

Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

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Specially Designed Instruction

Legally specially designed instruction (SDI) is the content, methodology and instructional strategies unique to the individual with emotional/behavioral disability. If the student does not need SDI, then eligibility criteria for the disability has not been met.

In general these students have difficulty following adult directives, getting along with peers, modulating mood, managing real and perceived stressful events in their lives in order to thrive in school. This includes coping with heightened arousal from stress response, anxiety and fears due to self defeating thoughts and in general the interpretation of the world through a negative, defeatist lens rather than an optimistic, growth mindset.

The TIERS model classroom assures that all students receive the specific SDI that will allow the student to recover to the extent possible, from the symptoms that created the eligibility.

Content Components in TIERS programs include:

1. **Social Skills curriculum** that teaches acceptable ways to accept feedback, and other teachable skills that may not be in the students' skill repertoire.
 - a. Skillstreaming, Boy's Town Social Skills Curriculum, Social Skills Improvement System are sample evidence based curricula.
2. **Social Emotional Learning curriculum** that teaches students how to cope with stress, and manage thoughts and feelings
 - a. See: www.casel.org for evidence based SEL curriculum such as Second Step k-8, School Connect 9-12, The Ruler, Strong Teens, Strong Kids, Lions' Quest and others
3. **Physiology for Learning** that includes mood scaling, diet, sleep hygiene and stress management through mindfulness training
 - a. Mood: See Subjective Units of Distress/Discomfort Scaling, (SUDS)
 - b. Mindfulness: See **Mind-Up** for prek-8 and **Learning to Breathe** for 9-12
 - c. Sleep hygiene and diet: See sleep hygiene record keeping logs and health curricula for diet
4. **Self-Governance Circles** to provide the format for learning the social skills of complementing others, accepting complements, accepting and giving apologies

Methodologies and Instructional Strategies in TIERS programs include:

1. **An interval delivered point system** that gives feedback on full, partial and no success in general areas of safe, respect and responsible behavior as well as targeted individual goals.
2. **A daily contingent access to a honor's room/social laboratory** when 80% or better points are earned in order to practice social skills taught in class in the social laboratory, less structured environment.
3. **A three level system of motivation** based on increased success in meeting daily goals that includes honors outings in the community with continued success.
4. **A bonus point system** delivered within the interval to provide continuous positive feedback to motivate the student to continue with good behaviors up to the interval feedback session. This pays off in student store and can be used to gradually teach delaying of gratification through a banking system.
5. **Rigorous academics** tailored to specific skill deficits as well as common core instruction for grade placement delivered with high student engagement to prevent escape motivated behaviors.
6. **A systematic response to problem behavior, P.R.O.M.P.T.** that is linked to the point system based on solid relationships and a step-wise system of response for willful behavior.
7. **A personalized de-escalation protocol** for out of control emotionally driven explosions that uses collaborative problem solving to maintain safety.
8. **A 4 step reboot system** that does not include seclusion. This is as an alternative to suspension for most of the dangerous behaviors that would result in suspension of non-disabled students.

Related Services

Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disability may require related service(s) to benefit from their special education services. Related service providers may often be counselors, school or clinical service providers, behavior specialists, Marriage/Family Therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers and so forth.

When the student has not responded to the specially designed instruction, and an additional combination of behavioral contract, school home notes, and mentoring, the IEP team will meet to determine that next layer of intervention that will be delivered through providers. An IEP meeting can be called at any time to evaluate need for related services.

1. **For willful purposeful behavior** designed to get something or escape something, a FBA Functional Behavioral Assessment may be conducted by designated personnel to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan to examine replacement behavior instruction needs and other individualized positive behavioral supports. Often a behavior specialist will become involved in delivering supporting and supervising record keeping on replacement behavior training and consultation.
2. **For emotionally driven behavior**, a cognitive behavioral approach may be undertaken to provide measurable skill instruction delivered by one of the related service providers identified above.
3. **For storm and stress in the home** affecting social emotional wellbeing and academic engagement, related service providers may include parent supports, instruction and wrap around services in addition or instead of cognitive behavior intervention/therapy.