

Aligning Corrections to Core Values

Aligning correction procedures to core values supports students in building a deeper schema and understanding of those values. It helps shift correction from solely a punishment tool to a more instructional one. Correction procedures begin with prompting for desired behavior. Staff should anticipate challenging behaviors for a given task/setting and provide precorrection in advance. These include stating expectations and asking questions like those below:

Precorrection of Core Values

Safe

- How will we keep our bodies safe during _____?
- What does our body need to look like during this activity?
- What would safe behavior look like/sound like?

Respectful

- How can you use respectful words to express how you are feeling?
- What does it look like to show listening skills?
- What does collaborative discussion sound like?

Responsible

- What materials do you need out to be a responsible learner?
- What would showing good effort look like/sound like?
- What is the responsible choice in order to accomplish this task?

After challenging behavior is presented, prompting questions may be utilized again or staff should use verbal redirection with reference to the core values. For example, instead of telling a student to walk in the halls, a teacher corrects a student by saying, "It is **unsafe** to run in the halls. Please walk." Instead of asking a student to be quiet during class work a teacher corrects by saying, "Chatting to Sally is **not respectful** to others who are working. Please be quiet." Just a small change in language can have a large impact on understanding and performance.

Original Response	Response Aligned to Core Values
"You need to start bringing a pencil to class."	"Please be responsible and come to class with your supplies ready".
"We go down the slide, not up."	"It is unsafe to climb up the slide because another person may be sliding down."
"Stop teasing others."	"Use respectful words with your peers."
"Do not talk to your neighbor, this is independent work."	
"Don't throw trash on the floor."	
"No pushing in the hallways."	

Categorizing Challenging Behaviors

Responses to behavior should vary according to the severity of behaviors. Some behaviors are very minor and may only necessitate a small response, while other behaviors need an immediate response from additional personnel. In designing Tier 1 behavior systems, campuses should not only align related to challenging behaviors, but also the responses necessary according to the type of infraction. Below are descriptions of 4 categories of challenging behaviors.

<i>Minor Behaviors</i> Often Classroom/Staff Managed	<i>Major Behaviors</i> Often Office/Administrator Managed
<p>Non-Disruptive</p> <p>Behaviors do not interfere with other students' on-task behavior. If at least 80% of class is on task, then instruction should not be stopped to address behavior. Behavior can be addressed at a later time.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> Not completing work Out of seat Tardy</p>	<p>Escalated</p> <p>Behaviors are more extreme or non-compliant as the student is now responding emotionally. The student may need to be removed from the environment to regain control.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> Cursing at others Stealing items</p>
<p>Disruptive</p> <p>Behaviors pull other students off-task. Instruction will need to be paused to address the behavior to allow instruction to continue.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> Running in the classroom Calling out of turn</p>	<p>Crisis</p> <p>Behaviors cause emergency situations that may pose imminent danger to student or others. Support will need to come to the class to assist with the situation.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> Physical aggression towards others Self-harm</p>

An additional consideration when categorizing challenging behaviors is situational appropriateness. Some behaviors are socially acceptable in some environments while others are not accepted in any environments. Take for example the idea of horseplay and pushing among a group of friends. This behavior is often categorized as "disruptive" in the school setting but is accepted when playing in the neighborhood.

Correction Procedures

Replacing the Ladder with a Toolbox

Historically teachers implement a hierarchy of consequences (“the ladder”) in their classrooms. These hierarchies may be prominently posted, and in some case tied to a punitive tool such as a colored clip chart in primary or elementary settings. While widely used, these hierarchies can be problematic and undermine a framework for an instructional approach. Consider the following:

- Hierarchies of consequences imply that escalation of consequences will fix challenging behavior. Teachers adopt the mindset that the solution to misbehavior is harsher consequences rather than instruction and proactive approach.
- Hierarchies often become procedural barriers. Students and staff engage in power struggles over which “step” has (or has not) been completed, and it can become a point of contention between teachers and administrators.
- Hierarchies do not necessarily match behavior offense to the most appropriate response for that situation and may guide teachers to utilize ineffective strategies.

As a result of these factors, the Ground Work framework recommends shifting away from the philosophy of a ladder of consequences and to a more flexible “toolbox” approach. Developing a bank of responses for each category of behavior (non-disruptive, disruptive) provides teachers with the autonomy to choose the response that best fits the student, situation, frequency or other factors.

“I’ve come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.”

- Haim Ginot