Adult Responses to Behavior—General Guidelines (Thanks to: McIntyre, Charney, Hewitt, Jones, Nelsen, Mendler, and others)

- Delete these four things from commentary when responding to inappropriate behavior
  - "WHY" questions
    - Asking "why" is helpful when problem solving, but not when responding to behavior. Asking "why" when responding or attempting to stop behavior is generally accusatory and begins the nagging. It may force students into more undesirable behavior, like lying. Obviously, if you genuinely want to know why and the student's response determines your next move, ask the question. But if you want the behavior to stop, don't ask why, just redirect.
  - The word "YOU."
    - In general the word, "you" attacks, condescends, controls and fails to solve the problem. It is not the intention perhaps, but this is the effect of hearing, "You . . ."
  - The words, "NO" and "DON'T"
    - The positive in positive behavior support or positive discipline refers to attending to what you do want as opposed to what you don't want. Tell students what to do, not what not to do. The reason? Words inspire action. Consider this: "Whatever you do, don't think of a purple frog prince." What happened? If students are not displaying behavior that you want, teach it and tell them what behavior you want to see at any given moment.
  - NAGGING/BERATING/LECTURING
    - It just doesn't work. As Jane Nelsen says, "Why would we ever think that they way to get students to do better is to make them feel worse?" Instead of lecturing or berating, use a problem solving process: think, id the problem, devise a solution, implement solution.
Some other general guidelines concerning classroom behavior management:

- Acknowledge students who are demonstrating what is expected. Catch students being “good.”
- Adult responses should model the behavior we expect from young people.
  - Responses should always model the manner in which we want students to react to inappropriate behavior displayed by peers
- Privacy
  - Whenever possible, praise in public and redirect or invoke consequences in private.
  - Some students also prefer to be praised in private.
  - Many students are a lot more likely to follow through if your request is low-key and that often means private.
  - Consequences can happen later—remember your goal.
- Always stress the deed and not the doer—whether offering praise or admonishment.
  - Say, “Good choice”, instead of “good girl.”
  - Say, “Excellent effort”, instead of “you’re terrific.”
  - Say “I get angry when I see you do sneaky things” instead of, ‘You are a sneak.”
  - Say, “Loud talking violates our rules, I want you to find another way”, instead of “Close your big mouth.”
- Give information
  - Brief and non-judgmental offers of knowledge
  - Doesn’t tell the student what to do.
  - Examples: “Paste dries up when the lid isn’t on,” “If you hit others, they won’t be your friend.” “Rulers are for measuring.”
- Describe the problem
  - Mention problem to be addressed without assigning blame or student’s role
  - Request that student(s) figure out how to resolve,
  - Examples: “I hear answers, but don’t see hands.” “It’s almost time for the bell and the floor is a mess.”
- Send a note (another way to communicate in private)
  - Pre-emptive notes
  - After the fact
  - Humorous reminders
Offers of help
- Avoid using “need” use “want” instead

Planned ignoring
- Avoid overt attention to the problem behavior
- Because you’ve instructed students in this strategy, they know that you are CHOOSING to ignore the behavior for now.
- Attend to the student and other actions, ignore only the problem behavior.
- Consequences can be followed through with later
- If behavior escalates, your method is not working.

Redirect-
- Be specific and verbalize exactly what you expect students to do, not what not to do.
- Some adults feel more comfortable with the I voice attached, but whether a simple redirection or an “I voice” redirection—keep it focused on what you want, not what you don’t want.
- Some adults feel better about a request. Request but never beg.
- Calmly and respectfully tell students exactly what you want them to do. Say it nicely.

Remind or redirect once. Warn of the impending planned consequence if no result and then follow through.

Instruct students in positive practice.
- Positive practice involves students practicing the expected behavior that they were failing to demonstrate.
- There are lots of variations here—going back to walk on return, finding another way to express someone, sitting for two minutes with hands on body, replaying a conversation while adding please and thank you, etc. etc.
- This is genuinely about practice—it is not about punishing.

Use logical consequences.
- Logical consequences are logically related to the behavior.
- Students who don’t bring equipment back have to round up other equipment or keep an inventory.
- Student who monopolize the ketchup dispenser have to serve others
- Students who argue with sport officials must become officials for younger kids’ sports.
• Students who push and shove in line may not line up until everyone else has and on other occasions they may line up first, or they may simply be called to line up by themselves.

• Try Over-correction
  o Over-correction involves having a student demonstrate positive practice multiple times, or for a sustained amount of time. The sustained time is not about punishment, it is about practice to become habit.
  o Over-correction might involve walking in the hallway over and over again, but not for physical duress and not for humiliation.
  o Over-correction might involve picking up all the papers on the floor, but not while crawling.
  o Over-correction might involve cleaning the restroom, but not with a toothbrush.

• Loss of privilege
  o Loss of privilege should be directly tied to the behavior—having a student not be allowed on the swings for a week is more effective than having them sit out of all activity for a day.
  o Likewise, having a student not be allowed to use passes to the bathroom for one or two months is more effective than sending them to in-school suspension.
  o There should be a defined time limit and it should be reasonable, given the child’s age.
  o Care should be taken that the loss of privilege does not provide context for problematic behavior.
  o Care should be taken that the loss of “privilege” is not a reinforcing to the child.
  o Care should be taken in taking an activity in which the young person excels.
  o Care should be taken that the student has opportunities to practice the difficult context.
  o If Specials are part of the education curriculum they are not a privilege.

• Offer limited choices
  o Use choices that are acceptable to you
  o Choices should be real choices (water or nothing is not a real choice)
  o State choice and provide time for follow through
• Unless you expect a response, thoughtful or otherwise, avoid questions.
  o The best question is, “What behavior is expected right now?”
    The best follow up request is, “Please show me that behavior.”
• Use pre-corrections and reminders prior to difficult situations.
• Engage student in problem solving
  o Respectfully and collaboratively devise plan
  o Have student suggest effective ways to remind, redirect, approach
• Have student make plan, list alternatives, or benefits to appropriate behavior
• Use restitution.
  o Collaboratively plan, you offer several choices, or have student suggest alternatives.
  o Have victim decide on what the offender will do.
• Prevent and analyze function
  o Modify or remove triggers
  o Predict and head off misbehavior
  o Mood enhancement
  o Make sure replacement behaviors serve same function
  o Add triggers for appropriate behavior
• Proximity control
• Increased supervision
  o Assigned seats
  o In-school. Many schools lack an appropriate place for this.
  o Staff proximity
  o Parent shadowing
• Assign buddy
• Concluding Thoughts:
  o Keep it private
  o Avoid inadvertently reinforcing the behavior we want to stop
  o Remember that consequences do not have to happen immediately.
  o Always respond to inappropriate behavior in a business-like and matter-of-fact manner.
  o Focus on one main behavior at a time.
  o Stopping behavior is often enough—they don’t need to burn at the stake too.
  o Avoid responses that escalate the behavior (see a & c above)