

PBIS and Restorative Justice

Fact Sheet



The following are answers to the most commonly asked questions about Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice.

What is PBIS?

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, also known as PBIS, is a school-wide approach to preventing and responding to school discipline problems, both inside and out of the traditional classroom setting (i.e. hallways, lunchroom, etc.). PBIS, as a behavior system, creates a culture and climate in which students and staff know what is expected for success, are acknowledged when they are successful and supported when they need assistance

PBIS is meant to address: high rates of problem behavior, ineffective and inefficient disciplinary practices, lack of general and specialized behavior intervention, lack of support for staff to address problem behavior, negative school climates, and reliance on reactive behavior management.

How does PBIS work?

PBIS focuses on a set of consistent behavior expectations and emphasizes rewarding students who follow them. We often assume children already know how to act in schools, but PBIS creates a positive environment where students know what is expected and appropriate behavior is the norm.

PBIS starts with strategies that encourage all students to engage in positive behavior to prevent discipline issues. When students repeatedly engage in problem behavior, PBIS establishes intervention strategies that are proven to be effective (evidence-based practices). If students continue to struggle, PBIS calls for individualized support to help them.

PBIS school programs also track data to help school officials understand the results of implementing new procedures. Tracking data allows school officials to be flexible in their decision making and meet the needs of all students.

How is PBIS different from traditional discipline programs?

Traditional discipline programs often react to problems after they happen, repeatedly using punishment in hopes that students will change behavior. PBIS is different because it creates a system to prevent behavior problems by focusing on the POSITIVE behaviors instead of the NEGATIVE behaviors. When problems do occur, PBIS schools use the most effective strategies to address them.

Consider a student who frequently gets into fights at school. Under a traditional discipline approach, the student would most likely be suspended or expelled. However, under PBIS, the school would work with the student to develop an effective, specialized plan to help prevent the student from getting into fights at all. For example, the student may be allowed to go to certain teacher's classroom to "cool off" when they feel anxious about fighting. The student would also receive praise for following school-wide behavior expectations.

What are the benefits of implementing PBIS?

PBIS is a great behavior system for schools because the system:

- Encourages all students to engage in positive behavior, creating a more positive school environment.
- Supports academic success by keeping students in the classroom and engaged in learning.
- Uses data to help school administrators maintain an efficient system of discipline and make informed, effective decisions for the school.
- Reduces the number of students sent to alternative school placements or involved with the juvenile justice system.
- Provides individualized strategies to help struggling students.

What is Restorative justice (RJ)?

RJ is a theory of justice that focuses on the needs of both victims and offenders. In the school setting, restorative justice focuses on helping students face their misbehaviors, and take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. RJ creates a dialogue between victims and offenders to create ways to put things right and make plans for positive change for all involved.

RJ can be effective in many instances, including: reintegration following a suspension, situations involving bullying, truancy mediations, as well as others.

Why is RJ effective?

RJ is effective because it is comprehensive. RJ focuses on understanding the harm that results from misbehavior. Specifically, RJ isolates the needs and causes behind misbehaviors as well as the needs of those harmed to develop a comprehensive reparative response to misbehavior.

The RJ model believes that harmers will choose respectful options when they come to understand the true impact of their actions on the harmed, and the pain their misbehavior has caused to the harmer and the community.

Should PBIS and Restorative Justice be used together?

Yes, if possible. PBIS and RJ can be very effective when used together. PBIS creates a consistent school-wide behavior management system and individual support systems for struggling students. When problems do occur, RJ is an effective method for helping misbehaving students understand the consequences of their behavior and then reintegrate into the school-wide PBIS system.

Resources:

- Visit the Office of Special Education Program's website at <http://www.pbis.org/school/default.aspx>.
- Visit the Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline's website at <http://www.kycid.org/>.
- For more information on RJ, visit <http://www.nij.gov/topics/courts/restorative-justice/welcome.htm> or www.restorativejustice.org/



Children's Law Center, Inc.
1002 Russell Street
Covington, KY 41011
Phone (859) 431-3313
Fax (859) 655-7553

Email: info@childrenslawky.org
<http://www.childrenslawky.org/>

Children's Law Center, Inc.
1555 Georgetown Road
Lexington, KY 40511
Phone (859) 253-3353
Fax (859) 655-7553