

# ABA & Classroom Management

Children naturally imitate those around them. When adults discover what a child's behavior is actually communicating, they are better able to respond to the need rather than react to the behavior.

- Brad Blanton, *Radical Parenting* -



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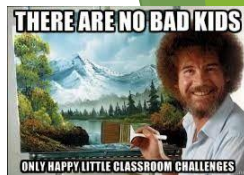
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## What is a Tough Kid?



- ▶ Brainstorm with your group what makes a student challenging.  
Create a list of attributes
- ▶ Create a separate list of attributes of the best or most successful students

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## Skills Children Need to be Successful

- ▶ Excited about learning, willingness to learn something new
- ▶ Ability to express themselves with words
- ▶ Ability to listen
- ▶ Ability to get along well with others
- ▶ Ability to do what they can (self-help)
- ▶ Ability to use fine motor skills for writing
- ▶ Ability to stay focused (average for adult is 20 mins)
- ▶ Ability to problem solve
- ▶ Ability to prioritize
- ▶ Ability to delay gratification
- ▶ Any of these helpful tools for being successful in the workforce or "the real-world"?




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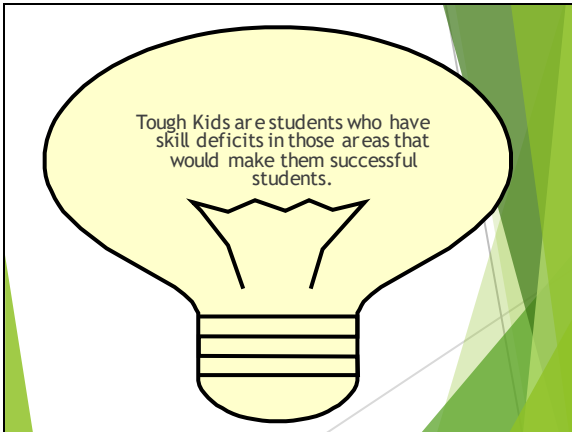
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**Really.....?**

- ▶ These students have difficulties with:
  - ▶ Transition times, doing things in a logical sequence or prescribed order, maintaining a sense of time or maintaining focus, impulsivity, expressing concerns, needs or thoughts in words, understanding what is being said, handling unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, novelty...
  - ▶ They are easily frustrated with difficult, tedious or new tasks, irritable and inflexible
  - ▶ They inaccurately interpret others behaviors negatively ("Everyone is out to get me" "Nobody likes me" "You always blame me" "It's not fair" "I'm stupid" "The teacher just doesn't like me")

Sound Familiar?

MY FACE AFTER I JUST FINISH GIVING DIRECTIONS  
AND A STUDENT ASKS ME WHAT TO DO.

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**Why some kids and not others?  
Why are there "more of them now"?  
Why can't they just behave?  
I tell them to "just be good"!**

- ▶ Still Face Experiment (3mins)
- ▶ Summer Learning Video (2mins)
- ▶ Brain Scans of Neglect
- ▶ 30 Million Word Gap
- ▶ List of Statistics - how common is this?

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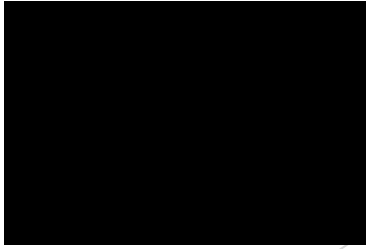
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## Still-Face Experiment



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## Summer Learning



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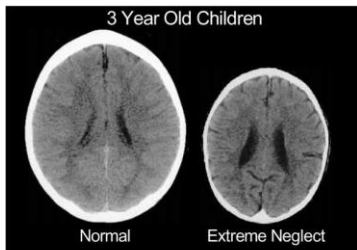
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"Childhood Experience and the Expression of Genetic Potential: What Childhood Neglect Tells us about nature and Nurture." Brain and Mind 3: 79-100, 2002



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### “The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3” by Harp and Risley (2003)

- ▶ Children from high-income families are exposed to 30 million more words than children from families on welfare
- ▶ Children on welfare hear average 616 words per hour, working class hear 1,251 per hour, professional class heard 2,153 per hour.
- ▶ 86%-98% of the words used by age 3 were derived from their parent's vocabularies (including average number of words, speech patterns and duration of conversations)
- ▶ Children from professional families hear 6 encouragements for every 1 discouragement; working class 2 encouragements for every 1 discouragement; children from families on welfare hear 2 Discouragements for every 1 encouragement
- ▶ Researchers found that measures of accomplishment at age three were highly indicative of performance at the ages of nine and ten on various vocabulary, language development, and reading comprehension measures.

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### So who's reading to learn?




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### The stats

- ▶ 1 in 5 Texas children care for themselves at home - unsupervised after school
- ▶ Dallas Co: 72% Economically Disadvantaged, 80% black & hispanic  
Tarrant Co: 55% EcoDis, 60% Black & hispanic
- ▶ 39% of students in grades 1-12 live in homes without their biological father
- ▶ Children living in a home with only their mother has risen from 8% in 1960 to 24.4% in 2012
- ▶ 12% of children live in a home with a parent who is dependent on or abuses alcohol, and/or other drugs
- ▶ Only 1 in ten parents think their child isn't getting enough sleep, however nearly 70% of children are suffering from at least one sleeping problem (snoring, apnea, not enough sleep, can't fall asleep, drowsy during day, etc) a few nights a week or more
  - ▶ School aged children should be getting 10-11 hours of sleep a night!

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## Will I eat? Will I be healthy? Am I safe? Do I have resources?

- ▶ 1 in 4 Texas children live in poverty
- ▶ 1 in 5 Texas children live in "food insecure households"
- ▶ 11% of Texas Children do not have medical insurance
- ▶ 1 in 3 babies born in Texas, the mother had late or no prenatal care
- ▶ Texas ranked 43rd in the nation for "Overall Child-Wellbeing"
- ▶ Texas ranked 47th in "Family and Community"

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## Learning starts early

- ▶ 60% of Dallas ISD kindergarteners are NOT "kindergarten ready" when they start school (% Tarrant)
- ▶ 64% of Dallas Co. 3rd graders are NOT reading on grade level (60% Tarrant Co.)
- ▶ A student not reading at grade level by 3rd grade is 4x less likely to graduate on time & 6x less likely if they are also from a low-income family
- ▶ High School drop-outs are 63x more likely to be incarcerated than college graduates
- ▶ For every month a child is behind by age 5, 3 months of catch up time are required. So if a student enters kindergarten a year behind their peers, it could take # YEARS for him to catch up
- ▶ Studies confirm number of books in the home directly predicts reading achievement. Middle income neighborhoods have a ratio of 13 books per child. Low-income neighborhoods, the ratio is one book for every 300 children
- ▶ 85-95% of brain development happens by the time a child is 5 years old and yet only 5% of the state's education budget is dedicated to this population

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## Mental Health

- ▶ 60% of kids in a given year will have their lives touched by: violence, abuse, crime &/or psychological trauma
- ▶ 1 in 4 girls (1 in 6 boys) will be sexually abused by the time they are 18 and 95% of them knew their perpetrator (it wasn't a stranger!)
- ▶ 1 in 68 children have an autism spectrum disorder (1 in 42 boys)
- ▶ 11% of children have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
- ▶ 20% of children in a given year will have a mental disorder that significantly impacts their life
  - ▶ In 13-18 year olds, 32% of them have an anxiety disorder, 19% have a behavior disorder, and 14% have a mood disorder

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## Let's make it real...

Consider a classroom of 24 students...

(12 girls and 12 boys)

- ▶ At least 14 of them are not reading on grade level
- ▶ 5 are unsupervised when they get home
- ▶ 17 are economically disadvantaged
- ▶ 2-3 of them do not have health insurance
- ▶ 8 had little or no prenatal care
- ▶ 10 are living without their biological father
- ▶ 17 experience sleep issues throughout the week
- ▶ 6 are living in "high poverty neighborhoods"
- ▶ 6 girls will be sexually abused  
4 boys will be sexually abused
- ▶ 5 might not eat tonight
- ▶ 14 will experience violence, abuse, crime &/or psychological trauma this year
- ▶ 5 will have a mental disorder
- ▶ 2-3 have ADHD
- ▶ 1 is in Special Education

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## ALWAYS start with empathy




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...So what do I do now?...




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## #1 - Q-TIP "Quit Taking It Personally"

- ▶ With a new understanding of the needs of our most difficult students we are better equipped to handle the behaviors and discover new possible solutions through positive relationships (with the student, parents/caregivers and other school personnel).
- ▶ The student has a need I can help fulfill
- ▶ The student has a deficit I can help teach

Repeat to your self:

**I will not take challenging  
behavior personally**

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## When a child doesn't know how to...

- ▶ Read, problem solve, write, solve for X, tie his shoes, swim, ride a bike, write their name, etc  
We TEACH
- ▶ Keep hands to self, regulate their emotions, delay gratification, wait their turn, share, control their impulses, control their anger, communicate their feelings in a pro-social way, etc  
We.....?

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"I've come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized."

- Haim G. Ginott

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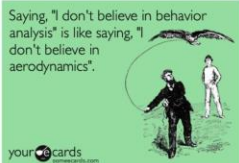
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## Applied Behavior Analysis

The process of systematically applying interventions based upon principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree, and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in behavior"

- Baer, Wolf & Risley, 1968



## The science of behavior...

All Behaviors Serve a Function

1. To Gain Attention
2. To Gain a Tangible
3. To Gain Sensory Input
4. To Avoid/Escape Something

All behaviors have gone through a process of reinforcement and punishment

- ▶ In ABA "punishment" means anything that DECREASES the likelihood the behavior reoccurs in the future
- ▶ In ABA "reinforcement" means anything that INCREASES the likelihood the behavior reoccurs in the future

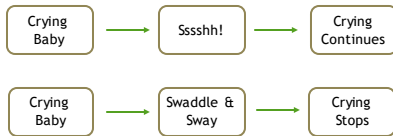
Challenging behavior exists because:

1. It's been working for them this far for getting what they want
2. No one has taught them an alternative, made them practice it and reinforced them for using it.

	Reinforcement (Increase)	Punishment (Decrease)
Positive (Adding)	<b>Positive Reinforcement:</b> Praise Hugs Stickers M&Ms Computer Time	<b>Positive Punishment</b> Spanking Writing Sentences Speeding Tickets Reprimands Restraints
Negative (Taking Away)	<b>Negative Reinforcement</b> Alarm clock Fire alarm Crying Baby Reduced classroom assignments	<b>Negative Punishment</b> Time out Fines Withdrawal of affection Silent Treatment/Cold Shoulder

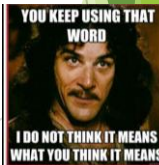


## A moment about negative reinforcement...



Next time the baby cries, which behavior are you more likely to try first?

How does this relate to yelling? What teaching behaviors are students reinforcing you for doing?




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## A moment about punishment (ABAstyle)

- ▶ If your intervention is not decreasing the behavior, it's not punishment.
- ▶ If your intervention doesn't increase the behavior, it's not reinforcement

### Classroom Examples

1. The kid who acts out of class and gets suspended, starts acting out more to get sent home
2. The student you praised profusely in public for doing a great job stops working, scoffs and rolls his eyes to deflect the attention




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## New Tool #3 - Take Data and Take Notice

- ▶ Antecedent - Behavior - Consequence
- ▶ If you're telling people, "Every time I x, he y"
- ▶ Look for patterns
- ▶ Check the environment, people, places, times, days...
  - ▶ Does the student comply in one class but none of the others?
  - ▶ Does the student comply in all classes, except for one?
  - ▶ Is it on days mom drops him off or when dad picks him up?
  - ▶ Is it always on Fridays or only on Mondays?
  - ▶ Is he grouchy in the mornings or hyper in the afternoon?




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## New Tool #4 - Behavior Modification

- ▶ Do you want to increase or decrease a behavior?
- ▶ Determine the function of an unwanted behavior, apply appropriate "punishment".
- ▶ Do not take away a behavior without replacing it with an appropriate one that will meet the same function.
- ▶ Use appropriate reinforcement (meets the same function) to reward the desired behavior that replaces the old unwanted one.

Don't just say, "Make good choices"

- Do they know what a good choice is?
- Can they explain the choices?
- Can they explain the short-term and long-term consequences for each choice?




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### Is knowing the function really that important?

- ▶ [Tantrum #1](#)
- ▶ [Tantrum #2](#)

- ▶ The same behavior (screaming, crying, kicking, hitting, throwing pencils, etc) can be for different reasons
- ▶ It's knowing the "why" that's most critical to affecting a change




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### In General..

- ▶ If the function of the unwanted behavior is attention - ignore & teach alternative appropriate way of gaining attention
- ▶ If the function is a tangible - do not give tangible unless earned with appropriate behavior
- ▶ If the function is sensory input - block and teach alternative behaviors to achieve at least similar input
- ▶ If the function of the unwanted behavior is to escape/avoid something - do not allow escape, teach alternative appropriate way to avoid/escape




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## 7 Steps to Success

- ▶ Identify the trigger /function and predictable problem behavior
- ▶ Specify replacement behavior
- ▶ Systematically modify the context/environment
- ▶ Conduct behavior rehearsals/role play/practice
- ▶ Provide strong reinforcement for the replacement behaviors (it has to be just as worth it to them!)
- ▶ Prompt the replacement behavior
- ▶ Monitor student behavior and take your data!

“When \_\_\_\_ (who) does \_\_\_\_ (what behavior), then \_\_\_\_ (what happens next) and then \_\_\_\_ (gets/gets out of) which reinforces the unwanted behavior.  
It would be better for \_\_\_\_ (the student/class if instead) he/she \_\_\_\_ (replacement behavior).”




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## Get creative...

Take the list of challenging behaviors and hypothesize the function of each and come up with a creative solution to either decrease the inappropriate behavior or teach and increase the appropriate alternative




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## Impulsivity for example...

- ▶ Block if you're fast
- ▶ Have them do the behavior again, slower or correctly
- ▶ Practice waiting, taking deep breaths or counting before answering, or acting
- ▶ Exercise - wear that body down!
- ▶ Have quiet down time - have them practice sitting quiet, hands in lap for a few minutes
- ▶ Bubbles activity
- ▶ Token Economy (earning or losing)

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## But what if what I am trying isn't working?

- ▶ Keep trying! - How long has the unwanted behavior been working for them? (think of slot machines)
- ▶ Extinction Bursts - could get worse before it gets better (think of vending machines)
- ▶ Maybe the wrong function - try something else
- ▶ Don't be afraid to ask for help, or get creative
- ▶ Calming our own stress can calm or eliminate the behavior of the child.
- ▶ We can not control the child, only ourselves.
  - ▶ We can change the environment, our reactions and influence their behaviors.

If your "punishment" isn't decreasing the unwanted behavior - it's not a punishment




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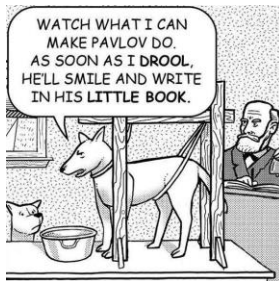
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## Be Careful - just as you're trying to modify someone else's behavior, they are trying to modify yours!




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## The brain

- ▶ Amygdala - Fight or Flight or Freeze (freezing can look like defiance)
  - ▶ Unlearned Behavior, Developed by 18 months
- ▶ Hippocampus - Responsible for clear thinking, decision making, and regulating the stress coming from the amygdala
  - ▶ Learned behaviors, developed by 36 months
- ▶ Orbito-Frontal Cortex - Determines appropriate behaviors, abstract thought and controls social and emotional functioning.
  - ▶ Developed by 25-30 years

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## Different Ages

- ▶ Chronological - Date and Year
- ▶ Cognitive - Academic/Standardized Tests
- ▶ Emotional - Tantrum vs Road Rage?
- ▶ Physical - Hormones, Height vs. Weight

Don't assume one's emotional age and one's chronological age are the same!

When we are stressed we act our emotional age.




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## Remember Children are Stressed too

- ▶ Woke up early or Woke up late?  
Are you as calm and patient when you're late for work as you are when you have plenty of time?
- ▶ What about the kid who's woken up abruptly because the parent's late for work, shoved out the door without breakfast or a hug wearing a dirty shirt that was on the floor?  
\* Dr. Pepper Demonstration
- ▶ We (and our students) often behave with our brain stem and not the frontal lobe.

Our challenging students come to us already agitated...Already unable to cope with frustrations, disappointment, boredom, academic difficulties, etc.




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## Understand the phases of behavior

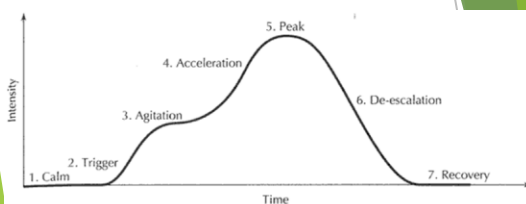


FIGURE 3.1 Phases of Acting-Out Behavior. Source: Colvin (1992). Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey p.81

^ Warning, does not always occur in this order and with this duration

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## How important is this stuff?

Researchers can accurately predict the likelihood of college graduation by a child's 8<sup>th</sup> grade Academic scores



And researchers can accurately predict the child's 8<sup>th</sup> grade Academic scores based on that child's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade social skills (behavior)



Additionally, "academic achievement directly influenced social competence from both first to second and second to third grade, and social competence was reciprocally related to academic achievement from second to third grade"

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## Environment Affects Behavior

### 1. Active Monitoring

Think about your driving behavior - does it change when there's a policeman present?

\***Circulate** - MOVE around the room, get close enough to see the student's work

\***Reinforce correct answers** - pats on back, high fives, happy faces on their work, thumbs up, etc.

\***Correct while walking** - star something, point something out, reminders to stay on task, etc. No more than 30 seconds per student

\***Reteach Whole Class** - notice when it's time to give more than one student more information (don't re-teach to individuals); Remind whole class

\***Reinforce good behavior frequently** - let them know you notice them when they're being good too!

\***Refocus off-task behaviors** - don't let them be off-task for long, redirect them

I don't manipulate others  
(just their environment)

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### ► Neat & Organized Classroom

- Chaos breeds chaos
- When students or the room is disorganized, learning is disorganized
- Too much distraction visual, auditory, physical...
- You have cubbies for a reason (put stuff in them)
- You have windows for a reason (open them - research shows natural light helps)
- You have collaborative desks for a reason (use your groups)
- You have a projector for a reason - use warm-ups, post items needed for the day, homework, etc




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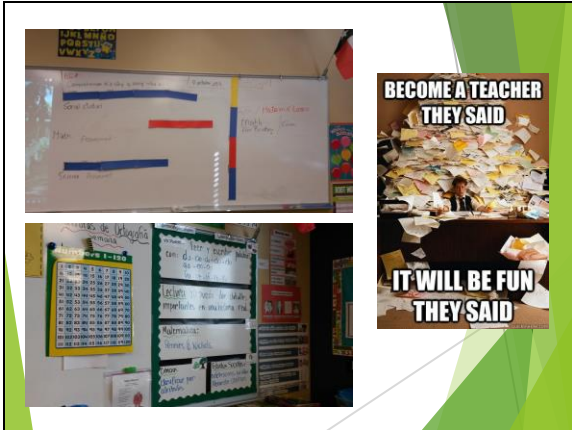
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**Procedures -**  
*Have them, practice them, enforce them & reinforce them!*

- ▶ Are your rules and procedures posted?
- ▶ Do you reference them throughout the day?
- ▶ How are students suppose to: get your attention, sharpen their pencils, turn in assignments?
- ▶ When are they allowed to: talk to their neighbor, ask to use the restroom, get up and get a drink of water?




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Rules & Procedures can be tailored for the whole group, or the individual


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Have you defined them?



- \* What's respectful to you may not be respectful to them
- \* How they act with parents can be different than how they act at school
- \* Do they truly "know" what they're suppose to do?

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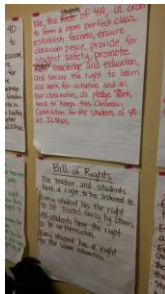
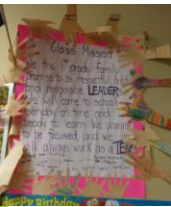
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We the students of \_\_\_\_  
in order to form a more  
perfect class...secure the  
right to learn....

- Bill of Rights
- \* The teacher and the students have a right to listened to
  - \* Every student has the right to a safe classroom
- ....

Class Mission:

We the 1st grade family, promise to be respectful, helpful and responsible leaders. We will come to school on time and ready to learn...

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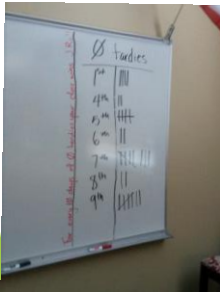
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Do you reinforce them?




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### Bonus Tips...

- ▶ Consistency, consistency, consistency
- ▶ Decide your expectations & procedures and practice them!
- ▶ Take the time, every time
- ▶ Choose your battles but be consistent with which ones you choose!
- ▶ Don't do it alone
- ▶ Develop a plan & recruit everyone to be involved (including the student)
- ▶ Give the student choices - as many as you can handle!
- ▶ Measure
- ▶ Start small/easy then aim bigger
- ▶ Pick one behavior at a time before moving on
- ▶ Don't be afraid to let the students solve their own problems - Be a coach!
- ▶ Say what you mean and mean what you say!
- ▶ Don't do bribes or threats - do behavior contracts
- ▶ If/Then statements

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### Whatever it Takes...

- ▶ Understand yourself and your stress first and then you can relate and understand the child
- ▶ Feel empowered and responsible for your reactivity to behaviors
- ▶ Make a commitment to the healing journey where mistakes are embraced and learned from
- ▶ Change the paradigm of bad kids just being bad kids and understand where behaviors come from
- ▶ Always be willing to keep trying and take the risk in trying something new or different  
Give YOURSELF a time out if you need it to control yourself
- ▶ Children often act out because they NEED attention so give it to them - in appropriate and healthy ways
- ▶ At times, use the concept of "time-in" to allow children to be engaged with you and experience positive, partnership building time.
- ▶ When a child is stressed, keep yourself calm and controlled then help them learn to regulate their own emotions

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It's up to YOU to decide how  
your school/class will be.




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### Q. E. D. (quod erat demonstrandum)

- ▶ "Lost at School" by Ross W. Greene, Ph.D
- ▶ "Childhood Experience and the Expression of Genetic Potential: What Childhood Neglect Tells us about nature and Nurture." *Brain and Mind* 3: 79-100, 2002
- ▶ "Linkages Between Children's Social and Academic Competence: A Longitudinal Analysis" *Journal of School Psychology*, Vol. 39, No. 6, 463-481, 2001
- ▶ "Social Development: Why it is important and how to impact it" Huitt, W. & Dawson, C. *Educational Psychology Interactive* (2011)
- ▶ "The Secret Behind College Completion: Girls, Boys, and the Power of Eight Grade Grades" by Thomas A. DiPrete and Claudia Buchmann
- ▶ [www.love-basedparenting.com](http://www.love-basedparenting.com)
- ▶ [www.integratingtrauma.com](http://www.integratingtrauma.com) Deborah Chelett-Wilson, MHR, NCC, LPC
- ▶ <http://centerforeducation.rice.edu/slc/LS/30MillionWorldGap.html>

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Just for fun, if there's time...

- ▶ [Big Bang Theory & ABA](#)

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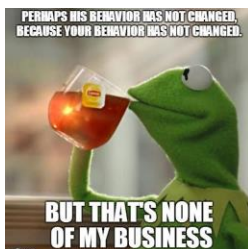
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If there is anything that we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves.  
~ C.G. Jung, *Integration of the Personality*




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