

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE: TEACHING SELF MANAGEMENT TO OUR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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**To teach is to show children that they determine their own destiny.
Effective behavior management is teaching children that they can manage
their own behavior.**

The effective teacher role models the utilization of cognitive strategies.

The role of the special educator is to teach our students that they are in control of their own destiny and we achieve in our role when we encourage independence; not dependence. We are helpful and guide them in managing their behavior, rather than hovering over them.

In one study (McQuillan and DuPaul, (1996), it was found that 66% of students with emotional/behavioral disorders responded more favorably to self management strategies than to interventions that were imposed and controlled by teachers.

Taxonomy of the five social skill dimensions

Calderella, P. and Merrell, K. (1997) outlined the key components of social skills and described the components of self-management.

1. Peer relations—how do our students relate to their own peers, how do they get along with others.
2. Self-management—includes remaining calm when problems occur, controls temper when angry, accepts imposed limits, compromises in conflicts, responds to teasing by ignoring peers, cooperates with others in a variety of situations, receives criticism well
3. Academic skills
4. Compliance skills
5. Assertion skills

Six Life Success Attributes of Students with Learning Disabilities

Raskind,Goldberg, Higgins, and Herman (2002) conducted a 20 year study of successful individuals with learning disabilities to determine the skills that they possessed that resulted in their success. The study identified these skills below and the following are activities that educators can incorporate to build these skills in their students.

Self Awareness—understanding and acceptance of who they are. Recognize weaknesses, don't allow their behavioral and learning challenges to define who they are.

Teaching individuals to be aware of their needs so they can develop self-determination which is increasing control of the individual's own life and destiny.

Activities: Have students create a "Victory List of Talents—include strengths, talents, and abilities, move from the mindset of What is Wrong to Who Am I, encourage participation in the IEP, utilize strengths to create compensatory strategies.

Proactivity and perseverance—being able to actively engage socially, vocationally, and politically. Being able to self advocate, pursuing goals even when there are setbacks, knowing how to benefit from failures and mistakes.

Activities: teaching student to structure their environment, take a picture of the student's clean desk or clean work environment and enlarge it and request that the student make their area look like that. Do before starting social and cognitive tasks. Once a week, have a cleaning period of time with students, teach children how to assess the environment for distractions.

Help children understand their flavors of distractibility. Are they distracted by any stimuli: auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic, hunger, stress/emotions, or weariness. How can those then be fixed by the student.

Choices—teaching problem solving. Lavoie suggests the IDEA Model:

IDEA—Identify the problem, D—Develop solutions, E—Establish Best Solutions, A—Action Plan

Goal-Setting—understanding the step by step process of reaching established goals, charting

Activities: Start out with half-day goal setting, lists to do, breaking large tasks into small parts with deadlines, self-charting of goals

Presence and Use of Support Systems—being able to identify critical individuals and items that provide a support system while also reducing dependence on others.

Activities: Have students identify individuals with whom they are comfortable. Make a list of those individuals.

Identify Support items such as spell checkers, ibooks, note-takers, use of a scribe, time management tools.

Emotional Coping Strategies—being able to identify situations that trigger stress, recognition of developing stress and coping strategies for those stressful events.

Activities: Teaching children positive self talk, deep breathing, body part tense-relax technique, teaching the student to take a personal time-out, code words or signals.

Steps to Take When Teaching Children to Self-Manage their Own Behavior

Vanderbilt (2005) outlined the following steps to utilize when teachers are teaching the student to manage their own behavior:

Identify the target behavior.

Develop a replacement behavior.

Collect baseline data.

Self-Management for Moving in the Hall from one class to another class:

When I went from my classroom to art, I did the following:

Yes No

Kept my hands and feet to myself

Walked

Stayed Quiet

Self-Management for Classroom Behavior:

Behavior	9:00-9:15 a.m.	9:15-9:30 a.m.	9:30-9:45 a.m.
Stay seated			
Keep Working			
Followed Directions			

We succeed when the child has learned the tools to manage his own behavior.

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