

Behavior Guidance & Support Framework for Early Childhood (LA 4)

Guidance aligned with IDEA and Best Practices in Early Childhood Education

Guiding Principles

- All children can learn and succeed when provided with developmentally appropriate support.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are the foundation and include: teaching expectations, reinforcing positive behaviors, and preventing challenging ones.
- Access: Support is provided for all students, with additional specially designed instruction for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Safety: Students, staff, and peers must be kept safe during behavioral incidents, with seclusion and restraint and/or removal as a last resort.

Supports for All Students

- Clear & Predictable Routines
 - Post visual schedules with simple pictures/icons.
 - Review the schedule at the start of the day and before transitions.
 - Provide verbal cues and transition songs/gestures.
- Behavior Expectations
 - Teach expectations (e.g., “Safe Hands,” “Kind Words”) through social stories and role play.
 - Reinforce positive behavior frequently and consistently.
 - Use class-wide reinforcement (token systems, praise chains, celebration boards).
- Environmental Supports
 - Provide calming areas with sensory items (soft seating, fidgets).
 - Reduce overstimulation by limiting visual clutter and controlling noise levels.
 - Be proactive by providing regular movement breaks and access to sensory tools.

Targeted Supports for Students with Emerging Needs

- Check-In/Check-Out Systems
 - At the beginning of the school day, complete check-ins with a teacher or paraprofessional to preview expectations and set goals.
 - At the end of the school day, complete a check-out for reflection and reinforcement.

- Small-Group Social Skills Instruction
 - Teach problem-solving, turn-taking, and interpersonal skills using social stories and modeling.
 - Discuss social story supports with related service providers, such as the speech-language pathologist.
- Visual & Communication Supports
 - Create “first/then” boards, choice boards, and timers.
 - Use picture systems, signing, gestures, and augmentative devices for students with communication needs.

Intensive Supports for Students with an IEP or Significant Behavioral Needs

- Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)
 - Discuss the need for an FBA with the school psychologists and/or special education teachers.
 - Conduct the FBA when behaviors interfere with learning.
 - Use the results of the FBA to create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
 - Discuss the BIP with the IEP team members and ensure all individuals are aware of modeling self-regulation strategies.
- Collaboration
 - Involve the IEP team, related service providers (occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech-language pathologist, behavior specialist), and families.
 - Monitor progress regularly and plan adjustments as needed.
 - Review LDOE online supports, such as the LRP Institute modules, to support behavioral needs

Crisis Response & Student Removal Procedures

- De-Escalation First
 - Ensure staff members are trained in de-escalation techniques (calm voice, redirection, offering safe space).
 - Provide choices and calming tools or quiet corners/centers.
 - Remove triggers (noise, crowding) before removing the student.
- Student Removal Protocol (only when safety is at risk)
 - Remove to a supervised safe space (temporary, not seclusion).
 - Document the incident and interventions attempted.
 - Support the student to reintegrate into class as soon as it is safe.
 - Track behavior incidents (frequency, duration, triggers, interventions used).
 - Review data at team meetings (teacher, admin, specialists).
 - Adjust supports as needed.
- Legal Alignment
 - Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), for students with an IEP, if a removal **exceeds 10 cumulative school days**, the IEP team should reconvene for a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR).
 - Ensure Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) continues, even during removals (alternate instruction, 1:1 support, or behavior-focused interventions).

- [Louisiana HB684](#) (Restraint & Seclusion Law) indicates that the use of seclusion and physical restraint should only occur in situations of "imminent risk of harm," meaning an immediate and impending threat of a person causing substantial physical injury to self or others.

Supports for Teachers, Support Staff, and Principals

- Professional Development
 - Provide training in PBIS, de-escalation, and sensory needs.
- Staff Support
 - Develop clear crisis-response protocols to reduce staff fear and liability.
 - Ensure access to behavior specialists for consultation.
- Administrative Role
 - Ensure consistency in behavior expectations and crisis response.
 - Serve as the final step in the removal process to protect instructional staff and students.

Behavior Supports: Permitted versus Not Permitted

| Focus Area | Permitted | Not Permitted |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Student Placement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students with IEPs can be placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with support. ● Placement changes must be decided by the IEP team. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student placement cannot be changed unilaterally by a teacher or administrator due to behavior alone. ● Placement changes cannot be made without an IEP meeting. |
| Classroom Removal (short-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers may remove a student from the class due to serious disruption(s) for a short period of time. ● The student should be supervised by the principal/designee. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may not be removed without documentation or principal/administrator involvement. ● “Informal” removals (e.g., repeatedly sending a child home early without due process) violate IDEA and state law. |

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| Suspension (temporary) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspensions are short-term and may occur for serious rule violations or when safety is threatened. Parents must be notified. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine suspension of preschool/LA4 students for minor, developmentally-typical behaviors (e.g., tantrums, crying, toileting issues) is prohibited. Suspensions should not occur without trying PBIS and interventions first. |
| Expulsion (long-term) | <p>Expulsions are reserved only for major infractions (e.g., weapons, drugs, severe endangerment) and require a due process hearing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must be offered an alternative educational placement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expulsions are not used for minor or developmentally typical behavior. Expulsions are not implemented without due process or without offering alternative placement. Preschool/LA4 expulsions are discouraged, except in extreme safety cases. |
| Seclusion and Restraint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seclusion and restraint are only allowed when a child poses an imminent risk of serious physical harm to self or others. All incidents must be documented and reported to parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It cannot be used as punishment or for staff convenience. It cannot be used in place of proper behavior support. |
| Protections for Students with IEPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If behavior impedes learning, the IEP must include PBIS and support. If a student is removed >10 days (cumulative), an MDR must be held. If the behavior is determined to not be a result of manifestation of the student's disability, the discipline may be the same as for other students; however, the school must still provide FAPE, which can occur in an alternative setting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with disabilities cannot be expelled/removed long-term if the behavior is linked to their disability. Schools cannot deny FAPE during suspension/expulsion. |

Resources

- [Early Childhood Classroom Supports](#)
- [RS 17:416.21: Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint](#)