

Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 1, Elementary): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle

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Description:

Mr. Santini's classroom has students with a range of social, emotional, and academic skills.

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Description:

He explicitly teaches and reinforces expectations, rules, and procedures.

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Description:

Despite this, he has two students who continue to struggle.

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Description:

The first is Nora.

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She is successful across academic content areas and can usually work independently after minimal teacher-led instruction.

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Description:

She is a confident student, enjoys challenging assignments, and is well-liked by her peers.

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Description:

However, during whole-group instruction, Nora can easily become frustrated and exhibits challenging behavior.

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Description:

This typically happens when peers ask "silly" questions

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Description:

or need extra help on activities she finds easy.

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At times, Mr. Santini is able to quickly re-engage her in class instruction, but on other occasions Nora's behavior escalates.

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Description:

She talks back and shouts at Mr. Santini

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Description:

before eventually putting her head down, refusing to respond.

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Description:

Mr. Santini has tried reminding Nora of the classroom expectations and asking her what's wrong, but neither action calms her down.

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Description:

The second student is Kai.

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He is outgoing and easily makes friends.

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Description:

He's a hard worker and enjoys hands-on projects and working in a group.

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Description:

However, Kai struggles with reading and shows signs of frustration when required to read aloud Notes:



Description:

or answer comprehension questions.

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Description:

When called on during instruction, he sighs loudly,

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puts his head down, and occasionally refuses to participate.

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Description:

His behavior can escalate from shouting

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Description:

to shoving everything off his desk

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Description:

to storming out of the classroom.

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Description:

Mr. Santini consistently reminds Kai that he needs to give his best effort and that everyone makes mistakes.

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Sometimes this reminder gets him back on track.

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Description:

But at other times, this approach seems to make things worse.

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Description:

Mr. Santini is confused and frustrated. He wonders why his efforts aren't consistently working for Nora and Kai.

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Description:

Here's your challenge:

Notes:



Description:

What should educators understand about challenging behaviors?

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Description:

How can educators recognize and intervene when student behavior is escalating?

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Description:

For more open educational resurces (OERs) about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices, visit: iris.peabody. vanderbilt.edu or iriscenter.com