



INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BEHAVIORAL NEEDS FOR STUDENTS WITH IEPs

Establishing Adult Practices to Support Students with Social and Emotional or Behavioral Needs

In addition to examining and addressing adult behavior and bias, the following adult practices fall within three broad dimensions and serve to support students with social, emotional, or behavioral needs within all school environments. These practices provide additional information to the [Strategies to Change Mindsets](#) section. While these recommended practices are far from a comprehensive list, they offer a starting point for creating a supportive learning environment that set the conditions for academic and social success.

Setting and Modeling High Expectations

- **Use Wisconsin’s Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies.** The SEL competencies can assist in identifying age- and grade-level skills that students need to be taught. Adults can help students acquire and apply these skills to improve students’ access, engagement, and progress in age- or grade-level curriculum and instruction. Adults must understand the social and emotional age, grade, and developmental expectations for each individual student in the same way that adults must understand academic age, grade, and developmental expectations of students.
- **Recognize, identify, and ensure social and behavioral expectations are culturally unbiased and responsive to the ethnic or racial makeup of the classroom and school population.** Engage with and actively involve families and community members to ensure classroom, school, and district expectations match individual cultures and values.
- **Recognize each student’s unique individual abilities and assets.** Identify whether school and classroom expectations align with the goal of creating expert life-long learners for each and every student in the educational community.

- **Provide multiple means for engagement, representation, and action and expression.** There is no “average” learner. Consider how these three Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines can help remove academic and functional (e.g., social and emotional) barriers across the classroom, school, and district.
- **Engage students in setting expectations for the school and classroom community.** Student engagement in decision making provides student voice and increases ownership and understanding of the school and classroom behavioral expectations.
- **Ensure that expectations are clear, observable, and consistent.** Students need to know what academic and social behaviors are expected, including what those behaviors look and sound like. This creates a learning environment that is safe, supportive, and predictable.
- **Teach, model, and provide opportunities to practice and generalize social and behavioral expectations.** Teaching and practicing behavioral expectations across learning environments is critical in order to support students' understanding on how to meet school and classroom expectations.
- **Model social and behavioral expectations.** Acknowledge when you have acted in ways that do not meet your own expectations as well as school-wide expectations or adult social and emotional competencies and consider how to use these moments as “teachable moments.” Use the adult [Wisconsin PK-Adult Social and Emotional Learning Competencies](#) and share how you are growing in these with your students.
- **Do not expect students to look like mirror images of each other.** Some students may take more time to learn the rules and expectations, need opportunities to role play and practice, or may have greater difficulty generalizing behaviors to new settings and situations. Ensure students not only understand these individual differences, but *value* it amongst themselves as a community of learners.
- **Develop systems to cue, practice, re-teach, and maintain expectations once they are established and taught.** Reminders, both visual and verbal, are helpful, as are classroom routines that are structured to increase the likelihood that students understand and follow the expectations.
- **Be flexible in your approach and acknowledgement of how students meet the established expectations.** Understand that students may be able to demonstrate different ways of “how” behavioral expectations look in the

classroom and school settings (e.g., using visual schedules to complete assignments, using a break card to remove themselves from an activity or demand).

- **Facilitate and model empathy, understanding, and flexible thinking.** Adults who model the skills we seek in students foster an environment that supports trust, safety, empowerment, choice, collaboration, and belonging.

Establishing Routines

- **Establish consistent classroom routines to make the environment more predictable.** Predictable routines provide students with a structure that makes it easier to respond with behavior that supports learning. For example, starting class with a trivia question every day provides students with a reliable cue that lets them know when class is going to begin. Students can then be prepared to respond with the expected behavior, such as getting out their book, sitting in their seat, quieting down, etc.
- **Use classroom routines to create a sense of shared values, common experience, and sense of belonging to a common community.** When everyone is following the same routines, they are part of the same team. All members feel a sense of contributing to the whole, empowered to help the group succeed, and a necessary part of that success.
- **The brain relies on routines to increase the efficiency of learning.** Students are better able to learn and meet the established expectations when the threat and stress in the learning environment is reduced.
- **Classroom routines should support the type of learning environment you are trying to create.** If you want students to be collaborative as part of a community of learners, establish classroom routines that support a collaborative environment. Arrange desks in groups, structure time for students to process and share information collaboratively, and design learning tasks which require students to rely on each other to be successful.
- **Classroom routines need to be explicitly taught.** Routines need to be modeled and practiced often while students are learning them and maintained consistently by the adults.
- **Use celebrations that are culturally responsive.** When celebrations are relevant to the unique culture of each and every student, they can be part of a classroom routine to recognize both the success of individuals and the success of the group. Be explicit in helping all students understand their interdependence by using affirmations, applause, high fives, and other forms of recognition to celebrate success as a community.

- **Embed Wisconsin Social and Emotional Competencies into academic and behavioral routines.** Identify academic demands that require additional functional (e.g., social and emotional) skills, and support and incorporate routines that reinforce those skills as well as provide support into academic instruction.

Increasing Engagement

- **Create conditions so that student engagement is enhanced and barriers to engagement are reduced or eliminated.** Learners are purposeful and motivated by personally meaningful learning goals, predictable supports for sustaining effort and persistence, and through options for self-regulation. There are multiple possible means of engagement for all learners in all contexts. Providing options and allowing flexibility is essential. Use the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and [design engagement options with the UDL Guidelines](#) as part of research-based practices shown to influence high levels of engagement.
- **Create opportunities for shared ownership.** Shared ownership in the learning process increases student engagement and reduces discipline issues. A study by Corrigan and Chapman (2008) established a connection between gains in teacher effectiveness and shared responsibilities with students. Engaging youth in shaping and moving through the learning process creates better outcomes for students. To better support students whose behavior interferes with learning, adults need to engage them in creating conditions for success. Engage students in identifying the supports and both the adult and student behaviors that will make their learning successful. Develop a plan with, not for, the student. Students need to be partners in creating and sustaining long-term conditions for change.
- **Make learning meaningful and relevant to each and every student.** Research shows that students invest themselves in learning when educational experiences have personal meaning. When adults engage youth in effective ways, adults can positively impact social and emotional learning and reduce the need for disciplinary measures.
- **Engage students as collaborators to set goals, develop a plan, assess progress, and use reflection to seek continuous improvement.** Seek to change the role of the teacher to the one of facilitator. See [CAST UDL Tips for Developing Learning Goals](#) for ideas to engage students in shared decision-making.

Reflection and Application Activities

The following reflection and application activities were developed to build the knowledge, skills, and systems of adults so they can assist students with accessing, engaging, and making progress in age or grade level curriculum, instruction, environments, and activities.

1. Which of the above practices do teachers use consistently as classroom-wide strategies or as strategies to meet the individual needs of students? Which practices need to be implemented or improved?
2. How do you know if school staff are consistently providing positive behavioral supports and interventions with fidelity? How might you improve your knowledge of effective implementation of systems and practices?
3. How will your school or district train and support staff to implement practices and systems to support students with significant behavioral needs?
4. Are there practices or systems that you feel are missing to support students with significant behavioral needs?
5. Using the [Inclusive Learning Communities \(ILC\) Practice Profile](#) from the Wisconsin DPI [RPIC Project](#), review the essential attributes of a learning environment that is inclusive of each and every learner. Consider the core competency area of Learning Climate, Culture, & Relationships.
 - How are adults promoting the social and emotional well-being of all learners?
 - Reflect if the use in practice is Expected, Developmental, or Unacceptable.
 - What are the areas of strength and needs for adults in the building?
6. Review the DPI [Intensive Supports](#) web page or the module from [Trauma Sensitive Schools Online Professional Development](#) page. How might these strategies support students with significant behavioral needs?
7. How is your school incorporating [social and emotional learning competencies](#) into the school curriculum and day to day interactions with students?
8. How can [Universal Design for Learning](#) support school and district interventions and supports for students with significant behavioral needs?



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