STOPPING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR BEFORE IT STARTS

Teacher Implementation Checklist

SECTION 1: START WITH YOUR BEST GUESS

- ☐ I collect ABC data across multiple days
- ☐ I identify a pattern in WHEN and WHERE the challenging behavior happens
- ☐ I identify what the child usually GETS or GETS AWAY FROM after the challenging behavior
- ☐ I can write a best guess (hypothesis) in simple terms:

"When [what came before], [child's name] [what the child did] in order to [get something / get away from something]."

My best guess:

SECTION 2: CHOOSE YOUR STRATEGY

Based on your hypothesis, circle the function that best fits, then select the matching strategy.

The child is trying to...	Use this strategy
Get away from a task, transition, or demand	Use Cues: Priming and Precorrection
Get teacher or peer attention OR get something they want	Give Attention: Presession Attention + BSP

My chosen strategy:

Remember: Behavior-Specific Praise (BSP) supports ALL strategies. Use it any time the child does the right thing.

SECTION 3: PLAN WHEN AND WHERE

Based on your ABC data:

- ☐ I know which activity or routine is most often connected to the challenging behavior:

  Activity/routine: _____

- ☐ I know what time of day the challenging behavior most often happens:

  Time: _____

- ☐ I have a plan for WHEN I will use my chosen strategy (BEFORE the activity when the challenging behavior happens):

  My plan: _____

SECTION 4: USE THE STRATEGY

Each strategy has its own checklist page.
Once you choose a strategy, follow the checklist for that strategy.

SECTION 4A: CHECKLIST FOR STRATEGY 1 USE CUES (PRIMING AND PRECORRECTION)

Use this section if the child's behavior function is to GET AWAY FROM a task or activity or to GET SOMETHING they want.

Priming Steps:

- ☐ I identify which transition or activity causes the behavior
- ☐ I give a warning 2-5 minutes before the change happens
  (Example: "5 more minutes, then we clean up.")
  (Example: "1 more minute - almost time!")
- ☐ I give a second, final warning right before the change
- ☐ I follow through with the transition as planned
- ☐ I use behavior-specific praise when the child handles the transition well

Precorrection Steps:

- ☐ I identify the specific situation where the challenging behavior is predictable
- ☐ I know what I WANT the child to do instead (the desired behavior)
- ☐ RIGHT BEFORE the situation, I remind the child calmly what to do
  (Example: "When we line up, we keep our hands to ourselves. Can you show me?")
- ☐ If needed, I let the child briefly practice the expected behavior
- ☐ I provide behavior-specific praise when the child does it right
- ☐ I use precorrection EVERY time the situation comes up - not just sometimes

SECTION 4B: CHECKLIST FOR STRATEGY 2: GIVE ATTENTION (PRESESSION ATTENTION AND BEHAVIOR SPECIFIC PRAISE)

Use this section if the child's behavior function is to GET ATTENTION.

Presession Attention Steps:

- ☐ I confirm that attention is the function - my ABC data shows the child usually GETS adult or peer attention after the behavior
- ☐ I find out what this child enjoys (topic, activity, or toy they like)
- ☐ BEFORE the activity where challenging behavior usually happens, I give this child 2-3 minutes of my full, one-on-one attention:
  - □ I sit with them and make eye contact
  - □ I follow their lead and let them choose the topic
  - □ I am fully present and warm
  - □ I let them do most of the talking
- ☐ I transition the child back to the group or activity after 2-3 minutes
- ☐ I watch to see if the challenging behavior decreases during the activity that follows
- ☐ If behavior continues at the same level, I adjust: try more time, or a different topic

Behavior-Specific Praise (BSP) Steps:

- ☐ I identify the specific behavior I want to see more of
- ☐ I watch for that behavior throughout the day
- ☐ When I see it, I name it immediately with a warm, specific statement:
  - (*Example: "Aisha, I love how you sat quietly at circle time!"*)
  - *(Example: "You gave Jaylen a turn - that was such kind sharing!")*
- ☐ My praise is:
  - □ Specific (names the exact behavior I saw)
  - □ Immediate (said right when I see it)
  - □ Genuine (warm and sincere tone)
- ☐ I use BSP often - especially during the activities where the child typically struggles
- ☐ I aim for more positive, specific comments than corrections throughout the day

SECTION 5: TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Use this simple record after each day you use your strategy. Fill in one row per day.

Date	Activity/Time	Strategy Used	Did behavior happen?	What helped?	What to try next time?
			☐ No ☐ Less ☐ Same		
			☐ No ☐ Less ☐ Same		
			☐ No ☐ Less ☐ Same		
			☐ No ☐ Less ☐ Same		
			☐ No ☐ Less ☐ Same		

Remember:

Track what happens, what helps, and what to try next time.

Small changes can lead to big improvements!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After one week, take a few minutes to reflect:

Is the challenging behavior happening less often?

Is the strategy being used consistently every day?

Does the strategy need to be adjusted? (More time? Different activity? Simpler communication?)

Who can I talk to if I need more support? (Co-teacher, behavior specialist, family)

Adapted from Wood et al. (2018); Evanovich & Kern (2018); Menzies et al. (2023); Muharib & Pennington (2019); McClure & Burt (2023); Park & Lynch (2014); Collins & Landrum (2022).