

# RESPONDING TO SCHOOL CONTACTS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a way of supporting your child's strengths and helping your child learn by teaching behavior using proactive approaches that respond to each child's specific needs. Schools, individuals and families can use PBIS to support children to be successful in all environments.

**This tip sheet offers suggestions if you are contacted by your child's school about their behavior. Even though it can be difficult, working collaboratively with the school to understand and address behavior issues can help your child.**

## HOW DO I RESPOND WHEN THE SCHOOL INITIALLY CONTACTS ME?

Being contacted by the school about your child's behavior can bring up a variety of emotions, from anxiety to anger. All of these feelings are valid and normal. Both you and the school want your child to be successful. These strategies can guide your contact with the school to gather useful information and set the stage for collaborating with the school:

### ASK FOR DETAILS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED



Remain open to discussion with both the school and your child. Collect facts about the situation, and avoid making judgments or criticizing staff or other students. Specifically, you may consider asking:

- What was said, or done?
- What happened prior to and immediately after the incident?
- What were the actions and words of adults and peers before, during and after the incident?

To make sure everyone at the meeting is on the same page, consider providing a summary and asking if that covers the information provided. This information will help you to have a better understanding of the situation to know what areas to target for improvements.

### ASK HOW THE SCHOOL IS RESPONDING



Inquire about the supports in place to encourage positive behaviors and the actions that will be taken in response to the incident. Specifically, you may consider asking:

- How does the school teach and encourage positive behavior?
- What disciplinary action was chosen in response to the incident and why was this action chosen?
- Identify the next steps that will be taken by the school?

This information will help you to have a better understanding of the actions the school is taking and the options available to help prevent future incidents.

### ASK TO COLLABORATE



Express desire to work with the school and your child to ensure they have a successful school year. Following the initial call, questions will likely come up later.

- Ask for the person(s) name and contact information so you can follow-up.
- Try to schedule a follow-up when you receive the initial contact.
- Also, make sure to provide your preferred method for maintaining contact with the school and request the school provides regular updates on student behavior.

## HOW DO I KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING?

You may want to maintain regular communication with the school after you have been contacted. Communication between home and school is best when it is frequent, positive, and constructive. These strategies can help maintain effective communication with the school:



### ESTABLISH A PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION

With school staff, identify how and when to stay in touch about your child's behavior and any strategies that are being implemented. If you don't have the technology you need to communicate with school or if the times or format of suggested communication don't work for you, let the school know of your needs.



### SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCES

Share with school staff any concerns you have about your child's behavior at home, any patterns you notice in their behavior, and what works and doesn't work at home.



### MONITOR COMMUNICATION

Keep a log and records of all communications (phone, electronic and in-person) between you and the school. Reach out to the school to discuss any changes you would like to make to the frequency or format of your communication.

## WHAT IF OUR PLAN DOESN'T WORK?

Sometimes the initial plan developed to respond to behavior doesn't work. In these cases, you may need to schedule a meeting with the school to determine what to do next. These strategies may help:



### ASK TO PROBLEM-SOLVE

Respectfully communicate your concerns in writing and request a meeting to examine data and revise plans. See if the school already has a team that focuses on problem-solving that you can join. Help the team collect and analyze information about your child's behaviors, academics and social-emotional skills and needs. Use the information to help identify new interventions to try. Focus your attention on finding solutions rather than dwelling on the problem.



### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

If your child has a 504 plan or an individualized education program (IEP), be familiar with legal protections (procedural safeguards) available to your child during the IEP process to allow continuation of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Consider requesting a functional behavioral assessment to develop a behavior intervention plan. Know your family's rights and responsibilities when disciplinary action is taken by the school.

## MORE INFORMATION

Family-School-Community Alliance: <https://fscalliance.org/>  
 National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS: [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)  
 Center for Parent Information & Resources: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/>  
 Association for Positive Behavior Supports: [www.apbs.org](http://www.apbs.org)  
 Home and Community Network of APBS: <https://hcpbs.org/>

DEVELOPED BY THE FAMILY-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Visit <https://fscalliance.org/> for more information