10 EASY BEHAVIOR TIPS

The Brevard Public Schools Behavior Support Team is here to help.

Here are ten behavior tips to use as we learn to navigate the world of distance learning.

01. Create a Schedule

Establish structure in your day by developing a schedule for the "school day". Start school at the same time each day (this may be staggered if you have multiple learners sharing a device), and don't forget to schedule breaks, physical activity, and mealtimes. Make sure to periodically check to make sure the learner is following the schedule, and reward on-task behavior with things like praise and earned breaks.

02. Create Rules

Younger learners often don't realize where the line is drawn, and older learners will push to exert their independence. Have a discussion and agree on realistic rules that are developmentally appropriate. Create three to five positively stated rules and make them clear, to the point, one sentence, and never vague or subjective. Also create positive and negative consequences for behaviors. A positive consequence might be extra phone time for finishing math, while a negative consequence might be no video games during the next break.

1. Hands to self   2. Stay in your work area   3. Follow directions
          4. Listening ears   5. Kind words

03. Teach the Rules and then Re-Teach the Rules

Review the rules that you created and ensure that everyone understands what they look like, sound like, and feel like. Discuss examples and non-examples. Practice what it's like to do schoolwork - sitting, listening, attending to lessons, switching between lessons/subjects, and asking an adult for help. Provide lots of encouragement when your learner gets it right!

04. Choice and Control

From a limited list of options you're comfortable with, allow your learner to have choices. Examples include break time activities, work location, and preferred items following work completion.

05. Attention

Attention can be one of your most valuable tools. It is best to give attention to the things you want your learner to do more of. Pay attention to the learner's efforts to complete the math problem, not the tapping of the pencil. (Example: "Thanks for working so hard this morning on your math!")

06. Pivot Praise

If one of your learners is not doing what you have asked them to do, you can simply turn to another learner who is following directions and provide them with specific praise (Example: "John, I love how you are sitting at the table and working!"). Once your learner begins following directions, immediately turn to them and praise them for doing so.

07. Dealing with Disruption

Try to minimize disruptions and interruptions as much as possible. To get back on track, try asking your learner what they're working on, restating the current expectation, or using the Interrupt and Redirect technique (Example: "You're on the phone. Please do your work.") You may need to stay in close physical proximity until they get back on track. Praise them once they do!

08. Follow Through

If your learner continues to violate the rules you have established, after two additional reminders, make sure you follow through on the pre-established consequences calmly, quickly, and without emotion. Then quickly move on and give a new opportunity for your learner to show you how he/she really can follow the rules.
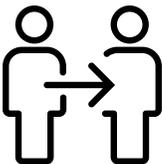
A consequence might look like:

Limit the attention you give to the challenging behavior while monitoring for safety.

Do not allow the learner to access any preferred items or activities.

Once the learner is calm, repeat your original request exactly as before.

09. Giving Feedback

Provide your learner with praise for following rules and directions, but be mindful to deliver corrective feedback away from others. Many times when learners are corrected in front of others, adults may decrease the learner's motivation. (Example: Praise Jane for getting started on her work. When she stops working or gets off task, ask her to join you in another area, where you can speak to her privately)

10. Escape

If you think your learner may be acting out to avoid an assignment, identify whether it is because they don't *know how* to do it or because they don't *want* to do it.

If they don't know how to do it, then teach and show them first.
If they don't want to do it, offer suggestions on other ways to complete the task.
This is also a great opportunity to teach them to ask for a break!