Structured Classroom Environment: Proactive Planning

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Positive Behavior Support

• Positive Behavior Supports operate with an explicit set of assumptions or beliefs.

• One of these beliefs is that settings set the context for behavior. Settings can calm or escalate student behavior, and set expectations for performance.
Questions to Ask About the Classroom Structure

- What message do students get when entering the classroom?
- Does the structure provide an opportunity for all students to be supervised and to be engaged?
- Is the setting chaotic or is it organized to facilitate smooth transitions?
- Are routines clearly articulated?
Questions to Ask About the Classroom Structure

- Are expectations/rules reflected somewhere in the room?
- Is a schedule posted that can be easily referenced?
- Are staff in close proximity to students or do they spend their time solely behind their desk?
- Is there anything that is impacting sensory processing?
Classroom Structure

• There is not a one size fits all approach for students.
• Make sure areas are clearly defined in the room (e.g., play areas, work area, etc.)
• Consider the message students get when they enter the room. Organizations gives the message it is time to work.
• Traffic patterns within the classroom should be established.
• Furniture should be arranged so learners can work individually and in groups.
• For students who need more structure, consider table top dividers or other means to help them focus.
Classroom Structure

• For students who are already distracted, clutter can further distract and heighten anxiety. All unnecessary materials, tasks, and distractions should be removed or placed out of learner view, if needed.
Classroom Structure

- Staff (including instructional assistants) should not be stationed behind their desks solely. Staff should be in closer proximity to students as a method to maintain order and engage students.

- Staff should be able to monitor all students at all times.

- There should be signals established for gaining class attention.
Classroom Structure

• Students and staff entering the classroom should be able to easily locate a schedule/agenda for the day, set of classroom rules, and other expectations posted somewhere in the room.

• Expectations/rules should be operationally defined and taught.

• These should not be removed during the school year.
Classroom Structure

• Upon entering the instructional setting, students should be engaged immediately to set the tone for the day and to create a momentum for learning.

• This means that the instructional environment must be organized in a manner that keeps momentum going.
Classroom Structure

• Visual supports can be used to help minimize the need for continual verbal reminders, reduce anxiety for students, and clarify expectations.
Classroom Structure
I'm working fine!

I need help, and I can't keep working.

I need help, but I can keep working.
Visual Supports

- 5 puppies
- Outside Voices
- Play Voices
- Inside Voices
- Whisper Voices
- NO Talking
Classroom Structure

• **Staff should vary their instruction to match the needs of students.**

• **Positive comments should outweigh negative comments from staff.**

• **Students should be actively engaged (80 percent) during the class period or day.**
Having a classroom and instruction well organized will minimize behavioral outbursts and ensure maximum learning occurs.
Questions?