Possible Interventions for the Function of **Attention**

Adult Attention

1. Class messenger – Takes messages to the office, other teachers etc. all adults who receive this message will know to give the student some extra attention at the time of delivery.

2. Diary – Student earns 5 minutes of one-on-one time with an adult first thing in the morning to go over diary of what they did the night before at home. They come in at the end of the day to get a new diary and to discuss how the day at school went.

3. Lunch w/dignitary – Student earns lunch privileges with a special adult. This could be principal, grandparents, SRO, etc.

4. **Young children with problems occurring every few minutes** – every 5 min, if the student is on task, walk by giving an animal cookie (or whatever means something) and also acknowledge with a smile or "good job". At the end of the session, the other students each get as many cookies as the student got. The student gets attention from the teacher, a goodie, and attention from peers who will encourage him to do well. This will then be faded to every 10 min etc and eventually will be rewarded with a smile and a "good job".

5. Assistive technology (see Assistive Tech coordinator) - a timer that is set for vibrations and worn like a watch. A child that is disrupting class to get attention can be given a card with one side smiley face and the other side neutral face. When it goes off, if the student is behaving, she marks a smiley, if not, a neutral face. If there is another adult in the class, or one you could use temporarily when beginning this intervention, the adult would give student a thumbs up for marking correctly. After 4 happy faces marked correctly, she will receive 1 min of individual time with the teacher. She will be taught what constitutes good behavior and poor behavior. (The teaching of this concept could go under teaching replacement behavior).

6. Young children can be taught to ask the teacher for a hug when they feel the need – again – this could go under the replacement behavior.

7. Students can be taught to periodically raise their hand for help with an assignment. They will get attention whether they needed the help or not, without others knowing.

8. Always mark "give frequent attention" on the BIP.

9. Assign important jobs around the classroom.

10. Provide lots of praise and encouragement.

11. Ignore problem behavior as often as feasible. The student may not care whether the attention received is positive or negative so, if reprimanded, the student is reinforced to do the behavior again when he wants attention.

12. Student who is stealing to gain adult or peer attention – Eliminate social attention as much as possible for stealing. Student will be required to return or replace stolen items, but no discussion of the incident. She will not be required to apologize and will not be sent to the principal. Classroom activities will go on as usual. If student attempts to discuss stealing, staff will redirect her to the activity at hand.

13. Give the child a job such as holding the eraser during circle time and erasing items on the calendar board, or the child has to count everyone who is present and write the number on the attendance sheet..

14. Check In – Check Out
    The child goes directly to a calm quiet place in the morning to check in with their Check In: Check Out person. They get points for going. The adult tells the child how many happy faces to color in each row.

    The point is to not put sad faces on the sheet, but to comment on all the happy faces accumulated throughout the day. This can be done at the end of the hour or every 12 minutes or so. (The adult could set a timer for every 12 minutes and mark a colored in happy face for that time period throughout the hour.) Remember, Sherry Bradford, ESE Technology Coordinator has vibrating timers that can be checked out.)

    At the end of each hour, the child checks in with their "Check In: Check Out" Buddy. This buddy can debrief anything that just occurred and help calm any underlying currents that might be brewing and preview how the next hour is going to unfold.

    Depending on the child, the adult can put up a sticker chart in the office for days that the child earns over 30 smiles (example) and when they have 3 days of over 30 smiles, they get to eat lunch with that special adult. The "Check in : Check out Program" is usually used for children who are seeking attention. However, with young children we have found it useful for escape as well because the child is getting to leave the learning area to go check in with this adult: which they perceive as a break.

    - Give student an IOU to meet with him when the class is over.

15. Student will mark an x on a happy face or a neutral face when she feels the timer vibration once every minute. First, used only during story time, then, in other parts of the day. A staff person will also make a card and give her a thumbs up if her card is marked correctly. Student will be ignored if marked incorrectly. After 4 happy faces and a card that is correctly marked, staff will give her two minutes of attention by sitting with her while she does her work and giving a pat on the back, offering help etc. At the end of the class, if 8 happy faces were marked, student will get a ribbon pinned to her shirt (or sticker etc.) **Replacement behavior –** Student will be taught to recognize appropriate and inappropriate behavior and to self-monitor behavior by marking an x on either a happy face or a neutral face printed on a small card.

16. **Replacement behavior: When student seems overwhelmed**, teacher will put a smiley face in an envelope and send student to the secretary; the smiley face will let the secretary know she should engage her in conversation for some attention.

17. Student will keep a journal of what she does at home. She will bring this to a designated staff person to discuss her previous evening's activities. This will give her attention and an opportunity to discuss the day and any changes to the routine for the day.

18. Student will have a HELP card. She will display the card when help is needed. She will be reminded to do this. Teacher will provide attention when card is displayed, even if just to say, "I'll be there in a minute."

19. Give student a written or picture schedule showing when she can have a few minutes of time with the teacher or other staff member.

20. **Stealing** – Attention for stealing will be emolliated as much a possible. Student will be required to replace stolen items and her parents will be notified, but no one will discuss the incident with student. She will not be required to apologize and will not be sent to the principal. Class room activities will go on as usual. If student attempts to discuss her stealing, staff will redirect her to the classroom activity at hand – this is if the stealing is for attention.

21. **Disruption and off-task – good for ADHD –** Student is given a timer that reminds him every 3-5 minutes during a 50 minute class to mark a card with a plus when he is on-task and his behavior is appropriate and a 0 if he is off task or disruptive. When he has three plus marks, he will ask the teacher for feedback. If it is during instruction, he will raise his hand. If during group time, he will be allowed to walk up to the teacher with card. The teacher will provide praise and mark the card to show where to start counting for the next three plus marks. At the end of each class period, if student had no more than two 0s, he will earn a sticker (or something else determined to be important) the rest of the class could also earn stickers for class rewards and the stickers could be combined to reach a goal where the class would have a reward/party etc. This would give student attention from the teacher and from peers.

22. Peers will be praised often for being on task which will cause the offending student to do what they do to get that attention.

23. Teach independent skills.

24. **Circle Time**

a. Give the child a hands on task – such as holding the eraser, counting who is present and writing the number on a sheet.

b. Give students a wiggle break and teach them how to appropriately stand up and stretch when they need to without being disruptive.

Breaking the Attention-Seeking Habit: The Power of Random Positive Teacher Attention

The Power of Random Positive Teacher Attention

Some students misbehave because they are trying to attract teacher attention. Surprisingly, many students who value adult attention don't really care if it is positive (praise) or negative attention (reprimands)--they just want attention!

Unfortunately, instructors with students who thrive on teacher attention can easily fall into a 'reprimand trap.' The scenario might unfold much like this: First, the student misbehaves. Then the teacher approaches the student and reprimands him or her for misbehaving. Because the student finds the negative teacher attention to be reinforcing, he or she continues to misbehave-and the teacher naturally responds by reprimanding the student more often! An escalating, predictable cycle is established, with the student repeatedly acting-out and teacher reprimanding him or her.

Teachers can break out of this cycle, though, by using 'random positive attention' with students. Essentially, the instructor starts to ignore student attention-seeking behaviors, while at the same time 'randomly' giving the student positive attention. That is, the student receives regular positive teacher attention but at times unconnected to misbehavior. So the student still gets the adult attention that he or she craves. More importantly, the link between student misbehavior and resulting negative teacher attention is broken.

Steps in Implementing This Intervention

Step 1: Select How the Teacher Will Show Positive Attention to the Student. The key to this intervention strategy is that the teacher will be giving the student regular positive attention at times of his or her choosing. It is important, then, for the teacher to put together a list of ways to deliver positive attention that (a) can be done quickly, without disrupting classroom instruction, and (b) the student actually finds rewarding. Here are just a few ideas for giving positive attention:

- Pat the student on the shoulder
- Make eye contact and smile at the student

- Check in with the student about how he or she is progressing with an assignment
- Call on the student in class (when you are pretty sure that he or she knows the answer!)
- Pass the student a note with a cheerful comment, specific praise, or compliment
- Give brief, specific praise about the student's work or behavior (e.g., "I really like to see how carefully you are drawing that map, Joanna!")
- Give the student a few words of encouragement
- Invite the student to summarize for the group the main points of a classroom discussion
- Converse briefly with the student
- Select the student to carry out a classroom task (e.g., passing out papers) that he or she likes

Step 2: Decide How Frequently the Teacher Will Give 'Random' Positive Attention to the Student During a Class. The teacher now needs to figure out how often during a class period he or she will approach the student to give positive attention. Generally, this intervention works best if the teacher is able to give the student a fairly high level of positive attention, at least at the outset.

One good way for the teacher to estimate how frequently to provide positive attention is to observe a student across several class periods. The instructor keeps track of how frequently (e.g., once every 5 minutes) the student tries to capture the teacher's attention with problem behaviors. When the teacher has a good idea of how often the student typically seeks attention, he or she can plan to counter the misbehavior by giving the student 'random positive attention' at the same rate. Note: A teacher can simply estimate the student's rate of attention-getting behavior based on past experience with him or her. (If needed, formal guidelines can be found in the section below, A Method for Estimating Rate of Student Attention-Seeking.)

Step 3: The Teacher Chooses the Time(s) and Setting(s) in Which to Use Random Positive Attention. If the target student engages in attention-seeking during only certain times of the day or in particular locations (e.g., just after lunch in math class), the teacher can limit this intervention to just those time periods. If the student seems to be attention-seeking most of the time and in most locations, however, the teacher may want to use the random attention strategy across a greater part of the school day.

Step 4: Start the Random Attention Intervention. Unlike some intervention ideas, random teacher attention does not require that the student be formally trained in its use. Just start the intervention! There are just two simple rules:

- Rule 1: Whenever the student inappropriately tries to get the teacher's attention, the instructor either (a) ignores the student or (b) in a neutral manner, quietly and briefly redirects the child to task. The teacher then continues teaching..
- Rule 2: During a given class session, whenever the student is 'due' for positive teacher attention, the teacher observes the student. If the student is not engaged in attention-seeking behavior when the teacher glances at him or her, the instructor immediately approaches the student and briefly delivers positive

attention (using a choice from the list developed in Step 1). Then continue teaching. Otherwise, the teacher simply ignores the student's attention-seeking behavior and continues teaching.

Step 5: Fade the Successful Intervention Over Time. Once the teacher finds that random positive attention has significantly reduced or eliminated the student's attention-seeking behavior, the instructor can gradually 'fade' the intervention. Each week, the instructor reduces the number of times that he or she approaches the student with positive attention--until the teacher is only occasionally providing that attention. If at any point in the fading process, the teacher discovers that the student begins again to act in an attention-seeking manner, the teacher can temporarily increase the rate of random positive attention until the student's behavior improves. Then the teacher continues fading the attention.

Troubleshooting: How to Deal With Common Problems in Using Random Positive Teacher Attention

The student's behavior does not significantly improve when the teacher uses this intervention. If you discover that random positive teacher attention is not effective in 'turning around' a student's misbehavior, there are several possible explanations:

- The student is not receiving enough random teacher attention. If possible, try increasing the rate (number of times) that you give the student random positive attention during a class session. (See Step 4: Rule 2 above.) Boosting the rate of positive teacher attention may be all that is needed for the student to act more appropriately.
- The teacher continues to give the student attention for misbehavior. Sometimes teachers don't realize how much attention they pay (even unwittingly) to students who misbehave for attention-seeking reasons. Reflect on your own classroom interactions with the student. If you discover while you are using random positive attention that you are still giving the student lots of attention for acting out, you should (a) continue to use random positive attention and (b) make an extra effort to respond neutrally to, or simply ignore, the student's attention-seeking behaviors.
- The student generally does not find teacher attention to be rewarding. This random-attention strategy will work only if the child misbehaves to seek teacher attention. If, however, the student acts inappropriately for some other reason (e.g., to escape a situation that he or she finds unpleasant or to gain the attention and approval of classmates), you will need to select a different intervention strategy.

A Method for Estimating Rate of Student Attention-Seeking

Pick several class times when your student is most likely to try to grab your attention. Keep track of the start and end times of these observations (e.g., reading group, 9:30 to 10:10 a.m.) Tally or estimate the number of times during each session that the student attempts to capture your attention (e.g., asking for assistance when not really needed, engaging in attention-seeking misbehavior that forces you to approach him or her to reprimand or redirect).

To figure out how frequently the student seeks your attention on average, add up the total number of minutes from all the observation sessions and divide that figure by the total number of times that the student sought your attention across sessions. For example, if you had observed a student for a total of 120 minutes (across 3 sessions) and the student had sought your attention 10 times during the observations, you would know that the student sought your attention an average of once every 12 minutes (120 minutes / 10 incidents of attention-seeking =one attention-seeking incident every 12 minutes).

Once you have estimated how often the target student is vying for your attention, you can 'match' this attention-seeking behavior by giving the student random teacher attention at the same rate.

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