form of derogatory or demeaning statements made to peer
- Leaving a designated area without teacher permission
- Disruption
- Property destruction

Intervention
Intervention Session (with use of CSEFEL materials)
- Using a puppet, the teacher explained how Tucker Turtle has come to help them to learn strategies for calming
- Teacher modeled the four steps of the Turtle self-control technique consisting of: (a) stop, (b) go into shell, (c) take three deep breaths and (d) calm to think of a solution to the problem
- Teachers facilitated role play scenarios with the children
- The teacher read the book Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think

Results
Although a decrease in problem behavior was seen for all of the children, direct observations indicated the technique was not used by any child during play sessions in the classroom.

Results (cont’d)
- Direct observation indicated:
  - A decrease in problem behavior following intervention
  - Use of the technique (stop, go into shell, deep breathing, calm/think) was never observed
- DECA score decreased at post-test for one of three children
- IRP overall mean item score was 4.82 (range 4.13-5.4), indicating high satisfaction

Discussion
Although a decrease in problem behavior was seen for all of the children, direct observations indicated the technique was not used by any child during play sessions in the classroom. Therefore, the observed behavior change may be due to factors other than the specific techniques taught during the intervention. Additional research is needed to identify operational components of intervention.

References
Hemmeter, M. L. (July/August, 2007). We are all in this together: Supporting children’s social emotional development and address challenging behavior. Exchange, 12-16.