Social Skills

Behavior Intervention Guidelines (BIG)
Behavior Intervention Guidelines

Introduction

What is it? The Behavior Intervention Guidelines (BIG) process was developed by Teaching Research as a universal (class/program-wide) behavior management system to deal with common behaviors exhibited by young children in a consistent manner. Through the BIG process staff categorize problem behaviors into one of three predetermined areas and then respond to the behavior using agreed upon responses for each area.

Why we do it BIG is designed as a preliminary strategy for dealing with common behaviors that you may encounter in your day-to-day dealings with young children. The BIG system has proven to be an effective tool for dealing with problem behaviors and has greatly reduced the number of inappropriate behaviors and the need for positive behavior support plans.

How it fits in the model BIG is the third part of the Social Skills component of the model. BIG are designed to be used in conjunction with the other two Social Skills areas: 1) Guidelines for Interacting with Children; and 2) Teaching Social Skills. The development and implementation of the BIG process has proven to be a highly effective tool for those who have used it. It will not however solve all behavior problems. You may know of children in your program that will need the assistance of an individually developed positive behavior support plan to assist them in resolving persistent, unusual, or severe behavior problems. The process for developing and implementing classroom and home positive behavior support plans will be described in a later section.
Social Skills Component: Section 2
Behavior Intervention Guidelines (BIG)

Topics to be covered

This section provides you with the knowledge and skills to develop BIG for your program. Specifically, this section will cover:

- Rationale for using BIG
- Steps for developing BIG

Content

**Rationale for Using BIG**

BIG is a systematic approach for managing common problem behaviors that is utilized to respond to a class of behaviors in a consistent manner. Reasons for utilizing BIG in the model include:

- BIG enables all staff to be consistent in their response to behaviors by categorizing similar or related behaviors and then responding to all behaviors in that group in a similar manner. In doing so we remove the need for staff to be continually deciding how to respond to a child's behavior.

- BIG greatly reduces the number of different responses staff have to remember. Each new behavior exhibited by a child does not represent a new decision for the staff, but rather triggers a response from the staff according to a set of agreed upon rules.

- BIG allows for a quick response to new inappropriate behaviors.

- BIG is a simple process that can be used by all staff.

- Because BIG facilitate consistent responses by all adults, children are better able to understand behavioral expectations and consequences.
There are four steps in the development and implementation of BIG. It is recommended that all the staff from your program develop the guidelines together as a group. This will increase buy-in to the system and will allow you to work through any disagreements that may arise in how to handle certain behaviors. The four steps are described below. A copy of the Behavior Intervention Guidelines Form is provided at the end of this section to use when developing BIG for your program. A master copy of the BIG form is included in the plastic folder.

**Step 1: Identify the Problem Behaviors**

The first step of the process of developing BIG is to identify the specific behaviors that are observed among children that you work with that appear to be "problematic." Problem behaviors are those that inhibit socialization, interfere with the child's ability to learn, or that pose a threat to health or safety.

To identify problem behaviors take a minute or two to think about the children you work with in your program. Then write one behavior (such as "spitting") on each of three blank pieces of paper or index cards. You need to write big so everyone can read it. Next, tape your 3 cards onto a wall or some other place where everyone can see them.

**Step 2: Categorize the Problem Behaviors**

The second step is to cluster or group similar behaviors from the list of behaviors that you generated during Step 1. Behaviors are categorized in order to increase consistency in dealing with behaviors as well as simplifying the number of responses. We have simplified the process by identifying three common categories: aggressive, self-indulgent, and non-compliant. These categories are used because they encompass the vast majority of behaviors that are commonly found in early childhood settings. Definitions of the categories are included in Figure 1. Based on the definition of each category, place the behaviors listed on your cards under one of the three categories. For example, spitting, biting, and hitting would all be under the "aggressive" category. Additional examples are found in Figure 1. After all the behaviors have been placed in the three categories write examples from your lists onto the BIG form provided at the end of this section.
## Behavior Intervention Guidelines (BIG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When Behavior does NOT Occur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| AGGRESSION        | Behaviors that cause harm or damage to people or property; may be physical or verbal in nature. | • Hitting  
• Biting  
• Kicking  
• Destroying toys  
• Throwing a chair |          |          |
| SELF-INDULGENT    | Behaviors that are disruptive and involve only the child.                  | • Whining/Pouting  
• Screaming  
• Swearing/Cussing |          |          |
| NON-COMPLIANT     | Failure to follow adult directions or known rules.                         | • Not putting away toys when told  
• Running to avoid a task  
• Saying “No” when told to do something by an adult |          |          |
Step 3: Develop a Response for the Category

The third step of the process is to develop responses for the behaviors that fall into the same category. Responses will be developed in two areas: 1) responses when the behavior does not occur (when the child is not exhibiting the problem behavior) and; 2) responses when the behavior does occur (when the child is exhibiting the problem behavior). When determining the responses for the categories remember to consider the social skills items that were discussed earlier:

- Acknowledging the child’s feelings
- Self-regulation/anger management
- Problem solving

Responses should also be non-aversive (they do not inflict physical or psychological pain or humiliation) and be appropriate for the categories (i.e., time out is not used for the default response for all behaviors).

Starting with aggression, come up with a positive response for the child when he is not exhibiting the problem behavior. For example, *socially reinforce the child* by saying something like “Thank you for sharing your toys with John.” Write your group’s response under the column titled “When Behavior does NOT Occur” on the form provided.

Next, determine responses that a child should receive when the problem behavior occurs. For example, *verbally correct the child* by saying something like “No hitting. If you are angry use your words.” Write your group’s response under the column titled “When Behavior DOES Occur” on the form provided.

*Figure 2* contains an example for responses when the behavior does not occur and responses when the problem behavior occurs for the aggression category.

Complete Step 3 by developing responses for the other two categories of behaviors (self-indulgent and non-compliant) and writing them in the appropriate space on the form.
Step 4: Implement Your Behavior Intervention Guidelines

Once you have determined the responses for each category then all staff must implement the procedures. Some behaviors are easy while others will be more difficult. Some children will come up with variations on the theme such as different kinds of tantrums. Also keep in mind that for a short time a child's behavior may worsen. This is when it is critical that all staff hang in there and not waiver from your agreed upon rules. It is the consistent response that will enable the child to improve his behavior. Remember, kids like to test the system to be sure you really mean it.

Summary

This section has described the four-step process for developing and implementing the Behavior Implementation Guidelines part of the Social Skills component of the model. You have also been able to apply the steps in developing BIG that are individualized to your classroom/program. When implemented consistently, BIG will decrease the number of common problem behaviors that children in your classroom exhibit. This will result in a reduced need for developing individual classroom positive behavior support plans.
### Social Skills Component:

Behavior Intervention Guidelines (BIG)

#### Section 2

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• Provide verbal correction (i.e., “No hitting. If you are angry use your words.”) |
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| NON-COMPLIANT     | Failure to follow adult directions or known rules.                          | • Not putting away toys when told  
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**Figure 2**
References and Resources

Resources:


