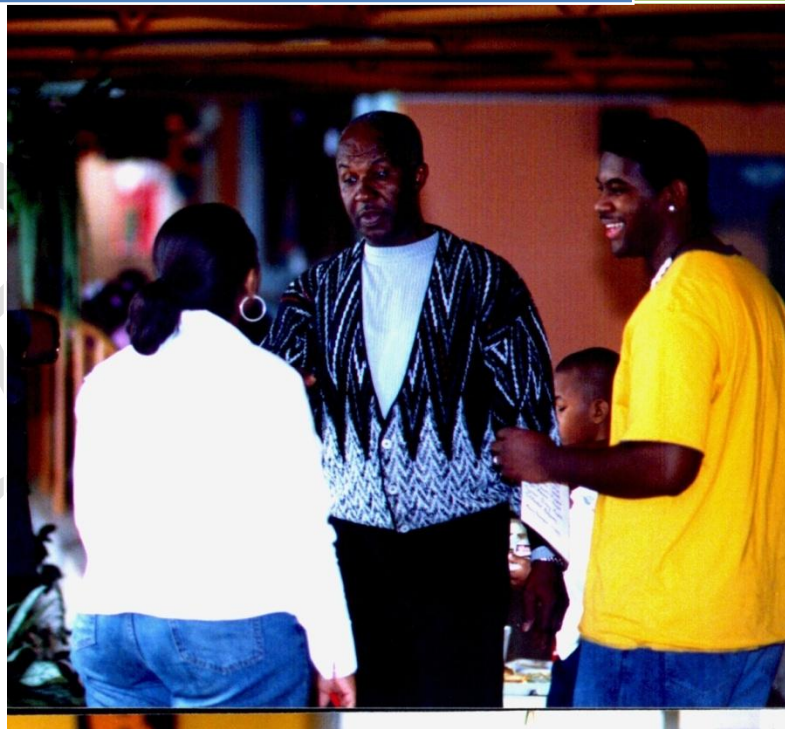# How Teachers Can Help Me: Student Advocacy Booklet Teacher Form and Scoring Guide

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The original "How Can Teachers Help Me" guide was developed by graduate students as part of Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr's Emotional and Behavioral Disorders class during the fall of 2008 at the University of Pittsburgh. Ms. Elizabeth Steele edited the guide, and we are grateful for her efforts. The guide was based in part on a similar guide developed by Dr. Sue Perfetti and the Apollo-Ridge School District.

Since then, the guide has undergone many changes to increase its applicability as a practical resource for both students and the adults who serve them. We are grateful to many individuals who helped pilot this tool increasing our understanding of self-advocacy and self-determination.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Some students may struggle with their behavior in the classroom. If left unchecked, behaviors that conflict with a teacher's expectations or rules can become a major distraction to the instructional environment. While the causes of these inappropriate behaviors can be difficult to pinpoint, the one constant is that the adults in the school are charged with responding to the behaviors.

All teachers have their own unique style of classroom management, including strategies designed to eliminate or prevent unwanted behavior. Over time, these strategies are refined and hopefully become part of a classroom culture which breeds both academic and behavioral success. Unfortunately, some students will continue to exhibit challenging behaviors, regardless of how effective these strategies may seem.

Students are unique as well. Each individual student brings his or her own strengths, weaknesses, and personal experiences to the classroom. This uniqueness means that students respond differently to various instructional and behavioral management strategies. Colloquially speaking, what works for *you* may not work for *me*. Adults do not always know which strategy or intervention will have the most success with a student. In this sense, selecting these strategies often boils down to trial and error.

One person who may be helpful in selecting the most appropriate strategy is the student himself. Children and adolescents know what they will respond positively to, and what has worked successfully for them in the past. Regrettably, however, adults often neglect to include students when selecting strategies to reduce difficult behaviors.

This Scoring Guide is intended for use by adults in conjunction with the *How Teachers Can Help Me: Student Advocacy Booklet.* The main purpose of these resources is to help students to self-select interventions and strategies for their own behavior. The Student Advocacy Booklet contains a comprehensive checklist of strategies, activities, and tips that may help curb challenging student behavior. Students work alone and complete the checklist, selecting the things that they feel will work best for them.

Once the student has completed the Booklet, adults can use these data to guide them towards evidence-based strategies proven to help reduce inappropriate behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors. Using these strategies by themselves or in concert with one another can help struggling students to adjust to the classroom environment. Read on to find out how to use this Scoring Guide.

HOW TO USE THE SCORING GUIDE

Following the steps below will guide you toward selecting the strategies and interventions that are maximally effective for improving student behavior.

1. Ask a student in your class to complete the Student Advocacy Booklet. Make sure that he or she can complete the Booklet in privacy. This should take approximately 20 minutes.

2. The strategies in this Scoring Guide include references to groups of numbered items from the Student Advocacy Booklet. For example, the first strategy, "active supervision," refers to items one through seven of the Booklet.

3. For each strategy, sum the number of checkmarks the student has placed within the range of items referenced. In the example below, the student has marked five of the seven items in the active supervision section. Place this total (5) in the Scoring Guide.

1. __X___	Ask me how my day has been and let me go speak with my counselor if I need to.
2. __X___	Check to make sure I am prepared. Do I have the materials required?
3. _____	Ask if there is anything I need and how I am feeling that day.
4. __X___	Tap my desk or walk by if it looks like I'm not paying attention.
5. __X___	Stay close to me so that I can stay focused more easily.
6. _____	Check to make sure that no one is teasing me.
7. __X__	I enjoy adult attention – it makes me happy.

4. The more checkmarks a student has placed within a range of items for a particular strategy, the more appropriate that strategy will be for helping them with their behavior. In the example above, the student has marked five out of the seven items. This indicates that active supervision may be a helpful strategy for his teacher to employ. Conversely, had the student marked only one or two of the items, active supervision would most likely not be an effective strategy for the teacher to try with this particular student.

5. Once you have completed the Scoring Guide, you will have a better idea of which strategies and interventions to try. Included under each strategy is a short explanation and/or a link to a free web resource which describes the strategy at length. Please use this information to learn more about each of the strategies included within this guide before attempting to implement them. Good luck!

SCORING GUIDE

Item Number(s)	How many checked?	Corresponding Strategy
1-7	/7	Active Supervision
8-13	/6	Providing Choices
14-18	/5	Classroom Based Physical Activity
19-24	/6	Cooperative Learning/Flexible Grouping
25-26	/2	Contingency
27	/1	Collateral Closet
28-34	/7	Decrease Downtime
35-36	/2	Home – School Communication
37-44	/8	Increase Rate of Success
45-49	/5	Modeling
50 -56	/7	Organization
57-62	/6	Planned Ignoring
63-66	/4	Precision Requests
67-73	/7	Posting Requests
74-79	/4	Posting Rules and Expectations
80-81	/2	Nonverbal Cue
82-86	/5	Praise
87-94	/8	Precorrection
95-99	/5	Redirections
100-105	/6	Response Cards
106-116	/11	Maximizing Environmental Structure
117-124	/8	Time Based Strategies

ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Active supervision is a strategy that requires adults in schools to be vigilant observers and participators in their environment. Follow the steps below to begin active supervision:

1. Constantly scan the entire area looking for problem behaviors or dangerous activity.
2. Continuously move around the area making sure to travel by areas, activities, and groups that are known to cause problems.
3. Check for appropriate and inappropriate behavior being certain to praise or correct as necessary.

http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Active-Supervision/176/Default.aspx

PROVIDING CHOICES

Engaging adults in power struggles is part of the developmental period for middle school and high school students. Unfortunately, defiant or non-compliant students can disrupt the flow of a classroom. Often, the best way to handle noncompliance is to create the "illusion of control" for students by providing choices. Instead of simply telling the student what he or she should be doing, phrase directives and commands as competing alternatives. This gives the student more control over their day and is likely to increase their engagement with instruction. Just be sure that all of the choices offered to students are desirable outcomes for the adults in the classroom!

CLASSROOM BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sitting in a classroom for extended periods of time can be difficult for many students, particularly students with emotional or behavioral disorders. One way to break up the monotony of the school day is to engage your students in short, in-class physical activities. These activities can increase concentration, reduce fidgeting, and improve on-task behavior (Caterino & Polack, 1999). Follow the steps below to use a classroom-based physical activity:

1. Determine when to use the activities by observing your class and noticing when patterns of undesirable behavior occur.
2. Physical activities should be age-appropriate. Vigorous activities work best. For example, have your students stand up and stretch their arms and legs or move around the room.
3. Implement the physical activity during these time periods. They should take no longer than 5-10 minutes.

- http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Classroom-Based-Physical-Activity/111/Default.aspx

COOPERATIVE LEARNING – FLEXIBLE GROUPING

Think of these strategies as different ways to guide students towards helping one another with instruction. In other words, cooperative learning and flexible grouping are forms of peer tutoring. When grouping students together for an assignment or review, be careful how you create the pairings. Ensure that your students are in groups or pairs that can work together effectively without being disruptive. Cooperative learning and flexible grouping are best when used with tasks such as spelling, vocabulary, sight words, formulas, and history facts (Kerr & Nelson, 2010).

For more on cooperative learning, go to http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Cooperative-Learning/33/Default.aspx
For more information on flexible grouping, visit http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Flexible-Grouping/36/Default.aspx

CONTINGENCY

At its most basic level, a contingency is a relationship between a behavior and a consequence (Kerr & Nelson, 2010). For example, you may praise a student every time he answers a question correctly. In this example, the praise is the consequence for the answering behavior. Contingencies such as these are strengthened (and thus more effective) if the application of the consequence is consistent with the occurrence of the behavior.

However, some contingencies are more complex and demand more of your attention. Contingencies may be even be delivered to an entire classroom at once. These are often called group contingencies. In a group contingency, the whole classroom is subject to some form of contingency based on behavior. Follow the link below for a more detailed example of a group contingency, *The Good Behavior Game*.

For more on this strategy, go to http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Good-Behavior-Game/37/Default.aspx

COLLATERAL CLOSET

The collateral closet is a very simple strategy that helps students who frequently do not have the tools or resources required for effective instruction (it also comes in handy for students who tend to walk away with school property). For example, consider a student who comes to class without a writing utensil. In order to get a pencil from her teacher, the student must trade a personal item in to the

collateral closet. The student hands over the item to the teacher, who in turn delivers the pencil. At the end of the class period, the item is returned to the student and the pencil is returned to the teacher. This strategy is a good alternative to verbal reprimands and takes zero time away from instruction.

DECREASING DOWN-TIME

http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Increasing-Engaged-Time/38/Default.aspx

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Increasing communication between the school and home environments is crucial for academic and behavioral success (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). There are many methods of fostering this relationship, including:

- Many schools call home only when students misbehave. If parents only receive negative messages from school, they may become alienated to the environment. Be sure to call home when students behave appropriately or do well on assignments.
- Send home a daily report card for behavior and/or academics. Parents must sign off the report card, which is returned to school the next day.
- Invite parents to the school for conferences concerning their student's behavior. Parents often know what works best for their children. They may be able to provide you with some helpful tips!

INCREASE RATE OF SUCCESS

Within the classroom, another effective intervention is increasing students opportunities to respond (OTR) to academic instruction. This requires that teachers embed abundant opportunities for their students to respond within their lessons. Methods to increase OTR include asking more questions, providing additional prompts for correct responding, individualizing instruction to accommodate students with varying proficiencies, and providing corrective feedback (Conroy et al, 2008). When implemented correctly, this intervention has been shown to increase on-task behavior and reduce disruptive behaviors (Sutherland, Gunter, & Alder, 2003). In addition, redirection through effective feedback and error correction may increase students' engagement in school activities (Conroy et al, 2008).

MODELING

All children are born with the ability to imitate others. In fact, most of early behavior is learning by modeling adults (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). Thankfully, this behavior doesn't go away when children become adolescents. Modeling is particularly effective when students look up to their teachers, or have a good relationship with their teacher. When modeling behavior for students, be sure to stop and explain each of the steps in the behavior. Role-playing difficult situations with students and discussing how they will react can also be helpful. However, you must also be aware of your *own* behavior at all times - adults can model both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors!

ORGANIZATION

Students do best in classrooms that are highly structured and organized (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008). Use the tips below to create an orderly, organized classroom environment (Kerr & Nelson, 2010):

- Establish arrival, dismissal, and re-entry routines.
- Establish routines for in-class transitions (e.g., dividing into groups, re-organizing furniture, etc).
- Post the class schedule and/or individual agendas each day in the same place.
- Be sure students know what to do with their personal belongings. If necessary, provide space for students to place their jackets, backpacks, etc.
- Ensure that the physical layout of the room provides students with unobscured access to adults and instructional materials.

PLANNED IGNORING

When planned ignoring is used, the teacher purposefully withholds her attention when a student misbehaves. Planned ignoring can be effective in reducing behavior when attention from adults is desirable. Typically inconsequential behaviors (not raising hand when asking a question) are ignored while consequential behaviors (pushing or shoving) must be addressed immediately with the student.

PRECISION REQUESTS

Precision requests are unique directives that have been shown to reduce aggression and disruption in the classroom setting (Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003). A precision request is a flexible strategy, as it can be used in conjunction with many other techniques in almost any setting. Follow the steps below to issue a precision request:

- Make a request, using the word "please."
- If the student cooperates, reinforce the behavior.
- If they don't cooperate, initiate a second request, starting with "you need to…"
- If the student cooperates, reinforce the behavior.
- If the student does not cooperate, use a reductive technique.
- For more on precision requests, visit http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Precision-Requests/103/Default.aspx

POSTING AGENDA

Placing the day's agenda on the chalkboard each day is a simple way to ensure that your students know what will be expected of them. This can help to reduce unnecessary anxiety because students can prepare themselves for upcoming tasks or activities. Be sure to be consistent when posting the daily agenda, and explain any unusual changes to the schedule at the beginning of the school day. Finally, establish the expectation that the class schedule is "subject to change." This will help to reduce the confusion when you realize that you have to extend the Algebra lesson!

POSTING RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Perhaps the most basic preventative strategy is creating a system of rules and expectations for student behavior. Setting up a universal set of school rules is one of the most effective methods that schools can employ to help reduce the existence of student misbehavior because more students will behave appropriately if staff clearly define appropriate behaviors (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004). In this sense, creating rules serves as a universally preventative measure, setting the standards for appropriate conduct in the school environment. For this strategy to be most effective, however, you must also dedicate time to review these rules and expectations with your students. Most researchers agree that behavioral rules and expectations must be *explicitly taught* to students (McMullen, Shippen, & Dangel, 2004). Dedicating the time to teach behavioral expectations can have a positive effect on student behavior (Lohrmann & Talerico, 2004). For increased effectiveness, ask your students to assist you in creating your classroom rules.

NONVERBAL SIGN CUE

Establishing nonverbal cues can be a successful strategy for both individual students and the entire class. Class-wide signals are more common and are used to communicate simple messages to the entire class. For example, clapping your hands may signify to students that you are asking for silence.

This may help reduce the chatter from students without having to address each one individually or verbally. A word of caution about nonverbal cues: don't expect students to automatically understand your cues. You must define and rehearse the application of cues with your students in order for them to be effective.

PRAISE

Praise is a form of positive reinforcement used by all adults. Along with redirection, it is probably the most common strategy employed by teachers. However, in order for praise to be most effective, consider the following tips (Kerr & Nelson, 2010):

- Praise should be contingent upon a specific behavior. Don't arbitrarily make hollow praise statements.
- Specify the behavior you are reinforcing in your praise statement. For example, "Betsy, you're doing a great job of staying on task today. Keep it up!"
- Vary your praise! Use different phrases and approaches for delivering your praise.
- For more on Praise, go to http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Praise-in-the-Classroom/105/Default.aspx

PRECORRECTION

Precorrection is a simple strategy used to prevent misbehavior. Use precorrection in times and situations where/when you can anticipate that there will be problems:

- Think about the times of day or situations that may preempt behavior problems.
- Review the rules and routines for these occasions *before* they begin!
- Be specific about what you want your students to do, and give them the tools they need to be successful.
- Precorrection is often as simple as providing students with verbal reminders. However, if needed, you may want to physically rehearse behaviors with students as well.
- For more on precorrection, go to http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Precorrection/174/Default.aspx

REDIRECTION

Redirection is used to remind students what they are supposed to be doing, or to draw the student's attention towards an instructional task. Redirections are often verbal, but they can also take the form of nonverbal prompts such as gestures or written notes. Redirection can be both preventative and reactive. Examples:

- Preventative: "I am going to call of the names in alphabetical order, so be ready to listen for your name."
- Reactive: "I'm sorry I didn't call on you when you raised your hand earlier. Next time, please be patient, and I promise I will get to you."

Be careful not to rely too heavily on redirections or prompts. Research shows that teaches are prone to escalate their redirections with behaviorally challenging students to the point where the interaction is negative (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004).

RESPONSE CARDS

Instead of requiring verbal responses to your questions, try using response cards. Response cards are pieces of paper or dry erase boards that students hold up when asked a question. Note that you may need to adjust your instruction to reflect "yes/no" responses when using response cards. The following are helpful tips for using response card in your classroom (Christle & Schuster, 2003):

- Demonstrate how to use the response cards first.
- Specify what you want the students to do with defined cues ("Cards up" means that you want the students to hold the cards up over their heads with the answer facing the teacher).
- Pass out the cards and any other materials.
- During a lesson, ask questions that require a short answer, number, or letter.
- Scan the cards and select a correct answer, repeating the answer out loud to the rest of the class.

MAXIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE

Generally, this is not one unique intervention, but rather a system of intertwined strategies often referred to as "environmentally mediated interventions" (Kerr & Nelson, 2010; p. 202). These strategies include altering the seating arrangement so that each student has unobscured visual access to the teacher, posting the daily schedule and class rules, increasing teacher directed activities, and

establishing consistent routines. Strategies such as these ensure that students know what is expected of them, reduce unnecessary confusion, and establish consistency in the classroom. These interventions work in concert with one another to promote academic and social behaviors (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).

TIME-BASED STRATEGIES

There are many time-based techniques that you can implement to reduce inappropriate behavior in the classroom. Note that some of these techniques require you (and your schedule) to be flexible in terms of organizing your time:

- Write how much time is left for the completion of an assignment or test on the chalkboard.
- Start class 1-2 minutes late so tardy students do not miss instruction.
- Adjust the length of time given to complete assignments so that struggling students have time to finish.
- Break up instruction by keeping tasks short in duration, if possible.
- Build an extra five minutes into each assignment so students can check their work.
- Clearly define the amount of time that students have to transition from one classroom or activity to the next.

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