

Strategies for Behavioral Issues

Behavior problems following brain injury often have a neurological basis. These students are often unable to plan their behaviors; they also may be unable to foresee the consequences of their actions. They may have memory problems, increased impulsivity, and impaired judgment leading others to see their behavior as aggressive or belligerent (Special Education Service Agency, 2005). The following suggestions can assist the student as well their peers and teachers to deal with the student's behavior.

- Avoid fatiguing student – be aware of their physical limits.
- Limit distractions.
- Allow student ample time to adjust to new situations or activities.
- Avoid surprises.
- Be clear and consistent with behavior expectations.
- Provide frequent positive feedback and avoid criticism.
- React to aggression with a neutral approach.
- Provide an explicit explanation of expectations prior to an activity.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Assist peers in understanding and supporting student.
- Provide a social coach who can help prepare the student for various social events and situations.
- Modify activities to decrease frustration.
- Be flexible.
- Limit choices – some students may be overwhelmed with too many choices.
- Teach and model acceptable alternate behaviors (e.g., verbally expressing anger instead of hitting).
- Schedule preferred activities after non-preferred to give the student something to work towards.
- Limit the number of students in an activity – some students do not react well to overcrowded situations.
- Reduce distraction and clutter.
- Establish routines and follow them.
- Provide verbal or visual prompts or warnings.
- Help student define personal space by using hula hoops or tape on the floor.

Note. Adapted from “Considerations When Including Students Who Have Experienced Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)”, Special Education Service Agency (SESA), Anchorage, AK, Retrieved April 7, 2005 from <http://www.sesa.org/sesa/agency/docs/incltbi.html>; “Strategies for Challenging Behaviors” by M. Rush, 2000, Inclusion... Yours, Mine, Ours, Jacksonville, FL, www.rushservices.com/Inclusion/strategies_for_challenging_behav.htm.

General Strategies for Managing Behavior for Students with TBI

- √ **Establish cooperative relationship.** Behavioral challenges often result from the interaction between the child and the school environment. It is important to determine how the student with TBI and the school can work together.
- √ **Provide feedback to the student.** The teacher is encouraged to provide direct, immediate feedback (in private) about the impact of the student's behavior.
- √ **Encourage alternative behaviors.** Teachers can utilize a number of effective methods such as modeling, cueing, and rehearsing appropriate behaviors.
- √ **Provide clear structure and predictable routines.** Students with brain injury need consistency class to class, school to home, and school to school.
- √ **Pace instruction accordingly.** Be cautious not to overload the student with cognitive demands as this may lead to frustration.
- √ **Set reasonable expectations.** Be specific about the expectations, communicating them in writing and in class discussion.
- √ **Allow rest periods.** Students with TBI often experience fatigue, headaches, and dizziness. The student is often unable to meet the challenges of school which may contribute to behavioral problems.
- √ **Consider modification of school environment.** Several environmental factors, such as noisy hallways and crowded classes, can lead to over stimulation and trigger negative behaviors.
- √ **Include peers in the process.** Others in the school, such as peers and teachers, are encouraged to be part of the solution. They can be encouraged to speak slowly, provide social support, and assist by taking notes for the student.
- √ **Involve the family in any behavior management plan.**

Note: Adapted from Students with Traumatic Brain Injury: Identification, Assessment and Classroom Accommodations by M. Hibbard, W. Gordon, T. Martin, B. Raskin, & M. Brown, (2001), New York: Research and Training Center on Community Integration of Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury.

Try Praise Instead

99 Ways to Say “Good Job!”

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're on the right track now! • You've got it made. • SUPER! • That's right! • That's good. • You're really working hard today. • You are very good at that. • That's coming along nicely. • GOOD WORK! • I'm happy to see you working like that. • That's much, much better! • Exactly right. • I'm proud of the way you worked today. • You're doing that much better today. • You've just about got it. • That's the best you've ever done. • You're doing a good job. • THAT'S IT! • Now you've figured it out. • That's quite an improvement. • GREAT! • I knew you could do it. • Congratulations! • Not bad. • Keep working on it. • You're improving. • Now you have it! • You are learning fast. • Good for you! • Couldn't have done it better myself. • Aren't you proud of yourself? • One more time and you'll have it. • You really make my job fun. • That's the right way to do it. • You're getting better every day. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That's the best ever. • You've just about mastered it. • PERFECT! • That's better than ever. • Much better! • WONDERFUL! • You must have been practicing. • You did that very well. • FINE! • Nice going. • You're really going to town. • OUTSTANDING! • FANTASTIC! • TREMENDOUS! • That's how to handle that. • Now that's what I call a fine job. • That's great. • Right on! • You're really improving. • You're doing beautifully! • SUPERB! • Good remembering. • You've got that down pat. • You certainly did well today. • Keep it up! • Congratulations. You got it right! • You did a lot of work today. • Well look at you go. • That's it. • I'm very proud of you. • MARVELOUS! • I like that. • Way to go! • Now you have the hang of it. • You're doing fine. |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did it that time! • That's not half bad. • Nice going. • You haven't missed a thing! • WOW! • That's the way! • Keep up the good work. • TERRIFIC! • Nothing can stop you now. • That's the way to do it. • SENSATIONAL! • You've got your brain in gear today. • That's better. • That was first class work. • EXCELLENT! • I think you're doing the right thing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good thinking. • You are really learning a lot. • Good going. • I've never seen anyone do it better. • Keep on trying. • You outdid yourself today! • Good for you! • I think you've got it now. • That's a good (boy/girl). • Good job, (student's name). • You figured that out fast. • You remembered! • That's really nice. • That kind of work makes me happy. • It's such a pleasure to teach when you work like that!
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Note. Adapted from "99 Ways To Say Very Good: For Those Days When You Can't Think of What To Say", Career Lab, Englewood, CO, www.careerlab.com/99ways.htm.