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Teaching Children to Self-Manage Their Behavior

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Behavior self-management is the ability to monitor and adjust one's own behavior. For teachers of students with noncompliant or disruptive behaviors, this would be a dream come true! When implementing this method, the teacher needs to initially be the primary manager. It then becomes the teacher's goal to transfer as much management of the student's behavior to the student him/herself during the intervention. Eventually, the student should be able to manage his/her own behavior, thus increasing appropriate behaviors and improving academic and social skills. This, in turn, will allow the student to perceive him/herself as capable and successful. Below are seven suggested steps for implementing a self-management system in the classroom.

Step 1

Choose one behavior to focus on (e.g., increasing time spent on task).

Step 2

Once the behavior reaches an acceptable level with the teacher managing it, begin introducing self-management techniques to the student.

Step 3

Define the exact behavior the student will monitor and evaluate. Give examples and non-examples so that the student completely



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understands what behavior he/she is monitoring. Clearly state the purpose of self-management so that the student develops ownership of the concept. Discuss the reward system that reinforces if the student successfully records and then adjusts his/her behavior.

Step 4

Decide how the student will count and record his/her behavior. Keep it simple and post it on an index card or chart near the student as a visual cue and reminder.

Step 5

Set time limits for the student to count and record behavior. Start with a small period of time, such as ten minutes, before gradually increasing the amount of time

during which the student monitors and records the behavior. The teacher needs to give lots of corrective feedback about the accuracy of the recording.

Step 6

Once the student accurately records data on a regular basis, begin checking accuracy randomly. Reward the student for accuracy.

Step 7

Allow the student plenty of opportunities to self-manage. Provide positive, corrective feedback. Any time the student manages his/her own behavior (e.g., records that he/she is off-task but quickly gets back to work), the teacher should immediately reward the student in some way (e.g., with verbal praise, a sticker, a pat on the back).

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Resource

Rhode, Ginger, Ph.D., Jenson, William R., Ph.D., & Reavis, H. Kenton, Ed. D. *The Tough Kid Book*. 1996. Sopris West. Longmont, CO.

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