AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

SUPPORT APPROACH IN AN URBAN PRESCHOOL SETTING

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation documents the process of planning and conducting an evaluation of a

positive behavior support (PBS) approach, which was aimed at reducing challenging

behaviors and increasing of prosocial behaviors among preschool students in an urban

public school setting. The program evaluation that was planned and conducted utilized

Maher's (2000) program planning and evaluation framework. The focus of the

dissertation was to follow through with evaluation of aspects of the PBS approach so that

useful evaluation information could be provided to the supervisors of the Office of Early

Childhood Education (OECE), with the intent of determining strong points of the

program and areas in need of improvement. Another important dissertation intent was to

provide a program evaluation plan that could be incorporated into the operational routine

of the OECE so that program evaluation could become an integral part of the program.

Furthermore, it was a basic contention of this dissertation that behavioral programs and

services in public schools, such as PBS, should be incorporated into organizational

routines and thereby be evaluated routinely so that informed judgments can be made

about the value of the program, which will subsequently contribute to program

development and improvement. This program evaluation was planned and conducted by

this investigator during the 2008-2009 academic year. For this evaluation of the

preschool PBS approach, four program evaluation questions were delineated in the

program evaluation plan. Results of a formative implementation of the program

evaluation plan revealed that teachers were generally satisfied with the PBS approach,

that the program was implemented most consistently in its earliest years of

implementation, that there was a discrepancy between teachers' self-assessment of their

skills and their ability to document the manifestation of these skills, and that professional

development and coaching were among the most helpful strategies for increasing

teachers' skills. Findings of the dissertation were that the evaluation plan is feasible, key

stakeholders found the evaluation information useful, and there was a desire to continue

to use the evaluation plan for ongoing evaluations of the PBS program.

Recommendations are offered for the development, improvement, and ongoing

evaluation of the PBS program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Overview

This chapter discusses the importance of evaluating positive behavior support

approaches in preschool programs. It also details the context in which the program

evaluation was conducted, which includes a review of the evolution of preschool

programming in New Jersey, the role of the New Jersey Department of Education

(NJDOE) in preschool programming, and information about the structure of the Local

Education Agency (LEA) in which the program evaluation was conducted. The chapter

concludes with a description of the dissertation task and delineates four program

evaluation questions.

Rationale for Evaluating a Positive Behavior Support Approach in a Preschool Program

The group of students most likely to be excluded from regular education programs

due to behavioral difficulties is preschoolers. Data collected as part of the National

Prekindergarten Study indicated that the expulsion rate for preschool students is 6.7 per

1000 prekindergarten children enrolled, a rate that is 3.2 times higher than the national

rate of expulsion for students at all other grade levels (Gilliam, 2005). This finding is

particularly disturbing since expulsion is simply a reactive approach to challenging

behaviors. It fails to teach preschool children the skills necessary to replace inappropriate behaviors. Moreover, many preschool children have not yet developed the cognitive ability to connect the reason for not being permitted in school with the problem behavior they exhibited. Collectively, this suggests that the need for worthwhile effective behavioral programs and services at the preschool level is even greater than the need for behavioral interventions in other grades.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) models are being used in school settings as a method of choice for reducing challenging behaviors and promoting prosocial behaviors. The PBS approach was originally developed as an alternative to aversive interventions for students exhibiting severe forms of aggression and self-injurious behaviors (Carr, 2007; Carr et al. 2002). PBS is now being used with a wide range of students across a variety of contexts.

Best practice models for implementing the PBS framework in schools are developing. Behavioral programs and services, such as PBS, used in schools should be evaluated so that judgments can be made about the value of the program, which will subsequently contribute to program development and improvement (Maher, 2000).

Dissertation Context

The purpose of the current program evaluation was to evaluate the implementation of a PBS approach for reducing challenging behaviors and promoting prosocial behaviors among preschool students in an Abbott preschool program in an urban public school district in New Jersey during the 2008-2009 academic year.

Abbott was the first named plaintiff in a landmark class action lawsuit that was filed in 1981 on behalf of urban children living in economically disadvantaged municipalities. The lawsuit claimed that school funding for the poorest public school districts was unconstitutional in comparison to the funding received by wealthier suburban school districts and that schoolchildren in the poorest public school districts were not receiving a thorough and efficient education. The criterion that was established by the New Jersey State Supreme Court to determine if students living in poorer districts were receiving a constitutionally guaranteed public education was whether or not they were mastering the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards to the same degree as students in wealthier suburban districts. After a series of New Jersey Supreme Court Rulings, 28 public school districts were identified as "Abbott" districts. By 2004, three more public school districts were so designated.

As a result of the New Jersey Supreme Court Abbott decisions, new initiatives have emerged to remedy the lack of parity between wealthy suburban and poorer urban public school districts. In 1997, one of the first important Abbott rulings mandated that Abbott public school districts receive state funding that provides them with the same per-pupil operating budget as found among the state's wealthiest public school districts. In 1998, the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to provide universal high quality preschool programs for all three- and four-year-old children residing in Abbott school districts. The Court defined basic standards for high quality preschool, which included a certified teacher and an assistant teacher for each classroom, a maximum class size of 15 students, a developmentally appropriate curriculum, and adequate facilities.

Most recently, the New Jersey School Funding Reform Act of 2008 expanded the mandate for high quality preschool programming. Under this School Funding Reform Act, all eligible at-risk three- and four-year-old children, regardless of the public school district in which they live, must be offered placement in a high quality preschool program at public expense (NJDOE, 2008a). Children are considered at-risk as defined by income eligibility. This means that every public school district in New Jersey must offer a high quality preschool program even if only one child living in the school district meets the family income eligibility requirements. As a result of these preschool expansion guidelines, public school districts that were once referred to as Abbott school districts, are now referred to as having "universal" preschool programs since *all* three- and four-year-old children residing in these districts are offered placement in a high quality preschool program. Other non-Abbott school districts are referred to as having "targeted" preschool programs since these school districts must only offer placement in a high quality preschool program to *targeted* children based on income eligibility requirements. The goal of these programs is to serve every eligible at-risk preschool child. No eligible child may be excluded from participation in a high quality preschool program for any reason including toilet training, immigration status, illness, or any other individual circumstance (NJDOE, 2008a).

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) of the NJDOE has programmatic responsibility for preschool through 3rd grade programs. The DECE is responsible for the development, implementation, and alignment of program components with a focus on standards, curricula, and assessment. The DECE oversees all preschool programming in the state. Accordingly, it has developed regulations for Elements of High

Quality Preschool Programs (NJDOE, 2008b) that are mandated to be followed by every

public school district. The DECE document describes the elements necessary for

implementing a high quality preschool program and includes specific guidelines for

eligibility, program planning, program staffing, curriculum and assessment, transition,

facilities, program evaluation, contracts with private providers and Head Start, fiscal

oversight, and appeals.

The DECE also produced Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines (NJDOE,

2008a). Together these documents provide guidance to school districts in the planning and

implementation of high quality preschool programs. Each school district is mandated to

have a preschool program that is driven by research-based best practices, and the plans

must be updated annually. Preschool programs may be provided by a mix of in-district,

private provider, and local Head Start classrooms. State funded preschool programs must

include all of the major features as outlined in the Elements of High Quality Preschool

Programs. The overall purpose of preschool programming for all eligible three- and four-

year-old children is to close the achievement gap between children of families with lower

income and higher income levels.

Each Local Education Agency (LEA) has a district level Office of Early

Childhood Education (OECE) to oversee district level preschool programming. The

anonymity of the district in which this program evaluation was conducted must be

maintained. For the purposes of this dissertation, therefore, the LEA district level office

will be referred to as the OECE. The OECE in which this program evaluation was

conducted is managed by two Supervisors of Early Childhood Education. The primary

responsibilities of the supervisors are to develop and implement the preschool five-year

plan, oversee the budget and coordination of services, and supervise administrative and OECE staff. Per NJDOE guidelines, the OECE staff includes a number of specialized positions, each of which will be reviewed below.

The fiscal specialist is required to have auditing, budgeting, and accounting experience. She reports to the supervisors of the OECE as well as to the district level School Business Administrator. The fiscal specialist's responsibilities include financial management assistance to private providers, compliance monitoring, tracking and reporting of teacher certification, reviewing and expediting adjustments to quarterly expenditure reports, and providing assistance with fiscal corrective action plans in response to audits.

One master teacher is budgeted for a maximum of every 20 classrooms. In districts, however, that support students who are English Language Learners (ELL) the ratio is reduced to one master teacher for every 15 classrooms. The ratio for master teachers to classrooms is further adjusted based upon the level of classroom teacher certification and the number of years of classroom teacher experience. As a result of these guidelines, the OECE has six master teachers. Master teachers are required to have three to five years of teaching experience in preschool programs. The primary roles of the master teacher are to provide modeling, coaching, and informal observations of classroom teachers with the aim of providing feedback. The master teachers are also responsible for assisting with the implementation of the curriculum selected by the OECE, providing staff development, and implementing performance-based assessment. In the OECE, one master teacher is the bilingual specialist and another master teacher is the inclusion specialist.

The OECE is also required to have one school nurse for every 300 preschool students. School nurses are responsible for conducting vision, hearing, dental, height, and weight screenings upon entry into the program. Other responsibilities include maintaining and following up on preschool student health records, communicating with parents and staff about health issues, and assisting parents with locating medical resources. The OECE staffs four school nurses to serve the students in the district preschool program.

Each district OECE is required to have one Community Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS). The CPIS is responsible for coordinating the Early Childhood Advisory Council, conducting needs assessments regarding families, and coordinating work with other social services personnel. The Early Childhood Advisory Council reviews preschool program implementation and supports transition activities as children move from preschool through third grade.

State funded early childhood programs are also required to establish one four-member Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) for every 750 preschool students enrolled in the preschool program. The PIRT may include a combination of psychologists, learning disabilities teacher consultants, social workers, and speech language specialists. The PIRT in the OECE consists of one psychologist, one learning disabilities teacher consultant, three social workers, and two part-time speech and language specialists. The PIRT is required to use a consultation model to assist staff with modifying children's challenging behaviors so that all preschoolers may successfully participate in the general education classroom. PIRT responsibilities include, but are not limited to, providing written strategies to teachers, modeling, providing consultation to

teachers, parents, administrators, and master teachers, and coordinating screenings aimed at identifying preschool children at-risk for future school difficulties. The overarching aim of the PIRT is to reduce referrals to the Child Study Team (CST) and increase classroom teachers' ability to support students with special needs in the general education classroom. Classroom teachers may request assistance from the PIRT for support regarding specific children. The PIRT in the OECE receives 220-240 such requests each academic year.

As mandated by the DECE, one of the main functions of the PIRT is to provide support to teachers, staff, and administrators on the implementation of the PBS approach as a means of building teachers' skills for addressing the needs of students with challenging behaviors. This support is offered in a number of modalities including professional development on the PBS approach, observing teacher-student interactions in the classroom, collaborating with parents and teachers, providing written strategies as needed, modeling and coaching on the use of suggested strategies, and developing and monitoring behavior support plans for individual children. In order to develop the abilities of PIRT members to provide training and support on the PBS approach, the DECE provided 14 days of training on the PBS approach for all PIRT members statewide (10 days in 2003-2004 and an additional 4 days in 2004-2005).

In the five years that the PIRT has been providing support to teachers, staff, and administrators on PBS, no evaluation of the PBS program has been conducted. The NJDOE requires every public school district providing preschool programs to participate in the Self Assessment and Validation System (SAVS) in an effort to maintain the quality of the preschool programs. Components of the SAVS were designed by the NJDOE and

are aimed to broadly assess how the components of the program work together to support each child's learning and development (NJDOE, 2008a). The results of the SAVS are used to inform the five-year preschool program improvement plan and annual updates (NJDOE, 2008b), which must identify areas in need of improvement, steps to be taken for improvement, and timelines for such improvements. Although the SAVS includes a set of criteria for assessing intervention and support services provided by the PIRT, it fails to include any criteria for evaluating the extent to which the PBS approach is impacting upon the manner in which teachers are able to address the needs of children exhibiting challenging behaviors.

According to Maher (2000), a sound program evaluation is one that is practical, useful, proper, and technically defensible. The purpose of an evaluation of a human services program is to enable judgments to be made about the value of the program which will contribute to program development and improvement. A significant portion of resources has been devoted toward implementing the PBS program in the OECE, as well as in a number of other districts across New Jersey and the nation. It was important to evaluate the effectiveness of the PBS program in order to determine which components of the approach were successful and which were in need of improvement so that relevant stakeholders could make decisions about the merit and worth of the program based on accurate information. Additionally, information about the effectiveness of the PBS program will add to the growing body of literature examining the value of the PBS approach. Furthermore, the process by which the PBS program was evaluated was assessed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation process, which will serve to strengthen future program evaluations in public school settings.

Dissertation Task

One supervisor of the OECE was interested in knowing if the PBS program increased teachers' abilities for addressing the needs of preschool children exhibiting challenging behaviors. In order to accomplish this task, the main focus of this dissertation was the application of the program evaluation process as described by Maher (2000). The Evaluation Phase is one of four phases in Maher's framework for program planning and evaluation. The other phases of the framework are the Clarification Phase, the Design Phase, and the Implementation Phase, each of which will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

As the school psychologist on the PIRT, the current investigator was a participant observer, which provided the opportunity to have direct knowledge of the PBS implementation process and the daily workings of the OECE. In collaboration with one OECE supervisor, the investigator was able to place the PBS program into an evaluable form, which is one of the early steps in the Evaluation Phase of Maher's (2000) Program Planning and Evaluation framework. It is important to place a program that is being evaluated into an evaluable form so that there will be clarity for all stakeholders regarding what will actually be evaluated. This will also be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

The current investigator also collaborated with the supervisor in the OECE and other PIRT members to develop a program evaluation plan for the PBS program in accordance with the framework presented by Maher (2000). Accordingly, four program evaluation questions were developed:

1. Who has participated in the PBS approach?

2. How has the PBS approach been implemented?

3. What were the reactions of preschool teachers to the PBS approach in terms of strengths, adequacies, and areas for improvement?

4. To what extent were the goals of the PBS program attained?

In order to successfully address these questions, and to make sound judgments about the value of the PBS program, the current investigator and other key stakeholders engaged in a series of sequential, interrelated, and reflexive activities as outlined by Maher (2000). Accordingly, specific program evaluation protocols were developed that detailed the program evaluation questions, data collection variables, data collection methods, instruments and procedures, methods and procedures for data analysis, and guidelines for communication and use of evaluation information. Evaluation data were collected via two instruments designed specifically for evaluation of the PBS program. The first was a teacher's questionnaire and the second was a classroom observation checklist. Each instrument was designed by the current investigator to capture variables that are specific to the PBS program. A permanent product review was also conducted in order to determine whether and to what extent there was a relationship between the PBS program and the degree to which teachers requested assistance with addressing challenging behaviors and promoting positive behaviors in the classroom. Program evaluation questions, as well as corresponding program evaluation protocols, will be reviewed in Chapter IV. The evaluation of the PBS program and consequent results will

be discussed in Chapter V. Chapter VI will review the evaluation of the program

evaluation. Chapter VII will present conclusions and recommendations.

Summary

It is important to evaluate PBS approaches used in public preschool programs so

that judgments can be made about the value of the program, which will subsequently

contribute to continued program development and improvement (Maher, 2000). This is

particularly important as best practice models continue to emerge. One supervisor in the

OECE was interested in knowing if the PBS program contributed to teachers' abilities for

addressing the needs of preschoolers exhibiting challenging behaviors. Four program

evaluation questions were developed in accordance with the program evaluation

framework presented by Maher (2000). A series of sequential, interrelated, and reflexive

activities were conducted in an effort to address the program evaluation questions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The PIRT members of the OECE implemented the PBS program mandated by the NJDOE Early Childhood Office to assist teachers with addressing the needs of children with challenging behaviors. To facilitate the application of PBS in preschool programs, the Division of Early Childhood Education provided 14 days of training on the PBS approach for PIRT members (10 days in 2003-2004 and an additional 4 days in 2004-2005). PIRT members were expected to train teachers and other early childhood staff on the PBS approach and to facilitate implementation of the program.

The task of this dissertation was to evaluate the PBS approach in the OECE so that sound judgments about the value of the program can be made, which will subsequently contribute to the development and continuous improvement of the program. The purpose of the current chapter is to review the literature relevant to the dissertation. Sections of this chapter include the following: History of Approaches to Addressing Behavior Problems in Schools; Positive Behavior Supports; Application of Positive Behavior Supports; Behavior Problems of Preschool Children; Positive Behavior Support

Model for Preschool Programs; and Evaluating Positive Behavior Supports in Preschool Programs.

The first section, History of Approaches for Addressing Problem Behaviors in Schools, reviews the history of school discipline practices and provides a timeline for the development of the PBS approach. This section is relevant to the dissertation because it offers the reader additional insight into the context in which the development of PBS occurred, as well as an explanation as to why innovative frameworks for addressing problem behaviors in schools were needed.

The second section, Positive Behavior Supports, describes the aims of PBS and the specifics of how PBS emerged. A widely accepted framework for delivering PBS in schools is also presented. This section is relevant to the dissertation because it is important to understand the foundation upon which behavior support initiatives are based. The reader must have a general understanding of the levels of intervention that are a part of the PBS framework.

The Application of Positive Behavior Supports is the third section of this chapter. This section reviews the elements of PBS as they are applied in schools and alternate settings. Most of the current literature on PBS is focused on implementation at school age grade levels (kindergarten through high school) and not on preschool. This discussion, therefore, is relevant to the dissertation because it lays the groundwork for expanding the application of PBS to early education programs.

The fourth section, Behavior Problems of Preschool Children, discusses the prevalence and impact of preschool problem behaviors. There is also a review of ten summary statements reflecting the current knowledge level of preschool behavior

problems. This supports the task of the dissertation because it underscores the need to implement early intervention behavioral programs in early childhood settings.

The fifth section of the literature review is the Positive Behavior Support Model for Preschool Programs. The PBS framework mandated for use in early childhood programs by the NJDOE is presented and each level of support in the framework is reviewed in this section. An understanding of this particular PBS model is relevant to the dissertation because this is the model that is being evaluated in the dissertation task.

The final section of this chapter, Evaluating Positive Behavior Supports in Preschool Programs, presents examples of case studies that support the use of the PBS approach with young children. The strengths and limitations of specific tools designed for evaluating PBS in preschool programs are also discussed. This is a relevant aspect of the dissertation since it provides an underlying basis for understanding the need to further evaluate PBS programs in early childhood settings. It provides the foundation for selecting an evaluation approach which may extend the literature in this area.

History of Approaches for Addressing Problem Behaviors in Schools

Teachers have been faced with students exhibiting problem behaviors since the days of the one room schoolhouse. Numerous anecdotal reports of children standing in corners and wearing dunce caps have been shared by generations of grandparents. Since the turn of the last century, however, the number and intensity of discipline problems in schools has increased dramatically. The days in which educators' biggest concerns were of placing frogs in the teacher's water glass or dipping pig-tails in ink wells are gone. School discipline problems appear in the news on an all too frequent basis, citing

physical violence, property damage, homicide, and suicide. Today, school violence is so prevalent that there have even been incidents of preschoolers making serious violent threats.

As a result of the increase in intensity and frequency of serious behavior problems, school districts have developed comprehensive discipline procedures that include catching future instances of problem behaviors via close monitoring, restating rules and consequences for undesirable behaviors, having a continuum of consequences for repeat offenders, exercising consistency in how staff responds to problem behaviors, and emphasizing final consequences to inhibit future problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002a).

When the school discipline approaches listed above fail to reduce serious challenging behaviors, and the number and intensity of problem behaviors continue to rise, school districts have reacted by initiating zero tolerance policies, hiring security guards, installing surveillance cameras and metal detectors, mandating school uniforms, implementing detention, suspension, and expulsion procedures, and assigning alternative school placements (Sugai & Horner, 2002a).

These discipline practices have been based on an underlying assumption that the behavior problems displayed by students are discrete; each instance of problem behavior is viewed and addressed as a separate, unrelated issue. Such practices fail to consider the context in which the behaviors occur, and fail to incorporate a systems level approach for reducing challenging behaviors. Moreover, these disciplinary interventions fail to teach students new skills for dealing with intense emotional situations that trigger undesirable behavior outbursts.

During the period of the 1960s through the 1980s, strategies for behavior change were based on positivistic research grounded in operant learning punishment principles. The use of aversive techniques was widely accepted in treating individuals with severe disabilities and severe behavior problems (Lovaas, Schaeffer, & Simmons, 1965 as cited in Dunlap, Sailor, Horner, & Sugai, 2009). However, when the movement toward deinstitutionalization appeared in the 1980s, a mismatch between the use of aversive measures to reduce challenging behaviors and the moral values of the community emerged. By the early 1980s, positivistic research began to examine the secondary effects of aversive treatment such as outbursts, anxiety, and avoidance (Favell & Rincover, 1983 as cited in Dunlap et al., 2009).

The 1980s saw a paradigm shift in the treatment of severely challenging behaviors. Not only were aversive treatments thought to be morally distasteful, but there was also recognition that in order to increase quality of life, challenging behaviors must not only be reduced, but positive behaviors must also be increased. Research began to focus on *why* problem behaviors occurred, which led to applied behavior analysis (ABA) and functional analysis of behaviors (Dunlap et al., 2009). Rather than an emphasis on punishment to alter problem behaviors, an emphasis on the need for preventative practices emerged. By 1987, the United States Department of Education funded research for non-aversive behavior interventions, which led to the coining of a new term, positive behavior support (PBS). PBS was focused on addressing severe disabilities and behaviors, and was based on research regarding applied behavior analysis from the early 1980s. By the early 1990s, the application of PBS expanded to not only the treatment of

individuals with severe disabilities and behaviors, but it was also applied to the treatment of emotionally and behaviorally disturbed individuals.

The event that spiraled PBS into school-based interventions was the 1997 Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which required the use of functional behavioral analysis (FBA) and the use of positive interventions as behavioral change strategies (Sugai and Horner, 2002b; Turnbull, Wilcox, Stowe, and Turnbull, 2001). As a result of this mandate, there was so much interest in and research on PBS that in 1999 a new peer reviewed publication emerged, the Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, PBS was applied to early intervention with young children (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, and Strain, 2003). Sugai and Horner (2002a) introduced a now widely accepted, multi-tiered framework for PBS. The application of PBS continued to expand. In 2001, the NJDOE Division of Early Childhood Education mandated the use of PBS in all Abbott preschool programs (NJDOE, 2001). In 2003, the Association for Positive Behavior Support, which focused on promoting research strategies, person-centered values, and systems change to increase quality of life and decrease problem behaviors, was founded.

The increase in interest and use of PBS continued to soar. The requirements to use FBA and PBS that were introduced in IDEA 1997 remained in IDEA 2004 (Office of Special Education Programs, OSEP, 2009). As part of the IDEA initiative, each state was required to establish a PBS technical assistance center and develop a website to support PBS implementation throughout school districts in their state. These technical assistance centers and websites are funded by IDEA 2004. Most recently, the NJDOE Preschool Program and Implementation Guidelines (NJDOE, 2008a) strengthened the mandate for

the use of PBS by citing a specific PBS model: the Social Emotional Teaching Pyramid

Model proposed by Fox, Jack, & Broyles (2005).   This PBS model will be reviewed later

in this chapter.

Positive Behavior Supports

        The aim of PBS is to decrease problem behaviors and increase positive behaviors

in order to influence the quality of life for individuals with behavioral disabilities or other

disorders that impact behavior (Carr, 2007; Carr, et al. 2002; Office of Special Education

Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports,

2009). PBS describes an approach for meeting the needs of children exhibiting

challenging behaviors that examines the purpose of the behavior and focuses on teaching

new skills to replace challenging behaviors. PBS originally focused on the development

of behavior support plans to help children and adults who exhibited challenging behavior.

More recently, PBS has been implemented at school-wide and program-wide levels. In

these settings, all school staff work together to teach behavioral expectations and social

skills, and to provide individualized interventions to those students most at risk for future

problems (Fox, et al., 2005).

        Carr and colleagues highlighted that PBS emerged from three major areas. First,

applied behavior analysis provided basic terminology and concepts that have contributed

to the formulation of PBS such as stimulus-response, setting events, reinforcing

consequences, shaping, and prompting. Applied behavior analysis also gave rise to

functional analysis, which serves to identify the purpose of behaviors via specific

assessment procedures. Second, the normalization/inclusion movement that emerged

over the past 150 years (Carr et al., 2002) extended rights to individuals and groups who have been marginalized by mainstream society.   This has led to current educational practices of including students with disabilities with regular education students rather than segregating them into self-contained special education classrooms. Third, PBS looks to person-centered values to inform strategies that serve to "enhance personal dignity and opportunities for choice" (p. 6, Carr et al., 2002).

Carr and colleagues (2002) outlined how applied behavior analysis, the normalization/inclusion movement, and person-centered values have given birth to PBS as a new, but still evolving applied science. It is the manner in which the critical features of PBS are integrated, however, that make PBS a unique approach to addressing challenging behaviors. PBS offers a comprehensive lifestyle change for behaviorally challenged individuals and their families, via a life-span perspective rather than a short-term approach. It also offers ecological validity and meaningful application in real-world settings. The application of PBS is a collaborative process involving participants from different systems in conjunction with interventions that are practical and desirable for stakeholders. Further, PBS interventions are proactive rather than reactive. Another factor that is unique to PBS as a behavioral intervention approach is that participants accept alternate scientific practices such as qualitative measures, self-reports, and interviews rather than requiring traditional experimental research methods. Moreover, PBS embraces multiple theoretical perspectives from ecological, environmental, and community psychology (Carr, et al., 2002).

Sugai and Horner (2002a) developed a continuum of behavior supports based on a public health and disease prevention model. The PBS continuum was designed to

provide supports based on the relative needs of the students. In this framework, primary prevention refers to school- or classroom-wide supports for all students to reduce the likelihood of the development of problem behaviors. According to Sugai and Horner, primary prevention may include an emphasis on teaching appropriate behaviors and teaching practices that boost academic success, and may prevent problem behaviors among 80% of students. Secondary prevention will be needed by 15% of students and is aimed at reducing risk factors, such as poverty, and strengthening protective factors, such as additional school supports and family assistance. Tertiary prevention is aimed at the remaining 5% of students with high risk for problem behaviors and involves individualized systems supports.

The Application of Positive Behavior Supports

One focus of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was on the use of PBS and functional behavior assessments (FBA) for students with disabilities. IDEA also required that schools apply the PBS approach to students who have not already been identified as eligible for special education if the school had knowledge that the student is at risk for needing special education services due to their behaviors (IDEA, 1997). The basis of such knowledge can be from parent or teacher reports, or if the behavior of the student has demonstrated the need. This broad basis underscored the need for schools to adopt the PBS approach for all students, which resulted in the development of school-wide PBS (SWPBS; Sugai & Horner, 2002a).

Sugai and Horner (2002a) identified four key elements of PBS: outcomes defined and valued by stakeholders; research validated practices; data-driven decision making;

and a process level perspective (committees, families, administrative leadership, etc.). To make these elements more manageable and behavioral changes more sustainable, Sugai and Horner emphasized the need to organize a multi-systems approach that includes school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student perspectives. In the PBS framework, behavior supports are placed on a continuum based upon the needs of the student, and a model of prevention is embraced by all stakeholders and applied to all students. This model points toward examining how the school functions as a whole, rather than looking to classroom management styles of one teacher or the behavior of one student. Accordingly, Sugai and Horner (2002a) outlined a five-step process for implementing SWPBS. These steps are (1) Establish a school leadership team; (2) Secure school-wide supports from staff; (3) Develop data-based action plans; (4) Arrange for high fidelity of implementation; and (5) Conduct formative data-based monitoring.

In 2002, there were about 500 schools across the nation implementing SWPBS (Sugai & Horner, 2002a). By 2008, more than 5300 schools were implementing SWPBS (Frey, Lingo, & Nelson, 2008). A preponderance of case-based literature has indicated general success for SWPBS. For example, at an elementary school in Oregon, two third grade boys with serious behavior problems (i.e. hitting, self-injurious behavior, eating staples, poking others with scissors, running away from school) and significant disabilities (i.e., emotionally disturbed, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder) exhibited significant reductions in problem behaviors when secondary tier interventions were used to support *all* third grade students in addition to the individualized behavior support plans that were developed specifically for these boys (Freeman, et al., 2006).

At an elementary school in Illinois, SWPBS was credited with preventing another 3rd grade boy from being classified as a student with a disability (Freeman, et al., 2006). In this case, the boy was exhibiting a variety of problem behaviors and academic struggles. The support team developed a behavior support plan that closely involved family input and targeted teaching and reinforcing social and academic skills. A Child Study Team (CST) evaluation that was initiated as part of the support process determined that the child had a learning disability. He was not classified, however, because the teacher and the CST recognized that he was making adequate progress with the new supports already in place as a result of SWPBS.

Not only has SWPBS been shown to be effective in addressing the behavioral needs of students, it has also been credited with improving skills among teachers and support personnel. For example, in an urban school district in Southern California, behavior support plans were demonstrated to be more technically sound in schools where SWPBS was being implemented in comparison to schools that were not implementing SWPBS (Medley, Little, & Akin-Little, 2007). In still another example, a behavioral intervention plan for recess, which was embedded in SWPBS, not only resulted in reduced problem behaviors among children, but also increased the level of teacher supervision (Franzen & Kamps, 2008). SWPBS has also been shown to have favorable outcomes in alternate settings, having been credited with increasing positive behaviors in a correctional facility for male juvenile offenders (Feinstein, 2003).

Behavior Problems of Preschool Children

Aggression and other behavioral problems are escalating among preschool children (Campbell, 2002). As many as 25% of preschool children engage in behaviors that are considered disruptive, dangerous, aggressive, and/or sometimes disgusting (Webster-Stratton, 1999). Children living in poverty are especially at-risk for exhibiting challenging behaviors (Qi & Kaiser, 2003). Children in Head Start classrooms exhibited externalizing problem behaviors once every six minutes, which translated to approximately 36 episodes of problem behaviors per hour in each classroom (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997). This helps to explain why the rate of expulsion from school among preschool children is higher than that of any other age group (Gilliam, 2005). Behaviors such as noncompliance, being overactive, and fighting with peers, however, are very common among preschool children (Campbell, 2002), and do not necessarily suggest psychological disturbance. Certain behaviors are a result of typical child development processes and may increase or decrease with age. Nonetheless, within the context of a preschool classroom, many of these behaviors can be quite disturbing to adults, and may in fact pose threats to the safety and welfare of peers. Additionally, students engaging in these behaviors may also find themselves rejected by peers (Wood, Cowan, & Baker, 2002), which then may serve to exacerbate the behavior problems.

It is often difficult to distinguish between annoying behaviors that occur among typically developing preschool children and behaviors that indicate a more serious problem. One reason for this difficulty is that differing viewpoints of preschool behavior problems may be attributed to the observer. A parent or teacher may view noncompliance or fighting as serious behavior problems, while a psychologist may view

the same behaviors as developmentally appropriate within a given context. Campbell (2002) organized preschool behaviors into three categories: annoying behaviors, age-specific problems, and symptomatic problem behaviors. Annoying behaviors refer to behaviors typical for a specific age group that are a concern to some individuals. Age-specific problem behaviors refer to behaviors that are an exaggeration in the frequency and/or intensity of typical behaviors. These may or may not indicate a more serious problem. Symptomatic problem behaviors refer to behaviors that are most likely indicative of problems of clinical significance.

Assessing the severity or implications for future pathological disturbance of problem behaviors among preschool students is dependent on several factors (Campbell, 2002). First, behaviors must be considered within the context of what is known about child development. Most preschool age children will exhibit externalizing behaviors at one time or another. Observers must consider the frequency and intensity of these behaviors in comparison to same age peers in the same context. Second, the perceptions and interpretations that the observer brings to the situation will also determine how problematic the behavior is considered. These perceptions will also determine how a teacher will respond to the behavior. If a teacher views aggression as typical behavior for a three-year-old then it will not be cause for alarm, and it is more likely to be addressed in the present moment. The third factor that contributes to how behaviors of preschool children should be assessed is dependent on the level of family supports for child development (Campbell). Unrealistic parental expectations and demands may contribute to the development of inappropriate behaviors.

Although it is difficult to determine whether or not a particular behavior is indicative of future pathology, it is increasingly understood that persistent, intense challenging behaviors in preschool are associated with problems relating to peer acceptance, school adjustment, and general school success in later years (Campbell, 2002). Dunlap et al. (2006) synthesized the growing body of evidence pertaining to the presence, impact, prevention, and intervention of challenging behaviors in young children. They developed ten summary statements that reflect the state of current knowledge of preschool behavior problems based on a consensus of peer-reviewed descriptive, experimental, and quasi-experimental research. The ten summary statements correspond to three main categories: (1) Presence and impact of challenging behaviors; (2) Prevention of challenging behaviors; and (3) Intervention with challenging behaviors.

The first two summary statements refer to the presence and impact of challenging behaviors among young children:

> 1. When children with significant problems are neither identified in a timely way nor given appropriate education and treatment, their problems tend to be long lasting, requiring more intensive services and resources over time. Moreover, when the challenging behavior of young children is not addressed in an appropriate and timely way, the future likelihood increases for poor academic outcomes, peer rejection, adult mental health concerns, and adverse effects on their families, service providers, and their communities (Dunlap, et al., 2006, p. 32-33)

It is important to address behavior problems in preschool since longitudinal studies revealed that students with a history of severe behavior problems had the lowest grade point average and the highest high school drop-out rate (Tremblay, 2000). Moreover, behavior problems in early childhood are identified as the single best predictor of future serious behavior problems in adult life (Campbell, 2002).

2. "Although some systems and tools for early identification of children with challenging behaviors are available, the actual identification of these children and the provision of appropriate services are very low" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 34)

As noted earlier, this can be attributed to a variety of factors that confound the identification of children with problem behaviors (i.e. perceptions, developmental ranges). However, Dunlap et al. present several explanations for under-identification of young children with problem behaviors including lack of early behavior screening, inadequate behavioral health services, and possible biases against identifying children with behavioral challenges.

The next three summary statements presented by Dunlap et al. (2006) refer to the prevention of challenging behaviors.

3. "Children and their families who access mental health and physical care are less likely to have behavioral and social problems" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 35).

4. "Children who experience nurturing and positive parenting are more likely to have healthy relationships and reduced problem behavior" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 36).

Effective early intervention programs promote parenting skills and prevent abuse, thus

contributing to mental and physical health care, which can aid in preventing future

problem behaviors. The next summary statement regarding prevention of challenging

behaviors strongly relates to the dissertation.

    5. "Children who experience high quality early education environments and

    caregiver interactions are more likely to have better social competence outcomes

    and fewer behavioral problems" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 36).

As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, one foundational element to the

PBS approach is aimed at building positive relationships between teachers and students.

The need for positive relationships is grounded in longitudinal research that indicates that

teacher-child closeness in early years has a positive impact on prosocial skills and peer

interactions in later elementary grades (Dunlap et al., 2006).

    Each of the five remaining summary statements put forth by Dunlap et al. (2006)

concern interventions with challenging behaviors.

    6. "Interventions based on a functional assessment of the relation between the

    challenging behaviors and the child's environment are effective for reducing

    challenging behaviors of young children" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 37).

In the PBS approach, the use of functional assessments is indicated for students who

continue to exhibit challenging behaviors even after all other supports are in place. This

will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

    7. "Teaching procedures have been demonstrated to be effective in developing

    children's skills and reducing challenging behaviors" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 37).

Young children often lack the skills necessary to function within a classroom setting. They need direct instruction in social skills and language development in order to navigate the rules and expectations of a classroom environment. The PBS approach aligns with current research by advocating for teaching skills that encourage the replacement of inappropriate behaviors with prosocial behaviors.

8. "Interventions involving alterations to features of the child's activities and the child's social and physical environment have been demonstrated to reduce challenging behaviors" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 37).

This involves identifying the antecedents to the child's problem behaviors and altering the environment in such a way that the behavior is less likely to occur. These alterations can involve offering choices, embedding preferred activities into difficult ones, and considering the arrangement of the physical environment and scheduling of activities (Fox et al., 2003). The PBS framework addresses these alterations at the universal level of instruction.

9. "Multicomponent interventions implemented over time and across multiple relevant environments can produce durable, generalized increases in prosocial behavior and reductions in challenging behavior" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 38).

This summarizing statement regarding interventions for challenging behaviors among young children refers to the need to develop behavioral interventions that not only address antecedents and consequences, but also environmental arrangement, scheduling, and instructional modification throughout a variety of contexts such as classrooms, school hallways, playgrounds, and school cafeterias. The statement also reflects the need

for behavioral interventions to be persistent over time in order to produce sustainable changes in behavior.

> 10. "Family involvement in the planning and implementation of interventions facilitates durable reductions in challenging behaviors of young children" (Dunlap et al., 2006, p. 38).

Dunlap and colleagues (2006) indicated that the consensus of current research reflects the need to include the child's family. Numerous initiatives are in place to encourage and promote family involvement in preschool programs. As noted in the previous chapter, the NJDOE allocates funding for one parent community involvement specialist in each local office of early childhood education. Further, PBS has been adapted for use in training parents of toddlers and preschoolers. HOT DOCS (Armstrong, 2006) is based on the PBS framework and identifies parents as the main providers of intervention with trainers of the HOT DOCS program as helping partners.

The preponderance of the literature makes it clear that if left untreated, serious behavior problems in preschool are almost sure to get worse. Early intervention is the best hope for preventing escalation of behavior problems into older grades and adulthood. There also appears to be a variety of evidence-based practices that can be utilized to assist with the prevention and intervention of challenging behaviors among preschool children. These practices and interventions are most likely to occur in preschool programs. However, preschool teachers have reported that addressing challenging behaviors is the single greatest obstacle to providing quality preschool programs (Micklo, 1992 as cited in Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 1998). Helping teachers to set and

reinforce rules and routines may be critical for preventing challenging behaviors in preschool settings (Arnold et al.).

Since Dunlap et al. (2006) aptly point out that little research has focused on program procedures and systems that promote improved behaviors among young children, it seems imperative that proper program evaluations of school-based programs for addressing challenging behaviors occur with increased frequency. Given that problem behaviors among preschool children are so common, and that these behaviors may or may not be indicative of future pathology, it seems important that teachers and other adults responsible for the care of these students be prepared to appropriately address and manage the behaviors. A program evaluation that is practical, useful, proper, and technically defensible (Maher, 2000) will help identify components of school-based behavior intervention programs that are worthwhile and those that are in need of improvement, thus providing teachers and other stakeholders with guidance on how to best support the social and emotional development of young children.

Positive Behavior Support Model for Preschool Programs

Over the past two decades there has been an emphasis on getting young children ready for kindergarten via preschool programming. It is generally accepted that this includes basic academic readiness skills such as letter and number recognition. Unfortunately, most people fail to recognize the need to prepare young children for the social and emotional demands of school settings. As already noted, preschool children are expelled from school at a rate that is more than three times the rate of any other grade level (Gilliam, 2005). Moreover, there is a growing body of evidence indicating that

serious, persistent problem behaviors in preschool lead to future school failure and serious problem behaviors later in life (Campbell, 2002; Dunlap et al. 2006; Pierce, Ewing, & Campbell, 1999). Together, these facts underscore the need to address challenging behaviors among preschool children with the same intensity and purpose as addressing academic readiness skills.

The NJDOE Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines (2008) cites the PBS Teaching Pyramid model presented by Fox et al. (2005) to address the social emotional needs of preschool students. PIRT members throughout the state of New Jersey received 14 days of training on the PBS Teaching Pyramid (Fox et al., 2003) during the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 academic years. After the training, PIRT members were required to provide ongoing professional development on the PBS Teaching Pyramid for all district preschool staff and coordinate efforts for successful PBS implementation in the early childhood programs.

The Teaching Pyramid (Fox et al., 2003) was developed based on the public health model of promotion, prevention, and intervention and Sugai's & Horner's (2002a) three tiered PBS model (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009). It "defines the classroom practices needed to support the social emotional development of young children" (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009, p. 185). The Teaching Pyramid includes universal promotion, secondary prevention, and tertiary intervention levels with descriptions for teaching practices at each level of the pyramid. There are four levels of support on the PBS Teaching Pyramid. Each of the four levels of support is discussed below.

Building Positive Relationships. The first of two levels of support aimed at universal promotion is Building Positive Relationships. This refers to the need

to develop positive, supportive relationships among all relevant stakeholders: the teacher and the child, the teacher and the parents, the teacher and other teachers, and the teacher to other staff. Building Positive Relationships is viewed as the foundation for all other teaching practices (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009). Fox et al. (2003) point out that positive relationships with children increase the teacher's ability to positively influence the child's behavior. Even very young children notice when adults are responsive and caring. As a result, children are more likely to pay attention to what that teacher says, and they are more likely to behave in ways that increase the amount of positive attention from that teacher. Another benefit to developing positive, supportive relationships with children is that under these conditions children are more likely to develop a positive self-image, confidence, and a sense of security (Fox et al.). Some methods for building relationships with preschool children include engaging in play, greeting every child by name, having a conversation during lunch, and sending home positive notes (Fox et al.).

Classroom Preventative Practices. Classroom Preventative Practices is the second level of support aimed at universal promotion. At this level of intervention, consideration is made for the physical environment of the classroom. Teachers and other support personnel are encouraged to rearrange the physical environment with the aim of reducing the amount of wide-open space while also allowing for visual monitoring of all areas of the classroom. Also, at this level, teachers are encouraged to arrange the classroom schedule so that high energy activities are balanced with low energy activities, and quiet activities are balanced with noisier activities. The *Classroom Preventative Practices* level of the Teaching Pyramid also addresses the appropriateness and amount of materials in the classroom. Teachers should ensure that the quality and quantity of

materials in the classroom can meet the needs of the wide range of developmental stages of early childhood. Finally, at this level of the pyramid, teachers are also encouraged to clearly define and teach classroom rules and routines. Rules and routines that are consistently taught and followed make the environment more predictable for the child and are likely to result in a reduction of problem behaviors. Rules at the preschool classroom level should be quite simple, such as we use walking feet, we take turns, and we use soft touch. Other classroom preventative practices that teachers can implement include developing a sign-in method for students, creating waiting lists at highly desirable centers in the classroom (i.e. computer area), using visual support for line-up time, and providing warnings for transitions from one activity to another (i.e. five more minutes until clean-up).

Social Emotional Teaching Strategies. The secondary prevention level of the Teaching Pyramid is Social Emotional Teaching Strategies. This level is in place to address the needs of all preschool children for the development of appropriate social emotional skills. While some children learn social emotional skills via observational learning and adult guidance, many children require planned and intentional instruction to develop competencies with emotional regulation, problem solving, and friendship skills (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009).

The ability to regulate emotions is dependent upon first developing a vocabulary to identify feelings. Once children have the vocabulary to name feelings, they can be taught to recognize those feelings in themselves and in others. After feelings are recognized, children can be introduced to strategies that help regulate those feelings in appropriate ways. The goal is for young children to begin to control anger and impulses

as they are developmentally able. At this level of the Teaching Pyramid, young children

are also introduced to problem solving skills, which include recognizing that a problem

exists, determining some possible solutions, selecting the best solution, and carrying it

out. Developing competency in friendship skills includes the ability to take turns, enter a

play group, share, offer assistance, and give compliments. Effective methods to teach

these skills include introducing the concept, modeling, role-playing, rehearsing,

prompting, and providing feedback (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009).

Intensive Individualized Interventions. The tertiary intervention level of the

Teaching Pyramid is Intensive Individualized Interventions. This top level of the

pyramid is reserved for use with approximately 5% of children who will continue to

exhibit intense and persistent challenging behaviors even after all other supports are in

place. At this level, a FBA is conducted and a behavior support plan is developed, which

includes interventions designed to prevent the behavior from occurring, to teach new

skills, and to create changes in adult responses to behaviors. The interventions are

comprehensive, and for consistency, should be implemented across all settings. Behavior

specialists or consultants should be provided to assist the teacher and family during the

initial implementation (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009).

Evaluating Positive Behavior Supports In Preschool Programs

While there is generally little research on the application of PBS for preschool

populations in comparison to other grade levels, several case studies on the use of PBS

strategies with preschool age children are emerging. For example, individualized PBS

for preschool aged children with autism resulted in dramatic improvements in functional

behaviors for six children. Dunlap & Fox (1999) implemented individualized supports to assist families with children with autism. The children, all of whom were nonverbal, exhibited a variety of problem behaviors including severe tantrums, running away from adults, kicking, and head banging. The families were taught skills to promote long-term changes. Prevention strategies were implemented and replacement skills were taught to the children. Postintervention outcomes revealed reductions in tantrums and other problem behaviors for all six children. Moreover, the children developed the ability to play with family members, enroll in preschool, and improve communication via gestures and one-word utterances.

Another case study of a young child with autism was presented by Buschacher & Fox (2003). In this example, a comprehensive intervention plan based on the PBS approach was developed in collaboration with the child's family, school, speech therapist, and others involved in his daily routines to address tantrums that occurred in his home, community, school, and during private speech therapy. The behavior support plan included prevention strategies and new skills to be taught, as well as appropriate consequences such as praise or redirection as needed. Six months after the initial implementation of the behavior support plan, tantrums were described as minimal, the child was able to participate in routine community activities (shopping, beach, playground, etc.), and he participated in language therapy.

PBS was also applied to two students in a community preschool program (Duda et al., 2004). Results indicated that the children exhibited a reduction in problem behaviors and increased engagement in classroom activities. The fidelity of implementation of the behavior support plan was also evaluated. Structural supports, such as using specific

seating arrangements and establishing predictable routines were implemented with a higher degree of fidelity than interactional interventions such as child-directed praise.

One of the first program-wide implementations of the PBS approach in an early childhood program was in Kansas. It was established and assessed by Hemmeter, et al. (2007). In the first year of implementation, teachers received pretraining and support from a leadership team for development of behavior support plans. Additionally, three program-wide rules/expectations (we use walking feet, we take turns, we use gentle touch) were developed collaboratively with all stakeholders. In the second year, each teacher was provided with a PBS Tool Kit (a notebook of resources for easy access to support successful PBS implementation). Teachers were also given reinforcement by their directors, and they received ongoing support from their leadership teams. They were then able to share success stories via a weekly newsletter.

Outcomes of this program offer promise for other program-wide PBS initiatives in early childhood settings. By the end of the first year, teachers indicated that they had more confidence in dealing with challenging behaviors, thus relying on reduced levels of outside support. Additionally, a policy change was made that eliminated the use of time out as a behavioral intervention. At the end of the second year, there was a significant reduction in teacher requests for crisis intervention. This resulted in a shift in expenditures for the use of mental health consultants, with the focus moving from predominantly intervention-based efforts to predominantly prevention-based efforts. By the third year of the implementation of the PBS approach, only three requests were made by teachers for crisis intervention in comparison to nearly 50 similar requests prior to initiating PBS approach (Hemmeter et al., 2007).

Hemmeter et al. (2007) identified five factors that likely contributed to the success of the PBS approach in this Kansas program: (1) A strong leadership team; (2) Acknowledgement that the development of program-wide PBS takes time; (3) Recognition for teachers' commitment to the PBS approach; (4) Consultants with experience in behavior support; and (5) Including mental health consultants in development of the PBS program.

SWPBS and PBS for preschool populations appear to be a promising approach for reducing challenging behaviors and promoting positive outcomes for all students, educational staff, and schools. However, Sugai & Horner (2006) emphasized that additional research is required to determine which aspects of SWPBS account for reductions in challenging behaviors and sustainability and which are in need of improvement. Hemmeter et al. (2007) acknowledge that a more rigorous evaluation is necessary in order to establish program-wide PBS as an evidence-based practice.

Hemmeter and Fox (2006) developed, and are in the process of field testing, the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool Kit (TPOT). It is intended to assess the fidelity of implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in preschool classrooms. The TPOT consists of items that serve as indicators for teaching practices at each level of the pyramid. Items include measures for supporting children's play, providing feedback, examining adequacy of classroom materials, teaching social emotional skills, and developing individualized interventions. Administration of the TPOT includes an observation of the classroom and an interview with the teacher. While this tool is very promising for measuring outcomes of the use of the Teaching Pyramid, it does not appear to provide any information about which components of the implementation process of the Teaching

Pyramid were most valuable to teachers and which components may be in need of improvement.

Horner, Benedict, & Todd (2005, as cited in Benedict, Horner, & Squires, 2007) developed another instrument for evaluating PBS practices in preschool settings. The Preschool-wide Evaluation Tool (Pre-SET) was based on the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET), which was developed to evaluate universal and systems level PBS interventions in elementary and upper grades (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, et al., 2001, as cited in Horner et al., 2004). Universal and systems level items on the Pre-SET were adapted from the SET to be more applicable to early childhood settings. Unlike the SET, the Pre-SET also includes categories to measure secondary and tertiary interventions, as well as family involvement.

Benedict et al. (2007) used the Pre-SET to assess the impact of consultation on PBS implementation in four early childhood classrooms. Results indicated that there was an increase in percentage of the PBS features used by teachers after consultation, with the greatest changes occurring in acknowledging positive behaviors and classroom management. There were no changes in family involvement, monitoring and decision making, or county/state support. The authors made an attempt to measure changes in student behavior, but the overall problem behavior rates were low, and no discernable differences were evident between pre- and post-consultation. A measure of the teachers' perceptions of the PBS consultation was taken via a questionnaire. Generally, teachers indicated that the PBS consultation was "excellent" (Benedict et al., p. 186) and would recommend it to colleagues.

In addition to these program-wide evaluation tools, there is a limited but emerging body of literature that examines and discusses specific behavioral management strategies and components of PBS that relate to early childhood settings. For example, Stormont, Covington Smith, and Lewis (2007) found a positive relationship between the teachers' use of precorrection and praise and student behavior. Hiralall and Martens (1998) found that training preschool teachers on scripted instructional sequences had a positive effect on teacher and student behavior; half of the teachers maintained the use of an instructional sequence (obtaining eye contact, signaling, directions, modeling, praise, and redirectives) over a two month period and improvements in student behavior were maintained. Nordquist and Twardosz (1990) emphasized the use of environmental organization to prevent challenging behaviors in early childhood settings, indicating that physical and programmatic features of classrooms can influence the incidence of behavior problems. Neilson and McEvoy (2004) discussed the implications of functional behavior assessments for preschool children with an emphasis on the need to involve families.

The only process evaluation of a PBS program in an early childhood setting found in the literature was conducted by Frey, Faith, Elliott, and Royer (2006). They evaluated the implementation of universal level supports of a PBS model in a large Head Start program. Frey et al. presented two evaluation questions. First, they assessed the importance of the goals, procedures, and outcomes attributable to classroom management interventions from the perspective of classroom teachers and other key stakeholders. Second, they compared the differences in classroom environment between seven classrooms that received intervention and an equal number of comparison classrooms.

Teachers who received the intervention were provided with mental health consultants who facilitated collaborative efforts to design and implement a written preventative classroom management plan. Teachers were asked to complete a satisfaction survey and participate in a focus group. Items on the satisfaction survey were intended to gain teachers' perspectives of their input into the classroom management planning process, knowledge of the mental health consultants, the problem-solving planning process, and behavioral outcomes for their students. Independent observers used the Interaction subscale of the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised* (ECERS-R) to evaluate the classroom environment. Results of the survey indicated that teachers were very positive about the classroom management interventions, with collaboration rated the highest. No significant differences were found in classroom environments between classrooms that received interventions and those that did not. However, the sample size was too small to formulate any conclusions about the effects of the intervention.

As for all human services programs, the successful delivery of PBS programs in early childhood settings is dependent upon the extent to which they are planned, carried out, and modified (Maher & Bennett, 1984). A meaningful evaluation should start with an in-depth understanding of the program, an open discussion of the program quality, and the underlying values of the organization (Lee & Walsh, 2004). In public schools, consultants for program evaluation are encouraged to engage teachers and other stakeholders in the evaluation process so that the evaluation can have a meaningful impact on how programs are implemented and valued (Lee & Walsh). Evaluations that are purely outcome focused do little to identify program quality and fail to identify which components of the program contributed to outcomes.

The approach to the evaluation of human service programs presented by Maher (2000) is excellent for developing capacities of both novice and experienced evaluators to identify a problem and build relevant processes for program evaluation. Program evaluation is best conducted via a set of planned activities to assist with the development and improvement of services (Maher & Bennett, 1984). Evaluation of programs in schools has traditionally been informal (Maher & Bennett), with almost no attention paid to preschool programs until recently. Maher and Bennett (1984) advocate for a program planning and evaluation approach that promotes program improvements by making evaluation efforts more open, encouraging documentation so that recommendations for improvement can be communicated, and facilitating the review of such recommendations. The program planning and evaluation framework presented by Maher (2000) is well suited to the evaluation of PBS approaches in early childhood settings.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature relevant to the dissertation task. The actions to address behavior problems in schools have evolved from almost strictly punitive efforts to positive efforts. This paradigm shift began in special education as educators recognized the need to implement measures aimed at preventing challenging behaviors rather than using reactive approaches. The PBS framework for addressing challenging behaviors was placed at the center of behavioral change efforts after IDEA 1997 mandated the use of positive intervention strategies for supporting students with behavioral needs.

PBS offers a continuum of supports designed to meet the behavioral needs of all students. Use of the PBS framework is emerging at school-wide levels, where all staff work together to teach behavioral expectations and social skills. A number of case studies have indicated that the PBS approach not only aids in the reduction of challenging behaviors in students, but also improves teachers' skills for effectively addressing challenging behaviors.

While there has generally been a good deal of attention paid to the behavior problems of school-age students, the behavioral needs of preschool students have historically been neglected. During the past 20 years, however, attention paid to the behavioral needs of preschool students has increased. A consensus of literature has indicated that persistent, intense, challenging behaviors in preschool are associated with problems in later life (Campbell, 2002). In order to prevent these negative outcomes, preschool students need to experience high-quality early education programs where behavioral interventions are based on functional assessments and teaching practices develop prosocial skills (Dunlap et al., 2006).

The PBS Teaching Pyramid (Fox et al., 2005) was developed specifically to address the social-emotional and behavioral needs of young children. This model was selected by the NJDOE to be implemented in all public preschool programs. The Teaching Pyramid is aimed at reducing challenging behaviors and increasing prosocial behaviors. It is comprised of four levels: Building Positive Relationships, Classroom Preventative Practices, Social Emotional Teaching Practices, and Individualized Intensive Interventions.

PBS for preschool programs is in its infancy. Thus far, it has emerged almost exclusively from case-based literature that examines the outcomes of individual students. More recently, program-wide PBS efforts have gained attention. If the PBS approach, however, is to be successful and sustainable over time, and not simply another swing of the educational pendulum, research must be conducted to help identify which components of PBS are most useful for developing teachers' skills for addressing the social emotional and behavioral needs of preschool children with challenging behaviors. The program planning and evaluation framework presented by Maher (2000) was used to evaluate the PBS approach in the OECE, and is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

APPROACH TO PROGRAM EVALUATION

Overview

This chapter presents a description of the program evaluation framework

delineated by Maher (2000), which was used to evaluate the PBS program in the OECE,

with a focus on the 12 major activities of the Program Evaluation Phase. It also includes

a description of the PBS program, including important elements of the design of the

program. The final section of this chapter describes the organizational context in which

the evaluation plan was implemented.

The Program Evaluation Framework

The program planning and evaluation framework presented by Maher (2000)

consist of four phases: Clarification, Design, Implementation, and Evaluation. Together,

these four interrelated phases focus on the process of program planning and evaluation.

The purpose of focusing on the process of program planning and evaluation is to be able

to implement a program so that goals and needs of target populations can be met and

judgments about the merit of a program can be made. This chapter will briefly review

each phase of Maher's framework, with an emphasis on the evaluation phase, which was

the focus of the dissertation. For more information about Maher's program planning and evaluation approach please see *The Resource Guide for Planning and Evaluation of Human Services Programs* (Maher, 2000).

Clarification Phase

The purpose of the Clarification Phase, the first of the four phases of the program planning and evaluation process, is to develop a clear understanding of the current circumstances that are of concern to the client. This is accomplished by a series of sequential, interrelated set of activities that result in an understanding of the target population, their needs, and the context in which those needs are embedded. According to Maher (2000), a clear understanding of the present situation is necessary to obtain a controlled, predictable program planning and evaluation process, which will result in a program that has value for the target population. Once all activities of the Clarification Phase are completed, a written Clarification Report is developed for use by the consultant and relevant stakeholders.

Design Phase

The second phase of Maher's (2000) program planning and evaluation framework is the Design Phase. The purpose of the Design Phase is to provide a clear understanding of the program to be provided to the target population. According to Maher, a clear understanding of the design of the program is necessary so that sound judgments can later be made about how the program was implemented and the extent to which it added value to the target population. The Design Phase provides clarity about the purpose, goals, and

activities of the human services program. It also provides guidance to program implementers and administrators regarding how to proceed in a timely and economically responsible manner. Without a well-developed program design, there is a risk that implementors and other stakeholders will become disinterested in the program, which will result in a reduction of desired outcomes.

The Design Phase is based on the information obtained during the Clarification Phase. The four major activities of the Design Phase are to describe the program purpose and goals, consider program design alternatives, develop the program, and document the program design. These activities are sequential, interrelated, and reflexive. Each activity guides the next, and changes in one activity may result in changes to the next. A written Program Design Document directs the Implementation Phase and the Evaluation Phase.

Implementation Phase

The third major phase of Maher's (2000) program planning and evaluation framework is the Implementation Phase. The purpose of this phase is to ensure that the program is implemented as it was designed. Maher noted several reasons that the Implementation Phase is important. First, it is expected that the program will result in value for the target population if it is implemented as intended. Second, if the program is not implemented as designed there is a risk that worthwhile outcomes for the target population will be diminished. Third, when a program is implemented as designed there is a greater ability to make informed decisions about how to improve the program as it operates. Finally, proper documentation of the implementation of the program is necessary to determine how the program added value to the target population.

The major activities of the Implementation Phase are to review the program design, facilitate the program implementation, and monitor the program process. As in the Design Phase, each of these activities is sequential, interrelated, and reflexive.

Program Evaluation Phase

The last of the four major phases of Maher's (2000) program planning and evaluation framework is the Program Evaluation Phase, which was the focus of the dissertation. The purpose of the Program Evaluation Phase is to gather and analyze data so that sound judgments about the value of the program can be made. The Evaluation Phase is actually one of the elements of the Design Phase, and as such begins early in the process of program planning and evaluation. There are several reasons why the Evaluation Phase is very important (Maher). First, a sound program evaluation can assure that utilization of resources adds value to the target population. Second, a sound program evaluation can contribute to program development and improvement. Additionally, other program planning decisions, such as whether or not to expand the program, can only be made based on important information about the program's worth and how it was implemented. Moreover, a sound program evaluation that addresses external concerns such as those of boards of education and other entities, can contribute to continued funding for the program. Finally, a sound program evaluation can facilitate the involvement of key stakeholders for continued program improvement. Taken as a whole, a sound program evaluation needs to be developed and conducted so that the program can continue to operate, if appropriate, and it can be modified as needed to better meet the needs of the target population.

Maher (2000) emphasizes four qualities of a sound program evaluation: practicality, usefulness, propriety, and technical defensibility. First, a program evaluation plan is considered *practical* if it can be implemented without interfering with the daily activities and routines of the organization. Second, the program evaluation is considered *useful* if it assists the key stakeholders with making effective decisions about the program and its improvement. Third, a program evaluation is considered *proper* when it aligns with all ethical and legal standards. Finally, a program evaluation is *technically defensible* when the procedures, methods, and instruments can be justified and are reliable, valid, and accurate.

There are twelve major activities in the Program Evaluation Phase. As in the Design Phase and Implementation Phase, these activities are sequential, interrelated, and reflexive. Although they are intended to be conducted in order, it may be necessary to return to earlier activities so that adjustments can be made as deemed appropriate. The remainder of this section will briefly describe each of the twelve activities. For a comprehensive review of the steps, please see *The Resource Guide for Program Planning and Evaluation of Human Service Programs* (Maher, 2000).

1. Identify the Client

The first of the twelve activities is to identify the client for the evaluation of the program. Maher (2000) presents the following questions to consider when identifying the client. (1) Who is the individual within the organization that is directly responsible for the program design and implementation? (2) Who is the individual within the organization that is directly responsible for overseeing the program, and is also

functioning in an administrative capacity? (3) Who is the external individual, group, or agency that is interested in the design, implementation, and outcomes of the program? The answers to these questions will aid in the identification of the primary client and determine if there are multiple clients.

2. Determine the Client's Needs for Program Evaluation

Once the client is identified, a thorough discussion of the reasons for a program evaluation is warranted. A determination must be made as to whether or not the needs of the client can be met via a program evaluation. Maher (2000) indicated that the following reasons that contribute toward the importance of identifying the client's needs for program evaluation. First, clients are more likely to be involved in assuring that the evaluation is planned and conducted appropriately if they have clarified why they need a program evaluation.   Second, consultants and stakeholders are in a better position to decide whether and to what extent the needs of the client can be met via a program evaluation if the client has explicitly articulated those needs. Third, once the program evaluation needs of the client have been identified, it is possible to determine the client's level of understanding of and expectations for the program evaluation. There may also be other reasons for determining the client's needs for the program evaluation.

There are three tasks that assist with determining the client's needs for program evaluation. First, specify what the client wants to know about the program so that areas of concern regarding the program can be identified. The information that the client provides can be categorized into the *current state of affairs* and the *desired state of affairs* regarding who the target population is, how the program was implemented, and

what value was added to the target population. Next, pinpointing the reasons that the client wants knowledge about the program assists the consultant with determining whether the client can be assisted by a program evaluation. Last, it is important to assess how the client expects program evaluation information to be obtained. Clients that have prior experience with a sound program evaluation process are more likely to understand that the program evaluation process is a systemic process. Clients without sound program evaluation experience may have unrealistic expectations. In either case, assessing the client's program evaluation expectations will assist with working with the client.

3. Place the Program to be Evaluated into an Evaluable Form

In order for a sound program evaluation to occur, a human services program must be placed into an evaluable form. Often, a consultant will be asked to evaluate a program that has not been placed into a sound program design. In such instances, the consultant will need to work with the client to place the program into an evaluable form via the activities of the Design Phase (Maher, 2000) prior to engaging in any of the program evaluation activities.

An evaluable program reflects a program design that meets three criteria: clarity, compatibility, and development status. *Clarity* exists only to the extent to which written information regarding each element of the program design is understood by all relevant stakeholders. *Compatibility* exists only to the degree to which each program design element is consistent with other program design elements. *Development Status* refers to

the degree to which each program design element is developed for successful implementation.

Placing the program into an evaluable form may be time consuming, but it is very important for several reasons. A fundamental task of the program planning and evaluation process is to facilitate the continuous development and improvement of human service programs. This task cannot be accomplished without a program that is clearly understood by all stakeholders. Additionally, outcomes must not be considered in isolation, but rather in relation to the program. In order to made sound judgments about the program and the target population prior to and during the time that the program was implemented, the program must be in an evaluable form. Moreover, human service programs must be fully understood so that a determination can be made as to whether or not a program can and/or should be replicated. Finally, placing a program into an evaluable form is important because the designing and development of a program utilizes a range of resources. Given such an expenditure of resources, it is necessary to know what value the program is expected to bring to the target population so that these expectations can be used as a basis for the program evaluation.

4. Delineate Program Evaluation Questions

Program evaluation questions are questions about some element of the program's design, implementation, or results that will facilitate program planning and evaluation actions to be taken (Maher, 2000). These actions include making judgments about the following: the merit of the program for serving the needs of the target population; the worth of the program in adding value to the target population; the ability of the program

to be implemented as designed; and the program's contributions to the organization

(Maher). Similarly, these actions may also include making decisions about the following:

how to use the evaluation information to make revisions in the program design; whether

and to what extent the program can be replicated in other settings; whether elements of

the program should be eliminated; and whether the entire program should be terminated.

Several tasks can be carried out to delineate program evaluation questions. These tasks

are: specify what needs to be known about the program; generate a list of program

evaluation questions; and select the most important questions to be answered. Once the

final program evaluation questions are identified they should be placed into a SMART

program evaluation form. The acronym SMART (specific, measurable, answerable,

relevant, timeframed) refers to characteristics of human service program evaluation

questions that increase the likelihood that data will be gathered specifically relating to the

question that the stakeholders will use to take effective program planning and evaluation

actions (Maher). Each program evaluation question is placed into a Program Evaluation

Protocol Worksheet.

5. For Each Program Evaluation Question, Specify the Data Collection Variables

A data collection variable refers to some item or matter that needs to be measured

to assist with answering the program evaluation question (Maher, 2000). There are two

tasks that must be taken for each program evaluation question. First, a list of variables on

which data can be collected is generated. Second, each variable must be operationalized

so that clarity will be reached as to what types of data need to be collected. This in turn

will serve to guide decisions about methods, procedures, and instruments for data collection.

6. Describe the Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Procedures

The next step in the Program Evaluation Phase is to determine how data will be collected on each program question variable so that each question can be answered. Maher (2000) presents four tasks that need to be accomplished for each program evaluation question.

First, data collection variables for each question must be reviewed to identify the most important ones. Each program evaluation question must be considered separately, and then each variable is considered in relation to that question. A determination is made regarding the importance of each variable and whether or not data can be collected on each variable. It is possible that certain data collection variables are eliminated, and that further reflection would result in other data collections variables being added to the list. If the decision is made to add data collections variables to the list, they must be operationalized and placed on a Program Evaluation Protocol Worksheet.

Once the most important data collection variables are identified, decisions are made about the method and sources for data collection. The methods refer to the way in which data are collected and may include questionnaires, tests, permanent product review, rating scales, interviews, and observations. Data sources refer to the individual or group on which data will be generated and may include the target population, program personnel, files, records, or data bases, and other people.

The third task to be accomplished for each program evaluation question is to decide about the procedures for data collection for each variable. Procedures refer to when data are collected and whether or not a control group will be used, which will impact upon the data collection procedures selected. Once procedures for data collection have been identified, the final task is to select and/or develop instruments. In either circumstance, instruments should meet the following qualities: practicality, usefulness, propriety, and technical defensibility.

7. Describe the Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis

This activity is aimed at determining how to analyze the data that have been collected so that program evaluation questions can be answered. It is important to analyze and interpret the data in a systematic manner so that program evaluation questions can be answered in a way that informs the client and other relevant stakeholders. There are several tasks that will allow data to be analyzed and interpreted using practical and technically sound methods and procedures (Maher, 2000). These tasks include: selecting the unit of analysis; organizing and displaying the data; identifying frames of reference; and determining statistical procedures.

8. Specify Program Evaluation Personnel and Responsibilities

The eighth step in the Program Evaluation Phase is to identify the people who will be involved in the program evaluation and to clarify their roles and responsibilities relevant to the program evaluation. The purpose of the activity is to increase the likelihood that the program evaluation will occur as planned. There are several tasks that

must be completed for each program evaluation question, which will facilitate completion

of this step. These tasks are: identify the evaluation responsibilities and timelines;

determine the people who will be responsible; and discuss the timelines and

responsibilities with the designated people.

9. Delineate Guidelines for Communication and Use of Program Evaluation Information

      The ninth step in the Program Evaluation Phase is a major activity of the program

planning and evaluation process. During this activity, guidelines are developed regarding

how to communicate and use program evaluation information for program planning.

Delineating guidelines for communication and use of program evaluation information

increases the likelihood that program planning actions will contribute to the continuous

development and improvement of the program. *Communication* refers to conveying the

results of program evaluation to targeted audiences in an informative manner, which can

be through written or oral methods. The *use* of program evaluation information refers to

reviewing, interpreting, and making decisions about program planning actions. The

following tasks need to be completed for each program evaluation question: target the

audiences for receipt of evaluation information; specify the evaluation information to be

communicated; determine how to involve the audience in the use of evaluation

information; and pinpoint program planning actions (Maher, 2000).

10. Construct Program Evaluation Protocols

      During this activity, program evaluation protocols are developed and placed into a

written form as a program evaluation plan document. This activity is readily

accomplished via successful completion of the first nine activities, during which
information was placed onto respective Program Evaluation Protocol Worksheets for
each question.   The headings on the Program Evaluation Protocol Worksheet developed
by Maher (2000) are:

- Program Evaluation Question

- Data Collection Variables

- Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Procedures

- Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis

- Guidelines for Communication and Use of Program Evaluation Information

The following program evaluation plan format is presented by Maher (2000). It can be
used as a reference when there are questions about the program evaluation and how it
relates to program planning.

I. Overview of the Program Evaluation

A. Client and Client Information Needs

B. Timeframe of the Evaluation

II. Description of the Program that was Evaluated

III. List of Program Evaluation Questions

IV. Program Evaluation Protocols

Appendix A – Copies of Instruments

Appendix B – Professional Biographical Sketch of Consultant/Program Planning
and Evaluation Team (optional)

11. Implement the Program Evaluation

During this step, the program evaluation is implemented based on the information provided in the program evaluation protocols. The aim is to make sure that the process of the evaluation is controlled as expected based on the following indicators presented by Maher (2000) for each program evaluation question: data are collected on variables specified in the protocol; methods, procedures, and instruments designated in the protocol are used; data analysis and interpretation are based on the methods and procedures articulated in the protocol; and evaluation results are communicated to the target audiences and used by them for program planning. If it is necessary to modify the evaluation process and revise one or more protocols, a rational for such changes must be made clear.

12. Evaluate the Program Evaluation

Through this final step of the Program Evaluation Phase, the program evaluation that has been implemented is itself evaluated. This step is very important so that relevant stakeholders can determine how to improve future program evaluations as well as the entire program planning and evaluation process. Maher (2000) poses four questions that align with the four qualities of a sound human services program evaluation: practicality, utility, propriety, and technical defensibility. These questions are:

1. To what extent was the program evaluation conducted in a way that allowed for its successful accomplishment? (*Practicality*)

2. In what ways was the resulting program evaluation information helpful to people? Which people? (*Utility*)

3. Did the program evaluation occur in a way that adhered to legal strictures and ethical standards? (*Propriety*)

4. To what degree can the evaluation be justified with respect to matters of reliability and validity? (*Technical Defensibility*)

Description of the Program Design

The PBS program was already being implemented when it was decided to conduct

an evaluation of the program. In accordance with Maher's (2000) framework for

program planning and evaluation, it was important to place the program into an evaluable

form.   The consultant constructed the program design based on recollections as a

participant-observer, review of records, interviews with PIRT members, and meetings

with one of the OECE supervisors. After developing an initial program design document,

the consultant provided a copy to one PIRT member to obtain feedback. The following is

a description of the PBS program as implemented during the 2004-2005 through 2008-

2009 school years. The program design follows the format that is presented in *The*

Resource Guide for Planning and Evaluating Human Service Programs (Maher, 2000).

Target Population

The PBS program was targeted toward the teachers of approximately 1300

preschool students enrolled in the early childhood education program in a medium sized

urban public school district. For the 2008-2009 academic year there were 87 teachers

participating in the early childhood program. See Figure 1 for a complete distribution of

classrooms in the Early Childhood Program. Teachers may be working in classrooms at

one of the following locations:

(1) privately owned early childhood centers contracted with the public school

district;

(2) early childhood centers overseen by the county regional educational services

commission; or

(3) preschool classrooms located within the public school district schools.

About half of the teachers have obtained teacher certification via the "alternate route" within the last three years. The remaining teachers earned teaching certification via traditional methods. Most of the teachers in the early childhood program are considered novice teachers in that they have fewer than five years of teaching experience. All but three teachers are female. About one third of the teachers are bilingual English/Spanish speakers.

Statement of Purpose

The program was organized around the PBS pyramid model selected by the NJDOE for all public early childhood education programs. The purpose of the PBS program was to provide the teachers of the OECE with the skills and supports necessary to reduce challenging behaviors and increase prosocial behaviors among preschool students in the classroom. Preschool teachers working as part of the OECE will receive training, coaching, and modeling in the PBS model. Through this program, teachers will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to reduce challenging behaviors and promote prosocial behaviors among preschool students.

Public School District

Office of Early Childhood Education

| Individually Owned Private Early Childhood Centers | County Regional Educational Services Commission | Public School District |

School A: 15 Classes

School B: 9 Classes

School C: 5 Classes

School D: 4 Classes

School E: 4 Classes

School F: 4 Classes

School G: 3 Classes

School H: 3 Classes

School I: 2 Classes

School J: 1 Class

School K: 12 Classes

School L: 6 Classes

School M: 6 Classes

School N: 4 Classes

School O: 4 Classes

School P: 3 Classes

School Q: 1 Class

School R: 1 Class

Figure 1. Distribution of Classrooms in the Early Childhood Program During 2008-2009.

Program Goals

1. Early childhood teachers will engage in teaching behaviors and activities that are designed to prevent or reduce the incidence of challenging behaviors among preschool children.

2. Early childhood teachers will identify triggers that result in the occurrence of challenging behaviors.

3. Early childhood teachers will explain the function of challenging behaviors in preschool children.

4. Early childhood teachers will identify adult responses that perpetuate the occurrence of challenging behaviors in preschool children.

5. Early childhood teachers will identify new skills that can be taught to preschool children that would replace challenging behaviors.

Eligibility Standards

All preschool teachers who teach in classrooms that fall under the auspices of the Office of Early Childhood Education were expected to participate in the PBS approach.

Phases

The PBS pyramid model was introduced to teachers according to the following structure and timeframes:

Year 1
    1. All preschool teachers participated in a full-day professional development workshop on the PBS approach for reducing challenging behaviors and

increasing prosocial behaviors as a means of offering teachers a starting point for implementing the approach in their classrooms.

2. PIRT members observed classroom teachers during the regular school day and provided consultation in the form of written strategies, modeling, and coaching of the PBS approach.

3. Technical assistance was provided for functional behavioral assessments and subsequent behavioral support plans for individual students, as needed.

Year 2

1. New preschool teachers, who joined the early childhood program, participated in a full-day professional development workshop on the PBS approach.

   a. Any teacher who received training in the prior year, but wanted the benefit of reviewing the PBS model, also participated in the full-day workshop.

2. Mini *lunch-and-learn* workshops were provided to teachers in small groups at individual early childhood centers. Topics included specific strategies that would facilitate the PBS approach in the classrooms (e.g., emotional literacy, self-regulation for preschoolers, making friends, etc.)

3. PIRT members observed classroom teachers during the regular school day and provided consultation in the form of written strategies, modeling, and coaching of the PBS approach.

4. Technical assistance was provided for functional behavioral assessments and subsequent behavioral support plans for individual students, as needed.

<u>Years 3 and 4</u>

1. New preschool teachers, who joined the early childhood program, participated in a full-day professional development workshop on the PBS approach.

    a. Any teacher who received training in the prior year, but wanted the benefit of reviewing the PBS model, also participated in the full-day workshop.

2. Mini *lunch-and-learn* workshops were provided to teachers in small groups at individual early childhood centers. Topics included specific strategies that would facilitate the PBS approach in the classrooms (e.g., emotional literacy, self-regulation for preschoolers, making friends, etc.)

3. Each classroom teacher was assigned a PIRT Coordinator to act as primary consultant.

Components

A detailed description of the components that were part of each phase of the PBS program is presented below. First, components relevant to training are presented, followed by the components relevant to consultation.

I. Training

    A. Activities

1. Full-day professional development workshops were provided to teachers, assistant teachers and administrators on the PBS framework selected by the NJDOE.

2. Mini lunch-and-learn workshops were provided to teachers in small groups at individual early childhood centers.

B. Method

1. The full-day professional development was scheduled during the regular work day on several different dates in order to be able to limit participant attendance to between 30 and 40 teachers at each workshop. Didactic methods were used to introduce teachers to basic PBS concepts for developing positive relationships, creating supportive environments, teaching social emotional skills, and supporting individual students with persistent challenging behaviors. Each workshop included lecture and PowerPoint presentation, video clips, modeling, break-out groups for activities, development of classroom-wide action plans, and question and answer periods.

2. For lunch-and-learn workshops, teachers were presented with specific strategies that they could use in their classrooms to facilitate implementation of the PBS approach.

C. Materials

Materials used by workshop presenters for full-day and lunch-and-learn trainings were based on the Preschool Training Modules (Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, CSEFEL, 2009) which

included PowerPoint presentations, presenter guides, and video clips.

Trainers also developed additional materials for modeling, role play, and

small group activities. Participant handouts from the Preschool Training

Modules (CSEFEL, 2009) were selected and adapted based on perceived

target population needs.

C. Forms

At the end of each workshop, each participant was provided with an

evaluation form to rate the quality of the workshop relevant to their needs.

D. Equipment

1. Audiovisual equipment including television, VCR, computer, and

PowerPoint projector were used in full-day workshops. Other equipment

included flip charts, pens, markers, and large child-sized puppets for

modeling how to teach prosocial skills.

2. Equipment for lunch-and-learn workshops included pens, markers, and

puppets.

E. Facilities

1. Full-day workshops were conducted at a predetermined central location

in a public school district building.

2. Lunch-and-learn workshops were conducted in common areas at

individual early childhood centers.

F. Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships

1. Preschool teachers were required to attend full-day workshops as

scheduled. Attendance at lunch-and-learn workshops was voluntary.

2. PIRT members were responsible for training teachers on the PBS approach; observing classroom teachers during the regular school day and providing consultation in the form of written strategies, modeling, and coaching of the PBS approach; providing technical assistance for functional behavioral assessments and subsequent behavioral support plans for individual students, as needed; facilitating *Requests for Assistance* regarding specific students; and conducting collaborative meetings with other key stakeholders (parents, family workers, master teachers, center directors, building principles, school nurses, etc.) to develop action plans to support such students.

3. The Early Childhood Supervisors were responsible for monitoring the implementation of the PBS program.

II. Consultation

A. Activities

1. PIRT members were to consult with classroom teachers regarding behavior problems in the classroom.

2. PIRT members were to conduct regular classroom visits to observe and model the use of appropriate behavior support strategies.

3. PIRT members were to assist with the planning and implementation of behavior support plans for children who continued to exhibit challenging behaviors after all other supports were in place.

B. Method

A consultation model was used to build teachers' skills for preventing challenging behaviors and promoting prosocial behaviors in preschool students.

C. Techniques

1. Intervention and support meetings were held with teachers, family workers, parents, and administrators regarding students who exhibited persistent challenging behaviors.

2. Observations, coaching, and modeling in classrooms were used to build teachers' abilities to successfully implement strategies.

3. Written strategies were provided to teachers outlining individualized behavior support strategies for specific students.

D. Materials

Materials for consultation, modeling and coaching were adapted from the Preschool Training Modules (CSEFEL, 2009). Consultants also developed additional materials for modeling of specific strategies.

E. Facilities

Intervention and support meetings were held in a meeting room at the early childhood center of the teacher and student. Observation, coaching, and modeling occurred in the classroom of the teacher and student.

F. Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships

1. Preschool teachers were to implement the PBS approach in their classrooms, make referrals to PIRT for children who continued to exhibit

persistent severe challenging behaviors, participate in *request for assistance* meetings, and allow PIRT members into their classroom for the purpose of observing, modeling, and coaching.

2. PIRT members were to review *request for assistance* forms, facilitate *request for assistance* meetings, observe students and teachers in preschool classrooms, and model and coach appropriate implementation of specific strategies.

3. Family workers were to schedule *request for assistance* meetings, attend *request for assistance* meetings, and function as liaison between families and early childhood staff.

The preceding sections of this chapter described the approach used to evaluate the PBS program in the OECE, and was based upon the program evaluation framework presented by Maher (2000). The following sections of this chapter will describe the relevant organizational context.

Relevant Organizational Context

The purpose of presenting the relevant organizational context is to carefully consider information that relates to the readiness of the target population, the client, relevant stakeholders and the organization for the design of a human services program that can address important needs (Maher, 2000). According to Maher, relevant context refers to information about whether, how, and when to proceed with designing and implementing a human service program to meet the needs of a target population. This is essential because the target population does not exist in a vacuum, but rather they are embedded in several existing contexts (Maher, 2000). Accordingly, the relevant contexts such as social, cultural, and community, must be understood in order to develop an effective human services program.

Maher (2000) cites several reasons for delineating the relevant context. First, contextual factors that may facilitate the design and implementation of a human service program can be identified and considered. Conversely, contextual factors that may inhibit program design and implementation can also be identified and considered. Another reason for delineating the relevant context of the organization is to be able to determine the readiness of the organization for a human service program, specifically providing information regarding the extent to which a program may be designed and when and if it can be implemented. Finally, understanding the relevant contextual factors allows stakeholders to make judgments about the merit of the program and subsequently allows for effective decision making about implementation of the program in other settings.

There are several steps that a consultant and other relevant stakeholders can take to understand the relevant context of the organization. Maher (2000) presented the A VICTORY framework to facilitate the consideration of important contextual factors. Each letter of the A VICTORY acronym represents a contextual factor, which should be examined and considered with stakeholders in a progressive step-by-step manner. The factors assessed with the A VICTORY framework are:

- *Ability* of the organization to commit resources for design, implementation, and evaluation of a human services program

- *Values* that people within the organization and other relevant stakeholders ascribe to the target population, their needs, and evaluation of the program

- *Ideas* that people have about the current situation with respect to the target population, their needs, and evaluation of the program

- *Circumstances* within the organization that relate to its structure and direction

- *Timing* of the design, implementation, and evaluation of the human services program

- *Obligation* of organizational members and other stakeholders to address the needs of the target population in a programmatic manner

- *Resistance* that might be encountered with respect to the design, implementation, and evaluation the human services program

- *Yield* or benefit that may result for the target population as a result of the program and its evaluation

There are a number of approaches that can be used to obtain information about each of these contextual factors. Interviews and questionnaires can be utilized to obtain information from key stakeholders about the contextual factors on the A VICTORY framework to identify which may serve to facilitate or inhibit the design and implementation of a human service program. Permanent product reviews may be conducted to make judgments about the contextual factors. Finally, participant observation may allow for judgments to be made about the contextual factors based on involvement with the organization.

Program planning and evaluation consultants may enter an organization at any phase of the human services program. If a client seeks the services of a consultant prior to the program implementation, the consultant can assist the client with working through all four phases of the program planning and evaluation process. In this case, the consultant will conduct an assessment of the relevant contextual factors during the Clarification Phase (Maher, 2000). If, however, the client seeks to involve a consultant during the Evaluation Phase, the consultant will need to place the program into an evaluable form, which includes delineating the relevant contextual factors of the organization (Maher, 2000). The current investigator was asked to be involved in evaluating the PBS program after the program was already in the Implementation Phase. Accordingly, the consultant used the A VICTORY framework to determine the readiness of the organization for a program evaluation.

In order to delineate relevant contextual factors, the investigator interviewed one of the supervisors of the OECE. The investigator also functioned as a participant

observer, which provided first-hand knowledge and insight into the organization. The

organizational context for the OECE is presented below.

Ability of the OECE to Commit Resources

The human resources of the OECE consisted of two supervisors, five PIRT

members, six master teachers, three school nurses, one community parent involvement

specialist, and three secretaries. The organization was able to dedicate staff time to the

development, implementation, and evaluation of a human services program. The OECE

was also able to influence the Early Childhood Center directors toward designating time

for teachers to be available for professional development. All technological resources

possessed by the OECE (computer, software, projectors, copiers, etc.) were made

available for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the PBS program.

Any informational resources possessed by the OECE were made readily available

toward the design, implementation, and assessment of the PBS model. Available

financial resources were made available, but available funds differed from year to year.

Temporal resources did not offer any restrictions toward the design, implementation, and

assessment of a human services program for the target population, as long as no

additional costs were incurred.

Values of the Organizational Members

Members of the OECE have traditionally been concerned with the needs of the

teachers, and have valued professional development. The desire to support teachers

working with children at risk for future school failure and children with special needs is

very strong. To that end, the OECE has traditionally been very responsive to providing

trainings for teachers on a variety of pedagogical and behavioral practices.

Ideas People Have About the Current Situation

The current supervisors were not the supervisors of the OECE at the outset of the

implementation of the positive behavior support approach. However, the previous

supervisor was clear that the OECE needed an approach for teachers to reduce

challenging behavior and increase prosocial behaviors in their classrooms. The current

OECE supervisors are also clear about the continued need for a human services program

for teachers on reducing challenging behaviors and increasing prosocial ones.

Accordingly, the supervisors are clear about the tasks to be accomplished. Building upon

teachers' skills is embraced by all members of the organization.

Circumstances in the OECE with Respect to its Structure and Direction

Key administrators are expected to remain in current positions for the foreseeable

future.   In the past, there have been frequent changes in OECE administration, but since

the missions and strategic plan are not expected to change over the next two to three

years, it is not likely that any potential changes in administration will impact the design,

implementation, and assessment of a human services program for the target population.

Timing of Using a Programmatic Approach in the Organization

Administrators and other key stakeholders were prepared to allow time for the

design, implementation, and assessment of a human services program. There were no

current events that impacted this program or the organization during the past four to five years, and no current events are expected to have an impact on the program or the organization in the coming two to three years. Funding sources were expected to remain stable.

Obligation of Individuals and Groups

There were and are many active supporters for this program within the OECE such as administrators, PIRT members, OECE nurses, and OECE master teachers. No groups have been identified that may have opposed a program initiative for the target population. Only the current investigator and one supervisor were originally aware of the intent to evaluate the PBS program. PIRT members, center directors, teachers, and other stakeholders were informed about the plan to evaluate the program when the supervisor and the current investigator were ready to implement the evaluation.

Resistance Expected by Individuals and Groups

Minimal to no resistance was anticipated for the implementation of the PBS program. Some center directors, however, may have been resistant to releasing teachers for professional development because of the costs related to hiring substitute teachers on professional development training days. Nonetheless, all center directors complied with requests for allowing teachers to attend trainings. Resistance toward the evaluation of the PBS program was anticipated on the part of some PIRT members because they might have felt that an evaluation of the PBS program would reflect upon them poorly. In order to reduce this resistance, the evaluation was designed to be completely anonymous.

Yield, or Value, of the Information

Perceived benefits for the target population included personal growth and development in the area of teaching skills and classroom management. Potential drawbacks of the program and its evaluation included uniformity of implementation across all early childhood centers.

Summary

The context information indicated that the organization was ready to proceed with the evaluation of the PBS program for the target population. The OECE was able to commit resources and the timing was deemed appropriate. There were, and continue to be, many active supporters within the organization for this program and its evaluation. It was determined that resistance could be minimized via careful design of the evaluation. Many benefits for the target population were identified.

CHAPTER IV

PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes and reviews the program evaluation plan for the PBS program in the OECE. It follows the program evaluation framework presented by Maher (2000), which includes determining the client's needs for a program evaluation, evaluation questions, methods and procedures for answering and analyzing responses to each question, guidelines for communication and use of program evaluation information, and a plan for evaluating the program evaluation plan. Approval from the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects was obtained prior to implementing the program evaluation plan.

Overview of the Program Evaluation Plan

Client Needs

One supervisor of the OECE was interested in obtaining information about the PBS program that could be used for its continuous development and improvement. Specifically, the supervisor wanted to know if the program was being implemented as designed and what value, if any, it was providing for the target population.   She also

wanted to know who participated in the PBS program, whether the classroom teachers'

knowledge, skills, and abilities for supporting students with challenging behaviors

improved, and whether the staff was satisfied with the program.

Time Frame

The program evaluation was designed to be implemented at the end of the fifth

year of implementation of the PBS program. This pilot program evaluation was

conducted during April 2009 through June 2009.

Description of the Program

The description of the PBS program was provided in the previous chapter.

List of Program Evaluation Questions

1. Who participated in the PBS approach?

2. How has the PBS approach been implemented?

3. What were the reactions of preschool teachers to the PBS approach in terms of

strengths, adequacies, and areas in need of improvement?

4. To what extent were the goals of the PBS program attained?

Program Evaluation Protocols

Protocol No. 1

Program Evaluation Question 1. Who participated in the PBS approach?

Data collection variables. The data collection variables included relevant

characteristics about the preschool teachers and students. For the teachers, these

variables included gender, type of teacher certification, number of years of teaching

experience, and the number of students referred to PIRT. For the students, these

variables included age, gender, classroom placement, why they were referred to PIRT,

and whether or not there was a CST referral.

Data collection methods, instruments, and procedures. Data were collected by

several methods. An annual permanent product maintained by the OECE was reviewed

to collect data on gender, the type of teacher certification, and the number of referrals to

PIRT. The data for the number of years of teaching experience were collected on

Instrument 1 (Appendix A). Data on relevant students' characteristics were also

collected via the review of an annual permanent product maintained by the OECE. The

permanent product contains information on students referred by teachers to the PIRT

which included date of birth, school attended, name of teacher, date of referral, reason for

referral, whether or not the student was also referred to the CST, and the CST

determination. The current investigator conducted the permanent product review, as well

as distributed, collected and reviewed Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's*

Questionnaire (Appendix A). Data on preschool teachers were recorded on Instrument

1.1, *Preschool Teacher Statistics*. Data on students were recorded on Instrument 1.2, *Preschool Student Statistics.*

   Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis. Data analysis units included the statistics regarding the relevant characteristics of participants. Means and percentages were calculated for each variable. Data were placed in a table to display the frequency of distribution for each variable. Means and percentages were also calculated for each variable.

   Personnel and Responsibilities. The current investigator was responsible for collecting, reviewing, and analyzing data, as well as completing Instrument 1.1, *Preschool Teacher Statistics* and Instrument 1.2, *Preschool Student Statistics*. The investigator was also responsible for organizing and displaying data in tables.

Protocol No. 2

Program Evaluation Question 2. How has the PBS approach been implemented?

Data Collection Variables. Data collection variables included the description of adherence to the program as well as judgments about the adherence to the program. Variables also included the manner in which program activities, methods, and procedures for the PBS approach were executed.

Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Procedures. The methods of data collection were permanent product review and interview of key stakeholders. Data were collected on teacher trainings via permanent product review. Types and frequency of teacher support provided were obtained via interview of key stakeholders. Data on teacher trainings were recorded on Instrument 2.1, *Professional Development on Positive Behavior Supports*. Data on types and frequency of teacher support provided were recorded on Instrument 2.2, *Provision of Support to Teachers.*

Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis. Units of analysis were descriptive statistics for teacher trainings and teacher support strategies. Frequency and percentages were calculated and placed in tables.

Personnel and Responsibilities. The current investigator was responsible for permanent product review and interview of key stakeholders. The investigator was also responsible for collecting data, completing Instruments 2.1 and 2.2, and organizing and displaying data.

Protocol No. 3

Program Evaluation Question 3. What were the reactions of preschool teachers to the PBS approach in terms of strengths, adequacies, and areas in need of improvement?

Data Collection Variables. Data collection variables were preschool teachers' thoughts, judgments, and opinions of the implementation of the PBS approach for reducing challenging behaviors among preschool students. Teachers were lead classroom teachers in the OECE program. All lead classroom teachers in the program were surveyed.

Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Procedures. The data collection method included the distribution, completion, and collection of Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire.* Lead classroom teachers were asked to complete Instrument 1 during regularly scheduled staff meetings.

Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis. The units of analysis were the responses of lead teachers to the items on the questionnaire. There were a variety of items on the questionnaire. Teachers were asked to respond to some questions on a 3-point scale, some questions on a 5-point scale, and to place items on a list in rank order of importance. The questionnaire also included open-ended items. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation. The data were displayed in tables.

Personnel and Responsibilities. The investigator was responsible for distributing and collecting Instrument 1. Lead teachers were responsible for completing and returning Instrument 1 to the investigator. The investigator was responsible for organizing and displaying data.

Protocol No. 4

Program Evaluation Question 4. To what extent were the goals of the PBS program attained?

Data Collection Variables. Data collection variables were preschool teachers' perceptions of their abilities to engage in the following activities:

- Implement activities and routines that prevent challenging behaviors

- Identify triggers that may result in challenging behaviors

- Identify functions of challenging behaviors

- Identify adult responses to challenging behaviors that may decrease challenging behaviors

- Teach new skills that would replace challenging behaviors

Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Procedures. The data collection method included the distribution, completion, and collection of Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's* Questionnaire. Lead classroom teachers were asked to complete Instrument 1 during regularly scheduled staff meetings.

Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis. The units of analysis were the responses of lead teachers to the items on Instrument 1. There were a variety of items on the questionnaire. Teachers were asked to respond to some questions on a 3-point scale, some questions on a 5-point scale, and to place items on a list in rank order of importance. The questionnaire also included open-ended items. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation. The data were displayed in tables.

Personnel and Responsibilities. The investigator was responsible for distributing and collecting Instrument 1. Lead teachers were responsible for completing and returning Instrument 1 to the investigator. The investigator was responsible for organizing and displaying data.

Communication of Program Evaluation Information

After the program evaluation data was collected, the evaluation consultant analyzed the data and produced a report. The report included tables, graphs, and narrative information. It was presented to the supervisors of the OECE at a face-to-face meeting held during the fall of the next program year. During the meeting, the evaluation consultant reviewed the report, discussed the findings from the evaluation, and made initial recommendations. The supervisors of the OECE reviewed the evaluation information provided and made determinations on how to address what changes and improvements needed to be made to the PBS program. The supervisors of the OECE were to meet with other key stakeholders such as PIRT members and other staff in the OECE, early childhood center directors, and teachers to discuss evaluation information and the modifications that will be made to the program as a result of the evaluation.

Evaluation of the Program Evaluation

After implementing the program evaluation and analyzing the data, the evaluation consultant also reviewed the process of implementing the evaluation plan. The evaluation consultant tallied the number of people who participated in the evaluation to determine the response rate. The evaluation consultant interviewed the supervisors of the

OECE and other key stakeholders to elicit feedback about the process of the program

evaluation and reactions about its usefulness. The following four questions, which are

based on Maher's (2000) four qualities of a sound human services program evaluation,

were addressed:

1. To what extent was the program evaluation conducted in a way that

allowed for its successful accomplishment? (Practicality)

2. In what ways was the resulting program evaluation information helpful to

people? Which people? (Utility)

3. Did the program evaluation occur in a way that adhered to legal strictures

and ethical standards? (Propriety)

4. To what degree can the evaluation be justified with respect to matters of

reliability and validity? (Technical Defensibility)

CHAPTER V

RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Overview

This chapter reviews and reports the results of the evaluation of the PBS program in the OECE. Four program evaluation questions were addressed. The methods, procedures, and instrumentation described in Chapter IV were used to answer each programmatic question, and are discussed in the chapter. Copies of all instruments used in the program evaluation are presented in Appendix A. This chapter also reviews the results of the evaluation of the program evaluation.

Results of Program Evaluation Question 1

Program Evaluation Question 1: Who participated in the PBS approach?

The first program evaluation question sought to determine the relevant characteristics of the teachers and students who were involved in the PBS program. It is important to develop a thorough understanding of the participants of the program because this information may help to better serve their needs. In order to answer this question, data were collected via permanent product review and Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire*. Data were organized and recorded by the program

evaluation consultant on Instrument 1.1, *Preschool Teacher Statistics* and Instrument 1.2,

Preschool Student Statistics. Data were collected on teachers' gender, years of teaching

experience, and teacher certification. For students, data were collected on gender, age,

classroom placement, reason for referral to PIRT, whether or not there was a referral to

the CST, and the CST determination for eligibility for special education and related

services.

In order to answer the question about relevant characteristics of the preschool

teachers for the 2008-2009 academic year, the program evaluation consultant reviewed a

permanent product maintained by administrative staff in the OECE which consisted of a

spreadsheet of teacher credentials. An electronic version of the spreadsheet was provided

to the program evaluation consultant. The spreadsheet contained information about the

status of teacher certification. This data was recorded on Instrument 1.1, *Preschool*

Teacher Statistics. The program evaluation consultant also obtained information about

relevant teacher characteristics using Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's*

Questionnaire, which inquired about years of teaching experience. This data was also

recorded on Instrument 1.1, *Preschool Teacher Statistics.* Data on teachers were only

included for the 2008-2009 academic year because these were the teachers that

participated in the program evaluation. Data regarding the relevant characteristics of

preschool teachers are presented in Table 1.

In order to answer the question about relevant preschool student characteristics,

the program evaluation consultant reviewed a permanent product maintained by the

administrative staff of the OECE. This spreadsheet contained information about the

student's age, classroom placement (in-district or contracted early childhood center), the

reason for the referral to the PIRT, whether or not the child was referred to the CST, and the determination of eligibility for special education and related services made by the CST. Relevant characteristics of preschool students for the four years of the PBS program were reviewed. The data on the total number of students in the OECE program, referrals to the PIRT, and referrals to the CST were recorded on Instrument 1.2, *Preschool Student Statistics* and are presented in Table 2. Other relevant student characteristics were also recorded on Instrument 1.2, *Preschool Student Statistics* and are presented in Table 2.

Relevant Characteristics of Teachers

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the early childhood education program had 87 classroom teachers. The teachers were predominantly female (96.6%); only three teachers were male.   Data on teaching certification were available for 75 of the 87 teachers in the OECE. Of these teachers, 42 (48.2%) earned their teaching certification via traditional means and 33 (37.9%) earned their teaching certification through the *alternate route program*. The alternate route program is *a non-traditional teacher preparation program* designed for those individuals who have not completed a formal teacher preparation program at an accredited college or university, but wish to obtain the necessary training to become a NJ certified teacher (NJDOE, 2009). To obtain teacher certification via the alternate route, prospective teachers must apply for and obtain a certificate of eligibility through the Office of Licensure and Academic Credentials and secure employment in a public or private school requiring certification. The hiring school district must enroll the prospective teacher in the Provisional Teacher Program,

which is a school-based training program. A provisional teaching certificate is issued for two years. Alternate route teachers are also mentored by colleagues in the district and are evaluated by district personnel. Once the Provisional Teacher Program is successfully completed, a standard teaching certificate is issued.

Data on level of teaching experience were only obtained for teachers who completed the questionnaire. The level of experience among the teachers varied. There were nine teachers (12.3%) that had 1-2 years of teaching experience and nine teachers (12.3%) that had 3-4 years of teaching experience. Twenty-one teachers (28.8%) had 5-6 years of teaching experience. Almost half of the teachers (46.6%) had seven or more years of teaching experience. Data on relevant characteristics of preschool teachers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of Preschool Classroom Teachers

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	84	96.6%
Male	3	3.4%
Teacher Certification		
Traditional Certification	42	48.2%
Alternate Route	33	37.9%
Unknown	12	13.7%
Years of Teaching Experience (for teachers completing the questionnaire)		
1-2 years	9	12.3%
3-4 years	9	12.3%
5-6 years	21	28.8%
7 or more years	34	46.6%

Relevant Characteristics of Preschool Students

2005-2006 School Year. During the 2005-2006 school year, there were 1154 students enrolled in the preschool program. All but 30 students attended preschool in early childhood centers that were contracted with the OECE; the district had only two regular education preschool classrooms within the public school buildings. Of the 247 students that were referred by teachers to the PIRT for assistance, 37.2% were female and 62.8% were male. Although data on age for the 2005-2006 year were missing, available data suggested that there were approximately twice as many three-year-olds as four-year-olds referred for assistance. The most common reason for referrals to the PIRT was for language delays, which comprised 46.2% of referrals. Behavioral difficulties were the second most common reason for referrals (26.7%), and students who presented with both language and behavioral difficulties (22.7%) was the third most prominent reason for referrals to the PIRT. There were eight students (3.2%) referred to the PIRT for other reasons such as global delays, cognitive delays, motor impairments, hearing impairments, and health concerns. Of the 247 children referred to the PIRT, 74 were referred to the CST for evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. This reflected a CST referral rate of 6.4% of the total preschool enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

2006-2007 School Year. During the 2006-2007 school year, there were 1147 students in the early childhood program, and 254 (70.9% male and 29.1% female) were referred by teachers to the PIRT. As in 2005-2006, all but 30 students attended preschool in early childhood centers that were contracted with the OECE; the district had only two regular education preschool classrooms within the public school buildings. The

Table 2

Characteristics of Preschool Students Referred to the PIRT

Variable	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Total in OECE	1154	1147	1205	1350
Total referred to PIRT	247 (21.4)	254 (22.1)	258 (21.4)	219 (16.2)
Gender				
Female	92 (37.2)	78 (29.1)	97 (37.2)	81 (37.0)
Male	155 (62.8)	180 (70.9)	162 (62.8)	138 (63.0)
Age				
3-years-old	82[a]	151 (59.4)	96 (37.2)	148 (67.6)
4-years-old	41[a]	90 (35.4)	122 (47.3)	68 (31.1)
5-years-old	0	6 (2.4)	7 (2.7)	3 (1.4)
Unavailable	-	7 (2.8)	33 (12.8)	-
Classroom Placement				
Contracted Center	247	254	243 (94.2)	209 (95.4)
In-district Classroom	-	-	15 (5.8)	10 (4.6)
Reason for Referral to PIRT				
Language	114 (46.2)	127 (50.0)	152 (58.9)	99 (45.2)
Behavior	66 (26.7)	46 (18.1)	37 (14.3)	25 (11.4)
Language and Behavior	56 (22.7)	27 (10.6)	29 (11.2)	15 (6.8)
ESI-R Screening	-	-	28 (10.9)	73 (33.3)
Other	8 (3.2)	24 (9.4)	12 (4.7)	7 (3.2)
Unidentified	3 (1.2)	30 (11.8)	-	-
Referred to CST	74 (6.4)	51 (4.4)	32 (2.7)	36 (2.7)

Note. ESI-R screenings were not conducted for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. [a]Data on age of students referred to PIRT was only available for 123 of 247 students.

majority (59.4%) of the children referred to the PIRT were 3-years-old at the time of

referral, 35.4% were 4-years-old, and 2.4% were 5-years-old. Data on age were missing

for seven students (2.8%). The three most common reasons for referral to the PIRT were

language delays (50.0%), behavior difficulties (18.1%), and comorbid language and

behavior problems (10.6%). Twenty-four students (9.4%) were referred for other

reasons. Data on the reason for referral to the PIRT was missing for 30 students (11.8%).

Of the 254 students that were referred to the PIRT, 51 were referred to the CST for

evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. This reflected a CST

referral rate of 4.4% of the total preschool enrollment for the 2006-2007 school year (see

Table 2 and Figure 2).
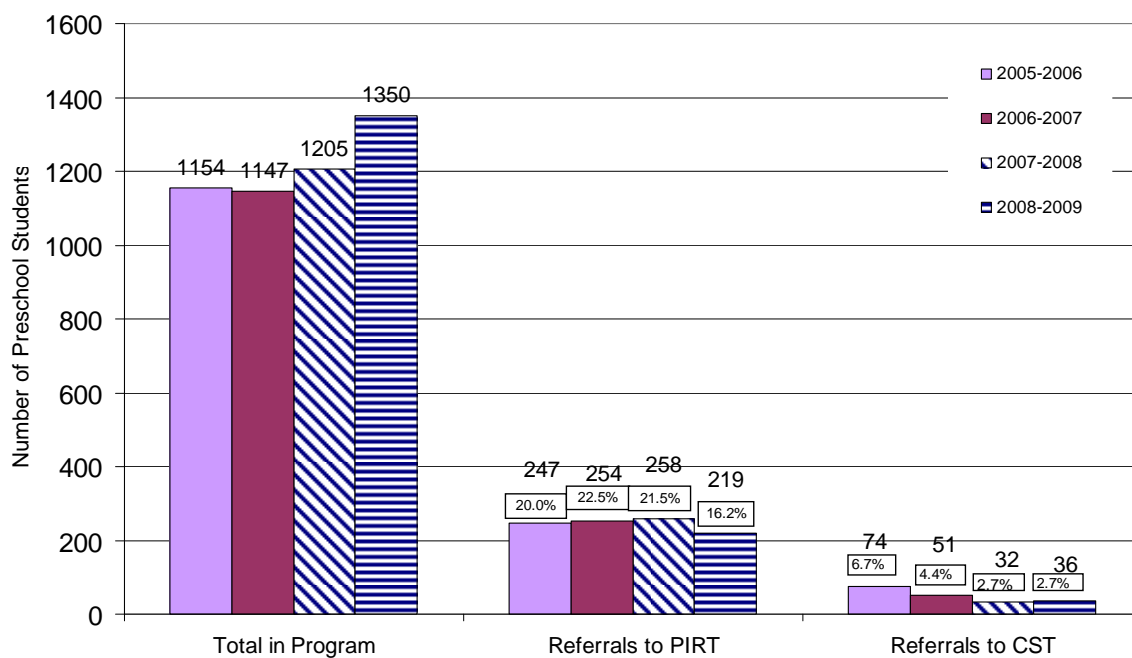
Figure 2. Referrals to PIRT and CST for four consecutive years.

2007-2008 School Year. During the 2007-2008 school year, there were 1205 students in the early childhood program, and 258 (37.2% female; 62.8% male) were referred by teachers to the PIRT. The district opened 5 more preschool classrooms within the public school buildings resulting in a total of 7 preschool classrooms within the public school buildings. Accordingly, 105 (8.7%) of the 1205 students attended school in district operated classrooms. Almost all of students (94.2%) referred to the PIRT attended school in one of the centers contracted with the OECE to provide preschool programming. Only 15 (5.8%) students attended school in one of the in-district preschool classrooms that opened during the 2007-2008 school year. Thirty-seven percent of students referred to the PIRT were 3-years-old, 47.3% were 4-years-old, and 2.7% were 5-years-old. As in prior years, the most common reason for referral to the PIRT was language (58.9%). The second and third most common reasons for referral were behavior (14.3%) and comorbid behavior and language difficulties (11.2%). In 2007-2008, students were also referred to the PIRT based on performance on the Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R), which is a standardized, norm-referenced instrument used to identify young children at-risk for future school difficulties. There were 28 students (10.9%) referred to the PIRT as a result of performance on the ESI-R. Twelve students (4.7%) were referred to the PIRT for other reasons. Of the 258 students referred to the PIRT for assistance, 32 were subsequently referred to the CST for evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. This reflected a CST referral rate of 2.7% of the total preschool enrollment for the 2007-2008 school year (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

2008-2009 School Year. During the 2008-2009 school year, there were 1350 students in the early childhood program. The district opened an additional three classrooms, for a total of 10 district operated preschool classrooms, which resulted in 150 (11.1%) students attending preschool in district operated buildings. Of the total enrollment, 219 (37.0% female; 63.0% male) were referred by preschool teachers to the PIRT. More than 67% were 3-year-old students, 31% were 4-years-old, and 1.4 % were 5-years-old. All but 10 students (4.6%) were in classrooms in early childhood centers that were contracted with the OECE to provide preschool programming. More than 45% of students were referred to the PIRT for language difficulties. Results of ESI-R screenings accounted for 33.3% of referrals to the PIRT. Behavioral difficulties constituted 11.4% of referrals, and comorbid behavior and language issues comprised 6.8% of referrals. Seven students (3.2%) were referred to the PIRT for other reasons. Of the 219 students referred to the PIRT for assistance, 36 were subsequently referred to the CST for evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. This reflected a CST referral rate of 2.7% of the total preschool enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

Commonalities and trends across the four years. Examination of data on characteristics of preschool students across the four academic years revealed commonalities and trends. In each year in which data were collected, there were significantly more boys than girls referred by teachers to the PIRT for assistance. Similarly, many more three-year-old students were referred than four-year-old students in each year except in the 2007-2008 school year. Almost all students that were referred to the PIRT attended school in contracted early childhood centers, which was expected

since there are relatively few in-district preschool classrooms. Language concerns were

the most common reason for referral in each of the four years. Behavior was the second

most common reason for referral to the PIRT in each year except 2008-2009, when

results of the ESI-R screenings were the second most common reason for referral.

Referrals to the CST declined in years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, and stabilized in 2008-

2009 (see Figure 2).

Results of Program Evaluation Question 2

Program Evaluation Question 2: How has the PBS approach been implemented?

The second program evaluation question sought to provide a description of how the PBS program was executed and the extent to which the implementation adhered to the program design. This information is valuable toward making sound judgments about the ability of the program to be implemented as designed, thus contributing to continuous program development and improvement. Answers to this question may also assist with making judgments about the program's ability to contribute toward the OECE.   In order to answer this question, data were collected about trainings provided to teachers on the PBS approach, as well as on the types and frequency of additional support provided by PIRT to preschool classroom teachers. These data were collected via permanent product review and interview of key stakeholders. Data on teacher trainings were recorded on Instrument 2.1, *Review of Professional Development on Positive Behavior Supports.* Data on additional supports provided to teachers were recorded on Instrument 2.2, *Provision of Support to Teachers.* The program evaluation consultant was responsible for reviewing data and recording it on Instruments 2.1 and 2.2.

Data were also collected about the extent to which preschool teachers implemented specific classroom strategies that were introduced during professional development workshops on the PBS approach. Data about the implementation of these specific strategies were collected via classroom observations and were recorded by the consultant to the program evaluation and other PIRT members during regular classroom visits on Instrument 2, *Preschool Positive Behavior Support Classroom Implementation Checklist*.

Professional Development

Table 3 presents a list of professional development workshops that were provided to teachers and other staff on PBS and related topics during the 2004-2005 school year, which was the first full year in which the PBS framework was introduced to teachers in the early childhood program. Teachers were presented with a mandatory 2-day workshop that provided an overview of PBS, as well as selected strategies that could be implemented in the classroom. Teachers were also offered one-day workshops (provided on Saturdays and attendance was voluntary) on developing play skills and enhancing self-regulation. Several one-hour lunch-and-learn workshops were also offered. The lunch-and-learn workshops were provided to small groups of teachers during their lunch hour on a voluntary basis and often targeted specific strategies that could be implemented in the classroom immediately. The lunch-and-learn workshops were repeated at multiple early childhood centers so that they would be available to all interested teachers.

Professional development related to PBS that was provided during the 2005-2006 school year is presented in Table 4. At the beginning of the school year a mandatory 2-day workshop was provided to teachers and other staff. This workshop provided an overview of how to embed language and social-emotional skill development throughout the school day within the curriculum. Several lunch-and-learn workshops were provided to support the implementation of specific strategies. Training on the PBS framework was expanded to special education teachers via half day workshops.

Table 3
Professional Development Trainings Provided During 2004-2005

Title of Workshop	Type of Workshop	Purpose
Positive Behavior Supports	2-day workshop	Overview of PBS for all preschool teachers
Developing Play Skills in the Classroom	Full day	Present importance of developing play skills to teachers with specific strategies to implement in the classroom
Enhancing Self-regulation in the Classroom	Full day	Present the importance of developing self-regulation in preschool children with specific strategies to implement in the classroom
Promoting Emotional Literacy	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies for teaching preschoolers about feelings
Teaching Emotional Regulation for Special Education Teachers	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies for teaching self-regulation to special education preschoolers
Strategies to Promote Self-Regulation	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies for teaching self-regulation to regular education preschoolers
Reading Books for Functional Language	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies to promote pragmatic language using literature
How to be a Good Friend	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies for developing friendship skills to teachers, parents, and family workers
Developing Language in the Classroom	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies to increase language development

Professional development that was provided during the 2006-2007 school year is presented in Table 5. A review of the PBS framework was provided to directors of early childhood centers. New teachers were provided with a full-day introduction to the PBS pyramid. Family workers and teaching assistants were also provided with a full-day introduction to the PBS framework. The lunch-and-learn workshop on self-regulation was repeated at teacher and director requests.

Table 4
Professional Development Trainings Provided During 2005-2006

Title of Workshop	Type of Workshop	Activity/Purpose
Integrative Language and Promoting Social-emotional Competence within the Preschool Classroom	2-Day Workshop	Overview of how to integrate language and social-emotional skill development throughout the school day
Mirror, Mirror on the Wall You Know Inclusion After All	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies to support the inclusion of special education preschoolers in regular education classrooms.
Building Positive Behavior Supports: Purposeful Strategies for Every Preschool Classroom	Lunch and Learn	Make-and-take strategies to promote positive behaviors in the classroom
Teaching Emotional Regulation: Strategies to Enhance Self-Regulation in the Preschool Classroom	Lunch and Learn	Make-and-take strategies to promote self-regulation
PBS for Preschool Children with Special Needs Part I	Half Day	Overview of PBS for special education teachers
PBS for Preschool Disabled Teaching Assistants	Half Day	Overview of PBS for special education teaching assistants

Table 5
Professional Development Trainings Provided During 2006-2007

Title of Workshop	Type of Workshop	Activity/Purpose
PBS for Directors	Full Day	Overview and refresher of PBS for early childhood center directors
Promoting Social-emotional Competence Within the Preschool Classroom for New Teachers	Full Day	Introduction to PBS for new teachers
PBS for Family Workers	Full Day	Overview and refresher of PBS for family workers
PBS for Teaching Assistants	Full Day	Introduction to PBS for new teaching assistants
Teaching Emotional Regulation: Strategies to Enhance Self-Regulation in the Preschool Classroom	Lunch and Learn	Make-and-take strategies to promote self-regulation

As in prior years, new teachers were provided with a full-day introduction to the PBS framework during the 2007-2008 school year (see Table 6). However, other professional development was not as extensive as in prior years. New family workers and teaching assistants were provided with a full-day introduction to the PBS framework. At director requests, a lunch-and-learn workshop was provided to parents to promote positive behaviors at home.

Professional development appeared to decline even further during the 2008-2009 school year. No full-day workshops were provided to teachers. A few lunch-and-learn workshops may have been conducted, but records were not available.

Table 6

Professional Development Trainings Provided by PIRT Members During 2007-2008

Title of Workshop	Type of Workshop	Activity/Purpose
Promoting Social-emotional Competence Within the Preschool Classroom for New Teachers	Full Day	Introduction to PBS for new teachers
PBS for New Family Workers and Teaching Assistants	Full Day	Introduction to PBS for new family workers and teaching assistants
Establishing Home Routines	Lunch and Learn	Present strategies to parents to promote positive behaviors at home

Provision of Supports to Teachers

PIRT members were asked to refer to permanent product records to determine the frequency of the provision of direct supports to preschool teachers. However, PIRT members indicated that such a task was cumbersome and time-consuming. Alternatively,

data were collected via interview of select PIRT members. Aggregated estimates of the

frequency of direct support to teachers are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Aggregated Estimates of Frequency of Direct Supports to Preschool Teachers

Type of Support	Frequency
Written Strategies	6-7 times per week
Modeling of approaches and strategies in the classroom	4-5 times per week
Coaching/Verbal Instruction	15-18 times per week

PIRT members indicated that they provide written strategies to several teachers

each week for a cumulative average of approximately 6-7 times per week. They also

indicated that they model various approaches and strategies for preschool teachers at a

rate of approximately 4-5 times per week. Modeling refers to times that PIRT members

demonstrate the implementation of specific strategies in the classroom. Teachers are

expected to observe the implementation of the strategy by the PIRT member to gain an

increased understanding of how to use the strategy successfully with students. This type

of modeling usually occurs after written strategies are developed and discussed with the

classroom teacher.

PIRT members indicated that they provide coaching/verbal instruction to teachers

at a rate of approximately 15-18 times per week. Coaching and verbal instruction occurs

during routine classroom visits by PIRT members to preschool classrooms. During these

visits, PIRT members may provide coaching in the form of verbal instruction to teachers in an effort to improve teacher performance in addressing the needs of the students.

Implementation of Specific Strategies

PIRT members conducted observations in 27 preschool classrooms to collect data about each of 25 items that are indicative of use of the PBS approach. During regular visits to classrooms, PIRT members evaluated each indicator on the degree of visibility and evidence of use in the classroom. A score for the visibility of each indicator was assigned as follows: (3) *clearly visible*, (2) *moderately visible*, or (1) *not at all visible*. Scores for evidence of use were assigned as follows: (3) *clear evidence of use*, (2) *moderate evidence of use*, or (1) *no evidence of use*. Scores were recorded by the program evaluation consultant and other PIRT members on Instrument 2, *Preschool Positive Behavior Support Classroom Implementation Checklist.* Results are presented in Table 8.

The indicator that was most visible was the daily visual schedule, which was clearly visible or moderately visible in 96.3% of classrooms. The daily visual schedule is comprised of a series of pictures or other images that represent the plan of activities for the school day. It is used to help children understand the classroom daily schedule so that they will be able to determine the sequence of planned activities. The indicator that was second most visible was the job chart, which was clearly visible or moderately visible in 88.9% of classrooms. Jobs create a sense of responsibility for each child toward the classroom community. It also gives the teacher the opportunity to assign tasks

Table 8
Results of Positive Behavior Support Implementation Checklist[a]

Indicator	Degree of Visibility			Evidence of Use		
	Clear	Moderate	Not	Clear	Moderate	Not
Daily Visual Schedule	19 (70.4)	7 (25.9)	1 (3.7)	3 (11.1)	10 (37.0)	14 (51.9)
Morning arrival schedule	3 (11.1)	4 (14.8)	20 (74.1)	2 (7.4)	3 (11.1)	22 (81.5)
Rules with visual cues	6 (22.2)	11 (40.7)	10 (37.0)	4 (14.9)	11 (40.7)	12 (44.4)
Lunch visual schedule	0	0	27 (100.0)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Rest visual schedule	0	1 (3.7)	26 (96.3)	0	1 (3.7)	26 (96.3)
Stop signs posted on doors	2 (7.4)	4 (14.8)	21 (77.8)	1 (3.7)	3 (11.1)	23 (85.2)
Hand washing schedule near sink	5 (18.5)	2 (7.4)	20 (74.1)	0	6 (22.2)	21 (77.8)
Brushing teeth schedule near sink	1 (3.7)	0	26 (96.3)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Visual schedule for bathroom	8 (29.6)	1 (3.7)	18 (66.7)	0	3 (11.1)	24 (88.9)
Transition cues	6 (22.2)	11 (40.7)	10 (37.0)	5 (18.5)	11 (40.7)	11 (40.7)
Magic Mouth	1 (3.7)	0	26 (96.3)	1 (3.7)	0	26 (96.3)
Board games	13 (48.1)	10 (37.0)	4 (14.8)	8 (29.6)	8 (29.6)	11 (40.7)
Songs basket	1 (3.7)	0	26 (96.3)	0	1 (3.7)	26 (96.3)
Job chart	17 (63.0)	7 (25.9)	3 (11.1)	16 (59.3)	6 (22.2)	5 (18.5)
Turn taking schedules	6 (22.2)	4 (14.8)	17 (63.0)	2 (7.4)	7 (25.9)	18 (66.7)
Visual support for line-up	1 (3.7)	0	26 (96.3)	1 (3.7)	0	26 (96.3)
Relaxation activities	0	0	27 (100.0)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Choice boards	0	0	27 (100.0)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Solution Kit	2 (7.4)	0	25 (92.6)	1 (3.7)	1 (3.7)	25 (92.6)
Feelings faces	2 (7.4)	5 (18.5)	20 (74.1)	0	3 (11.1)	24 (88.9)
Feelings books	1 (3.7)	9 (33.3)	17 (63.0)	1 (3.7)	4 (14.8)	22 (81.5)
Tucker Turtle prompts	0	0	27 (100.0)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Super Turtle Wall	0	0	27 (100.0)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Teasing Shields	0	0	27 (100.0)	0	0	27 (100.0)
Super Friend Wall	2 (7.4)	0	25 (92.6)	2 (7.4)	0	25 (92.6)

[a]n = 27 classrooms

to children so that they can build upon a variety of skills. The third most visible indicator

was board games, which was clearly visible or moderately visible in 85.1% of

classrooms. Board games are used to teach and reinforce academic readiness skills as

well as teach prosocial skills such as turn-taking, sharing, and handling disappointment.

There were several indicators that were *not at all visible* in the classrooms that

were observed. These included the lunch schedule, relaxation activities, choice boards,

Tucker Turtle prompts, super turtle wall, and teasing shields. The lunch schedule is

intended to provide a visual sequence of what is expected during lunch routines.

Relaxation activities are intended to be used to offer strategies to students when feeling

upset. Choice boards should be presented to students who need assistance in making

choices for activities. Tucker Turtle, the super turtle wall, and teasing shields are

strategies that teach children how to respond appropriately when confronted with difficult

situations.

There were also several indicators that were *not at all visible* in all but one or two

classrooms that were observed. These included the rest schedule, brushing teeth

schedule, magic mouth, songs basket, visual support for line-up, solution kit, and super

friend wall. Like the lunch schedule discussed above, the rest schedule is intended to

provide a visual sequence of what is expected during rest time. The brushing teeth

schedule provides a visual description of the sequence of steps involved in brushing teeth,

which is encouraged after lunch. Magic mouth refers to a strategy that is used to signify

whose turn it is to speak during whole class morning meetings. The songs basket is used

to empower students so that they feel that they have a role in deciding which songs to

sing during various parts of the school day. It consists of placing two-inch square pieces

of paper, each with a visual representation of a preschool song, into a basket. A student is invited by the teacher to select a paper from the basket and lead the class in singing. Visual support for line-up is provided by placing markers on the floor in the location in which the teacher would like the students to line up. The solution kit is intended to be used to encourage independent problem solving. It is made up of pictorial representations of solutions to common problems faced by preschool students that are placed in a binder or other easily accessible container. The super friend wall is a specially designated wall in the classroom to recognize students who have engaged in behaviors that are consistent with being a good friend.

Evidence of use was poor across all indicators. The job chart had the highest evidence of use; it was scored as clear evidence of use in 16 (59.3%) of the 27 classrooms that were observed. All but three of the remaining indicators were scored as no evidence of use in the majority of classrooms. Several of the indicators (brushing teeth visual schedule, relaxation techniques, choice boards, Tucker Turtle prompts, super turtle wall, and teasing shields) had no evidence of use in all classrooms.

<div align="center">Results of Program Evaluation Question 3</div>

Program Evaluation Question 3: What were the reactions of preschool teachers to the PBS approach in terms of strengths, adequacies, and areas in need of improvement?

The third program evaluation question sought to elicit the thoughts, opinions, and judgments of teachers about the PBS program. Obtaining information about perceptions of the target population is important so that decisions can be made about the worth of the program in adding value to the target population. Answers to this question may also

provide information that will allow decisions to be made about how to use evaluation information to make revisions in the design of the program. Preschool teachers were lead classroom teachers at contracted early childhood centers and public school buildings. The method for data collection was the distribution, completion, and collection of Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire.* The questionnaires were distributed, completed, and collected at regularly scheduled staff meetings. The questionnaire required respondents to provide ratings on either a 5-point scale, a 3-point scale, or an open-ended format. Respondents were also asked to rank the importance of activities that were relevant to the PBS implementation in the OECE program.

The questionnaires were administered during the second half of the 2008-2009 school year. The evaluation consultant was responsible for distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Accordingly, the evaluation consultant arranged with directors of early childhood centers to attend a regularly scheduled monthly staff meeting at each contracted center. At each staff meeting, the evaluation consultant explained the purpose of the program evaluation to the preschool classroom teachers, obtained informed consent, and distributed the questionnaires. The teachers were provided with sufficient time to complete the questionnaires during the staff meeting. The evaluation consultant remained at each staff meeting until all teachers completed and returned the questionnaires.

Teacher Reactions

There were 87 teachers in the early childhood program during the 2008-2009 school year. Of the 87 teachers, 73 teachers completed Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior*

Support Teacher's Questionnaire (see Appendix A), which reflected 83.9% of all the teachers in the early childhood program. The *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire* consisted of seven parts with a total of 29 items. Part I consisted of three questions requiring respondents to check a box indicating the response that best describes the type of classroom teacher they are, the number of years of teaching experience they have, and when they received a full day of PBS training. These data were presented and reviewed earlier in this chapter. Part II consisted of five questions that were answered on a 5-point scale pertaining to the level to which teachers felt competent about their abilities to engage in activities related to the goals of the PBS program. Part III consisted of six open-ended questions that also sought to obtain information about teachers' abilities to engage in activities related to the goals of the PBS program. Part IV consisted of five questions answered on a 5-point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with statements pertaining to the PBS program. Part V consisted of eight questions. Participants were asked to categorize activities of the PBS program as strengths, adequacies, or areas in need of improvement on a 3-point scale. Part VI asked that participants rank the three most important activities of the PBS program for developing skills for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing positive behaviors in the classroom. The results of Parts IV-VI of the *Positive Behavior Support Questionnaire* are presented in Tables 9-15. Part VII invited teachers to provide any additional comments or suggestions about the PBS program. Data obtained in Parts IV-VII of the questionnaire are presented in the remainder of this section of the chapter. Data obtained from Parts II and III of the questionnaire will be presented in the next section of this chapter, Response to Program Evaluation Question 4.

Approximately one-fifth of teachers (20.5%) strongly agreed that their ability to reduce challenging behaviors and increase positive behaviors among students improved as a direct result of the PBS program. The highest percentage of teachers (45.2%) somewhat agreed that their ability to reduce challenging behaviors and increase positive behaviors among students improved as a direct result of the PBS program. The mean score for this item was 3.81, where *5* represents *strongly agree* and *1* represents *strongly disagree*. Responses to Part IV Item 1 are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part IV, Item 1[a]

My ability to reduce challenging behavior and increase positive behavior among my students has improved as a direct result of the PBS program.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
1 (1.4%)	2 (2.7%)	22 (30.1%)	33 (45.2%)	15 (20.5%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

Approximately half of the teachers (50.7%) somewhat agreed that the PBS program was highly important to their directors. Twenty-six percent indicated that they strongly agree with this statement, and nearly 22% neither agreed nor disagreed. One respondent strongly disagreed with this statement. The mean score for this item was 4.0. Responses to Part IV Item 2 are presented in Table 10.

More than half of the teachers (53.4%) felt that the PBS program was highly important to the Early Childhood Office. Approximately 31% somewhat agreed with this

statement, and approximately 15% neither agreed nor disagreed. The mean score for this item was 4.38. Responses to Part IV Item 3 are presented in Table 11.

Table 10
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part IV, Item 2[a]

I can tell that the implementation of the PBS program is highly important to my director or principal.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
1 (1.4%)	0	16 (21.9%)	37 (50.7%)	19 (26.0%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

Table 11
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part IV, Item 3[a]

I can tell that the implementation of the PBS program is highly important to the Early Childhood Office.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
0	0	11 (15.1%)	23 (31.5%)	39 (53.4%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

The highest percentage of the teachers (43.8%) somewhat agreed that they get excellent support for implementing strategies from the PBS program. Opinions of the remaining teachers were varied. Fifteen percent strongly agreed, 20.5% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 13.7% somewhat disagreed that they get excellent support. Two teachers (2.7%) strongly disagreed that they get excellent support for implementing PBS strategies. The mean score for this item was 3.57. Responses to Part IV Item 4 are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part IV, Item 4[a]

I receive excellent support for implementing strategies from the PBS program.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
2 (2.7%)	10 (13.7%)	15 (20.5%)	32 (43.8%)	11 (15.1%)

Note: Three teachers (4.1%) did not respond to this question.
[a]n = 73 teachers

The highest percentage of the teachers (47.9%) somewhat agreed that teaching social-emotional skills is the most important component of educating preschool students. Opinions of the remaining teachers were varied. More than 38% of teachers strongly agreed that teaching social-emotional skills is the most important component of early childhood education, and 8.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. One teacher (1.4%) somewhat disagreed. Three teachers (4.1%) strongly disagreed. The mean score for this item was 4.15. Responses to Part IV Item 5 are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part IV, Item 5[a]

Teaching social-emotional skills is the most important component of educating preschool students.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
3 (3.1%)	1 (1.4%)	6 (8.2%)	35 (47.9%)	28 (38.4%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

The next set of questions also contributed toward providing answers to Program

Evaluation Question 3 (What were the reactions of preschool teachers to the PBS

approach in terms of strengths, adequacies, and areas in need of improvement?).

Responses to items 1-8 of Part V of the questionnaire are presented in Table 14. As

indicated earlier, these items were scored on a 3-point scale (1 = needs improvement; 2 =

adequate; and 3 = strength). Each item is discussed below.

Participants were asked to categorize full-day professional development on the

PBS approach as a strength, adequacy or area in need of improvement. Full-day

professional development refers to trainings that were provided by PIRT members to

teachers. The goals of these trainings were to provide teachers with an overview of the

PBS framework, and to provide a basic repertoire of strategies that could be implemented

in the classroom to reduce challenging behaviors and promote pro-social behaviors.

Almost 55% of teachers indicated that the full day professional development trainings

were either adequate (27.4%) or a strength (27.4%). All but three of the remaining

respondents (41.4%) felt that these trainings were in need of improvement. After

completion of the questionnaires, informal discussion revealed that some teachers

indicated that full-day professional development was in need of improvement because

they had not received the training. The mean score for this item was 1.86. Responses to

Item 1 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

In the second question of this section, participants were asked to categorize mini

lunch-and-learn workshops. Mini lunch-and-learn workshops are one-hour workshops

provided to teachers by PIRT members at contracted early childhood centers. The

content of the workshops relates to a variety of components of the PBS program. The

Table 14

Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part V, Items 1-8[a]

Respondents were asked to categorize each of the following activities/services related to PBS as a strength, adequacy, or area in need of improvement.		Score		
Item	Item left blank	1 Needs Improvement	2 Adequate	3 Strength
1. Full day professional development on the PBS program	3 (4.1%)	30 (41.1%)	20 (27.4%)	20 (27.4%)
2. Mini Lunch-and-Learn workshops addressing specific aspects of PBS	6 (8.2%)	38 (52.1%)	19 (26.0%)	10 (13.7%)
3. Receiving written strategies from PIRT members	1 (1.4%)	13 (17.8%)	35 (47.9%)	24 (32.9%)
4. Having strategies modeled and/or coached for me by PIRT members	1 (1.4%)	19 (26.0%)	30 (41.1%)	23 (31.5%)
5. Obtaining action plans developed at Request for Assistance (RFA) meetings	2 (2.7%)	13 (17.8%)	38 (52.1%)	20 (27.4%)
6. PIRT assisted development of Behavior Support Plans based on Functional Behavior Assessments	2 (2.7%)	20 (27.4%)	32 (43.8%)	19 (26.0%)
7. Support from my director/principal	-	9 (12.3%)	23 (31.5%)	41 (56.2%)
8. Support from my PIRT Coordinator	1 (1.4%)	9 (12.3%)	35 (47.9%)	28 (38.4%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

workshops are given during the teachers' lunch periods and attendance is voluntary. More than half of the teachers (52.1%) indicated that lunch-and-learn workshops are an area that is in need of improvement. Informal discussion revealed that teachers felt that these workshops were in need of improvement because they were not conducted with regularity. More than one quarter of teachers (26.0%) felt that these workshops were adequate and 13.7% felt that they were a strength. The mean score for this item was 1.58. Responses to Item 2 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

Teachers were asked to categorize written strategies received from PIRT members. Written strategies are often provided to teachers after a request has been made for assistance regarding a specific student. After consultation with the teacher regarding the student or direct observation of the student in the classroom, teachers are provided with strategies and ideas in writing that may serve to reduce the problem. The problems may be related to language, behavior, or a variety of other reasons. Almost half of the teachers (47.9%) indicated that they felt that written strategies were adequate. Almost one third of teachers (32.9%) felt that written strategies were a strength of the PBS program. Thirteen teachers (17.8%) felt that written strategies were an area that was in need of improvement. One teacher did not respond to this item. The mean score for this item was 2.15. Responses to Item 3 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

Teachers were also asked to categorize modeling and coaching of strategies. After written strategies are developed and discussed with the classroom teacher, PIRT members may be asked by teachers to model the implementation of certain strategies in the classroom for clarity. PIRT members may also approach classroom teachers and offer to model strategies in the classroom for the teacher. Coaching of strategies may occur in the classroom or after a PIRT member has observed the teacher implement the strategy. The highest percentage of teachers (41.1%) felt that coaching and modeling of strategies was adequate. Nearly one third of teachers (31.5%) felt that coaching and modeling of strategies was a strength. More than one quarter of teachers (26.0%) felt that coaching and modeling was an area in need of improvement. One teacher (1.4%) did not respond to this item. The mean score for this item was 2.06. Responses to Item 4 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

Action plans are developed at a collaborative meeting that includes the teacher, the parent(s), the PIRT coordinator, and other relevant stakeholders, as needed, after a Request for Assistance (RFA) has been made by a teacher to the PIRT. Action plans are written documents that delineate the concerns that the teacher has regarding the student, strategies to address the concerns, who is responsible for implementing the strategies, and a timeline for implementation and follow-up. More than half of the teachers (52.1%) felt that action plans were adequate. Approximately 27% of teachers felt that action plans were a strength, and 17.8% of teachers felt that action plans were in need of improvement. The mean score for this item was 2.10. Responses to Item 5 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

Behavior Support Plans are developed for specific students after a teacher has made a RFA to the PIRT. The development of a behavior support plan occurs for students whose behavior continues to be intense and persistent even after all other supports are in place. The development of the behavior support plan is a complex process that occurs after a FBA is conducted. Teachers were asked to categorize behavior support plans. The highest percentage of teachers (43.8%) felt that behavior support plans were adequate. More than a quarter of teachers (26%) felt that behavior support plans were a strength. A similar number of teachers (27.4%) felt that behavior support plans were in need of improvement. Two teachers did not respond to this item. The mean score for this item was 1.99. Responses to Item 6 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

Teachers were asked to categorize the support received from their directors. More than half of the teachers (56.2%) felt that support from their directors was a

strength. Nearly one third of teachers (31.5%) felt that director support was adequate, and 12.3% of teachers felt that this was an area in need of improvement. The mean score for this item was 2.44. Responses to Item 7 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

Teachers were also asked to categorize the support they received from their PIRT coordinator. Nearly half of teachers (47.9%) indicated that the support from PIRT coordinators was adequate. More than one third of teachers (38.4%) felt that support from PIRT coordinators was a strength, and 12.3% of teachers felt that this was an area in need of improvement. One teacher left (1.4%) this item blank. The mean score for this item was 2.26. Responses to Item 8 on Part V are presented in Table 14.

The next section of the questionnaire asked teachers to rank activities/services that they felt were or would be most helpful in developing skills for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing positive behaviors in their classrooms. The teachers were presented with a list of eight items (full-day professional development workshop, lunch-and-learn workshops, written strategies from PIRT members, coaching and/or modeling of strategies, action plans developed at RFA meetings, behavior support plans, director/principal support, PIRT coordinator support) and were directed to place a 1 in front of the item that they felt was or would be most helpful, a 2 in front of the item that was or would be second most helpful, and a 3 in front of the item that was or would be third most helpful. Weighted rankings indicated that teachers overwhelmingly felt that full-day professional development was or would be the most helpful. Coaching and modeling of strategies by PIRT members was ranked as the second most helpful. Lunch-and-learn workshops were ranked third most helpful (see Table 15).

Table 15

Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part VI, Weighted
Rankings

Please indicate the first, second, and third most important activities/services that you believe were or would
be most helpful in developing your skills for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing positive
behaviors in your classroom. Place a 1 in front of the item that you deem most helpful, a 2 for the second
most helpful, and a 3 for the third most helpful. You may leave the remaining items blank.

Activity/Service	Weighted Score	Weighted Rank
Full-day professional development	144	1
Coaching and/or Modeling of strategies	74	2
Lunch-and-learn workshops	61	3
Director/principal support	21	4
PIRT coordinator support	20	5
Action plans developed at RFA meetings	17	6
Written strategies from PIRT members	17	6
Behavior Support Plans	13	8

Part VII, which was the final section of the *Positive Behavior Support Teachers
Questionnaire,* invited teachers to provide any additional comments or suggestions
concerning the PBS program. Of the 73 teachers that completed the questionnaire, 27
teachers (36.9%) provided comments. Careful review of the comments by the program
evaluation consultant revealed the emergence of 5 common themes. Almost half of the
teachers (48.1%) who provided comments indicated that they were interested in more
training on the PBS approach. Some teachers (18.5%) indicated that it was difficult to
implement PBS strategies because they were unrealistic or there were too many other
classroom demands.   Other teachers (14.8%) indicated that they were satisfied with and
interested in more support from PIRT coordinators. Requests included the desire for

more modeling of strategies and scheduled time to meet with PIRT coordinators. Still

other teachers (11.1%) indicated that they were happy with and regularly used PBS

related strategies. Two teachers (7.4%) were interested in additional parental

involvement.

<div align="center">Results of Program Evaluation Question 4</div>

Program Evaluation Question 4: To what extent were the goals of the PBS program

attained?

   The last program evaluation question sought to determine the extent to which the

preschool teachers' abilities to decrease challenging behaviors and increase prosocial

behaviors among preschool students improved in relation to the PBS program. It is

important to be able to answer this question so that sound judgments can be made about

the merit and worth of the program. Parts II and III of Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior

Support Teacher's Questionnaire* aimed to elicit data to answer this question.

   In Part II, lead classroom teachers were asked to rate on a 5-point scale how

competent they felt about their ability to engage in each of five activities that relate to the

goals of the program. Responses to Items 1-5 in Part II are presented in Tables 16, and

18-21.

   In Part III, teachers were presented with open-ended questions in which they were

asked to provide specific examples of their knowledge of the same goal-related activities

that they were asked to self-evaluate in Part II. Teachers were asked to provide two

examples for each open-ended question that was presented. Responses were read and

scored by the evaluation consultant. A score of 1 indicated that the response was judged

to be in need of improvement, and was given if neither of the responses provided by the teacher was accurate. A score of 2 indicated that the response was judged to be adequate, and was given if one of the two responses was accurate. A score of 3 indicated that the response was a strength, and was given if both examples provided by the teacher were accurate. See Table 17 for ratings of teachers' responses to Part III.

The first item in Part II asked teachers to rate how they felt about their ability to implement activities and routines in their classrooms that would prevent or reduce challenging behaviors. The majority of respondents indicated that they felt moderately competent (54.8%) or extremely competent (28.8%) about their ability to reduce or prevent challenging behaviors. Nine teachers (12.3%) were neutral and only three teachers (4.1%) indicated that they felt minimally competent. Responses to Part II, Item 1 are presented in Table 16. Teachers were then asked to list two ways they build positive relationships with students and families because building positive relationships is the foundation to the PBS approach. More than half of teachers (57.5%) provided responses that were a strength and 31.5% of teachers provided responses that were adequate. Only 8 teachers (11.0%) provided examples that needed improvement (See Table 17). Teachers' self-assessment of their ability to implement activities that would prevent or reduce challenging behaviors was generally consistent with their ability to list two ways to build positive relationships.

The next item in Part II asked teachers to rate how they felt about their ability to identify triggers that may result in children engaging in challenging behaviors. The majority of respondents indicated that they felt moderately competent (53.4%) or extremely competent (31.5%) about their ability to identify triggers. Nine teachers

Table 16

Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part II, Item 1[a]

How competent do you feel about your ability to implement activities and routines in your classroom that will prevent or reduce challenging behaviors?

1 Not at all competent	2 Minimally competent	3 Neutral	4 Moderately competent	5 Extremely competent
0	3 (4.1%)	9 (12.3%)	40 (54.8%)	21 (28.8%)

Note: One respondent left this item blank.
[a]n = 73 teachers

Table 17

Ratings of Teacher Responses to Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part III[a]

Item	1 Needs Improvement	2 Adequate	3 Strength
Please list two ways in which you build positive relationships with your students and their families.	8 (11.0%)	23 (31.5%)	42 (57.5%)
Please list two functions of challenging behaviors that are seen in preschool children.	67 (91.8%)	4 (5.5%)	2 (2.7%)
Please provide two examples of triggers that may result in the occurrence of challenging behaviors in preschool children.	36 (49.3%)	15 (20.5%)	22 (30.1%)
Please list two things that you could do to prevent the triggers that you listed in #3 from occurring.	30 (41.1%)	25 (34.2%)	18 (24.7%)
Please list two new skills that can be taught to a preschool child that could replace challenging behaviors.	38 (52.1%)	20 (27.4%)	15 (20.5%)
Please list two strategies that, as a result of PBS training(s) you have attended, you are implementing in your classroom to promote social-emotional learning.	34 (46.6%)	12 (16.4%)	27 (37.0%)

Note: A score of 3 was given if both examples provided by the teacher were accurate. A score of 2 was given if only one of the examples provided was accurate, and a score of 1 was given if neither of the responses was accurate.
[a]n = 73 teachers

(12.3%) were neutral and only two teachers (2.7%) indicated that they felt minimally

competent. Responses to Part II, Item 2 are presented in Table 18. When teachers were

asked to provide two examples of triggers in an open-ended format, about half of the

teachers (49.3%) provided examples that were in need of improvement. Almost one-third

of teachers (30.1%) provided examples that indicated a strength in this area and 20.5%

provided examples that were judged to be adequate (see Table 17). Teachers' self-

assessment of their ability to identify triggers to challenging behaviors was generally

inconsistent with their ability to list two examples of triggers.

Table 18
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part II, Item 2[a]

How competent do you feel about your ability to identify triggers that may result in children engaging in challenging behaviors?

1 Not at all competent	2 Minimally competent	3 Neutral	4 Moderately competent	5 Extremely competent
0	2 (2.7%)	9 (12.3%)	39 (53.4%)	23 (31.5%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

The third item in Part II asked teachers to rate how they felt about their ability to

identify the functions of challenging behaviors. The majority of respondents indicated

that they felt moderately competent (53.4%) about their ability to identify functions of

challenging behaviors. An equal number of teachers felt extremely competent (21.9%) or

neutral (21.9%). Only two teachers (2.7%) felt minimally competent to identify triggers

to challenging behaviors. Responses to Part II, Item 3 are presented in Table 19. In

contrast, an overwhelming majority of teachers (91.8%) were unable to list two functions

of challenging behaviors that are seen in preschool children. Only 2 teachers (2.7%)

provided a response that was judged to be a strength, and 4 teachers (5.5%) provided

responses that were judged to be adequate (See Table 17). Teachers' self-assessment of

their ability to identify functions of behavior was not consistent with their ability to list

two functions of challenging behaviors seen in preschool children.

Table 19
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part II, Item 3[a]

How competent do you feel about your ability to identify the functions of challenging behaviors exhibited by the children in your classroom?

1 Not at all competent	2 Minimally competent	3 Neutral	4 Moderately competent	5 Extremely competent
0	2 (2.7%)	16 (21.9%)	39 (53.4%)	16 (21.9%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

The fourth item in Part II asked teachers to rate how they felt about their ability to

identify adult responses to challenging behaviors that might serve to decrease challenging

behaviors. As in the previous items, the highest percentage of respondents indicated that

they felt moderately competent (49.3%) about their ability to identify adult responses that

might reduce challenging behaviors. Twenty-six percent of teachers felt extremely

competent and 21.9% were neutral. Only two teachers (2.7%) felt minimally competent

to identify adult responses to reduce challenging behaviors. Responses to Part II Item 4

are presented in Table 20. When teachers were asked to list two things they could do to

prevent behavioral triggers from occurring in an open-ended format, 41.1% of teachers

listed preventions that were judged to be in need of improvement, 34.2% listed

preventions that were judged as adequate and only 24.7% listed preventions that were

judged to be a strength (See Table 17). Teachers' self-assessment of their ability to

identify adult responses to challenging behaviors that may serve to decrease challenging

behaviors was generally not consistent with their ability to list things they could do to

prevent triggers from occurring.

Table 20
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part II, Item 4[a]

How competent do you feel about your ability to identify adult responses to challenging behaviors that may serve to decrease challenging behaviors?

1 Not at all competent	2 Minimally competent	3 Neutral	4 Moderately competent	5 Extremely competent
0	2 (2.7%)	16 (21.9%)	36 (49.3%)	19 (26.0%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

The last item in Part II asked teachers to rate how they felt about their ability to

teach new skills that would replace challenging behaviors. The majority of teachers

indicated that they felt moderately competent (53.4%) about their ability to teach new

skills to replace challenging behaviors. Almost one quarter of teachers (24.7%) felt

extremely competent and 16.4% were neutral. Three teachers (4.1%) felt minimally

competent to teach new skills to replace challenging behaviors. Responses to Part II Item

5 are presented in Table 21. There was a contrast between teachers' self-assessment

regarding teaching new replacement skills and their ability to list two new replacement

skills to be taught to preschool children. In an open-ended format, 52.1% of teachers

listed replacement skills to be taught to preschool children that were judged to be in need

of improvement, 27.4% of responses were judged to be adequate and only 20.5% of

responses were judged to be a strength (See Table 17).

Table 21
Results of Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire: Part II, Item 5[a]

How competent do you feel about your ability to teach new skills to the children in your class that would replace challenging behaviors?

1 Not at all competent	2 Minimally competent	3 Neutral	4 Moderately competent	5 Extremely competent
1 (1.4%)	3 (4.1%)	12 (16.4%)	39 (53.4%)	18 (24.7%)

[a]n = 73 teachers

As a final item in Part III, teachers were asked to list two strategies which

promote social-emotional learning that they are implementing in their classrooms as a

result of PBS trainings. Ratings of their responses are presented in Table 17. Almost

half of the teachers (46.6%) provided responses that were judged to be in need of

improvement, 16.4% provided responses that were judged as adequate, and 37.0%

provided responses that were judged to be a strength.

Summary

Relevant characteristics of teachers were examined for the 2008-2009 school

year. There were 87 preschool teachers in the early childhood program; all but three

were female. Almost half of the teachers earned their teaching certification via the

traditional route. Nearly 40% of teachers earned their certification via the alternate route.

Data on teaching credentials was unavailable for the remaining teachers. Relevant characteristics of students were examined for 4 academic years. The number of referrals to the PIRT ranged from 219-258. For all years, the most common reason for referral was language concerns. For most years, the second most common reason for referral was behavior concerns.

Professional development was provided to teachers to facilitate the implementation of the PBS program. It appeared that trainings were most robust in the earlier years of the PBS program, and declined steadily. Other supports that were provided to teachers to facilitate the implementation of the PBS program included written strategies, modeling of approaches and strategies, and the provision of coaching and verbal instruction. The implementation of specific indicators related to the PBS program was evaluated by classroom observation. The indicators that were most clearly visible in the classrooms were the daily visual schedule, the job chart, and board games. Many indicators were not at all visible. Generally, there was poor evidence of use across all indicators.

Reactions of teachers revealed that the majority of teachers somewhat to strongly agreed that the PBS program helped improve their skills for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing prosocial skills among their students. The majority of teachers rated all the components of the PBS program as either adequate or a strength except for lunch-and-learn workshops, which were identified as in need of improvement because they were not offered with regular frequency. Teachers were asked to rank which components of the PBS program were or would be most helpful for developing their skills for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing prosocial skills among their

students. Weighted ranking revealed that teachers felt that full-day professional development on PBS, coaching/modeling of strategies, and lunch-and-learn workshops were the three components that were or would be most helpful to them.

In order to determine if the goals of the program were met, teachers were asked to rate how competent they felt about their abilities to engage in each of five activities related to the PBS program. They were then asked to demonstrate their competencies by providing specific examples of their knowledge in each of these areas in an open-ended format. There was a discrepancy between teachers' self-assessment of their competencies and their ability to list examples of these skills in all areas examined except for one, building positive relationships. Discrepancies between self-assessment of competency and ability to demonstrate skills were evident in identifying triggers to challenging behaviors, identifying the functions of challenging behaviors, identifying adult responses to challenging behaviors that would likely reduce problems, and teaching new skills to replace challenging behaviors.

Communication of Program Evaluation Information

Upon completion of data analyses, the program evaluation information was communicated to both supervisors of the OECE, one of whom was the client of the program evaluation. All four program evaluation questions were able to be answered. Information obtained was analyzed as described in the protocols for each question. A final report was compiled and presented to both supervisors at a face-to-face meeting that was held in the fall of the school year after the data were collected. The information in the report was formally reviewed in detail with the supervisors.

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Overview

The final program planning and evaluation activity is to evaluate the program

evaluation. According to Maher (2000), evaluating the program evaluation allows key

stakeholders to use evaluation information for judging the program's worth and to make

subsequent program planning decisions. Evaluating the program evaluation provides

information so that decisions can be made as to how future program evaluations and the

entire program planning and evaluation process can be improved. The evaluation of the

program evaluation can be facilitated by using the four qualities of a sound human

services program evaluation delineated by Maher, which are practicality, utility,

propriety, and technical defensibility. The following four questions, which are based on

these qualities, are:

    1. To what extent was the program evaluation conducted in a way that

    allowed for its successful accomplishment? (Practicality)

    2. In what ways was the resulting program evaluation information helpful to

    people? Which people? (Utility)

    3. Did the program evaluation occur in a way that adhered to legal strictures

and ethical standards? (Propriety)

4. To what degree can the evaluation be justified with respect to matters of

reliability and validity? (Technical Defensibility)

Responses to these questions can be obtained from a variety of people who have

been involved in the evaluation and through sources of data. In order to evaluate the PBS

program evaluation, these four questions were addressed during a meeting with the

supervisors of the OECE, through observations of the program, and through review of

data obtained from the program evaluation. This chapter discusses each of the four

questions.

Practicality

This question examines whether or not the program evaluation was conducted in a

manner that allowed for its successful accomplishment. Concerns about practicality were

an issue for the program evaluation consultant and the client throughout the program

evaluation process. Two program evaluation instruments were used for this program

evaluation. The first was Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teachers*

Questionnaire. The teachers were asked to respond to a questionnaire that would take

approximately 20 minutes to complete. It was only practical to engage the teachers for

this amount of time during regularly scheduled staff meetings, which required the

cooperation from the directors of the early childhood centers. The supervisors and

directors indicated that it was a worthy use of time and practical to ask teachers to

complete the questionnaire at the staff meetings. Directors expressed their support for the

program evaluation verbally, and provided teachers with ample time during staff meetings to complete the questionnaire. All of the teachers that were asked to complete the questionnaire at staff meetings participated, resulting in a 100% response rate. This unusually high response rate can be attributed to the support received from supervisors and directors for this program evaluation. Another successful feature of this approach to asking teachers to complete the questionnaire is that that teachers were not asked to expend any personal time to complete the questionnaire. This procedure for questionnaire completion did not present any disruptions to the daily operation of the early childhood program, and was embraced by all key stakeholders.

The second program evaluation instrument, *Preschool Positive Behavior Support Classroom Implementation Checklist*, was completed by PIRT members during regular visits to preschool classrooms. Only 27 implementation checklists were completed by PIRT members, a much lower response rate than for the teacher questionnaire. It may be hypothesized that the time required to make the observations and complete the checklist was cumbersome for PIRT members. It may not have been practical to ask PIRT members to set aside time during regularly scheduled classroom visits for the accomplishment of this program evaluation task.

Although response rates differed between the two instruments, the supervisors of the early childhood program and other key stakeholders were satisfied with the clarity of the questionnaire and the implementation checklist. The overall design of the program evaluation was practical for the public school setting in which it was executed.

Utility

The purpose of asking and answering this question is to provide key stakeholders with information that will allow them to make effective decisions about the program and how to improve it. Interviews with the supervisors of the early childhood program revealed that the information obtained from the program evaluation will be helpful toward the future development of the PBS program. The supervisors will be able to refer to the program evaluation information as a tool for planning future professional development for teachers and early childhood staff. They will also be able to use the information to guide functions of PIRT members in relation to the PBS program. The supervisors also indicated that the information obtained highlights the need for ongoing program evaluation. The supervisors plan to refer to the program evaluation information to modify the PBS program implementation and to inform future program evaluations.

The program evaluation information is also useful to teachers, PIRT members, and other key stakeholders. The objective information provided by the program evaluation can be utilized by all stakeholders to improve service delivery to students. Students at greatest risk can be more easily targeted for support and the process of implementing the PBS program can be revised to meet teachers' needs.

Propriety

The purpose of asking and answering this question is to ensure that the program evaluation occurs in a way that adheres to ethical and legal standards. Legal and ethical concerns were openly discussed prior to implementing the program evaluation process. The program evaluation plan was thoroughly reviewed and approved by one supervisor

of the early childhood office and the chairperson of this dissertation. The program

evaluation process was also approved by the superintendent of schools. Data for the

program evaluation was collected and reported in a manner that protected the

confidentiality of all participants.

Technical Defensibility

The final question for the evaluation of the program evaluation addresses the

reliability, validity, and accuracy of the methods, procedures, and instruments of the

program evaluation. The methods and procedures used for evaluation of the PBS

program evaluation were deemed to be justifiable based on the context within which the

program evaluation occurred. Two instruments were designed and used to evaluate the

PBS program in the OECE. Caution needs to be taken when considering the reliability

and validity of each of the instruments.

Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire* was completed

during regularly scheduled staff meetings at individual early childhood centers. Results

obtained from this instrument must be considered in light of the context in which they

were administered. Although every precaution was used to ensure confidentiality, and

these precautions were thoroughly explained to teachers prior to completing the

questionnaire, it is possible that teachers felt pressured to respond to questions in a

manner that would be most flattering to themselves and the center in which they worked.

Also, the presence of their directors during completion of the questionnaires may have

influenced responses even further.

Instrument 2, *Preschool Positive Behavior Support Classroom Implementation Checklist* was intended to be completed by PIRT members during regularly scheduled classroom visits. Pressure to conduct the observation and complete the checklist may have influenced the reliability of the information obtained. Data obtained as a result if this instrument must be interpreted cautiously.

Each instrument was examined by select PIRT members and one supervisor from the OECE prior to use in the program evaluation process, and deemed to have adequate levels of content and face validity. It is important to emphasize, however, that this evaluation was formative in nature and not a random sample controlled study. Results are only valid within the context of the PBS program and the specific population served.

Summary

The final program planning and evaluation activity is to evaluate the program evaluation so that subsequent program planning and evaluation decisions can be made. Four questions were developed based upon the four qualities of a sound human services program that are delineated by Maher (2000). These qualities are practicality, utility, propriety, and technical defensibility. Responses to these questions were obtained from interviewing key stakeholders, observations of the program, and through review of data obtained from the program evaluation.

First, the evaluation of the program evaluation determined that the implementation of the evaluation was conducted in a practical manner. Second, key stakeholders indicated that the program evaluation was useful in that it provided objective information that will allow effective decisions to be made about PBS program

development and implementation, as well as future program evaluations. Third, it was

determined that adherence to legal and ethical concerns was strictly maintained. Finally,

it was determined that results of the program evaluation were reliable and valid only

within the context of the program and the specific population served. Results cannot be

generalized to other PBS programs and settings.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations drawn after the

completion of a systematic program evaluation of a PBS program in the OECE. The

program evaluation presented in this dissertation captured a snapshot of the PBS program

during the 2008-2009 school year. It also provided an overview of how the PBS program

was implemented during the preceding four academic years. Conclusions and

recommendations are based on the information obtained as a result of the program

evaluation implemented during this timeframe. Conclusions are presented for the

findings of the program evaluation as well as for the findings of the dissertation.

Recommendations for the continued implementation of the evaluation plan are offered

followed by recommendations for improvements to the PBS program.

Conclusions

Findings of the Program Evaluation

Upon review of information obtained from the completion of the program evaluation, four main conclusions were drawn. First, the majority of teachers were generally satisfied with the PBS program. Second, the PBS program was implemented most robustly in the earliest years of program implementation. Third, there was a discrepancy between teachers' self-assessment of skills obtained as a result of participation in the PBS program and their ability to demonstrate acquired skills via open-ended questions. Fourth, teachers indicated that professional development on PBS and coaching from PIRT members were most helpful for building skills aimed at reducing challenging behaviors and promoting prosocial behaviors among preschool students. The remainder of this section of the chapter discusses each of these conclusions in greater detail.

The majority of teachers were generally satisfied with the PBS program. This conclusion was drawn from teachers' responses to select questions on Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire.* More than 65% of teachers indicated that their skills for reducing challenging behaviors and promoting prosocial behaviors improved as a direct result of the PBS program. Similarly, the majority of teachers recognized that the PBS program was highly important to directors and the OECE. The majority of teachers also indicated that they receive excellent support for implementing strategies related to the PBS program.

The PBS program was implemented most robustly in the earliest years of program implementation. This conclusion was drawn from permanent product review and

interview of key stakeholders. In the first full year of implementation of the PBS program, nine different workshops were offered to teachers. During the second and third years, five different workshops were offered to teachers each year. By the fourth year of implementation, only three workshops were offered.   Professional development declined even further during the fifth year of implementation. A few workshops may have been offered, but records were not available. However, aggregated estimates of direct supports to teachers in the form of written strategies, modeling of approaches, and coaching were reported to remain robust in the fifth year of the PBS program.

There was a discrepancy between teachers' self-assessment of skills obtained as a result of participation in the PBS program and their ability to demonstrate acquired skills via open-ended questions. This conclusion was based upon information obtained from select questions on Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire.* Teachers were asked to rate on a 5-point scale how competent they felt about their ability to engage in each of five activities that relate to the goals of the PBS program. Teachers were also presented with open-ended questions in which they were asked to provide specific examples of their knowledge of the same goal-related activities. While approximately three-fourths of teachers rated themselves as moderately to extremely competent across each of the five activities, generally fewer than half of their open-ended responses were judged to be a strength. This discrepancy suggests that teachers overestimated their abilities to engage in activities related to the goals of the PBS program.

Teachers indicated that professional development on PBS and coaching from PIRT members were most helpful for building skills aimed at reducing challenging

behaviors and promoting prosocial behaviors among preschool students. Teachers were asked to rank activities and services that they felt were or would be most helpful in advancing their skills for addressing the needs of preschool students with challenging behaviors.   Weighted rankings indicated that teachers believed that full-day professional development, coaching and modeling of strategies, and lunch-and-learn workshops were the most helpful.

Findings of the Dissertation

It was concluded from conducting this evaluation of the PBS program that (1) the evaluation plan is feasible; (2) key stakeholders found the evaluation useful; and (3) there is a desire to continue to use the plan for ongoing program evaluations of the PBS program. Most significantly, it was clear that the evaluation can be implemented as part of regular programming within the Office of Early Childhood Education with only minor adjustments to the program evaluation plan. Feedback from teachers indicated that they were interested in results of the program evaluation, in contributing toward improving the PBS program, and in future evaluations of the PBS program. Feedback from the supervisors of the OECE and other key stakeholders indicated that the evaluation was clear, practical, and not disruptive of daily routines. The supervisors of the OECE felt that the program evaluation was conducted successfully. They were very satisfied with the information obtained from the evaluation. Moreover, the supervisors would like to continue to improve the evaluation plan for the PBS program.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Improvement to the PBS Program

Although findings from the evaluation of the PBS program found that teachers were generally satisfied with the program, the overall information derived from the program evaluation suggests that improvements can be made to the PBS program that will serve to further enhance the skills of classroom teachers for addressing the needs of students with challenging behaviors. It is important to improve the PBS program because intense, persistent, challenging behaviors in preschool are associated with school adjustment and success in later years; behavior in preschool is the best predictor of serious behavior problems in adulthood (Campbell, 2002). High quality early childhood education environments lead to better social competencies and decreased behavior problems in preschool students (Dunlap et al., 2006). It has also been shown that appropriate teaching procedures are effective in developing children's skills and reducing challenging behaviors (Dunlap et al.).   Collectively, these facts underscore the need to improve teachers' skills for addressing the needs of young children exhibiting challenging behaviors. Improvements to the PBS program are a promising approach for increasing teachers' skills in this area. Therefore, the following recommendations are made based upon the information obtained from the completed evaluation of the PBS program.

First, it is recommended that the level of professional development for classroom teachers remain strong each year of program implementation. In the first full year of the PBS program, a variety of professional development sessions were offered, which included full-day trainings, half-day trainings, and lunch-and-learn sessions.   By the

fourth year of the PBS program, professional development decreased markedly. By the fifth year of the PBS program, professional development was so sparse that systematic documentation did not occur. The current program evaluation did not examine the reasons for the decline in professional development. Teachers, however, indicated that professional development was among the most helpful components of the PBS program for improving skills for addressing the needs of children with challenging behaviors. It is, therefore, recommended that professional development on the PBS program increase to a level substantially similar to that of the first two years of program implementation. It is further recommended that the professional development sessions be planned in advance by PIRT members in concert with the supervisors of the OECE. It is also recommended that a structured, systematic process for documenting professional development be developed and maintained by the OECE.

In order to better achieve the goals of the PBS program, planners of professional development can examine information obtained from the program evaluation to determine areas of greatest need. Program evaluation information revealed that teachers were able to demonstrate appropriate methods and strategies for building positive relationships with students and families. However, teachers were generally not as successful at demonstrating their abilities in the following areas: (1) identifying triggers to challenging behaviors; (2) identifying functions of challenging behaviors; (3) identifying adult responses to challenging behaviors that would likely reduce problem behaviors; and (4) teaching new skills to replace challenging behaviors. PIRT member and other support personnel should focus on developing these skills in classroom teachers.

Further improvements to the PBS program would contribute toward teachers' abilities for addressing challenging behaviors with the same intensity and purpose as addressing academic readiness skills. The best way to improve the PBS program is to develop a multisystems school-wide approach that involves classroom, non-classroom, and individual student perspectives. Sugai & Horner (2002a) delineated five steps for developing and maintaining a school-wide PBS program that are recommended for incorporation into the PBS program of the OECE. These steps were reviewed in Chapter II, and are to (1) establish a PBS leadership team; (2) secure school-wide supports from staff; (3) develop data-based action plans; (4) arrange for high quality fidelity of implementation; and (5) conduct formative data-based monitoring.

Hemmeter et al. (2007) emphasized the need for a program-wide PBS approach in early childhood programs that are comprised of multiple schools. The OECE is one such program. Accordingly, it is recommended that improvements to the PBS program incorporate five factors that Hemmeter and colleagues identified as mandatory for successful program-wide PBS implementation. These factors, which were also discussed in Chapter II, are (1) development of a strong leadership team; (2) acknowledgment that program-wide PBS takes time to develop; (3) recognition for teachers embracing the PBS approach; (4) availability of consultants with experience in behavior support; and (5) involvement of mental health consultants in the development of the program-wide PBS approach.

Recommendations for Implementation of the Evaluation Plan

The following recommendations are made based on the evaluation of the evaluation plan of the PBS program. In order to continue to successfully evaluate the PBS program, the following recommendations are made. First, supervisors in the OECE should designate an evaluation consultant to be responsible for ongoing evaluation of the PBS program. The current investigator agreed to commit significant amounts of personal time toward the successful completion of this evaluation because obtained data was made available for dissertation purposes. The supervisors of the OECE will need to provide future evaluation consultants with the appropriate resources necessary, particularly temporal and human resources, to execute a successful program evaluation. The evaluation consultant is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the program evaluation are conducted appropriately, including data collection, data analysis, and communication of the results of the evaluation. A designated evaluation consultant, in conjunction with access to all necessary resources, will increase the likelihood that future program evaluations will be conducted successfully.

Second, consideration should be made for the improvement of the data collection instruments used during the evaluation process. Instrument 2, *Preschool Positive Behavior Support Classroom Implementation Checklist* can be a valuable tool for identifying the extent to which specific strategies related to the PBS program are being implemented in the classroom. For this program evaluation, however, only 27 implementation checklists were completed and the reliability of the instrument was questionable. In order to be able to use the instrument to draw meaningful conclusions, future evaluation consultants should collaborate with other key stakeholders to

investigate methods for improving how this instrument can be used in its current form, or to determine how to improve the structure and use of the instrument. Further, PIRT members, or other staff in the OECE that will be responsible for conducting observations to complete this instrument must be provided with the opportunity to prioritize classroom visits for the purpose of completing this instrument.

Improvements can be made to Instrument 1, *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire* as well. Consideration should be made to revise this instrument so that open-ended questions align more accurately with questions in which teachers are asked to self-assess specific skills related to the goals of the PBS program. This will increase the ability of the instrument to identify improvements in teachers' skills that are achieved as a result of the PBS program. Accordingly, the data obtained from the evaluation plan will be more likely to provide the supervisors of the OECE and other key stakeholders with more meaningful and valuable information about the merit and worth of the PBS program.

Third, one of the findings of the evaluation indicated that professional development on the PBS framework declined over time. The current evaluation plan did not address the reasons for this decline. Consideration should be made to include examination of this phenomenon in future program evaluation plans so that meaningful information can be obtained about how to improve the delivery and frequency of professional development.

Fourth, improvements for communicating results of the program evaluation must be considered. Original guidelines for communicating the results of the evaluation included disseminating results to the supervisors of the OECE during a face-to-face

meeting. This meeting occurred as outlined in the evaluation plan; a written report was

presented to the supervisors, findings were discussed, and initial recommendations were

made. The program evaluation guidelines also included plans for the supervisors of the

OECE to meet with staff in the OECE, early childhood center directors, and classroom

teachers to discuss evaluation information and the modifications that will be made to the

program as a result of the evaluation. To date, however, communication of program

evaluation information to these key stakeholders has not occurred. It is recommended

that a plan to share evaluation information with all key stakeholders be revised to ensure

that all interested parties are informed about the results of the program evaluation. This

revision may include a change in designation of which stakeholders will participate in the

initial face-to-face meeting with the evaluation consultant and the supervisors of the

OECE. Additional participants in this meeting may serve to alleviate the supervisors in

the OECE from having the sole responsibility of disseminating evaluation information to

other key stakeholders. Another possible change for communicating results of the

program evaluation is to have the evaluation consultant be responsible for disseminating

evaluation information to all key stakeholders, rather than to the supervisors of the OECE

only. Regardless of how the plan to communicate evaluation information is revised, it is

important to maintain the integrity of the plan to communicate evaluation results.

Sharing evaluation information properly and thoroughly contributes to the abilities of all

key stakeholders to make decisions about (1) development and improvement of the PBS

program, and (2) improvements to the evaluation plan.

      Finally, it must not be overlooked that program evaluation is an ongoing process

of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and using information so that judgments can be

made about the worth of the program (Maher, 2000). Therefore, it is important to emphasize that program evaluation plans are not intended to be fixed or constant. Rather, program evaluation plans must remain fluid. There are principles and procedures that structure the process of program evaluation, but program evaluation is intended to be an ongoing process. As the PBS program continues to develop, it should be continuously evaluated to that sound judgments can be made as to whether or not it is adding value to the target population.

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate the PBS approach for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing prosocial behaviors among preschool children in a public urban preschool program. This chapter presented findings of the program evaluation and findings of the dissertation. Findings of the program evaluation revealed that teachers were generally satisfied with the PBS program and that the program was implemented most robustly in the earliest years of program implementation. Findings of the program also revealed that there was a discrepancy between teachers' self-assessment of skills and their ability to demonstrate the skills via open-ended questions. A final major finding of the evaluation was that teachers indicated that professional development on the PBS approach and coaching from PIRT members were most helpful for increasing their skills. Findings of the dissertation were that the evaluation plan is feasible, key stakeholders found the evaluation information useful, and there was a desire to continue to use the evaluation plan for ongoing evaluations of the PBS program.

This chapter also presented recommendations for improvements to the PBS program as well as recommendations for improvements to ongoing and future evaluations of the PBS program. Recommendations for improvements to the PBS program included robust professional development on the PBS approach to classroom teachers that is based upon information obtained from the program evaluation about teachers' skills. Another recommendation was to utilize a systems level approach to implementing PBS that aligns with best practices found in current literature. This includes incorporating a school-wide approach (Sugai & Horner, 2002a), and a program-wide approach (Hemmeter et al., 2007) to PBS implementation.

Recommendations for improvements to the evaluation plan included designating an evaluation consultant, developing improvements to data collection instruments, and considering improvements for communicating results of the program evaluation. Most importantly, it was recommended that all stakeholders be mindful that program evaluation plans are not intended to be fixed or constant. Program evaluation is an ongoing process that provides information about the merit and worth of the program. It is only through continuous development of evaluation plans such as those delineated by Maher (2000) that improvement to programs such as the PBS program can be made.

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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM INSTRUMENTATION

Instrument 1. Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire

> **Directions:** Please do not put your name or any other identifying information on this paper. Please write legibly and answer the questions to the best of your ability.

PART I

1. Please check one of the following that best describes you:
- ☐ Regular education classroom teacher employed by a contracted early childhood center
- ☐ Regular education classroom teacher employed directly by the district
- ☐ Special education classroom teacher
- ☐ Regular education teacher's assistant employed by a contracted early childhood center
- ☐ Regular education teacher's assistant employed directly by the district
- ☐ Special education teacher's assistant
- ☐ Family worker
- ☐ Early Childhood Center Director/Assistant Director
- ☐ Head Teacher
- ☐ Other: _____

2. If you are a teacher or teacher's assistant, please indicate the number of years that you have been teaching:
- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-4
- ☐ 5-6
- ☐ 7 or more

3. Have you attended at least one full-day professional development on the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) framework during the time that you have been employed as part of the school district's early childhood program?

- ☐ Yes……….When? ☐ 2002-2004 and/or ☐ 2005-2009
- ☐ No

Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire (cont.)

PART II

	1 not at all competent	2 minimally competent	3 neutral	4 moderately competent	5 extremely competent

How competent do you feel about your ability to:

1. Implement activities and routines in your classroom that will prevent or reduce challenging behaviors? ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

2. Identify triggers that may result in children engaging in challenging behaviors? ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

3. Identify the functions of challenging behaviors exhibited by the children in your class? ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

4. Identify adult responses to challenging behaviors that may serve to decrease challenging behaviors? ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

5. Teach new skills to the children in your class that would replace challenging behaviors? ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire (cont.)

PART III

1. Please list two ways in which you build positive relationships with your students and their families.
   a. _____

   _____

   b. _____

   _____

2. Please list two functions of challenging behaviors that are seen in preschool children.
   a. _____

   _____

   b. _____

   _____

3. Please provide two examples of triggers that may result in the occurrence of challenging behaviors in preschool children.
   a. _____

   _____

   b. _____

   _____

4. Please list two things that you could do to prevent the triggers that you listed in #3 from occurring.
   a. _____

   _____

   b. _____

   _____

5. Please list two new skills that can be taught to a preschool child that could replace challenging behaviors.
   a. _____

   _____

   b. _____

   _____

Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire (PART III Cont.)

6. Please list two strategies that, as a result of PBS training(s) you have attended, you are implementing in your classroom to promote social-emotional learning.

    a. _____

    _____

    b. _____

    _____

PART IV

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree or disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
1. My ability to reduce challenging behavior and increase positive behavior among my students has improved as a direct result of the PBS program.	○	○	○	○	○
2. I can tell that the implementation of the PBS program is highly important to my director or principal.	○	○	○	○	○
3. I can tell that the implementation of the PBS program is highly important to the Early Childhood Office.	○	○	○	○	○
4. I receive excellent support for implementing strategies from the PBS program.	○	○	○	○	○
5. Teaching social-emotional skills is the most important component of educating preschool students.	○	○	○	○	○

Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire (cont.)

PART V
Please categorize each of the following activities/services related to PBS as either a strength, adequacy, or an area in need of improvement:

	Strength	Adequate	Needs Improvement
1. Full day Professional Development on the PBS program	○	○	○
2. Mini *Lunch-and-Learn* workshops addressing specific aspects of PBS	○	○	○
3. Receiving written strategies from PIRT members	○	○	○
4. Having strategies modeled and/or coached for me by PIRT members	○	○	○
5. Obtaining action plans developed at Request for Assistance (RFA) meetings	○	○	○
6. PIRT assisted development of Behavior Support Plans based on Functional Behavior Assessments	○	○	○
7. Support from my director/principal	○	○	○
8. Support from my PIRT coordinator	○	○	○

PART VI
Please indicate the first, second, and third most important activities/services that you believe were or would be most helpful in developing your skills for reducing challenging behaviors and increasing positive behaviors in your classroom. Place a 1 in front of the item that you deem most helpful, a 2 for the second most helpful, and a 3 for the third most helpful. You may leave the remaining items blank.

_____ Full day professional development

_____ Lunch-and-learn workshops

_____ Written strategies from PIRT members

_____ Coaching and/or modeling of strategies

_____ Action plans developed at RFA meetings

_____ Behavior Support Plans

_____ Director/principal support

_____ PIRT coordinator support

PART VII

Please feel free to provide any additional comments or suggestions concerning the PBS program.

_____

_____

_____

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Instrument 1.1 Preschool Teacher Statistics

Refer to permanent product records to obtain information on preschool teacher gender and teacher certification. Refer to Instrument 1 *Positive Behavior Support Teacher's Questionnaire* for data on years of teaching experience and PBS training status. Enter the number and percentage that corresponds to each data element.

Academic year: _____

Data Element	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female		
Male		
Years of Teaching Experience		
1-2 years		
3-4 years		
5-6 years		
7 or more years		
Teacher Certification		
Certified		
Pending (Alternate Route)		

Instrument 1.2. Preschool Student Statistics

Refer to permanent product records to obtain information on preschool student gender, age, reason for referral to PIRT, referral to CST, and special education eligibility status. Enter the number and percentage that corresponds to each data element.

Academic year: _____

Data Element	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female		
Male		
Age		
3 years old		
4 years old		
5 years old		
Classroom Placement		
Contracted Early Childhood Center		
In-district Classroom		
Reason for Referral to PIRT		
ESI-R Screening		
Language		
Behavior		
Language and Behavior		
Other		
Referral to CST		
3 years old		
4 years old		
5 years old		
Special Education Eligibility Status		
Eligible		
Not Eligible		
Not Evaluated		

Instrument 2. Preschool Positive Behavior Support Classroom Implementation Checklist

Observer:			In district classroom:			☐ yes ☐ no	
Date:							

	Indicators	Clearly Visible	Moderately Visible	Not Visible	Clear Evidence of Use	Moderate Evidence of Use	No Evidence of Use	Comments
1	Daily visual schedule clearly posted and modified for each day as needed	3	2	1	3	2	1	
2	Morning arrival visual schedule clearly posted	3	2	1	3	2	1	
3	Rules with visual cues posted throughout the room	3	2	1	3	2	1	
4	Lunch visual schedule posted in clearly visible area	3	2	1	3	2	1	
5	Rest visual schedule posted in clearly visible area	3	2	1	3	2	1	
6	Stop signs posted on exit doors	3	2	1	3	2	1	
7	Hand washing visual schedule posted near the sink	3	2	1	3	2	1	
8	Visual schedule for brushing teeth clearly posted near the sink (if applicable)	3	2	1	3	2	1	
9	Visual schedule for using the bathroom posted in the bathroom	3	2	1	3	2	1	
10	Visual and auditory cues are present for transitions (such as traffic lights, bells, lights, songs)	3	2	1	3	2	1	
11	Magic Mouth available for large group activities	3	2	1	3	2	1	
12	Board games with all the pieces in tact (to promote turn-taking games)	3	2	1	3	2	1	
13	Songs Basket available to promote student choices	3	2	1	3	2	1	
14	Job chart clearly posted with job available for every child	3	2	1	3	2	1	
15	Turn taking schedule posted for computer and other highly preferred areas	3	2	1	3	2	1	
16	Visual support for line up provided (ex. Feet posted on floor)	3	2	1	3	2	1	
17	Visual support for choosing relaxation activities clearly available	3	2	1	3	2	1	
18	Choice boards clearly available to assist students with selecting activities	3	2	1	3	2	1	
19	Solution Kit readily available	3	2	1	3	2	1	
20	Feeling faces posted throughout the room	3	2	1	3	2	1	
21	Feeling books available in library	3	2	1	3	2	1	
22	Turtle puppets or other Tucker Turtle prompts clearly visible	3	2	1	3	2	1	
23	Super Turtle wall or other whole class acknowledgement of Super Turtle behaviors	3	2	1	3	2	1	
24	Child-made Teasing Shields readily available	3	2	1	3	2	1	
25	SuperFriend wall clearly visible with evidence of frequent use	3	2	1	3	2	1	

Instrument 2.1   Review of Professional Development on Positive Behavior Supports

Refer to permanent product records to obtain information on the name of the workshop, the date it was presented and the number in attendance. Enter the corresponding information.

Name of Workshop	Date	Number in Attendance	Audience

Instrument 2.2   Provision of Support to Teachers

This form is to be completed by PIRT members.

Academic year: _____

1. Refer to permanent product records to obtain data on the type of support provided to teachers and the frequency to which that support is provided. Enter the corresponding data into the table.

Type of Support Provided to Teachers	Frequency per Week
Modeling	
Coaching	
Written Strategies	
Verbal Instruction	

2. Please indicate the number of Behavior Support Plans that you developed this academic year: _____