

MAKING A GOOD/SUPERIOR PLAN BETTER ACTIVITY

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The following statements are from Cadre plans that scored in the good to superior range overall, yet have elements that can be improved. With your partner(s) review the two problem patterns and identify the common error and suggest a revised statement.

I. Problem Pattern One

- **Line 1: Definition of problem behavior:** Danny has **off task behavior**, including refusal to initiate or complete tasks within his repertoire and **loud verbal outburst**.
- **Line 8: Function of behavior:** Michael **tantrums** to continue access to preferred activities
- **Line 11: Reinforcement:** At the end of each school day during which Robert **has not been aggressive**, he will receive one reward card depicting his favorite cartoon characters (of his choosing) to take home to collect, provided by his SDC teacher, paired with verbal praise (e.g., “good job keeping calm at school”)
- **Line 13: Goals:** Using a token economy system and a behavioral rehearsal, Jamie **will safely transition** from the classroom to the van at the end of the school day, **using appropriate language** on 10 consecutive trial days.

II. Problem Pattern Two

- **Line 5: Predictors** Whenever Billy feels angry with his peers he is likely to begin hitting them
- **Line 6: What is supporting the behavior:** Robert feels angry and has not yet learned to express his needs while in an agitated state
- **Line 6: What is supporting the behavior:** Andrew feels he does not need to use safe travel procedures and does not want to be identified as a visually impaired student.
- **Line 1: Definition of Problem behavior:** When attempting to be helpful, David invades their personal space (coming closer than arm’s length) and irritates peers. This impairs peer relationships

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Annotated by Diana Browning Wright

I. Overall Problem Pattern One: Problem behavior is not in observable terms.

- **Line 1: Definition of problem behavior:** Danny has **off task behavior**, including refusal to initiate or complete tasks within his repertoire and **loud verbal outburst**.

DBW suggested change: Improve Description

Danny plays with objects on his desk or talks to peers about topics unrelated to current task. If requested to stop, he says, "Why should I? or This isn't important!" or other statements indicating he will not comply. He uses a voice loud enough to be heard by everyone in the room, or anyone in the hallway. This behavior happens for tasks within his independent task completion ability.

- **Line 8: Function of behavior:** Michael **tantrums** to continue access to preferred activities.

DBW comments: If behavior was operationalized, e.g., put in observable measurable terms on line 1, then simply inserting referencing that definition suffices on line 8..For example, if Line one states: Michael tantrums, defined as: "He rocks back and forth in his chair, falls to the floor and moves his legs and arms rapidly will moaning and screaming." Then, on line 8 may read: Michael "tantrums" (see line 1 definition) to maintain (get) continued access to preferred activities.

- **Line 11: Reinforcement:** At the end of each school day during which Robert has not been aggressive, he will receive one reward card depicting his favorite cartoon characters (of his choosing) to take home to collect, provided by his *SDC teacher, paired with verbal praise (e.g., "good job keeping calm at school.")*

DBW comments: As above, "aggressive" needs to have been thoroughly defined on line 1, with a reference to that definition. I have some concerns that developing at plan requiring waiting to the end of the day for a reinforcer may be too long for an initial reinforcer for alternate behavior. Perhaps designating more frequently at first would be a good idea, then reducing frequency of reinforcement as success is attained.

- **Line 13: Goals:** Using a token economy system and a behavioral rehearsal, Jamie will safely transition from the classroom to the van at the end of the school day, using appropriate language on 10 consecutive trial days.

DBW suggested change: safely transition and using appropriate language needs to be further defined. Additionally, “by when” “what conditions” “at what level of proficiency” and “measurement” need further refining. For example: (By when) By 1/06/08 (who) Jamie (will do what) will walk unaided from classroom to the van, staying within three feet of the accompanying adult. She will talk with her aide or teacher and peers in a normal speaking voice tone, refraining from calling anyone a name or swearing, i.e., words referencing diety, toilet functions or sexual activity (under what conditions) as she transitions the end of the school day, (at what level of proficiency) with no adult verbal or physical prompting.(measurement). The approximate 10 minute transition to the van will be recorded as 1. meeting, or 2. not meeting this goal by the accompanying adult on a daily log sheet. 4 out of 5 days of the recorded intervals will demonstrate goal acquisition.

II. Problem Pattern Two: Hypotheses about feelings is not consistent with the paradigm of applied behavior analysis. We must describe in observable terms.

- **Line 5: Predictors** Whenever Billy feels angry with his peers he is likely to begin hitting them

DBW comments: Describe an observable behavior, what is seen or heard. *Whenever Billy becomes red in the face and verbalizes, “I hate you,” in a voice tone and with nonverbal communication interpretable as anger by bystanders, he is likely to begin hitting the peer.*

- **Line 6: What is supporting the behavior:** Robert **feels angry** and has not yet learned to express his needs while in an **agitated state**

DBW comments: *Again, describe anger and agitated state in observable terms. On line one, consider:*

Robert becomes “angry” when in an “agitated state.” He has not yet learned to express his needs calmly under these conditions. Either here, or on line one, operationalize “angry,” e.g., Robert demonstrates “anger” through raising his voice while expressing displeasure with people’s actions (“Don’t tell me what to do!” or with assignments, “I’ve already done this and there is no way I am doing it again!”) “Agitation” is defined as rapidly shifting eye gaze, rocking back and forth, and quick staccato body movements while not being engaged in an activity.

- **Line 6: What is supporting the behavior:** Andrew **feels** he does not need to use safe travel procedures and **does not want** to be identified as a visually impaired student.

DBW suggested changes: *Andrew states, “I don’t think of myself as visually impaired, and I don’t want other people to think that either. I can travel without using a cane!” Tell what observation made the OBSERVER think Andrew feels these things. Behavior analysis avoids hypotheses about feelings and thinking and describes observable behavior.*

- **Line 1: Definition of problem behavior:** When **attempting to be helpful**, David invades their personal space (coming closer than arm's length) and **irritates peers**. This impairs peer relationships.

DBW suggested changes: *David demonstrates that he likes his peers and wants to help by leaping up, leaning closely over the student's desk to provide assistance on a task, even when not requested do to so. He comes closer than arms length to the peers, and peers respond by stating, "Not so close!" or, "I don't want your help, back off" or pushing him away, demonstrating through words and gestures their irritation with the non requested assistance and person to person distance being too close. (Move, the statement, "this impairs peer relationships" to line 2: This impairs learning because..... or bracket off this information as it is not directly related to the problem behavior description, it is beginning the analysis of why we should address the behavior.)*