

1. **Hypothesis:** All of Tracey's behaviors of concern are related to the aggression that she has been recently directing at peers (in the hallways and the classroom) and at the teachers. This aggression has developed into two forms: physical and verbal. Tracey shouts, argues, yells, threatens and practices name calling when she is angry. In addition, she has thrown chairs at her peers and slammed the classroom door when asked to go to the principal's office. The antecedent of these behaviors seems to be whenever the teacher asks the students to work independently and quietly by themselves. Tracey exhibits this aggressive behavior so that she can escape the classroom and relax while waiting for the principal to see her.

Tracey's low grades after six weeks of Middle School indicate that she may be having difficulty learning and understanding the material presented in class. During Tracey's interview she admitted to being "nervous about class." She also emphasized the fact that she hates when teachers ask her questions in front of the class, and she hates homework. Tracey is nervous in her new Middle School environment and thus, she is not comfortable completing any academic task alone whether it is answering questions, homework problems or working quietly at her desk. She knows that if she acts inappropriately, the teacher will send her out of the classroom and then she can complete activities that she is more comfortable with (read a book, sit quietly, etc.) These activities seem to release her anxiety. When Tracey leaves the classroom she is patient, calm and waits for the principal without any incidents.

2. It is apparent that Tracey has an intense desire to learn. Tracey's mother explains that sometimes when she comes home from a late shift "Tracey's papers and books are

sprawled out all over her bed and she is fast asleep.” Tracey works hard to complete her homework. From Tracey’s home life it is assumed that Tracey is fairly independent. She almost never makes a mess in the house and is responsible for putting her own dinner together since her father usually comes home and sleeps. Lastly, Tracey puts a lot of time and effort into the things she loves. She is a very dedicated musician and practices her flute every day. Her mom wishes that Tracey loved her other classes as much as she loves band.

It is always important to discover the strengths of every student. More often than not, we focus on the negatives and fail to realize the unique blessings that each of us was given by God. Often times, it is helpful to use that specific child’s strengths so that he/she will be successful in the classroom. What does the child like? What does the child persevere at? What positive qualities does the child exhibit regarding character? The strengths of a child can be used as a natural scaffold to overcome or strengthen the weaker attributes.

3. Within Erickson’s stages of development, Tracey would fall into the industry vs. inferiority category. Tracey is in her pre-teen years and has just entered Middle School. She has had to adjust to a new group of peers, a new environment and more difficult work. She believes that the teachers do not like her and she feels ‘dumb’ sitting in the classroom. Due to Tracey’s recent struggle with her academics, she feels inferior to her teachers and her classmates. In addition, Madison may be soon approaching the Adolescent stage of development and thus it is necessary for Tracey to learn to feel confident with her peers and herself.

4. Using the Supporting data from the Behavior Doctor FBA Data Tool, I hypothesized that during homework reviews/academic instruction Tracey threatens and screams in order to avoid frustrating work and potential failure. From the background information given and from looking at the data, it appears that Tracey generally exhibits her behavior when asked a question in class or when participating in a homework review. Due to the fact that Tracey receives very little academic help from home, Tracey is most likely wanting to escape these tasks because they are frustrating, she does not understand the information, and she is afraid to face potential failure in front of her classmates.

For the most part, when a verbal reprimand was given, Tracey did not stop her behavior. It was only when Tracey could fully escape the behavior (when she was sent out of the classroom) that her behavioral incidences stopped. This further indicates that Tracey was not trying to seek attention, but rather escape the classroom.

6. **Setting/event:** In the classroom during a quiet activity/academic work

**Trigger events:** When looking at the antecedents, I observed that most of the behaviors occur when Tracey is given an Instruction/Directive, asked to review homework with the class, called on in class, or asked to interact with her peers.

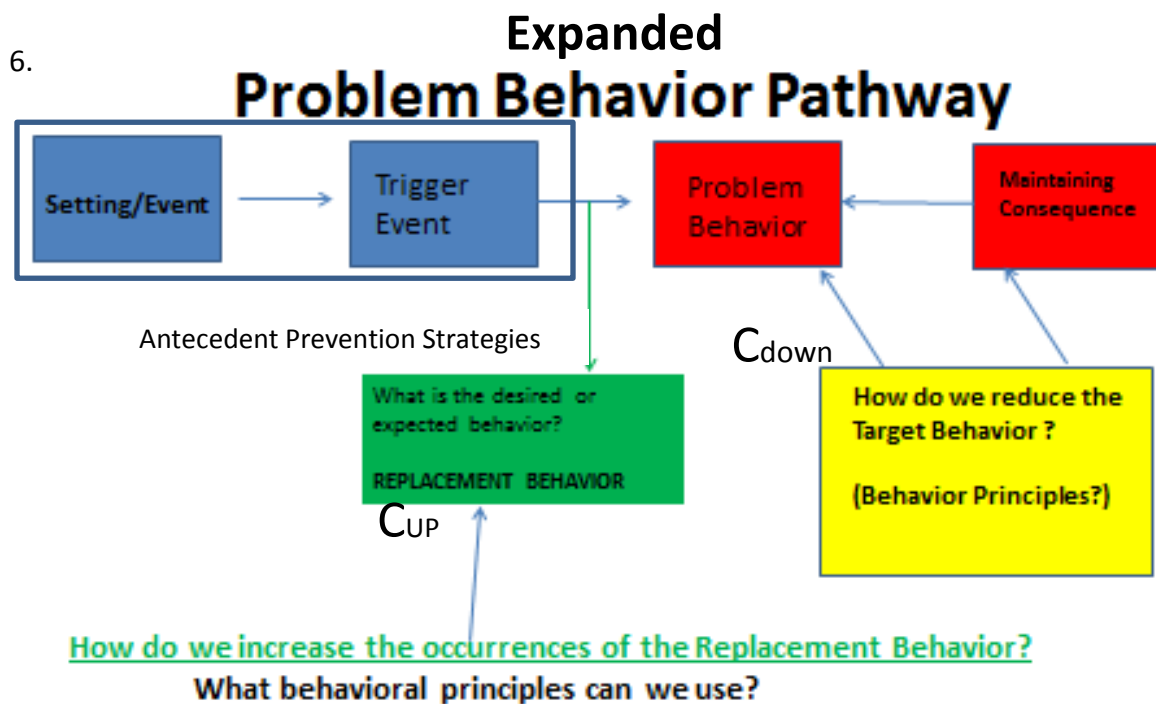
**Behavior of concern/maintaining consequence:** Tracey responds by shouting, throwing objects, threatening and name calling (aggressive verbal behavior.)

**Function:** From the following antecedents, one could make the hypothesis that when given a difficult academic task that makes her uncomfortable (antecedent),

Tracey shouts and uses threats (behavior) to avoid completing these tasks. Notice

that every time the teacher responded to the bad behavior by offering another choice or sending Tracey outside the classroom, Tracey usually stopped the behavior. The consequence that most consistently made Tracey stop her bad behaviors was when the teacher sent her outside the classroom.

Madeline is not receiving the scaffolds and independent work she needs to excel academically. Her parents are not home to help her with her homework or her academics and thus she is facing the pressure of having to do everything on her own. In many cases, bad behaviors are linked with problems in academics, and thus it is the teacher's responsibility to take action and make sure the student is performing on grade level with the rest of the class.



**A. Antecedent Prevention Strategies:**

- **Teacher tutoring:** Due to Tracey's high levels of frustration during homework reviews, the teacher may decide to start working afterschool with Tracey every Monday,

Wednesday and Friday for one hour so she feels more confident in her ability to do her homework. Currently, Tracey is completing her homework without parental help and she is feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. The teacher should talk to the parents about transportation arrangements.

- **Modifying homework so that it is manageable:** If Tracey is below her Zone of Proximal Development, the teacher may provide scaffolding or modify Tracey's homework and give her fewer problems. This way, Tracey will be able to focus on specific problems and work more on her accuracy which may provide confidence during homework reviews. This would also allow her to go to bed before 1:00 every night. Tracey's behaviors occur more in the afternoon when she is tired and defeated.
- **Scaffolding all lessons and instruction in every class:** The teacher and ES teacher will provide scaffolding and organizational techniques for all of Tracey's classes. Tracey will be learning the same material but it will be introduced one small section at a time (chunking).
- **Provide a graphic organizer:** The teacher will construct a graphic organizer for Madeline that lists all of the assignments and topics that will be taught during the week. Madeline will receive her graphic organizers on Friday's, before the new week, so she can work ahead for the next week if she desires to do so.
- Tracey will keep a homework planner where she is instructed to write the assignments that are due for the next day. Every time Tracey receives a new assignment she will be prompted by the teacher to write the date it is due on top of the paper and in her planner. Tracey will also have two separate folders to organize her papers for each

subject. On the left side of the folder will be labeled 'homework' and the right side will be labeled 'papers to take home.' All the teachers will check Tracey's planner at the end of each class.

- **Independent homework checks:** The teacher will print out the correct answers for every student and have them check their work individually. Afterwards, if an individual needs a problem to be worked out, the teacher will show the example on the chalkboard/smart board. This saves the entire class from humiliation if he/she did not understand the homework the previous night.

Pre-teaching in ES room: The teacher and ES teacher may need to go back to evaluate Tracey's IEP and determine whether Tracey is in the Least Restrictive Environment possible. It seems when Tracey is in the ES room for reading, very few behavioral problems occur. The behaviors occur more frequently during math, social studies, English and science when Tracey is in the general education classroom.

**Provide discussion questions ahead of time:** Another way in which the teacher may be able to change the environment to prevent a trigger event is to give Tracey the discussion questions that are going to be asked the next day so she can look over them and write down the answers ahead of time. Similar to this, if Tracey is going to be working with her peers for a group project the teacher should tell Tracey many days in advance. This may help to release anxiety.

**Structure groups for "peer interaction":** Instead of putting Tracey in different groups every time, it may be a good idea for Tracey to have a permanent group/partner that she can become

familiar with to release unneeded anxiety. Tracey should be paired with someone who shares similar interests/hobbies.

**Visual cue that indicates transition period:** Tracey also struggles with redirection/transitions in the classroom. The teacher may choose to eliminate this trigger event using a visual cue such as holding up 5 on his hands to warn Tracey that he will be redirecting soon. It is apparent that Tracey likes routine (she goes home, practices flute, does her homework and goes to bed) and thus, the feeling of 'not knowing what is going on' causes her behavior to escalate further.

**Weekly sessions with the school counselor:** The teacher may decide that it would be appropriate for Tracey to receive two counseling sessions a week (one on Tuesday and one on Thursday for 30 minutes) to help Tracey learn how to express/verbalize her emotions appropriately when she is feeling frustrated.

**Ripple Effect and social reinforcement:** The teacher will use behavioral specific language such as "Excellent job exhibiting good behavior during the math homework review!" or "I'm proud of your hard work!" The teacher should provide social reinforcement even when the student has not answered the homework question correctly. Perhaps if the teacher focuses more on the positive behaviors rather than the negative behaviors, Tracey will begin to want this praise as well.

**Skill streaming:** Lastly, the teacher will implement skill streaming so Tracey knows how to respond to stressful situations. The teacher may have Tracey model the appropriate behavior.

First the teacher models the appropriate behavior when asked to do something she doesn't want to do. The teacher thinks about it, writes her feelings down and then tells Tracey how she feels. (Ex. "I am angry because I don't like participating in homework views." "I will use my red slip to signal to the teacher that I don't understand a problem and she can help me figure out what to do.") Then, the teacher will let Tracey practice using a similar response to the next scenario.

B. **Replacement Behavior:** The goal is for Tracey to exhibit a behavior that is appropriate when she is frustrated. An example of this is using her words to tell the teacher she doesn't want to do that specific activity, using visual cues, taking a break and monitoring her own behavior. To begin with the teacher may give Tracey two colored slips: a red slip (indicating she is mad) and a green slip. **(Self-regulatory behavior)** When Tracey is not pleased with an activity or becomes anxious she can write on the back of the red slip why she is angry and raise her hand. **(cue)** The teacher will reassure Tracey that when Tracey has her red slip placed on her desk and her hand is raised, the teacher will come over in less than three minutes. Tracey may then take a seven minute break at her desk (not leaving the room) to calm down. These breaks will decrease by one minute every week. If Tracey needs help on a specific assignment/answering a question she may use the green slip to indicate she needs some extra assistance. Depending on how much Tracey uses the red slips, the teacher may decide to create a limit. (ex. You may use only four red slips a day.) This number may decrease by one every two weeks.

The teacher will also develop a behavior chart so Tracey can monitor her own behavior in every class. The sheet will have the name of the class and either a happy or sad face



below. If Tracey circles the sad face, she must describe the class period and write down the bad behaviors she used and why. If she circles the smiley face she must indicate why the class period was good. There will also be a place for the teacher to write comments in the corresponding box below that class. Tracey will have to report to each teacher to sign the box at the end of class. (Check in Check Out system)

The teacher may choose to set up a **positive reinforcement system** for Tracey. It may be that Tracey starts off with 25 music notes on her music chart. If Tracey ends up with at least five music notes at the end of the day, she is allowed to go to the music room during homeroom to practice her flute/listen to music. **Preferred activity** (The teacher would have to get permission from the band teacher to do this.) Each week, the teacher will decrease the baseline number of music notes by one. **(Shaping)** Eventually, the goal is to phase out this system of positive reinforcement so that Tracey is no longer extrinsically motivated, but intrinsically motivated.

The Desired Behavior would eventually be to have Tracey write down her feelings and then count to 10 to calm down.

**Reducing Behavior of Concern:** Currently, Tracey is exhibiting many aggressive behaviors: namely, shouting, threatening and throwing. Thus, it is important that Tracey's aggressive behavior is channeled into something else.

Tracey will be prompted by the teacher to put a tally mark on her self-check sheet if she chooses to exhibit one of her behaviors.

Since this is extremely aggressive behavior the teacher may immediately use **DRA** (continually lessening target behavior through establishment of an alternative behavior such as raising her hand to ask for help or using the ticket method. In addition, the teacher may use **DRO** so that Tracey must have no incidence of the behavior for at least 15 minutes of class. If Tracey follows this plan, she is allowed 10 minutes to choose an activity to do at the end of the day. Each week, 2 minutes will be added on until the 40 minute final goal is reached. **(shaping)**

The teacher may also use **removal punishment** to stop the bad behaviors from occurring. Every time Madison shouts or threatens someone, she will lose one of her music notes on her music chart.

Tracey may be given a squeeze ball to put in her desk. Every time Tracey is called on or asked to do something she doesn't want to she should squeeze the ball 10-20 times instead of shouting to regain composure and swallow twice (as if she is swallowing her angry words). She should be instructed to do this before she raises her hand and holds up the red slip to the teacher.

If Tracey is exhibiting one of her bad behaviors, the Teacher will prompt Tracey to use her red card by placing a small red magnet on the board.

**Extinction:** The teacher may choose to ignore Tracey's (minor) verbal accusations. However, this strategy will not work for more disruptive behaviors such as shouting and loud threatening.

7. The data recorded on the Behavioral Doctoral Tool is a clear indicator that the plan is working. On Monday, Tracey only shows four incidences of the behavior. There is only a single case in Science class where Tracey's behavior did not stop after a consequence

was given. On Tuesday, it appears that Tracey only showed six behavior incidences rather than the fifteen incidences that occurred prior to when the behavior plan was implemented. There are only two incidences where Tracey's behavior continued. On Wednesday, Tracey exhibits five behavioral incidences rather than the nineteen incidences that occurred prior to the behavior plan. Only one of the behaviors continues when a consequence is given. On Thursday, four incidences occur (rather than the previous fifteen) and all four stop. On Friday, four incidents occur and all four stop. The most common consequences given were the removal of a music note (removal punishment), a tally mark on the self-check monitoring card, prompting a red ticket and receiving a five minute break. There were, however, a couple of cases in which the teacher reverted back to the old consequences such as 'verbal reprimands.' I included these 'mistakes' to portray a more realistic data collection. Sometimes, in the moment of the behavior problem, teachers forget to follow their new plan and end up using their old consequences.

Overall, the amount of total incidences occurring over a period of five days is 25 incidences in comparison to the 49 incidences that occurred previously. Originally, as the week went on the behaviors continued to increase with intensity. However, when the new plan was implemented, there were a total of only eight behavioral incidences between Thursday and Friday combined. This implies that the antecedent modification that were made are working, Tracey is not as frustrated as before and thus is getting more sleep throughout the week which is allowing her to perform better in school.

**9. List any other steps you would take to be supportive of Tracey's positive development?**

- a. The teacher should make sure that she has open communication lines with Madeline's parents. Every Friday the teacher would send Tracey's behavior checklist home and follow up with a 15 minute phone conference discussing Tracey's behavior for the week. The more open the lines of communication are with the parents the more consistently the behavior plan will be followed.
- b. In order to ensure that Tracey remembered her papers for the following day, the teacher should discuss with Tracey's parents an organizational system that they could set up at home to ensure that Tracey remembered all of her papers to be returned to school for the next day. This could be having two different colored bins (one for recycled papers and one for papers that need to be returned the next day.)
- c. A ticket system should be set up for Tracey that is implemented at home. Tracey indicated that her dad does not seem to mind when she exhibits negative behaviors. Unfortunately, Tracey will not be able to improve her behavior if the same strategies and expectations are not being reinforced at home. It is essential that the teacher works with both the parents to ensure that both of them understand the purpose and the importance of the behavior plan.
- d. The teacher may also indicate to the parent's the importance of setting aside time to work with Tracey on her homework. Although the teacher will be helping Tracey three days a week, she needs extra support in the home as well. Perhaps Tracey's dad could

work with her for 20 minutes before he goes to bed. Tracey needs role models in her life that can aide her and guide her through difficult situations.