

CASE STUDIES FOR PATHWAY CHARTING

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CAESAR

Caesar is a 6th grader with ADHD and learning disability in reading. Last year he had a difficult time on the playground without adult supervision due to his temper. When confronted with a rule he believes to be unjust, or a peer conflict, Caesar would explode, hitting and kicking the offending peer or adult. However, he has had only minor difficulty this year, due to increased supervision and positive points for refraining from physical fighting that he exchanges for home privileges and school access to desired computer games and access to participation in team sports. Though he has not had any physical fighting this year, verbal outburst and peer conflict have occurred on occasion which “set him up for problems” according to his teacher. After those occasions, staff know he will have difficulty.

The curriculum this year has been difficult for Caesar, due to his 3rd grade reading and writing skills, though his oral skills are exceptional, and he is very fond of science and social studies. He is making steady progress in reading this year, gaining more growth than expected. He gets along well with peers, despite the previous recess problems. Currently, Caesar has been upset about one teacher’s expectation that he complete an increasing amount of work independently. At times, he will refuse to follow the directions, and will escalate to swearing if the adult persists. He has also hit or pushed the adult away when highly escalated.

AARON

Aaron is a highly social and popular 4th grader with a twinkle in his eye, a big grin most of the time, and a high activity level. He has no disabilities. Everyone enjoys being paired with Aaron, but often the work produced is less than adequate. When Aaron has had a 30 minute period in which he has not been able to talk to his peers, he will immediately start talking off task when the teacher changes the activity to another task in which he has the opportunity to talk to his peers, such as during a lecture or when isolated during seatwork. The teacher knows Aaron is striving for attention and has often left him out of activities because “he is just too hard to manage.”

LISA

Lisa is a quiet, shy 10th grader with no disabilities. She will speak in class sometimes, but has a preference not to do so. Parents report she is a real “chatter box” at home. Typically, when any teacher calls on Lisa to answer a question, Lisa will just put her head down on her desk. Then she waits until the teacher calls on someone else before she puts her head back up again. This effectively leads to Lisa avoiding talking. Her teacher is concerned, and wants to address this problem.

BRIAN

Brian is a kindergartener with a special education eligibility diagnosis of speech/language disorder but with many features suggestive of autism. He is verbal, and uses 3-4 word sentences routinely to express needs and wants, but never to comment on something in the environment. Brian likes routines, and becomes very upset if the bus is late, or if the bus driver is not the expected one. On those days, when Brian’s bus routine has changed, staff members say they “know he will have problems.” Each school day Brian puts his coat away, and goes to circle time. After going to circle, on many days, Brian will run away, and kick and head butt if captured after running away, if the activity at circle time lasts more than five minutes. Brian is more likely to leave circle by running away, on days when the bus routine has changed from the typical bus routine.

NATHAN

Nathan is a freshman in high school with average academic achievement, but a diagnosis of high functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome. He has required a 1 on 1 aide for all of his academic career, and has a history of withdrawal into verbal perseverative behavior when stressed. He repeats movie scripts, book excerpts or other memorized material when anxious, but can be interrupted sometimes. At other times, a short class removal for a few moments has been effective.

On the first day of school it was especially hot, and Nathan has a history of responding poorly to hot weather. The autism specialist had taken Nathan around to meet teachers and learn the pathways between classes to help de-stress the transition to the new school. Nathan's current perseverative interest transitioned over the summer from Pokémon card characters to Nazis, which was of concern to his family. However, Nathan's interests, while intense, often transition to a new topic within a few months. Nathan has no history of aggression towards peers or adults, despite periodic intense interest in violent themes, such as Nazi activity he learned about on the history channel over the summer.

Nathan entered his German class and sat down immediately in a desk near the door. His assigned aide entered the room and accidentally bumped Nathan as she entered. As other students entered the room, Nathan leaped up and loudly stated, "What do I have to do to get you people to leave this place! Should I kill you all! Do I have to put you in the gas chamber, etc. etc." for several sentences related to his current Nazi interest.

Chart the pathway for this problem behavior. What school issues are present related to threatening behavior? What behaviors would you recommend as a functionally equivalent replacement behavior for future situations? How might you diffuse the issue of "hot days" that are challenges for Nathan?