

JUAN CASE STUDY

7 year old with mild mental retardation and AD/HD served in a Special Day Class Setting

Step One - Beginning the Activity:

Read Juan's description below silently to yourself

Juan is an engaging and spirited seven-year-old boy who is in a Special Day Class on an elementary school campus. He is mildly mentally retarded, has an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and has asthma and a mild congenital heart condition. He has taken many different medications. Currently he is taking one that is supposed to target aggression.



Fictitious picture

Juan is the only child at home and is much loved by his mother and stepfather. An older brother died of asthma. Juan's parents do not allow him to play outside unsupervised and since they both work, he does not often play in the neighborhood. His parents have a realistic picture of him although they feel that the behavioral difficulties he experiences are largely due to his lack of opportunities to play with other children.

In class, Juan works conscientiously on his assignments although since he was taken off stimulant medication, the length of time he can focus has diminished. There are 15 students in his class, all with significant academic delays. The classroom is traditional: desks are in rows; the teacher and aide direct and control all activities; positive reinforcement is sparse. The curriculum focuses on remediation.

Juan has always had behavioral difficulties at unstructured times. Juan's interactions with the other students concern staff: Juan annoys other children who are not bothering him. For example, he'll turn to a child doing her work and say, "No copy me" in an aggressive sounding voice. Or he'll lightly jab his lunchbox into the child ahead of him on line until he gets a reaction.

However, of greatest concern is his behavior at recess. When he feels that other students have broken a rule (whether or not it affects him) or have somehow violated his rights, he will kick, bite, punch, or slap. Juan can be playing happily with another when suddenly he will become angry and attack. Usually, no one is really hurt, although on one occasion, he continued to kick a smaller child who was on the ground. After an incident, he cries and generally falls apart for about 15 minutes. This behavior occurs daily.

A behavior specialist wrote a plan but she never saw the behavior at recess. An aide has been assigned to Juan at all recesses but she hasn't seen the plan and has never met the behavior specialist. She likes Juan and tries to cajole him into "being nice" but she has no training. Staff wonders if Juan needs a more restrictive environment since children have been hurt. His parents want him to remain in his current placement. They have an appointment to see the doctor to change Juan's medication to target impulsivity and attention since the current drug has not been effective. The team agrees with this approach.

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Step Two - Activity Instructions:

1. Quickly pick roles in your team from the list below.
2. Find the role descriptions in your handouts
3. Each player reads his/her part.
4. What to do next is embedded in each person's role description they receive.
5. Juan's parent begins the role-play.

- Juan's Parent(s)---can be one or more role players
- Administrator
- Lead BSP collaborative consultant (can be teacher, psychologist, behavior specialist, etc.)
- Juan's Teacher
- Juan's Aide
- Scorer (Advocate or other visitor who checks and scores each section)
- Remaining members of group: Adjunct role players

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Step Three:

Read **ONLY** your assigned role below. Be ready to play your part. Do your best to make this fun, and accurately communicate to the team your information and perspectives.

The parent(s) will open when everyone has read their roles, written the role on the provided label and put it on

☐ Opening Dialogue, first speaker – Parent(s) Role

You open the role-play by speaking first. Wait until you can tell everyone has read their parts and is ready to begin. Ask everyone to say their first name, and the role they are playing in this meeting. Tell them you are Juan's parent(s).

- After that, tell everyone you are frustrated by his school performance and that you think it is because he doesn't have an opportunity to play with other children in the neighborhood. Tell them he really, really loves computer games though, and he chooses that a lot at home. But now you are worried he will be "kicked out of school." You are thrilled the school wants to do something proactive and happy to be here today. You hope new medication will help.

☐ Opening Dialogue, second speaker – Principal Role

- Tell Juan's parents you too are glad we are coming together to talk about Juan's problems in school. You have seen him a few times for playground problems and are pretty frustrated. You like Juan, but the problems just keep happening over and over. As the recess aide if things are getting any better. **Stop**
- After the teacher says she thinks he should stay in for recess, remind her everyone needs a break and we just have to figure out how to make it work for Juan. **Stop**

☐ Opening dialogue, third speaker – Recess Aide role

- When the principal asks you if things are getting better say "I don't know!" and laugh. Tell the group you are trying to do better at catching him before he kicks, or bites, but he moves so fast! Tell everyone he seems to do it when he is frustrated and can't tell others what he wants or why he is angry. Characterize him as a "busy body", obsessed with who is following rules, and who is not. **Stop.**

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☐ Opening dialogue, fourth speaker – Juan’s Teacher role

- After the noon aide speaks, tell everyone that his classroom behavior isn’t that bad, if he could just stay in a structured setting all day, he wouldn’t get in so much trouble. He loves to put together puzzles, and will stay on task for a long time to earn free time minutes with puzzles. **Stop.**
- After the principal says, “But everyone needs a break!” Respond by saying that actually, he sometimes tries “just to get a rise” out of others by poking them in line or bothering them during seatwork. You have tried time out and reprimands, but nothing seems to work! **Stop**

☐ Opening dialogue, fifth speaker – Behavior consultant, teacher or psychologist in the role of leading this COLLABORATIVE team effort

After the first four speakers, then you start off: Let everyone know now that “my job is to facilitate everyone working together to understand the problem and find a solution. I have just observed Juan, and have spoken to his previous behavior specialist/consultant. We have about an hour to write down what we all plan to do to help support Henry in following rules and staying out of trouble. If it takes us longer, we will reschedule to finish on another day.” Offer to record the discussion on the blank BSP. Ask for acknowledgment that this is fine with everyone. Tell them “After we ALL make a decision is made as to what to write, I will check with you on final wording and record it for us. My scorer-assistant will let us know if we are on track, and if not will tell us to try to improve what we are writing.” Then start with Line One: The problem behavior. “So I hear everyone saying that Juan is having a problem at recess, and sometimes in the classroom. Let’s discuss what that is and finds words to write here.” ETC. Praise people for their contributions lavishly as you go through the plan.

You are modeling collaborative behavioral consulting skills. You may only write while YOU are talking, not while THEY are talking. Play Columbo: “Do I have that right? Now what should we write here again?” Your scorer-assistant will whisper to you to remember to write only what the team has agreed if you forget. You may only write when YOU are speaking, not while others are speaking. Your scorer-assistant will remind you by gesturing a hand with an invisible pencil.)

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Scorer - Assistant

Your primary duty is to whisper to the behavior consultant to remember to write ONLY if he/she is speaking, not while others are speaking. You cue him/her by gesturing a writing motion with an invisible pencil. He/she knows what that means. After the team determines what they will write for each line, consult your scoring guide. You give your analysis of the points for each response. After lines that must be analyzed together have been written (such as C. linking 5 and 6) stop the group to discuss the score. If you think any response is not a "2" response, suggest rethinking and writing again.

Adjunct Role Players

When you are required to introduce yourself, choose ANY role:

Grandparent, speech language pathologist, district psychologist, school psychology graduate student, ape specialist at the school, another teacher at Juan's school. You make it up. As the plan is written, play that role. Ask questions whenever you can, ask for more explanation, and above all, express how thrilled you are, praise lavishly!

JUAN CASE STUDY HINTS

Step Four - Key Information and Hints:

EVERYONE: Read as you write each BSP section/line and as you role-play plan development:

1. **Behavior:** Consider all the behaviors Juan shows: biting, kicking; poking people, etc. Consider whether these all have the same function, or different functions. Remember to number and correlate.
5. **Predictors:** less structured times, but also at recess (write this to a 2 pt.)
6. **What is in/missing in:** Juan has NOT YET learned what? Therefore, what have we NOT YET given him instruction in? (Use "NOT YET" without blaming anyone) Juan has not received reinforcement for doing anything right either. (Write this to a 2 pt. response)
7. **Environmental:** What changes would help him understand what is going on. Would social stories prior to recess help? Would a point system? Remember his developmental cognitive style is about age 4.
8. **Function:** Do all Juan's behavior serve the same function, or does he have patterns of problem behavior to protest, and patterns to get something? Develop a # correlating system to make scoring easier.
9. **Alternative replacement behavior:** Remember, with some behaviors to get something, and some to protest something, you will need replacement behaviors for each.
11. **Reinforcers:** Remember, he loves computer games and frequently asks to play them. Build realistic contingencies, offer access to stuff he likes (computer games, putting together puzzles, etc.) Be sure to see if there are activities Juan wants to do with his parents and build that in as well.
12. **Reactive Strategies:** Write multiple steps including reminding Juan of reinforcers for positive choices; reminders to switch to replacement behavior; meetings with principal; phone calls; new BSP meetings; and ultimately suspensions if violations harm others.
14. **Communication:** This parent has email. Think of daily reports written on his progress to both Juan and his parents. Juan can also write email from the teacher's office or school office if you want to involve him.