

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!”

1. You're on the right track now!
2. That's the best ever.
3. You've got it made.
4. You've just about mastered it.

5. SUPER!
6. PERFECT!
7. That's right!
8. That's better than ever.
9. That's good.
10. Much better!
11. You're really working hard today.
12. WONDERFUL!
13. You are very good at that.
14. You must have been practicing.
15. That's coming along nicely.
16. You did that very well.
17. GOODWORK!
18. FINE!
19. I'm happy to see you working like that.
20. Nice going.
21. That's much, much better!
22. You're really going to town.
23. Exactly right.
24. OUTSTANDING!
25. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
26. FANTASTIC!
27. You're doing that much better today.
28. TREMENDOUS!
29. You've just about got it.
30. That's how to handle that.
31. That's the best you've ever done.
32. Now that's what I call a fine job.
33. You're doing a good job.
34. That's great.
35. THAT'S IT!
36. Right on!
37. Now you've figured it out.
38. You're really improving.
39. That's quite an improvement.
40. You're doing beautifully!
41. GREAT!
42. SUPERB!
43. I knew you could do it.
44. Good remembering.

45. Congratulations!
46. You've got that down pat.
47. Not bad.
48. You certainly did well today.
49. Keep working on it.
50. Keep it up!
51. You're improving.
52. Congratulations. You got it right!
53. Now you have it!
54. You did a lot of work today.
55. You are learning fast.
56. Well look at you go.
57. Good for you!
58. That's it.
59. Couldn't have done it better myself.
60. I'm very proud of you.
61. Aren't you proud of yourself?
62. MARVELOUS!
63. One more time and you'll have it.
64. I like that.
65. You really make my job fun.
66. Way to go!
67. That's the right way to do it.
68. Now you have the hang of it.
69. You're getting better every day.
70. You're doing fine.
71. You did it that time!
72. Good thinking.
73. That's not half bad.
74. You are really learning a lot.
75. Nice going.
76. Good going.
77. You haven't missed a thing!
78. I've never seen anyone do it better.
79. WOW!
80. Keep on trying.
81. That's the way!
82. You outdid yourself today!
83. Keep up the good work.
84. Good for you!

85. TERRIFIC!
86. I think you've got it now.
87. Nothing can stop you now.
88. That's a good (boy/girl).
89. That's the way to do it.
90. Good job, (student's name).
91. SENSATIONAL!
92. You figured that out fast.
93. You've got your brain in gear today.
94. You remembered!
95. That's better.
96. That's really nice.
97. That was first class work.
98. That kind of work makes me happy.
99. EXCELLENT!
100. It's such a pleasure to teach when you work.
101. I think you're doing the right thing. like that!