

## **Mentor-Based Support Intervention: Check, Connect, and Expect**

A Tier 2 Primary Intervention for Students with Behavioral Difficulties

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### **Check, Connect, and Expect:**

For students who experience emotional and behavioral problems that do not respond to the universal interventions implemented in schools, the use of more targeted methods allows teachers and staff to individually address the issues that may be interfering with a child's education. Students with emotional and behavioral disabilities often have difficulty succeeding in school and can become a burden on a teacher's time and resources, which detracts from the needs of their fellow classmates. Additionally, these problems can follow students throughout their educational experience and into adulthood, resulting in increased probabilities of failing classes, dropping out of high school, not attending college, and struggling with relationships and employment. These challenging behaviors can be seen in students as young as elementary school age, which heightens the importance of finding strategies to address them before they become an impairing condition in middle or high school and beyond.

The Check, Connect, and Expect (CCE) intervention is part of the Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support model, which advocates different levels of support for students and teachers to increase the display of positive social behaviors and decrease the occurrence of problem behaviors. In this intervention, students who experience emotional or behavioral problems, or are at risk for developing them, are paired with a mentor or trusted adult at the school who meets with them on a daily basis to strengthen their commitments to school and succeeding in the classroom. These meetings occur twice a day for only a few minutes, but they serve as a chance to empower the student and prepare them for the day, outline their goals and their ability to achieve them, and provide reinforcement for success or encouragement for better outcomes tomorrow. CCE can serve as a concerted effort between the student, their mentor, and the student's teacher and parents to set up a continuum of support that carries them from school to the home. This intervention is simple to implement and requires that the adults involved devote small amounts of time to setting up expectations for the student, reinforcing their ability to accomplish them, providing prompts or encouragement during the school day, and ensuring that the child is praised or refocused depending on their behavioral outcomes. The main materials needed are a check-in/check-out sheet to record meeting attendance and a daily report card that specifies the positive behaviors in question and allows teachers to record their level of achievement (this can also serve as a school-home note that specifies how parents should appropriately respond to their student's daily progress).

The CCE is based on fifteen years of cumulative data from a variety of organizations and research studies that examine the success of the different components that make up this intervention, including the use of positive and caring adults who provide structured supervision, daily progress report cards, and the teaching of self-monitoring to students. This intervention has been implemented for students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, and in 18 urban elementary schools in the Seattle area alone. Multiple studies over the years have shown

positive gains in literacy, positive opinions about school and learning, and increased school completion. By encouraging the formation of positive relationships with staff, making clear and reinforcing the expectations of student's behavior, and getting them more engaged in school, the CCE intervention has been able to make strides in improving academic and social outcomes for all types of students in need.

### **Steps to Implement Check, Connect, and Expect**

#### 1) Training School Staff or Paraprofessionals to Become Mentors

A mentor should be a trusted adult who works at the school or is hired full-time for this position. Teachers, support staff, administrators, and so on can fill this role, but teachers should never be mentors to their own students because it creates dual role confusion. In order to properly train CCE mentors and prepare them for the responsibilities of this intervention, the school district should hold a two-day summer workshop, along with follow-up trainings throughout the year. The main focus of these trainings should be on:

- Relationship and rapport building with students with challenging behaviors
  - "Positive and unconditional caring"
- Establishing productive goals for students and encouraging their achievement
- Reviewing academic and referral records
- Collecting and storing information from Check In, Check Out and daily progress reports
- Effective forms of positive reinforcement and positive feedback
- Teaching problem-solving and/or self-monitoring strategies to students

#### 2) Selection of Students for the CCE Program

Since CCE is a Tier 2 intervention, it is necessary to identify those students who require more intensive services to address their behavior needs. The Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD) is a teacher nomination and rating form that enables teachers to identify the students in their class who show externalizing or internalizing characteristics. The next step is to complete rating scales for the three highest students in each category based on critical events, adaptive, and maladaptive behaviors. Once these students have been identified, parental consent is required for them to be able to participate in the program.

In order to strengthen the relationship between mentor and student, it is often beneficial to allow students to select an adult that they trust and would like to meet with each day. Establishing respect and rapport at the beginning helps to ensure that students will listen to and take to heart their interactions with the adult.

#### 3) Check In Procedures

Students should be instructed to meet with their mentor at the beginning of each morning, before they enter their classroom for the day. The meeting can happen anywhere that is convenient for the two to meet, as long as they have a quiet place to speak. These sessions last about 2-3 minutes and serve as a time to make sure that students are prepared for school, are aware of their positive behavior goals for the day, and are given encouragement that they can achieve them. This is also a time to try to address any problems that might interfere in the

child's ability to behave during the day, such as skipping breakfast, not sleeping well, or having a bad morning. Mentors may benefit from having a healthy snack available or a quick relaxation technique that can set the student on the right track.

At Check In, students are given the daily report card that lists all of their goals for the day, along with a rating scale (e.g., Likert scale, 1 – 4) that illustrates the degree to which they were able to achieve them. The report card is broken up into different time periods for the teacher to check off on or students can rate themselves if self-monitoring is encouraged. These time periods can be specific class periods, transition times, recess or lunch, or any other times that the student may be experiencing more problem behaviors. This report card stays with the student throughout the day and is turned in to their mentor at Check Out.

Overall, this morning meeting should serve as a time of unconditional positive regard and supportive encouragement of the student's ability to succeed in their goals. Mentors are not supposed to lecture or punish students, but rather serve as a steady source of help and support.

#### 4) Teacher Involvement (Prompting and Rating)

The teacher's role in this intervention is not time-intensive, but important nonetheless. The teacher can take a minute at the beginning of class to also review the daily behavior goals with the student and reinforce their belief that they can succeed. Throughout the day, they rate the child's behaviors on the daily report card and provide positive feedback when they meet social expectations, or prompts when the student is struggling. If students are self-monitoring their behaviors, teachers can simply check the daily report card and ensure that the student is being honest. At the end of the day, they can also make sure that the student has their daily report card to show to their mentor at the Check Out meeting.

#### 5) Check Out Procedures

Check Out occurs at the end of the day and serves as a time for the mentor to review the student's performance during the day and see if a pre-determined goal was met by tallying up the ratings. If the goal was met for the day, the mentor should verbally praise and reinforce the student for their achievement. If the goal was not met, the mentor should talk with them about how they can do better for the next day. If possible, this is a great time for the mentor to work on problem-solving skills with the student or other strategies that might help them deal with areas they struggled in that day. The mentor should keep one copy of the daily report card and send another home for the parent to review and sign. Students should leave this meeting feeling encouraged, no matter how they performed that day, and ready to succeed tomorrow.

#### 6) Parent Involvement (Encouragement at Home)

Since parent response at home is an integral part of this intervention, it is important that the coach meets or get into contact with the student's parents and explain to them how the program works. Parents need to know the best ways to reward their student for compliance with daily goals at home, along with how to encourage them to do better the next day, if goals are not met. Giving access to privileges (i.e. watching TV, playing video games, 1:1 time with a

parent, dessert, etc.) are the most effective ways for parents to use reinforcements, while taking away or preventing access to these same privileges helps to underscore the necessity of meeting expectations at school. Additionally, parents are responsible for collecting the note from the coach about how their child performed at school and returning it the next day with an explanation of how they responded to the suggestions of the note.

**Helpful Articles and Websites:**

Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention website:  
<http://checkandconnect.org/>

Strengthening the Safety Net - Check & Connect:  
<http://cecp.air.org/safetynet/check.htm>

New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports - What is Teacher Check Connect and Expect?  
[http://www.nhcebis.seresc.net/teacher check connect and expect](http://www.nhcebis.seresc.net/teacher_check_connect_and_expect)

The Check, Connect, and Expect Program (CCE): Prevention and Intervention for Behavioral Problems:  
<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/best/readings/strandN1.pdf>

**Resources:**

- Monitoring Form for Attendance of Check In, Check Out Meetings

Name:	Week:	Goal:	
<b>Monday:</b>			
Check In -	Yes	No	Absent
Check Out -	Yes	No	Absent
Met Goal? -	Yes	No	
If yes, praise given:			
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If no, encouragement given for better day tomorrow:

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**Tuesday:**

Check In - Yes No Absent  
Check Out - Yes No Absent  
Met Goal? - Yes No

If yes, praise given:

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If no, encouragement given for better day tomorrow:

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**Wednesday:**

Check In - Yes No Absent  
Check Out - Yes No Absent  
Met Goal? - Yes No

If yes, praise given:

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If no, encouragement given for better day tomorrow:

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**Thursday:**

Check In - Yes No Absent  
Check Out - Yes No Absent  
Met Goal? - Yes No

If yes, praise given:

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If no, encouragement given for better day tomorrow:

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**Friday:**

Check In - Yes No Absent

Check Out - Yes No Absent

Met Goal? - Yes No

If yes, praise given:

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If no, encouragement given for better day tomorrow:

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• Daily Behavior Report Card

Name:

Date:

Goal:

Goal	Morning Meeting	Literacy/ Writing	Math	Social Studies/ Science	Clean-Up
Be Safe	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Be Respectful of Others	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Follow Directions	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Participate/ Complete Tasks	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Make Good Transitions	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Please circle one: 1 = Was not able to meet goal

2 = Needed 3 or more prompts to meet goal

Daily Total: \_\_\_\_\_

3 = Needed 1-2 prompts to meet goal  
4 = Was able to meet goal with no prompts

Met goal? Yes No

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Comments: