CENTER ON PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

In collaboration with Center for Parent Information & Resources

SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH PBIS AT HOME

CENTER ON PBIS
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Introduction

Over 25,000 schools have embraced positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) as a highly effective way to build children's social-emotional-behavioral skills and reduce challenging behaviors. PBIS can be effectively used at home too and is especially helpful when events disrupt normal routines (e.g., worldwide health pandemics, natural disasters, extended breaks). Below are some recommendations for families and caregivers on how to use PBIS to support their children's social and emotional growth and minimize behavioral disruptions in the home.

Set Routines

Most children thrive when they have routines and structure. Schools set specific routines for students to follow during the day. Schools often post these schedules in classrooms or give them to students at the beginning of the school year or term.

When schools are not in session, students may have fewer predictable routines, which can increase their anxiety and challenging behaviors. To cut down on behavior problems, families and caregivers can mimic school routines with their children and set up times for learning, exercise, and play. It's helpful if these routines are similar to what students are already familiar with from school. The home schedule needs to be posted in a visible central place for all to see. **The more consistent the routines and schedule can be, the easier it will be to support prosocial behavior and prevent challenging behavior in the home.**

Elementary Routine Example	Secondary Routine Example
Get Ready to Learn *Wake up, get ready for the day, & eat breakfast*	**Get Ready to Learn** *Wake up, get ready for the day, & eat breakfast*
Morning Check-in *Review morning schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing today? Do you have any questions?)*	**Morning Check-in** *Together, set schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing today? Do you have any questions?)*
Morning Movement* *Consider a walk outside, yoga, "hike" inside on the stairs, etc.*	**Morning Exercise*** *Choose an exercise activity to do in the home or outdoors*
Structured Learning‡ *Establish times for core academic activities, like reading, math, writing*	**Morning Distance Learning‡** *Support the student in engaging in distance or remote learning activities*
Lunch Check-in *Eat healthy lunch, review afternoon schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing? Do you have any questions?)*	**Lunch Check-in** *Eat healthy lunch, discuss afternoon schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing? Do you have any questions?)*
Afternoon Learning Activities *Consider a virtual field trip, art, music, science, or other fun learning activity*	**Afternoon Distance Learning** *Support the student in re-engaging in distance or remote learning activities*
Afternoon Movement *Consider a walk, dance party, or similar active movement options*	**Afternoon Exercise** *Choose an exercise activity to do in the home or outdoors*
Social Connection§ *Connect with family members or friends via social media, phone, etc.*	**Social Connection§** *Connect with family members or friends via social media, phone, etc.*
Evening Family Time & Bedtime *Maintain typical evening routines to connect with each other*	**Evening Family Time & Bedtime** *Maintain typical evening routines to connect with each other*

**Free resources for movement activities: KidsActivities[1], GoNoodle[2]. ‡Free resources for structured or distance learning activities: Khan Academy[3], Scholastic[4], Outschool[5], PBS Kids[6], Age of Learning[7], My PlayHome[8], Sounding Board[9], LetterSchool[10], Tales2Go[11], Epic![12]. §Ideas for social connection: Schedule a remote playdate for elementary students, a video call with grandparents to do an art activity together, a virtual dance or music session, etc. (Many secondary students will have better ideas for this than parents will!)*

Set Home Expectations

If your child is in a school that uses PBIS, the school will have a chart with desired behaviors, including a description of how those behaviors will look like in each setting. For example, your child's school might ask students to "Be Respectful" (what's expected) in the classroom (where it's expected) by raising their hand before speaking (the desired behavior). Often these charts can be found on the school's website homepage.

Schools that actively use PBIS might have an orientation on what behaviors are expected and where, and set a time in the beginning of the year to teach students and staff the specific behaviors. These can be adapted by families to fit the home setting. Examples of an expectations table for home and school are below.

School Example

	Classroom	Cafeteria	Dismissal
Be Respectful	Raise your hand before speaking	Throw your food away when done eating	Listen to teacher instructions
Be Responsible	Turn in your homework when it is due	Bring your lunch money to lunch	Have your backpack ready
Be Safe	Walk when holding scissors	Keep feet on the floor	Walk in the hallways

Home Example

	Virtual Classroom	Mealtime	Bedtime
Be Respectful	Keep background noise to a minimum when engaged in lesson	Be kind to family members during conversation Put your dishes in the sink	Be polite when reminded about bedtime
Be Responsible	Do your best work Turn in your homework when it is due	Wash your hands before helping with meal preparation and/or eating	Go to bed on time
Be Safe	Keep open drink away from computer keyboard	Keep feet on the floor	Wash your hands before brushing your teeth

Teach, Remind, and Reward Expected Behaviors with Positive Feedback

Just like schools that use PBIS, doing so at home is much more powerful with a plan to teach, remind, and reward behaviors using positive feedback. Emphasizing respect, responsibility, and a sense of community is important for maintaining a smooth home-school connection.

For example, consider having conversations with your child that match conversations they might have at school on respecting other individuals. If your child's comment reflects a lack of understanding or bias, calmly discuss factual information (e.g., "Anyone can get sick." "We are a community that takes care of each other."). The following table shows how families and caregivers might teach, remind, and reward respectful, responsible, and safe behaviors.

	Be Respectful ***Example: Kind Language***	**Be Responsible** ***Example: Do Your Best Work***	**Be Safe** ***Example: Wash Hands***
Teach	Describe what kind language does (and does not) sound like in your home. Demonstrate kind language and ask children to practice kind language with you.	Describe what "doing your best" means in your home. Examples might include focusing on your work, reading/listening to all instructions before beginning, asking for help when needed, and sticking with it until done. Discuss what this looks like (and does not look like) across the types of learning activities.	Describe and demonstrate how to wash hands (using various posters available from CDC). To ensure your children wash their hands for 20-30 seconds, have them pick a portion of a favorite song to sing.
Remind	At the start of the day and each new activity where kind language is expected, remind kids to be kind. For example, "Playing games together is fun, and let's remember to be kind with our words."	At the start of the day and at the beginning of new or difficult activities, remind children to "do their best work."	Before meal preparation, before eating, after using the bathroom, or after touching their face, remind children to wash their hands.
Reward with Positive Feedback	When your child is kind, provide specific praise. For example, "Thank you for being kind when your sibling was having a hard time."	When you see your child doing their best, provide specific praise. "It's great to see you doing your best! I think you'll be proud of your work!"	When you see your child washing their hands, provide specific praise—for example, "Awesome handwashing! Thanks for keeping our family safe."

- **In addition to teaching, rewarding, and reminding, you may need to correct behavior.** When a child makes an error, provide a quick correction or re-direction. For example, if you observe your child showing disrespect to others:

  1. Quickly correct or signal the error, (*"That was not respectful"*)
  2. Re-state the expected behavior, (*"We speak kindly to each other to show respect"*)
  3. Provide an opportunity for positive interaction, (*"Let's try that again. How would you show respect?"*)
  4. Provide the child positive feedback, (*"That was a kind thing to say."*)

  Redirections can be even quicker ("Remember, you need to wash your hands before coming to the table. Please go wash your hands."). **The goal is for a correction or redirection to be calm, brief, and provide an opportunity for the child to practice the desired behavior.** In addition, it's important to maintain a 5-to-1 ratio and use more reminders than corrections.

  - **Maintain a 5-to-1 ratio.** It's easy to get into a habit of correcting, but the goal is to maintain a ratio of 5 positive interactions or praise statements for every 1 negative interaction or corrective statement.
  - **Remind instead of correct.** Instead of correcting behavior after it happens, we can remind children what we would like to see before a behavior is expected. For example, we can put a sign in the bathroom near the sink to "Wash your hands." Children can even help create these signs and brainstorm what signs might be needed.

- **To decrease undesired behavior, you can also teach alternatives.** To decrease an undesired behavior, like touching one's face, you can teach your child to do something else. For example, children can be given a fidget that they can play with that keeps their hands away from their face or taught to use a tissue to touch their face.

Learn the Facts About the Current Events and the System's Response

Make sure that you learn about the current state of affairs from trusted sources. If your child is old enough and they ask, consider sharing information about the event that is appropriate for their age. Highlight the steps your family, school, and district are taking to keep students, families, and staff healthy and safe during this time.

Communicate with Schools for Instructional Guidance

Keep in touch with your child's school or district. Regardless of how long schools will be closed, find out if they are establishing on-line or virtual learning opportunities for their students. If they are, it will be important for families and caregivers to learn how to access it. Try to check your email, phone, or other way that the school has used to communicate with you in the past. Ask your child if the school has a system already set up for on-line instruction that students at home can check or if their teachers have shared information on where they will post assignments. If you do not have access to the internet or devices (e.g., computers) to allow for virtual and distance learning, contact your school and ask for help or alternatives. If your child is in special education, contact the special

education teacher for additional information. If your child was receiving meals from the school, see if the school, town, or district has set up other ways for your child to continue to receive food.

Be Creative

With the emphasis on safety, your children may not have access to their peers for play dates or other family members in separate households. **Consider setting time to chat or be with friends in virtual play dates (e.g., FaceTime, Skype) or connecting with friends or relatives.** There are several free or discounted online learning resources for Pre-K–12 students to complete from home to keep up with learning. Parks, community areas, and libraries may not be physically accessible, but there might be fun activities available on-line. Keep children connected to their peers and distant family members virtually and take breaks throughout the day if feeling overwhelmed.

Model and Promote Emotional Wellness

You or your child might experience stress and anxiety during this time of extended school closure. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations and how you respond will make an impact on your child and the other individuals in your household. Take breaks from the news or social media. Take care of your body by engaging in deep breaths, stretching, exercising, and getting plenty of sleep. Make time for an enjoyable activity, and connect with others by talking to them. Modeling these behaviors will not only help you but will show and teach your child how to cope during stressful situations. It is important to continue to monitor your needs and your child's, and contact your healthcare provider if you have immediate or ongoing concerns.

Additional Useful Resources

- Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)[13]
- Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR)[14]
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)[15]
- US Department of Education COVID-19 Resources for Schools and School Personnel[16]
- Providing Services to Students with Disabilities during COVID-19[17]
- Tips for Parents when School is Out[18]
- Checklist for Teachers and Parents[19]
- Frequently Asked Questions[20]

Embedded Hyperlinks

1. https://kidsactivitiesblog.com
2. https://www.gonoodle.com
3. https://www.khanacademy.org
4. https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html
5. https://outschool.com
6. https://pbskids.org
7. https://www.ageoflearning.com
8. https://www.myplayhomeapp.com
9. https://www.ablenetinc.com/soundingboard
10. https://www.letterschool.org
11. https://apps.apple.com/us/app/tales2go/id458539653
12. https://apps.apple.com/us/app/epic-kids-books-and-videos/id719219382
13. https://www.pbis.org
14. https://www.parentcenterhub.org/
15. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/family.html
16. https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus
17. https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf
18. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/children.html
19. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/checklist.html
20. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html

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