

Pre-K Teach & Play Practice Point

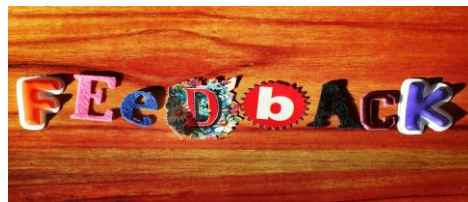
Delivering Effective Feedback

Feedback allows children to know what they should do more of, less of, what they have gotten “right,” and even what they need to work on.

As evidenced by our daily work, and a [2007 synthesis](#), we know, delivering feedback can have a positive and negative influence on learning, and that children tend to learn more, when they receive feedback on what they are doing well.

Unfortunately, the reality is that sometimes children struggle with being correct, or always making the “right choice,” and in these instances, still need feedback so they can adjust their response the next time. More importantly, children need feedback that is [targeted, specific, and timely](#) (TST).

As an educator or a parent, how *targeted, specific, and timely* is the feedback you deliver?



In addition to delivering TST feedback, we need to make sure our feedback actually supports children and doesn't confuse, shame, or frustrate them. One challenge we face in giving effective feedback is giving into the [lure](#) of using publicly displayed behavior management systems.

On the face of it, such methods for tracking children's behaviors appear to follow several recommended practices. For example, they can give immediate information to children, they are an example of using [visual supports](#) (which we know is effective), and some feel their use, frees up classroom instructional time.

The truth, however, is that these approaches to managing behavior can backfire, and are often [ineffective, unethical, and indeed harmful](#).

This Pre-K Teach & Play Practice Point offers educators and caregivers “replacement behaviors” for giving children feedback, without the use of publicly displayed behavior charts or cards.

Replacement Behaviors

1. Provide targeted, specific, timely, **and private** feedback to children to support learning how to self-monitor their own behavior. In other words, if you are going to use behavior charts/cards to monitor a child's performance, do so in a way that it is **not publicly displayed**.
 - In these instances, adults can discreetly inform children of what to do, and then at the end of the day or at logical time intervals, the adult can privately check in to see how things are going. All this said, it is "okay" (and effective), to publicly display visuals that illustrate *expectations for participation, class wide rules, and/or reminders for how to express emotions*.
2. When done intentionally, and paired with targeted, specific, and timely verbal or written feedback, privileges can be another means of delivering feedback. In other words, instead of taking away privileges (e.g., using punishment or threats), use privileges as an incentive to do things that need to be done. This way, children can strive to reach a goal, instead of giving up, once the privilege is removed.
 - Privileges are earned through good choices, so when a child does not earn a privilege, adults can take the opportunity to discuss with the child what choices they can make next time. Similarly, children can be given feedback about what they did that lead to earning the privilege.
 - When delivering consequences, they should not be arbitrary (e.g., "I'm going to take away your free time!" or "Get straight to the office, we are calling your parents!"). Rather, use **logical consequences**, particularly when something is needed beyond the use of privileges.
 - When "stronger" consequences are required, they should match the "offense." For example, a child that hits another child may need to be calmly removed from the classroom, or you might use a **responsive classroom time-out** where the child is unable to hit or harm others. In these situations, detailed feedback and efforts to teach rules should be delayed until the child is calm and receptive.

3. Although we often think of the **Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence sequence** (ABC: also known as Antecedent-Response-Consequence, or ARC) as specific to addressing the most challenging behaviors, this process can also be used as a class-wide strategy for giving feedback. What is the purpose of feedback, after all? Isn't it to support learners in obtaining or mastering the skills needed to succeed? And don't we want young children to succeed at being emotionally stable and confident individuals?



- The ABC sequence can be used to develop and implement an intentional class-wide plan that helps adults prepare for how best to respond and deliver feedback. As we know, it can be difficult to respond calmly and purposefully when addressing challenging behaviors. It can also be difficult to determine how to implement a comprehensive system for a larger group of children with varied needs. **Using the ABC sequence to bolster or adapt existing lesson plans can help in the delivery of effective feedback that is predictable and less reactionary.**
- Engaging in a **functional behavioral analysis** (FBA) may, however, also be necessary when children are routinely experiencing strong emotions or demonstrating challenging behaviors. FBAs are helpful in arranging the environment to avoid triggers, preparing for and being ready for situations likely to ignite strong emotions, and intentionally planning for the type of constructive feedback you will provide when emotions or behaviors do get out of hand.

Additional Resources

- [2 Highly Effective Ways to Deliver Feedback Without Playing the Shame and Blame Game](#)
- [B2K Practice Point: Effective Use of Visual Supports](#)
- [Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Effective Practices](#)
- [What Works Brief: Time-Out](#)
- [Cracking the Behavior Code](#)

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