

BEHAVIOR SPECIFIC PRAISE

Behavior specific praise refers to praise statements that explicitly reference the particular behavior for which the student is being recognized (Brophy, 1981; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). Teachers who use a high rate of behavior specific praise (BSP) usually experience less disruptive student behavior, as BSP increases appropriate behaviors and academic engaged time. Behavior specific praise statements are linked to a behavior, providing sincere feedback that praises effort, not ability. This establishes a supportive and positive classroom environment, increases on-task behavior and positive social behaviors while reducing problem behavior. For example, a teacher might say “Suzi, great job showing your work on all the division steps,” or, “Daezon, I appreciate how you pushed in your neighbor’s chair before lining up for recess. That shows teamwork,” instead of a generic, “Great job!”

Behavior specific praise is simple, effective when delivered consistently and immediately after desired behavior, no cost, and requires minimal effort. It can be a Tier 1 low-intensity teacher-delivered strategy for all students, or when needed, can target an individual or small group of students as a Tier 2 intervention.

As a Tier 2 intervention, BSP statements should be delivered at a rate of four positive to every one negative statement (4:1 ratio; Myers, Simonsen, & Sugai, 2011). The subsequent materials provide teachers a procedural checklist for implement behavior specific praise as an intervention, sample praise statements, treatment integrity checklist, and pre/post-intervention social validity measures for students and teachers.

IFEED-AV

Immediately
Frequently
Enthusiasm
Eye Contact
Describe
Anticipation
Variety

Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1992