

Intervention Name: Sit and Watch (Contingent Observation)

Function of Intervention:

The goal of the intervention is to assist a child acquire a desired behavior.

Brief Description:

This classic intervention was designed to provide a simple method to aid a child in the acquisition of desired behavior through observing other children behave appropriately. Specifically, using a modified time-out procedure, the student is removed from an activity and instructed both why they were removed and what the appropriate behavior would have been. Then the child is instructed to observe appropriate behavior for a short time prior to reengaging in the activity. Finally, when the child behaves appropriately, they are immediately praised. This intervention can be used as a follow-up to the “Active teaching of classroom rules” intervention, also found in this book.

Procedures

1. When a child displays an inappropriate behavior, describe it to him/her: “Josh, do not push other children when you want to take a turn at the computer.” In addition, describe the appropriate behavior: “Josh, when you want a turn you need to ask the other children and then wait for them to finish up. Remember to keep your hands in your personal space.”
2. Next, direct the child to go to the periphery of the activity and instruct them to observe other children behaving appropriately, “Josh, please take a turn in the Sit and Watch chair and see how Luke asks Steve to take a turn at the computer and then waits nicely for Steve to finish up.”
3. After a brief amount of time (approximately 1-3 minutes) ask if he/she is ready to rejoin the group. “Josh, are you ready to try to ask to take a turn at the computers? Remember how Luke asked and then waited nicely for Steve to finish up. Remember to keep your hands in your personal space.” If the student indicates that he/she is ready to return and behave appropriately, allow him/her to do so. If the student does not respond, or says they are not ready allow them to continue to observe. For example, “Josh, sit here and watch until you think that you can ask for a turn properly while keeping your hands in your personal space.”
4. When the student returns to the group and displays the appropriate behavior, give praise or some other positive reinforcement as soon as possible “Josh, I like how you asked to use the computer while keeping your hands to yourself.”

Critical Components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:

- A clear set of rules and desired behaviors must be established prior to implementing this intervention.
- Students should be explicitly taught the purpose of the Sit and Watch procedure. Role playing a situation where use of the Sit and Watch occurs

would be used is helpful. Each of the procedures should be implemented in order for this intervention to be successful.

- A child or children who can demonstrate the appropriate behavior.

Additional Procedures:

If the child cries for an extended period of time or continues to disrupt the group, while in the Sit and Watch space, move him/her to a designated “Quiet Place.” This can be in the same room or elsewhere, as long as the child is unable to make contact with the group. Allow the child to remain in the “Quiet Place” until he/she calms down and is able to return to the group. “Josh, since you are not sitting and watching, you are going to the Quiet Place to practice sitting quietly.” When he/she is calm, return the child to the Sit and Watch space and proceed through the steps described above.

Critical Assumptions/Problem-Solving Questions to be Asked:

Assumptions: The student is able to demonstrate the ability to perform the desired behavior. Other students are modeling the desired behavior.

Limitations: Children who are unable to recognize desired social behaviors in others may not benefit from this intervention.

Materials:

1. A “Sit and Watch” space placed within view of group activities.
2. A “Quiet Place” within the classroom (or elsewhere), but as far away from the group as possible.
3. A classroom rules chart clearly displayed.

References:

- Porterfield, J. K., Herbert-Jackson, E., & Risley, T. R. (1976). Contingent observation: an effective and acceptable procedure for reducing disruptive behavior of young children in a group setting. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 9, 55-64.
- White, A. G., & Bailey, J. S. (1990). Reducing disruptive behaviors of elementary physical education students with sit and watch. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 23, 353-359.