

Share Your Data Through Regular Meetings

Are regular Behavior Support Meetings really necessary? The short answer is yes.



Behavior Support Meetings are between school personnel and family to discuss a student's behavior with the purpose of reflecting on and identifying supports. A regular and consistent schedule will give everyone updated and relevant information for managing behaviors at school and at home and help with updating behavior plans, functional behavior assessments, and other behavior modifications and interventions.

Another key benefit of Behavior Support Meetings is keeping home and school on the same page. Regular contact with the school prevents students from telling their families one thing and the school another, pitting the two against one another. When everyone is in the room, confusion, conflicts and misunderstandings are more easily avoidable. Additionally, scheduled meetings encourage disengaged families into the behavior planning and intervention process.

Finally, everyone involved tends to feel more responsible for implementing interventions when they are discussed in person with school and home parties at the table. Behavior Support Meetings make families and teachers more responsible for addressing the student's behavior(s), including following through with consequences and rewards. When students are age appropriate and involved in meetings, they tend to feel included and take interventions more seriously. As a result, students are held directly responsible from all the parties.

Tips on Hosting a Behavior Support Meeting

The most important part of leading a Behavior Support Meeting is professionalism. Always use a calm and neutral tone with parents and students to avoid instigating conflicts, reminding all school staff to do the same.

Here are some tips:

- Develop a formal agenda for the meeting and share with everyone ahead of time
- Have a sign in sheet to note who is in attendance
- Keep notes of the meeting, emailing or sending them out to all participants
- Politely state the expectations for conduct during the meeting, like no swearing, yelling or rudeness and explain that if someone becomes too disruptive, they may step out to gather themselves, but if the issue continues, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled
- Always highlight something positive about the student
- Ask families what they hope to get from the meeting
- Remain on topic, redirecting to the agenda
- Set time limits for the meeting, adjourning and setting another meeting if necessary
- Have tissues and water available
- Have all relevant parties present, including teachers, social workers, counselors, administrators, parents/guardian, etc.
- Have all relevant documents ready with a copy for each person at the meeting, including behavior plans, student contracts, functional behavior assessments and data tracking forms.

It's extremely important to remind your staff and colleagues before the meeting to use language that acknowledges the focus is a child and not an adult. This seems obvious, but it is surprising how often emotions color our language in meetings surrounding behavior. Finally, encourage everyone to take themselves out of the process. Educators can feel understandably frustrated with students who chronically disrupt their classes and show up in their offices. Before the meeting, remind all school staff that the meetings are for problem solving and the student behaviors are not personal.



Consistent and regular Behavior Support Meetings may seem like more trouble than they are worth, but they help set clear expectations, build trust and develop positive relationships between school and families- all contributing to an educational environment conducive to learning.

Resources:

27 Tips for Parent Conferences. TSTA/NEA.

[http://www.inspiringteachers.com/classroom_resources/tips/parent_communication/parent_conferences.html].

Child Behavior: What Parents Can Do to Change Their Child's

Behavior. [<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/kids/behavior-emotions/child-behavior-what-parents-can-do-to-change-their-childs-behavior.html>].

Dealing With Angry Parents. EDUCATION WORLD, INC. [http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin474.shtml]. Hopkins, G. (2009).

Dealing With Difficult Parents. [http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/chat/chat111.shtml]. familydoctor.org editorial staff. (2010).

Harvard Family Research Project. *Parent-Teacher Conference Tip Sheets for Principals, Teachers, and*

Parents. [<http://www.hfrp.org/content/download/3295/96777/file/FI-ConferenceTipSheets.pdf>].