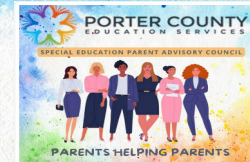


Please Sign In



WELCOME TO THE  
Porter County Education Services (PCES)  
Special Education Parent Advisory Council  
(SEPAC)

CommUNITY Meeting  
January 2026

## WHAT IS A SEPAC?

A Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a district-level (and/or in collaboration with an interlocal that contracts with local districts), parent-driven group that provides input to the local special education provider on system-level challenges regarding special education and related services. A local SEPAC provides direct input to school personnel and leaders about policies, programs, practices, and services that have an impact on students with disabilities and their families.

Its purpose is to advise, advocate and offer guidance, not to decide policy.

An effective SEPAC can increase the proactive involvement of families by inviting their input in ways that can be used to share local special education policy.

WE ARE  
PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

## WHO IS YOUR SEPAC TEAM?

- ❖ **Duneland** ~ Jackie Hood & Rebecca Shellito
  - ❖ **East Porter** ~ Jessica Kruger
- ❖ **Porter** ~ Alexis Kegebein & Maja Nikolov
  - ❖ **Portage** ~ Cass Pogue
  - ❖ **SELF School** ~ Kaley Piercy
- ❖ **Valparaiso** ~ Jessica Witherspoon & Jill Isley

## Special Education Administration

- ❖ **Executive Director** ~ Erin Hawkins, ehawkins@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **CFO/Treasurer/HR** ~ Quinnlyn Van Rys, qvanrys@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **SELF Principal/IEP Trainer** ~ Jen Rogers, jrogers@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **SELF Assistant Principal/OT & PT Supervisor** ~ Erica Wood, ewood@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **M-Team Director/AT Supervisor/Medicaid Reimbursement/Complaint Compliance Coordinator** ~ Shannon Aardema, saardema@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Shared Services Supervisor: Speech; Behaviorists & Student Service Coordinators; DHH & BLV programs; Nonpub Teacher; CPI Trainer; & Teacher Cohort** ~ Morgan Derby, mderby@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Speech Coordinator** ~ Alice Tokoly, atokoly@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Career & Tech Center Executive Director** ~ Audra Peterson, apeterson@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Career & Tech Center Principal** ~ Kyle Becich, kbecich@pces.k12.in.us

## ~ Before We Begin ~



**Engage Fully**



**What's Shared Here, Stays Here**



**What's Learned Here, Leaves Here**



**Take Care of Your Needs**

## Behavioral Supports & Services

In & Out Of School Settings

# Experiencing Behavioral Challenges

For Your Student With IEP???

## In-School VS Out-Of-School Supports

In-School Obligation	Out-Of-School (Private Vendor) Obligation
FAPE	Not FAPE

FAPE = Free Appropriate Public Education

## In-School Supports

Individuals w/Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Section 504
IEPs	504s
FAPE	FAPE

FAPE = Free Appropriate Public Education

Federal law under IDEA & Section 504 ensures all eligible students with disabilities receive special education and related services at public expense to meet their unique needs.

## Indiana's Special Education Law Article 7



SCAN HERE  
To Access Article 7  
(2024)

## In-School Supports & Services

Morgan Derby  
Shared Services Supervisor

Contact Information  
mderby@pces.k12.in.us  
219-464-9607

## Behavior Support in School: FBA's & BIPs

Presented by Morgan Derby,  
PCES Shared Services Supervisor

Let's Start with Some Vocabulary!

### FBA = Functional Behavioral Assessment

*According to Article 7 - Sec. 41. "Functional behavioral assessment" means a process that uses data to identify patterns in the student's behavior and the purpose or function of the behavior for the student.*

## FBA = Functional Behavioral Assessment

- An FBA should include the following data:
  - What are the behaviors of concern?
  - What are the functions of the behavior?
  - What are the student's triggers?
  - What strategies have been tried in the past?
  - What are new strategies that could be implemented?
- The data can be collected from observations, interviews, questionnaires, teacher documentation, discipline & attendance records, medical reports, and/or standardized assessments.
- This is created as a separate document and it is not embedded into the IEP, but it is uploaded into Special Programs.

## BIP = Behavioral Intervention Plan

According to Article 7 - Sec. 10. (a) "Behavioral intervention plan" means a plan agreed upon by the CCC and incorporated into a student's IEP that describes the following:

- (1) The pattern of behavior that impedes the student's learning or the learning of others.
- (2) The purpose or function of the behavior as identified in a functional behavioral assessment.
- (3) The positive interventions and supports, and other strategies, to:
  - (A) address the behavior; and
  - (B) maximize consistency of implementation across people and settings in which the student is involved.
- (4) If applicable, the skills that will be taught and monitored in an effort to change a specific pattern of behavior of the student. The behavioral intervention plan seeks to maximize consistency of implementation across people and settings in which the student is involved.

## BIP = Behavioral Intervention Plan

- A BIP can be formal or informal - meaning it could be part of the IEP or it might not be mentioned in the IEP.
- Any student can have a BIP- whether they have an IEP or not.
- For the purpose of this presentation, we are talking about BIPs that are part of the IEP.
- BIPs can be found under the Behavioral Intervention Plan section of the IEP.

## How do I know if my child needs an FBA or BIP?

Ask for an FBA if...

- If any member of the case conference committee is suggesting a change in LRE, placement, or length of day due to behavior
- If your child is struggling with behavior and it's significantly impacting their learning or the learning of their peers

Ask for a BIP if...

- Your child needs more individualized behavioral support than would be provided in a typical classroom management plan.
- Your child has moderate to significant behavioral concerns.
- Your child's behavior impacts their learning or the learning of others.

## My child is struggling with behavior at school. What should we do next?

### Ask for a Case Conference!

- If you haven't had a case conference to discuss your child's behavior, email or call your child's TOR and ask for a conference. The school will need to have a conference within 10 school days of receiving your request.
- Present your concerns to the case conference committee and ask to discuss different behavior support that can be offered.
- You can ask for a school-based or PCES behaviorist to attend the conference too.

### Behavior Support Continuum

- Some students just need a few environmental changes, such as...
  - More frequent breaks
  - Flexible seating options
  - A tape line on the floor to help them stay in one spot
  - A visual schedule
  - Check-ins with preferred adults throughout the day
- Depending on your child's specific needs, these can be written in an IEP as accommodations OR written as a behavior plan.
- Some students require additional behavioral support, which should be written as a behavior plan in the student's IEP.

### FBA vs. BIP

#### FBA

- This is a formal evaluation/assessment that requires parent/guardian consent. Once the parent/guardian signs the consent, the FBA must be completed within a certain timeframe (typically 50 school days).

#### BIP

- A BIP is a section of the IEP. It is only added if a student needs it.
- A student should have a behavior plan if they demonstrate behaviors that impact their learning or the learning of others.
- A behavior plan can be added at a case conference.

## FBA vs. BIP

### FBA

- A PCES behaviorist or MTEAM member completes the FBAs in Porter County.
- The FBA is presented and reviewed at a case conference and uploaded into Special Programs.
- A copy is also given to the parent/guardians and the school.

### BIP

- A TOR, behaviorist, director, or MTEAM member can write a behavior plan, but it should be done in collaboration with the case conference committee.
- A behavior plan should be reviewed a minimum of once per year at the ACR, but more frequently if the student is struggling.

## FBA vs. BIP, continued

### FBA

- Any member of the case conference committee can ask for an FBA.
- Parents/Guardians must sign consent.
- FBAs are automatically included with any evaluations for an Emotional Disability, per Article 7.

### BIP

- Any member of the case conference committee can suggest a behavior plan. A parent/guardian does not have to sign specific consent for a behavior plan because it is embedded in the IEP.
- A student does not have to have an FBA in order to have a BIP, but it is recommended if behaviors are significant or complex.

## Quick Facts!

- Data collected from the FBA should drive the BIP.
- FBAs can be completed multiple times over your child's school career.
- BIPs can be updated several times per year. There isn't a limit to how frequently they can be revised, but new strategies should be tried with fidelity for 4-6 weeks before determining if they are successful.
- BIPs should focus on 1-3 behaviors that are a primary concern.

## Who are the Behavior Specialists in Duneland?

- PCES Behaviorist – Michaelene (Mike) Igielski
  - [migielski@pces.12.in.us](mailto:migielski@pces.12.in.us)
- Duneland Behaviorist – Sophia Dekker
  - [sdekker@duneland.k12.in.us](mailto:sdekker@duneland.k12.in.us)

### Who are the Behavior Specialists in Portage?

- PCES Behaviorist - Traci Pimentel
  - [tpimentel@pces.k12.in.us](mailto:tpimentel@pces.k12.in.us)
- Portage Behaviorist - Katie Marmino & Rachael Whitworth
  - [katie.marmino@portage.k12.in.us](mailto:katie.marmino@portage.k12.in.us)
  - [rachael.whitworth@pces.k12.in.us](mailto:rachael.whitworth@pces.k12.in.us)

### Who are the Behavior Specialists in Valpo?

- PCES Behaviorist - Jillian Kosiara
  - [jkosiara@pces.k12.in.us](mailto:jkosiara@pces.k12.in.us)
- Valpo Behaviorist - Laura Peart
  - [lpeart@valpo.k12.in.us](mailto:lpeart@valpo.k12.in.us)
- Valpo Behaviorist - Kate Longoria
  - [klongoria@valpo.k12.in.us](mailto:klongoria@valpo.k12.in.us)

### Who is the Behavior Specialist in East Porter, Union Twp, Hebron, and Porter Twp?

- PCES Behaviorist - Natalie Laurinaitis
  - [nlaurinaitis@pces.k12.in.us](mailto:nlaurinaitis@pces.k12.in.us)

**Any Questions?**

- **THANK YOU, Morgan!**

## **Out-Of-School Supports**

**Debra Farrar-Schneider, Ph.D., H.S.P.P.,  
BCBA-D, IMH-E®**

Contact Information  
[dfarrarschneider@behaviorspecialists.net](mailto:dfarrarschneider@behaviorspecialists.net)

# **Behavior Strategies for Parents**

## **Engage In Self-Care!**

"Being a parent is the hardest job you'll ever love"

- You will only be able to do the job well if you are taking care of yourself.
- Self-care includes:
  - Getting enough sleep every night
  - Staying hydrated
  - Getting regular exercise
  - Spending time away from children
- Ask others for help.

## Have A Sense Of Humor!

“Parenting without a sense of humor is like being an accountant who sucks at math.”— Amber Dusick

- Laughter and perspective are necessary tools for navigating the *unpredictable* journey of parenthood.
- If we develop the ability to laugh at the random, ridiculous occurrences that inevitably accompany parenthood, we acknowledge parenting challenges without judgment.
- Don't sweat the small stuff.
- Research suggests humor is also a good parenting tool.

## Teach And Model Appropriate Behaviors

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.” James Baldwin

- Discuss and model your process (narrate thoughts and feelings) for:
  - Solving problems
  - Regulating yourself
  - Dealing with disappointment and frustration
  - Admitting mistakes, learning from them, and striving to change
- Create teachable moments when a child's behavior is inappropriate. Example: “That was disrespectful. We can handle that situation better by (specify action).”
- Cannot assume that your child knows what they should be doing.

## Provide Clear Instructions

- Be sure you have their attention before giving instructions.
- Specify exactly what you want them to do (rather than what not to do).
- If they do not have a choice, make a statement (do not ask a question).
- If you are not going to do it with them, do not say “Let's”.
- Pause and give them time to respond rather than repeating the instruction right away. Allow them at least 8 seconds to process an instruction.



## Provide Positive Attention For Appropriate Behaviors

- Catch them being good!
- Provide attention/rewards when you observe appropriate behaviors.
- Be sure that positive behaviors are receiving more attention than negative behaviors.
- Point out improvements, no matter how small.
- Ignore minor misbehaviors.

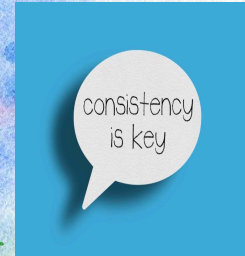


## Set Limits



- Times (e.g., bedtime, curfew)
- Boundaries (You can go here but not over there)
- Behaviors (You may do this but cannot do that)
- Communicate your expectations to the child prior to an event/outing (frontload).

## Be Consistent



- Children are confused when a behavior is acceptable one day and is not acceptable on another day.
- If you cannot respond to inappropriate behaviors in the way you indicated you would, pretend like you didn't see it.
- Parenting styles between parents should be as consistent as possible with both parents.

## Promote Responsibility And Independence

- Promote responsibility by assigning age- appropriate chores.
- Provide encouragement for tackling challenges.
- Allow them to fail and provide comfort.
- Do not solve all their problems or remove all obstacles (you want them to learn how to experience failure/disappointment while you are there to support them).
- Require your child to take responsibility for their actions. If your child breaks something (purposely or accidentally), require them to clean up the mess/replace it. If they do something unkind/that upsets someone, have them do something nice to make it up to the person (do not force an apology).
- Do not allow labels to define or limit your child (or excuse inappropriate behavior).

## Respect Your Child's Feelings

- Discuss emotions and ensure they know that verbally expressing feelings is okay (but behaving inappropriately as a result of those feelings is not okay).
- Provide empathy for their feelings and don't invalidate their feelings, even if you don't understand why they feel that way.
- Memorize a few phrases that you can use that sound sincere.

### Empathy Phrases

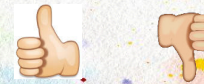
- What a frustrating situation to be in!
- That sounds really hard.
- That really stinks.
- Yes, I can see how that might make you feel really (state emotion).
- What a tough spot.
- I bet you feel (state emotion).
- Yikes, I know how much that meant to you.
- If I thought ..., I would have a hard time, too.

## Model Good Self-Regulation

- Lecturing and screaming are not effective behavior strategies. Don't yell unless it is to shout, "Good job!"
- Should be regulated and remain objective, neutral when you are addressing inappropriate behavior.
- Walk away or separate yourself from your child to collect your thoughts or feelings, when necessary.
- When you are both calm, explain to child why you were upset and identify a way to handle the situation better in the future. Discuss it *only* once and move on.
- Co-regulating (showing empathy and modeling calmness) helps your child learn how to regulate their emotions.

## Communication Strategies

- When gently correcting your child, use the "crap sandwich" method. Tell your child a positive behavior s/he displayed. Then, *briefly* point out what your child needs to do differently. Follow this with another positive behavior your child displayed.
- Agree on nonverbal or verbal cues that alert your child that you are happy or unhappy with their behavior. This is a good way to communicate when others are present, so you don't embarrass them.



## Avoid Power Struggles



- Do not continue to engage with your child when they are displaying negative behaviors. If child is yelling, say, "I will be happy to talk with you about that when you are calm, but I am unable to talk to you until you are behaving appropriately."
- When possible, provide child with 2 appropriate choices. Saying, "Would you like to pick up your toys or put away the books first?" is a choice.
- Do not argue. It takes two people to argue.

## Disruptive Behavior

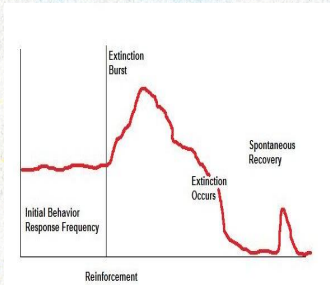
If disruptive behavior is occurring, it is somehow being reinforced.

Need to figure out how it is being reinforced and remove reinforcement, if possible.



## Extinction

- A previously reinforced behavior is no longer reinforced, so behavior is weakened and eventually stops occurring in the future.
- Must be prepared for extinction burst, which may result in an increase in frequency, duration, or intensity of the behavior or occurrence of novel behaviors



## Time-Out

- Child is removed from reinforcing environment for a brief period of time following a problem behavior.
  - Nonexclusionary time-out
  - Contingent observation
  - Exclusionary time-out



## Important Components of Time-Out

- Provide advance warning, because child needs to know which behaviors result in time-out.
- Have a pre-determined place for it.
- Should immediately follow the misbehavior, if possible.
- State the reason, being specific, brief, and unemotional.
- Keep length brief (1 minute per year of age is standard).
- Using a timer is recommended so they know how long they will be there (and you don't forget to let them out).
- Should be calm for at least 5-10 seconds before being allowed to leave time-out.
- Should be ignored while they are in time-out (i.e., not talking to them or about them, not gesturing in their direction, even if they are whining, crying, or protesting).
- Should not have access to any rewarding stimuli, such as television, electronic devices, toys, or games, while in time-out.

## Response Cost

- Child loses a specified amount of a reinforcer following a problem behavior.



### Example

Behavior: Child is caught playing video games at night when he is supposed to be going to sleep.

Response cost: Child loses opportunity to play video games for the following day (parent locks it in car trunk so it cannot be accessed).

## Overcorrection

- Child has to engage in effortful behavior related to the inappropriate behavior.
- ✓ Restitution- required to fix the environment disrupted by the problem behavior
- ✓ Positive practice- must engage in correct forms of behavior for a number of times or period of time

### Example

Behavior: Boy knocks his sister's block tower over.

Restitution: Boy rebuilds the block tower.

Positive practice: Boy is required to appropriately ask his sister if he can join her in block play 5 times.



## Support Outside the School

- Talk to your pediatrician.
- Find a behavior therapist who can assist you.
- Family Supports Home and Community Based Services (FSW) Waiver <https://www.in.gov/medicaid/members/home-and-community-based-services/family-supports-waiver/>

## Support Organizations

- Indiana Family to Family <https://www.inf2f.org/>
- Best Buddies <https://www.bestbuddies.org/family-support/>
- Chasing Dreams <https://chasingdreams.org/>

## Websites

- Center for Parent Information and Resources <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/behavior-at-home/>
- Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE) <https://wapave.org/>
- Association for Positive Behavior Support <https://apbs.org/how-we-can-help-for-families/>
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning [https://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training\\_modules.html](https://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_modules.html)
- The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI) <https://cainclusion.org/camap/family-engagement/>

## Suggested Readings

- How to Behave So Your Children Will, Too! by Sal Severe
- SOS: Help for Parents: A Practical Guide for Handling Common Everyday Behavior Problems by Lynn Clark
- How to Talk So Little Kids Will Listen: A Survival Guide to Life with Children Ages 2–7 by Joanna Faber and Julie King
- Don't Shoot the Dog by Karen Pryor

## Dr. Deb Q&A

- **THANK YOU, Dr. Deb!**
- Questions?

## Maximizing Supports

### *Parents/Guardians/Decisionmakers:*

- Utilize the supports and resources available in/out of school settings to better serve the child
- Share material with your team in/out of school
- Come to the IEP table with ideas of ways to support or feedback on what works in the home/community settings
- Give thought on ways that you and your team can work collaboratively to benefit your child
- Consider the importance of continuity of care for the child, in all settings

## Working Together

*Think of the impact a student has when they know their parent(s) and school team members are working together and building a sense of community for them*

***"Many-hands make light work"***

## General Resources

- NWI First Steps - [indianafirststeps.org](http://indianafirststeps.org)
- IN\*SOURCE - [insource.org](http://insource.org)
- CoAction - [coaction.care](http://coaction.care)
- Area Agencies on Aging - [in.gov/fssa/da/area-agencies-on-aging/](http://in.gov/fssa/da/area-agencies-on-aging/)
- BDS - [in.gov/fssa/ddrs/developmental-disability-services/](http://in.gov/fssa/ddrs/developmental-disability-services/)
- Social Security - [ssa.gov/benefits/disability/](http://ssa.gov/benefits/disability/)
- Vocational Rehabilitation - [in.gov/fssa/ddrs/rehabilitation-employment](http://in.gov/fssa/ddrs/rehabilitation-employment)
- Family to Family (Indiana) - [inf2f.org/](http://inf2f.org/)
- The Arc of Indiana - [arcind.org](http://arcind.org)
- Indiana Department Of Education - [in.gov/doe](http://in.gov/doe)
- IEP Technical Assistance Center - [iepta.org](http://iepta.org)

## HOW DID WE DO?



## Wrap-Up Announcements

- ◆ Future CommUNITY Meetings this academic year
  - Mar 18th: Transitioning to H.S. & Graduation Pathways @ SELF
  - May 20th: Don't Agree w/ IEP? Now What? Location TBD
- ◆ SEPAC Opportunities
  - Don't have the time to join SEPAC but interested in helping the mission? Chat with a SEPAC member to discuss opportunities that may fit you!
  - Share what ideas you may have for SEPAC - We're eager to hear from you!

## CONTACT US

### PCES Special Education Parent Advisory Council

✉ - [pcesparentgroup@pces.k12.in.us](mailto:pcesparentgroup@pces.k12.in.us)

🌐 - [www.pces.k12.in.us/sepac/](http://www.pces.k12.in.us/sepac/)

📘 - [www.facebook.com/PCESSEPAC](https://www.facebook.com/PCESSEPAC)