CHAPTER 6

Classroom Management

How this chapter prepares you to be an effective inclusive classroom teacher:

- This chapter emphasizes actively creating inclusive learning environments that support all students, foster cultural understandings, promote safety and emotional well-being, support positive social interactions, and facilitate active engagement of all students. You are introduced to the importance of expecting all students to learn and to providing supports in a way that helps each student be successful. PBIS and the FBA process are introduced. This chapter also provides a brief introduction to how to support students who live in poverty, who are learning English, or who are perceived to be members of the LGBT community. It outlines the PBIS pyramid and is designed to be read by all preservice teachers—including general education teachers—to integrate all students and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. It concludes with a review of the FBA process and provides examples of data collection to help determine why a behavior is happening. **This helps you meet CEC Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions.**

- The need to support students who are learning English is introduced in this chapter. **This helps you meet CEC Standard 6: Language.**

- In this chapter, we reiterate the importance of high expectations and the provision of opportunity for social and academic success for all students. This aligns with the need for you to be aware of how your own and others' attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence your practice as well as the practices of others. **This helps you meet CEC Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice.**

After reading and discussing this chapter, you will be able to

- Define classroom community in your own words

- Explain the importance of teachers' beliefs about students related to community building

- Explain how to complete class activities at the beginning of the year to create community

- Explain how to conduct a class meeting

- Explain how to teach students to manage conflicts respectfully

- Explain why it is important to sustain community throughout the year

- Describe the barriers to academic success for students who live in poverty, are learning English, or are perceived to be members of the LGBT community

- Create a pyramid with the 80/15/5 configuration and explain the kinds of support each group of students needs

- Create a list of daily, weekly, monthly, and infrequent routines

- Define differentiated instruction

- Explain what individual routines might look like for a student

- Define PBIS and explain what it means

- Define FBA, explain what it means, and explain the steps in the FBA process

build community   The strategies and activities teachers use to help students feel safe and welcome in the classroom.

In this chapter, we will explore how teachers **build community** and manage their classrooms. The topics are intertwined; a positive and supportive community helps classroom management, and mutual respect, clear routines, and clear expectations help a community flourish. Classroom management is the biggest single concern of new teachers, and this chapter will provide support through information, narratives, and activities. Our focus is on proactive community-building approaches, rather than reactive or punitive approaches.

In the first section of the chapter, classroom communities are described and the teacher's role in creating community is explained. In the second section, classroom management is reviewed, and different approaches are described. The narrative is from Rachel Zindler, an experienced teacher-turned-consultant who describes strategies for developing community and establishing positive classroom management.

Before beginning, please understand that no matter how much you plan, unexpected things will happen—probably every day! Having a strong, nurturing community and good classroom management will help you and your students deal with whatever arises. This is vital, because the one thing you can expect in teaching is the unexpected. We have had field trips cancelled at the last minute, unannounced fire drills, a student throwing up on the teacher's desk, and a bee disrupt a lesson. The trick is to be flexible within a strong community, and we will show you how.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

What is a classroom community, and how do teachers develop it? Mara Sapon-Shevin noted that

> Community building is about how adults talk to students, it's about what's on the walls, the books we read, and the songs we sing. And it's about what happens when something goes wrong in class.…Community building centers on two things: establishing (proactively) norms of community and responding thoughtfully to challenges to that sense of community. Community building requires thinking—*before* the name calling, the conflict on the playground, or the formation of cliques— about what the culture of the classroom will be and how these norms will be established with students. (2007, pp. 146–147)

Think about your time in elementary and high school. Which of your teachers had the most welcoming, supportive classroom? That did not happen by chance. Teachers think a lot about how to create welcoming spaces, because a student who feels safe and supported learns more easily than a student who feels anxious or afraid. Creating a comfortable classroom where students are expected and encouraged to take risks and make mistakes is an essential skill for teachers, and by building a classroom community you will do just that.

Community begins with the fundamental beliefs that a teacher holds. If a teacher believes that every student is capable of learning and is fundamentally good, all the planning and arrangements that stem from those beliefs reflect that caring and support. If a teacher believes (even if she or he might not say so) that some students are not capable of learning, and that some students are fundamentally bad, the classroom will reflect that, too. The teacher's core beliefs are at the very heart of classroom community (Figure 6.1).

We believe that all students can learn and that all students are fundamentally good. This does not mean that students can do no wrong, but it does mean that when students act in ways that are not acceptable, we work to address the behavior that needs replacing without assuming there is something fundamentally bad about the student. *There is no such thing as a bad child.*

How do you build a community? By interacting with every student, by responding with compassion when students interact with each other, and by setting the tone in your classroom.

You are the model for your students in every interaction: how you speak to other teachers, to other adults, to your own students, and to students from other classes. Your students watch and learn from what you say and how you act. How you handle feeling frustrated and how you manage a conflict or teach problem-solving skills may be as important as the content you teach. Some of the skills you need to know and to teach students include how to get to know each other, how to be respectful, how to manage conflict, how to work in groups, and how to give and receive help. We have divided these skills into two groups: how to build community and how to sustain community. Then, we talk about specific groups of students who may be in your class.

To build community, you must plan deliberately for students to get to know each other; their backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses are all part of what makes each student unique. At the beginning of the year or semester or quarter, take the time to do getting-to-know you activities with your students. You may think that taking time away from content instruction is impossible, or a waste of time, but we disagree. While teachers

> *I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escaped or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized. —Haim Ginott,* Teacher and Child *(1972), p. 13*

Figure 6.1. Excerpt from *Teacher and Child.*

cannot spend days and days on community building, think about this: Part of good teaching is getting to know your students, so that you can teach each group in ways that best suit their needs. If you do not get to know each student and each group of students, you will probably spend some of your instructional time managing the behavior of the group. Instead of losing time later on, reacting to problems, spend some time at the beginning of the year on positive activities. If you are proactive about management early on, you will not have to be reactive later in the year.

Build Community

The beginning of the year is an exciting, nervous time for students and teachers; so much lies ahead, and there is a wealth of possibility. Teachers can use many activities on the first day of school to help students feel welcome and to get to know one another, build community, and communicate expectations.

Some teachers introduce themselves even before the first day of school by mailing a postcard to each student when they get their class lists in August. They may call families or make home visits so that on that on the first day of school, the student and family already feel welcome and valued.

When planning activities to complete with the class, be sure to consider what students might feel comfortable with early in the year and what information may make some of them feel excluded. For example, some students may go on relatively expensive vacations, while others have never left town. Both experiences are important to value, but highlighting the differences early in the year may make the middle- to upper-class student feel bad about having more opportunities, and the less affluent student feel bad for having fewer resources. Both backgrounds deserve value, and over the course of the year, those differences can be explored. On the first day, ask students to share personal and family information that helps everyone get to know each other as individuals.

Here are two examples of class activities—a class puzzle and social bingo (see Table 6.1).

Class Puzzle   Cut poster board into 6-inch puzzle pieces and ask each student to draw or write personal information on one, such as his or her name, age, and family members. Other information varies by grade. First and second graders may report how many teeth they have lost; fourth and fifth graders may include a favorite song, book, or movie; high school students may include future career plans.

If a new student enters the class, redo the class puzzle; the old puzzle will not reflect all members and is no longer complete. The new puzzle gives students a chance to share who they are with the new student, and the new student gets a chance to join the community and feel valued. It also allows students to update their information and gives them a fresh start.

Table 6.1.   Strategies for building community

Class meetings
Class puzzle
Social bingo
Class covenant
Conflict resolution steps
Collaborative group work
Mailboxes for each student, at desks or cubbies
Postcards to send to classmates

Social Bingo   In this popular icebreaker for older students, teachers create a 5×5 grid on a piece of paper. A fact is typed in each box and a signature line is left blank beneath it. The grid's center square has a line for the student's name. When the papers are passed out, each student signs his or her own paper in the center square. Then, students get up and mingle, trying to get a signature from each classmate in a box that describes them. Examples of facts for the board: has more than five siblings, has been to the state capitol, likes pickles and peanut butter sandwiches, has read (a book from the grade level reading list), has slept in a tent, knows how to knit, or has a pet iguana. As with the class puzzle, be careful to include facts that students would be comfortable disclosing to each other, and do not highlight inequities in economic resources. For example, we would not recommend including "has been to Europe" for an icebreaker in the first days of school.

Develop Class Rules or Covenant   After getting-to-know-you activities, the next step is to help students think about your expectations and the class structure. Developing a set of expectations and rules for the group is essential in the first days of school. There is debate about how to do this effectively. If you simply say to students, "These are the rules," students will know what you want. But they may not agree with you and may not think your rules are fair.

An alternate route is to ask students which rules they think the class should have. The opportunity to take part in a process that is grounded in shared decisions and democratic principles is important, and an open discussion about class rules will provide that opportunity. Criticism of this strategy is that it feels faked; really, the teacher knows which rules he or she would like, and asking students for their input might seem inauthentic. If this is a concern for you, you might share with students the issues that you are vested in: for example, emotional and physical safety for everyone, and a way to be organized and clear about what to do. If you share this background before you invite your students to develop rules that are open for revision, you can be authentic about sharing the responsibility.

A balancing act between ensuring a positive, safe learning environment and allowing students input is the goal. In considering the expectations and rules you would like to have in your classroom, remember that you must follow school and district rules. If your principal has a rule against hats in school, you should not change that. This may sound simple, but it matters! The tone you set for your classroom needs to respect the rules of the building and district. If you or the students do not like a school or district rule, talk about it and consider investigating the reasons for it.

A second consideration is to limit the number of rules. There is a lot of advice about the ideal number, but generally having between three and five rules is recommended (Gable, Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009). More than that, and students may simply feel regulated and as though they are always going to be caught doing something wrong. Also, it is vital to make rules clear and easy to understand. Finally, try to phrase rules positively. For example, "Use inside voices" is better than "No shouting"; "Use walking feet" is easier to understand and do than "No running." When you say the rule, you are saying what you *want*, and the students can try to meet that expectation. Stating what *not* to do adds a layer of complexity that makes doing what you want more difficult. A student may hear "do not run" and focus only on the word "run."

Class rules can vary from relatively specific to broader ones that encompass many behaviors. Specific rules are those such as, "Use inside voices," while more general ones include "Be respectful" or "Do your best." In one classroom, we saw three posters, each with a heading: Be Safe. Be Kind. Work Hard. Under each heading, students had brainstormed specific examples of what that behavior looked like in their classroom.

Each of your rules will be specific to your situation and can be the focus of discussion in your class. This discussion will sometimes result in rules that you might not have

included or have ever thought about. If the list has more than five or six rules, plan to revisit, review, and revise it in 2 weeks. This second meeting is a great way to check in about how things are going and what needs to change or stay the same. It also provides a positive way to talk about the class and may prevent small problems from becoming large ones. Some teachers choose to develop a class creed or covenant instead of a list of class rules; you will decide which strategy helps you connect with your students most effectively and sets a positive tone for learning in your classroom.

Sustain Community

Once the school year begins and students settle into familiar routines, the work of building community becomes the work of sustaining community. Current local and national events and events in the lives of students will provide opportunities to strengthen the community you have built. Class meetings are one strategy that many teachers at all grade levels use to support community. We use them in our college classes and find that the simple act of going around and sharing "something new or good" is an effective tool for learning about each person. A great resource for learning more about class meetings is *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 2000).

Continue Class Meetings   Teachers can sustain the classroom community by continuing to hold class meetings throughout the school year. Class meetings can be varied in many ways, and as the year progresses and students become skilled at participating in class meetings, you can expand their purpose. Instead of asking each student to report something new or good, new prompts can be introduced, or minilessons on a range of topics can be taught while the whole group is together. Examples of topics for minilessons are how to manage conflicts respectfully, how to work in groups, or how to give and receive help. They can be brief morning check-ins to help everyone feel welcomed and heard and they can provide a structure to air conflicts and problems. In an elementary classroom, students may review the contents of a suggestion box and discuss solutions. In secondary classrooms, students can communicate concerns about assignments, seating arrangements, and how to get needed support.

Manage Conflicts Respectfully   If class meetings are used for conflict resolution, it is important to have clear guidelines for participation and taking turns. Teaching strategies for handling emotions and addressing each other respectfully will benefit everyone in the classroom. One common model is to teach steps for conflict resolution, model the steps, and then make a visual aid—in pictures or writing. Here are six steps for teachers to help students who are angry:

1. Approach students calmly, and stop them from hurting each other

2. Acknowledge feelings

3. Gather information (this includes taking turns listening and telling)

4. Restate the problem

5. Ask for ideas to solve the problem and choose a solution together

6. Provide follow-up support (Church, 2007, p. 4).

These steps can be expanded or condensed based on the group you are teaching; some students may need practice identifying feelings, listening to other students, restating the problem, or generating alternatives. Each of these steps is a social skill that needs explicit teaching, practice, and support.

Teach Students to Work Collaboratively and in Groups   Collaborative work is an important part of sustaining community. If you provide competitive games and challenges, there will always be winners and losers. While being a winner can feel great, it is harder to justify any student's feeling like a loser in the classroom. Instead of creating ways to pit students against each other, we believe that students need opportunities to compete against their own performance, improve their skills, and collaborate with each other. Mara Sapon-Shevin wrote extensively about this issue in her book, *Widening the Circle: The Power of Inclusive Classrooms* (2007). She summarized Alfie Kohn's book, *No Contest: The Case Against Competition* (1986) and noted,

> Low achievers are rarely motivated by competition because they do not perceive themselves as having a chance to win. A small number of high achievers may be motivated, but they are generally motivated to "win," rather than to learn.…And for all students, competition damages community and students' willingness to help one another. (p. 93)

We agree, and propose that teaching students to work *with* each other instead of *against* each other sustains community. Working in groups includes several skills: identifying what you need or want, being able to listen to others, and being able to talk about and practice compromise. Each skill is an important component of being a group member and these social skills can be taught explicitly to support group work.

Teach Students How to Give and Receive Help   Knowing how to give and receive help is another skill that students need in the classroom. Some students consistently fall into the role of the one being helped, while other students are identified as the helpers. This does not benefit either student. Helpers need to know about and learn from the strengths and gifts of other students, and students who receive help need practice being an expert who can teach others. One way to help everyone know about the strengths that each student has to offer is to make a resource book for the classroom. Every student writes down his or her strengths so that everyone else knows who to ask for help when they need it. Strengths might be linked to interests, such as "knows a lot about Spiderman and superheroes" or to academic skills such as "good at math" or "good at writing detailed paragraphs and peer editing."

Discuss Social Justice   It is important for students to understand how they can be active members of their community beyond the school. *Rethinking Schools*, a helpful resource for teachers, has a belief statement about the role of schools today:

> Schools are integral not only to preparing all children to be full participants in society, but also to be full participants in this country's ever-tenuous experiment in democracy.
>   There are many reasons to be discouraged about the future: School districts nationwide continue to slash budgets; violence in our schools and cities shows no signs of abating; attempts to privatize the schools have not slowed; and the country's productive resources are still used to make zippier shoes, rather than used in less profitable arenas like education and affordable housing. There is a Zulu expression: "If the future doesn't come toward you, you have to go fetch it." We believe teachers, parents, and students are essential to building a movement to go fetch a better future: in our classrooms, in our schools, and in the larger society. There are lots of us out there. Let's make our voices heard. (Rethinking Schools, 2011, para. 8–9)

We agree. An example of teaching students about activism and engagement in the community can be found in *Black Ants and Buddhists*, by Mary Cowhey (2006). She describes how her class of second-grade students learned about voting and the right to vote, and conducted a voter registration drive. Her students studied the civil rights movement, and learned about student activists and the history of the right to vote. Cowhey invited a local attorney to explain voters' rights to her students, and the class learned how to

register to vote. Students who were not citizens were interested in knowing how to become citizens, and students and family members had a voter registration drive at the school for 3 days. A family member who is bilingual volunteered, and having a Spanish-speaking person at the table helped many adults get information about voting. Finally, the class took a field trip to city hall to turn in the voter registration cards to the registrar. The mayor asked the students to prepare an exhibit of drawings about their voter registration drive, and the class happily agreed. This is just one way that even young children can be active members of the community. The benefit of this kind of teaching is that, "learning through activism is powerful because the need to use academic skills for social justice motivates their acquisition" (Cowhey, 2006, p. 103).

Who Is in the Classroom?

You are going to have a wide range of students, with a wide range of experiences and needs. Strive to avoid putting children into categories; it is not true that any child who is unlike her peers needs different teaching; all children need high-quality, responsive instruction. You should support the strengths and needs of all children. Some children come from affluent families; others live in poverty. Some students know English because it is spoken at home; other students are fluent in a language that is not English and learn English at school (and are called English Language Learners—ELL). Some children live with two parents; others live with a grandparent, a single parent, with gay parents, in foster care, or with a family friend. Some children are heterosexual, others are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT) or are perceived to be so. Your job is to create a safe, supportive environment for each of your students.

Teachers encounter realities that many others do not. We sometimes see children who do not have access to adequate nutrition, clothing, housing, or medical and dental care. Maslow's hierarchy of need tells us that basic human needs must be met before higher-order needs can be addressed:

> The basis of Maslow's theory of motivation is that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs, and that certain lower needs need to be satisfied before higher needs can be addressed. Per the teachings of Abraham Maslow, there are general needs (physiological, safety, love, and esteem) which have to be fulfilled before a person is able to act unselfishly (see Figure 6.2, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, 2005).

Practices to sustain community in the face of individual hardship include being sensitive to what students may want to share about their life experiences and being able to help students and their families access supports. Working to meet the basic needs of every child is not your job alone; your school social worker and community agencies will partner with your school and district to support children in getting their needs adequately met. Your role as a teacher is to gather information about resources that can help, and to work with families who would benefit from support.

Students and Poverty   Children who live in poverty may have concerns that other children do not, such as access to clean and safe housing and food security. One measure of poverty is the number of children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches at school. Every teacher, in no matter which state or district, needs to be aware that some students and families may need help getting adequate nutrition. This is essential for learning; Alaimo, Olson, and Frongillo (2001) noted that children who live in food-insecure households, where there is limited or uncertain availability of food, are more than twice as likely to have repeated a grade than their peers (p. 46).

The National School Lunch Program serves children whose families live below the level of poverty. In 2007–2008, the percentage of schools reporting that 76–100% of their
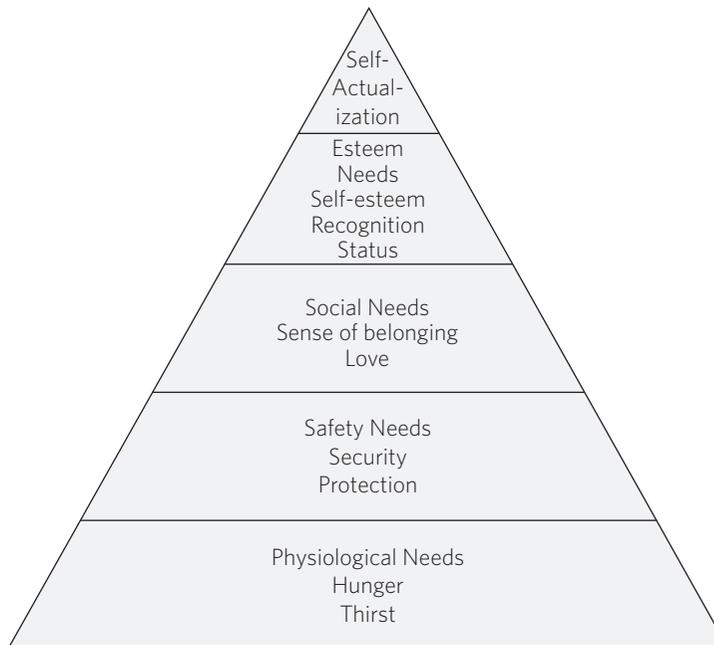
Figure 6.2. From MASLOW, ABRAHAM H.; FRAGER ROBERT D.; FADIMAN, JAMES, MOTIVATION AND PERSONALITY, 3rd Edition, © 1987. Adapted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

White students were eligible for free and reduced lunch were 5.1%; the percentages reported for Black or Hispanic students were 40% and 41.5%, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics; see, Table 6.2).

Providing food for weekends for children and families is one solution. Foodlink Backpack Program and Blessings in a Backpack are examples. Blessings in a Backpack "is designed to feed elementary school children whose families qualify for the federal free and reduced meal program, and may not have any or enough food on the weekends" (Blessings in a Backpack, 2011). Blessings in a Backpack's web site notes that one out of every six children in the U.S. (12.4 million) is at risk of hunger and that the states with highest food insecurity are Mississippi, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, Maine, South Carolina, Georgia, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri (Blessings in a Backpack, 2011).

Students Who Are Learning English Children who are learning English as a second language have challenges that may include frequent moves, poverty, gaps in schooling, and language and cultural barriers (Rodriguez, Ringler, O'Neal, & Bunn, 2009). In the United States, the number of students who are learning English has dramatically increased in the last 10 years. Between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s, the number of students in the United States increased 3.7%, and at the same time, the number of English language learners increased 57% (Teale, 2009, p. 699). Most students learning English have Spanish as their first language.

What we know about students who are learning English as a second language is that they learn English in the same way as their native English-speaking peers. Good teaching includes linked assessment and instruction, clear learning objectives, consistent routines, many opportunities to practice reading and writing, and active student engagement, which are are important components of teaching all students— including those who are learning English (Teale, 2009). Specific strategies to support

Table 6.2.   Students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch 2007–08

Table A-25-1. Number and percentage of public elementary and secondary students across schools, by percentage of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and race/ethnicity: School year 2007–08

| Race/ethnicity | Number of students[1] | Percentage of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch | | | | | |
		Total	0–25	26–50	51–75	76–100	Missing/ school does not participate
Elementary							
Total[2]	31,176,444	100.0	25.4	25.6	23.5	19.9	5.5
White	16,713,023	100.0	35.5	32.2	20.3	5.1	6.9
Black	5,270,943	100.0	8.3	16.9	28.5	40.0	6.2
Hispanic	6,950,840	100.0	12.1	16.8	27.9	41.5	1.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,494,329	100.0	39.1	24.0	18.8	15.2	2.9
American Indian/ Alaska Native	359,663	100.0	12.2	23.9	31.6	28.1	4.3
Secondary							
Total[2]	16,112,947	100.0	36.2	33.8	17.3	6.5	6.3
White	9,386,497	100.0	47.1	35.4	8.9	1.2	7.4
Black	2,632,525	100.0	15.0	31.6	31.1	15.0	7.3
Hispanic	2,989,287	100.0	19.0	31.9	31.4	15.4	2.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	801,687	100.0	44.9	30.7	15.9	5.3	3.1
American Indian/ Alaska Native	193,173	100.0	23.5	33.0	24.7	14.5	4.3

[1]Includes students enrolled in schools that did not report free or reduced-price lunch eligibility.
[2]Includes students whose racial/ethnic group was not reported.

NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch, or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity and poverty, see supplemental note 1. For more information on the Common Core of Data (CCD), see supplemental note 3. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2007–08. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section4/table-csp-1.asp

students who are learning English are using cognates (words that have the same origin) in English and another language, choral reading, teaching rhymes, acting out stories, creating individual word libraries, using peer support, and creating "language free" activities (such as a sensory table or dramatic play area) that do not require knowledge of English (Buteau & True, 2009).

Students and Their Families   Some children have families that include a mother and a father living together. But many children have other types of families— a single mother, a single father, a grandmother, gay or lesbian parents, or foster parents. The Census in 2000 showed that two-thirds of children lived in a family group that included a married couple (U. S. Census Bureau, 2004, p. 9). The other third lived in single-parent families (27%) or in a household with neither parent (5%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004, p. 9). Creating community includes honoring all types of families.

One way to reflect all families in an elementary school classroom is with a family tree. When one researcher was in an elementary school, she saw that each second grader's locker had a family tree worksheet taped to it. The top half was a picture of a

tree with the child's name on the trunk, and the family members listed on its branches. The lower half was lined for the children to write a few sentences explaining who the family members were. This was a great activity that needed one simple change: The tree was labeled with "Mother" and "Father," which does not work for children without this particular family structure. If the tree were left blank, it would be ready for any family grouping.

Students Who Are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgendered   Students who are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered often experience bullying. In fact, "the 2009 survey of 7,261 middle and high school students found that nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the past year and nearly two-thirds felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation" (The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2010). It is unacceptable for any student to feel unsafe in school; teachers need to find ways to actively support students who are LGBT. In a study of students and school climate, Diaz and Kosciw noted that "the availability of supportive school staff, Gay-Straight Alliances, LGBT inclusive curricular resources, and the presence of comprehensive anti-harassment school policies were related to improved school climate" (2009, p. 49). In addition to students who understand that they are members of the LGBT community, there are students who are questioning their identity and struggling to understand who they are and what that means for them. All students need access to supportive, caring adults who provide a safe space for listening.

You have now learned about how to build community and how to support all students. Next, you will learn about classroom management and how to be proactive about it.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

There are many approaches to classroom management, and there is no one right way to do it. At a very basic level, if you treat each child with respect and focus on sustaining community, you are off to a good start. We believe that all good classroom management includes clear routines and expectations; high-quality, engaging instruction; supportive feedback; and individual routines and expectations. In this part of the chapter, these strategies will be reviewed.

When you consider your strategies and plans for classroom management, you must remember that you are responsible for the well-being of *every* child in your class; both the child who is bullied and the bully. You must teach and support both the child who acts out and needs a great deal of structure and the child who is quiet and asks for little support or attention. To achieve mutual respect, you must begin by knowing each of your students.

Alfie Kohn wrote that "the practices that flow from a teacher's beliefs tend to elicit certain things from students. Label a particular child a troublemaker and watch him become one" (1996, p. 7). If you expect children to act in a particular way, you will see that happen in your classroom. Your beliefs about children and students shape your classroom practices, and we firmly believe that there is no such thing as a bad child. There may be unacceptable behavior in the classroom and the need for many effective strategies to motivate and engage students, but we think that the child who challenges you the most is your best teacher. That child supports your inquiry and growth as a teacher and classroom manager.

The student who does not follow directions, turn in work, or respectfully communicate with you and others gives you the chance to develop your skills in adjusting the environment, the work, and the support strategies you use. The skills you acquire because of this student will allow you to proceed with more grace and ease the next time
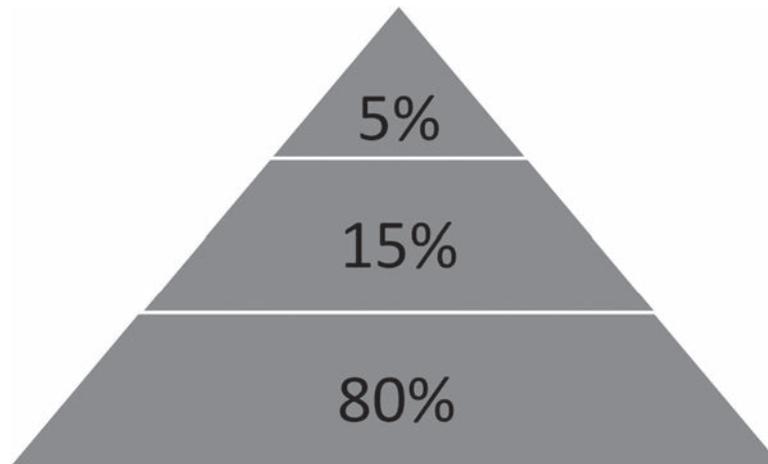
80% of students will respond to a classroom which includes
- Clear routines
- Clear expectations
- High-quality, engaging instruction
- Supportive feedback

15% of students will respond to a classroom which includes
- Clear routines, clear expectations, high-quality, engaging instruction, and supportive feedback
- Proximity
- Individual schedules
- Picture prompts
- Repeated directions

5% of students will respond to a classroom which includes
- Clear routines, clear expectations, high-quality, engaging instruction
- Supportive feedback, proximity, individual schedules, picture prompts, repeated directions
- Individual routines, academic expectations that are attainable for the individual student, behavioral expectations that are attainable for the individual student

Figure 6.3.   Classroom management pyramid.

you have a student who exhibits difficult behaviors. As you learn more about helping all students, you will become more and more skilled at using management strategies, and that range of strategies will increase and make you a better teacher.

The classroom management pyramid in Figure 6.3 illustrates that all students need clear routines; clear expectations; high-quality, engaging instruction; and supportive feedback. Some students need these strategies and in addition may need teacher proximity, individual schedules, pictures prompts, or repeated directions to be successful. A few students need all of these strategies and may also need individualized routines, academic expectations, and behavioral expectations. We have divided the classroom management pyramid into three groups, using an 80/15/5 configuration: approximately 80% of students who respond quite well to these factors, 15% of students who have difficulty doing their best without some additional supports, and approximately 5% of students who need even more intensive supports. The supports required by the middle group are often not particularly time consuming for a teacher to provide and are relatively simple to create or monitor.

Clear Routines and Expectations

Good classroom management begins with clear routines and expectations. If you are not organized, your students will not know what they are supposed to do and will quickly

come up with their own ideas about how to use class time. Routines include daily tasks, such as entering the class, turning in homework, completing daily oral reading (DOR) or bell work (a brief academic task that is prominently posted for all students to begin as soon as they come in the room), lining up to leave the room, walking through the hallways quietly, using the restroom, sharpening pencils, completing seat work, and submitting work. Each task needs practice, and many veteran teachers spend the first weeks of school teaching routines as well as academic content. At all grade levels, you cannot expect that students instinctively know how to do these things—especially the exact way you prefer things to be done. You need to explain, role-play, and practice.

Other routines take place less often but are still important. Gathering work for students who are absent is one example; preparing for your own absences is another. Having a system for leaving assignments for absent students reduces the tasks that you need to manage at the beginning of each class. We suggest preparing a folder for each content area or class, and putting materials labeled with absent students' names into the folders each day. When the student returns to school, she or he can check the folder for missed handouts and assignments. The inconvenience of your own absences can be alleviated by keeping a folder for substitutes in your desk at all times. This is often district or building policy; in addition, some principals require that this folder be updated each time a new unit of study is started.

Students also need to be prepared for unexpected situations and emergencies. A fire drill requires a quick and quiet response, which is best taught and practiced as a specific routine. This is typically taught as a buildingwide exercise, but the responsibility for your students lies with you. As you think about your first classroom, consider the other routines that you will want to teach.

Clear daily routines will help you and your students stay focused and interested, and so we recommend writing the agenda on the board for each class. If the lesson goes down a different path than you had planned, you will be aware when the direction changes and have a chance to decide if that is what you want to do. Without an agenda, you will not have a clear sense of whether or not students learned what you had hoped they would or have met your objectives. The analogy we use is of driving someplace new. Without a map, you cannot expect to get anywhere. This is not okay, as you are the teacher driving the group to a destination. With a map, you have options and the chance to choose a detour or stay on your original route. There is no one right way to do any routine; what you decide depends on both you and your students. But no matter which routines you choose, you need to have a reason or rationale for those choices, and you must be able to clearly explain your reasoning to students, to substitute teachers, and to your administrators.

Your expectations need to be as clear as your routines. For each activity, explain what you want students to do, provide a sample, and answer questions about the directions. Provide high-quality, engaging instruction and supportive feedback. Sometimes teachers mistakenly think that if they provide clear expectations, they will be giving something away, but being clear about what you want students to do is good teaching.

High-Quality, Engaging Instruction and Supportive Feedback

All students need access to instruction that is challenging without being frustrating. This is tricky, and takes practice. Learning how to differentiate your instruction is a classroom management tool, because good instruction is engaging, exciting, and reduces off-task behavior.

Differentiated instruction is "a process where educators vary the learning activities, content demands, modes of assessment, and the classroom environment to meet the needs and support the growth of each child" (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2007, p. 9).

Because students learn in different ways and at different rates (as demonstrated in Chapter 5), your teaching must account for these variations. For example, varying learning activities in English could mean that some students read silently, some listen to books on tape, and some read aloud to an adult or peer buddy. The books students read should also vary by reading level, at all grade levels. Many teachers select a topic or theme to study and all students read books related to that topic. In secondary settings, the same book may be reviewed by the whole class or grade level, but the way the content is reviewed may vary, and the product of the reading may vary too: Some students might write five-paragraph essays, while others might create a bulleted list of points.

Supportive feedback is specific, detailed, and informative. We have heard teachers say "Good job!" to work that really is not very good, and we have heard "You can do better" with little advice about how that might be done. Do not give general praise; give praise that tells the student exactly what they did that you noticed. For example, a general "I like your work" does not tell the student what it is that she has done well, but "Your paragraph is well organized with complete sentences, and I see three robust words—well done!" tells her that you have noticed her organization, sentence structure, and vocabulary choices. This is much more useful information.

Supportive feedback also includes telling students when they are making errors—either academically or behaviorally—and how to change what they are doing. Being clear about what you want students to do is important; if they need to change something, you need to let them know what to do instead. For example, "I see papers on the floor right now. Please stop what you are doing to pick up the papers near your desk so that we can all move safely around the room and keep our papers neat." This is a clear direction that describes the problem, what you want students to do about it, and how it helps the community.

Individual Routines and Expectations

The small minority of students who need individual routines and expectations are just as much a part of your class and responsibility as the other 95% of students. Some teachers have difficulty supporting students who have significant needs and feel that they have missed some essential, possibly secret information about what to do. This information is neither secret nor magical. Every teacher needs information about classroom management and how to arrange physical and emotional space to create a safe learning environment for all students. Some excellent support has been developed for students who are not doing what you want them to do.

Individual routines support a single student and meet his or her needs. A student who has difficulty walking in line through the halls might be taught a specific sequence of actions: hear the announcement that it is time to go to lunch, get Social Story from desk about walking in the halls, read Social Story with teacher or another adult as class lines up, get lunch card from desk to hold, join the end of the line, walk with teacher and class in line to lunch. In many ways, this is similar to the routine the other children follow. But this child has specific, explicit supports in place. None of this is babying or giving in to the student; providing individual support for what a few students need is good teaching. See Figure 6.4 for a basic introduction to the sentences used to write a Social Story and to view a sample Social Story

Another student may need support to make the transition from home to school. A junior high school student who has difficulty at the beginning of the day might be scheduled for a study hall in first period to allow him to review his notes, to schedule and gather his materials for each class, and to check in with a teacher or counselor. They might discuss concerns about what happened the previous afternoon or evening and problem solve about what to do.

Carol Gray (2010) writes that a Social Story

Describes a situation, skills, or concept according to ten defining criteria. These criteria guide story development to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality and a format, "voice" and relevant content that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the audience. (p. xxv)

The 10 criteria for Social Stories are
1. One goal
2. Two-part discovery
3. Three parts and a title
4. FOURmat
5. Five factors define voice and vocabulary
6. Six questions guide story development
7. Seven types of sentences
8. A Gr-eight formula
9. Nine makes it mine
10. Ten guides to editing and implementation (p. xxxvi)

Figure 6.4. The Social Story. (*Source:* Gray, 2010.)

Individual routines can also be designed for academic and classroom routines. If students have difficulty moving from one activity to the next, adding 5-minute and 1-minute alerts can help them know that a transition is coming. Writing a Social Story about what to do in the last 5 minutes and the last minute can help a student know that it is okay for an assignment to be incomplete and that he can move to the next topic because there will be time to complete the work later.

Individual expectations are related to routines and might be related to academic progress, behavior, or both. Some students will not take part in **alternate assessments** that other students are required to take by the **No Child Left Behind Act**. A small percentage of students can complete individual portfolios of work instead, so that teachers can show and measure the student's progress from the beginning to the end of the year. Alternate assessments are covered in more detail in Chapter 9.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The question of how special education fits in with general classroom management is one with many complex answers. You may have heard of **functional behavioral assessments (FBAs)** and **behavioral intervention plans (BIPs)** or **positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS).** These processes help teachers and building staff support a positive community and climate as well as teach students communication skills and strategies for solving problems in proactive ways.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive behavioral interventions and supports is a decision-making framework designed to guide the "selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students" (Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP] Technical Assistance Center, 2011). PBIS is a schoolwide program with four main elements: data for making decisions, outcomes that are measurable and supported by data, practices with evidence that the outcomes are achievable, and systems that support implementing the practices (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2011). The program often

alternate assessments Tests and evaluations for students with severe disabilities who will not take the standard tests most children take in reading, math, and other subjects. Alternate assessments are individually designed so that the progress a student makes during the school year can be measured against what the student was able to do at the beginning of the year.

No Child Left Behind Act The name for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorized in 2001. It has four main goals for schools: stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, proven educational methods, and more choices for parents.

functional behavioral assessment (FBA) A systematic process used to gather information about a student's behavior. Observations, anecdotal records, interviews, and reviewing records are all part of the data collection process that is used in the FBA.

behavioral intervention plan (BIP) The report made by a team to support changes in the environment and responses to a student who needs to change a behavior. The BIP is written for an individual student.

positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) Decision-making framework to support academic and behavioral success of all students.

includes three tiers of support, which are often presented in much the same way as the pyramid shown earlier in this chapter. This pyramid is a continuum of interventions, with primary interventions at the bottom that are used for all students, secondary interventions for some students in the middle, and individualized interventions at the top. The same percentages we mentioned before (80%, 15%, and 5%) are expected at each level (Cregor, 2008, p. 33).

More and more schools are using PBIS, because having a consistent, buildingwide approach that all teachers and administrators use to respond to students is useful in many ways. There is a growing research base about the effectiveness of buildingwide models; see the OSEP Technical Assistance Center web site for more information. PBIS is not a mandatory program; the OSEP Technical Assistance Center noted that

> While Congress recognized the potential of PBIS, it was hesitant to dictate any one educational approach to schools. Indeed, Congress was careful to balance the need to promote the education of children with disabilities and the right of states to govern their own educational systems. IDEA's requirements regarding the use of functional assessments and PBIS reflect this balance. IDEA requires:
>
> • The IEP team to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports for any student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others (20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(B)(i)).
>
> • A functional behavioral assessment when a child who does not have a behavior intervention plan is removed from his or her current placement for more than 10 school days (e.g. suspension) for behavior that turns out to be a manifestation of the child's disability (20 U.S.C. §1415(k)(1)(F)(i)).
>
> • A functional behavioral assessment, when appropriate, to address any behavior that results in a long-term removal (20 U.S.C. §1415(k)(1)(D)). (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2011)

Nevertheless, PBIS is part of many schoolwide plans, and you are certain to encounter it; it is important to be aware of its role as an effective, broad strategy. Also note that OSEP mentions functional behavioral assessment, which is discussed next.

Functional Behavioral Assessment

A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) process is a systematic process used to gather information about a student's behavior. It includes describing a student's behavior, identifying when and where the behavior occurs, how long it lasts, describing the setting, describing any consequences that maintain the behavior, developing a hypothesis for why the behavior happens, and writing a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) or positive behavioral intervention plan (PBIP) that details how the student will be supported in changing a behavior that is not productive or useful.

The FBA process is started when a student does not meet behavioral expectations even when clear routines and expectations, high-quality, engaging instruction, and supportive feedback are being provided, and teacher proximity, individual schedules, picture prompts, or repeated directions have been employed. As illustrated above, the FBA process is also used when a student with a disability label who does not have a BIP is suspended from the classroom for more than 10 days.

Remember that all behavior is communication. For example, saying "I need to use the restroom" communicates exactly that. A young child's shifting her weight from one foot to the other with a worried look may be communicating the same need. The difference is that if someone is able to express what is needed with words, there is little need for others to interpret what is said; the message is clear. In the second case, especially

when you do not know the child, you may not understand that shifting weight back and forth and looking worried means "I need the restroom." Instead, you might guess that the child is upset and needs a hug. Or that she is sad and wants to draw a picture about her feelings. Or that she is concerned about something and needs time to think by herself. In the meantime, while you are thinking through what she might need, she *still* needs to use the restroom! With students who are not able to communicate in traditional ways, teachers need to do the detective work to determine what they are trying to say. The FBA process gives you a method for doing so. The goal is to support the student in developing strategies to meet his or her needs in ways that are appropriate for the classroom.

The first step of the FBA process is describing the behavior under review. This needs to be done objectively and descriptively. Saying "she has tantrums all the time" does not tell the reader what is happening. As the reader, you do not have a clear picture in your mind of what goes on. Being clear and descriptive helps everyone share an understanding of what the behavior is. Saying "she throws her body on the floor and yells 'I hate this!' between five and seven times every morning" gives the reader a much better sense of the behavior.

Identifying when and where the behavior occurs, how long it lasts, and in what settings is the next step. This process can take several weeks as you observe, ask others to observe, and keep records. There are many ways to collect **observational data**. One way is by measuring the frequency of a behavior. The behavior chart in Figure 6.5 gives you information about how often a student is out of his or her seat without permission. What patterns do you see in this chart? What else do you want to know? Noticing patterns and raising more questions is an important process to use as you decide what information to gather.

observational data
Information gathered by watching interactions and behaviors of a particular student and the people and things she or he encounters.

Example of behavior chart

Behavior = out of seat without permission
X = 3 or more times   o = 1–2 times

Activity	Time	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Bellwork	9:00–9:30	o		o		
Reading	9:30–11:00	o				
Math	11:00–12:00	x	x	x	x	x
Lunch	12:00–12:30					
S.S.	12:30–1:30	o		o	o	
Science	12:30–2:00	o				

• What patterns do you see?
• What else would you like to know?
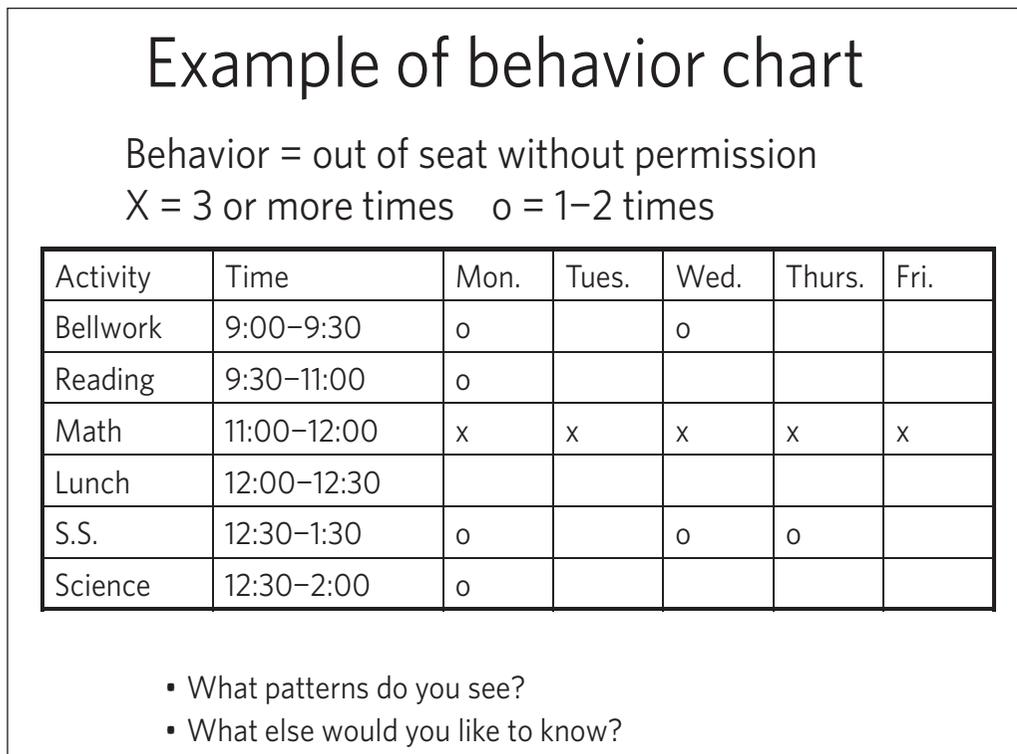
Figure 6.5.   Behavior chart sample.

permanent products
Student work, such as reports, tests, essays, worksheets, and drawings.

interview data
Information from talking with a student or adult. Interviews are important for providing a range of perspectives about what is happening.

anecdotal records
Reports written into a narrative of the ABCs of a behavior. These records should give the reader a clear picture of what happened.

ABCs of behavior   The Antecedent (what came before a behavior), the Behavior (what happened), and the Consequence (what came after the behavior). Each part needs to be described objectively using clear language so that the reader/listener has a clear picture of what happened.

Frequency or event recording is best used for behaviors that have a clear beginning and end. To gather data, use consistent time lengths (such as 15- or 30-minute intervals, or a class session).

Frequency data can be paired with a review of **permanent products**. Permanent products are simply work samples, like a spelling test, written work, or drawings that the student has made. If a student is out of her seat many times in a class session and the permanent product created during that time is of high quality and accuracy, the issue may be that the student is bored. If the permanent product shows that the student started work but then made many erasures, crumpled her paper, and stomped on it, the issue may be that the student was frustrated. Pairing work samples with observational data is crucial to the detective work of the FBA process.

Another essential kind of data to collect is **interview data**. An essential component of any FBA data collection process is interviews with the student, family, and other adults who see the behavior. Interviews should be conducted during a calm break, when everyone is relaxed and able to talk openly about the behavior in question. Questions to ask in an interview include: What does the problem behavior look like? How often does it happen? When does it happen? How disruptive is it? When interviewing someone, the goal is to hear his or her perspective. A student may say things that do not match your experiences; that is okay. The goal is to gather as much information as you can from many perspectives. Something that you find to be disruptive, such as a student lying on the floor screaming "I hate this!" may be perceived by the student as not very disruptive at all. The interview is not the time to discuss that; save sharing your perspective for another time.

Finally, **anecdotal records** are very helpful to determine the **ABCs of behavior**, or Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence. Anecdotal records are simply written reports about what happened: what was going on before the behavior, the behavior, and what happened afterwards. For example, a brief record might look like this:

Tuesday, May 10, 2011, 8 a.m.–10:30 a.m.

Laura came in this morning with a runny nose and seems to have a cold. After morning meeting, during reading, she put her head on her desk and seemed irritated when I asked her to start her work, but she completed about half of her report. At the end of reading, when it was time to transition to math, she threw herself on the floor yelling "I hate this!" I went to her and rubbed her back and asked her what would help her. She cried and said she felt sick. I sent her to the nurse to rest and to call home.

From this anecdotal report, we see that the antecedent is that Laura does not feel well and that math is about to begin. The behavior is throwing herself on the floor and yelling that she hates this. The consequence is that she is sent to the nurse. If this is something that happened just once, we would probably not be completing the FBA process. But if this happened many times, we might begin to wonder if Laura seems sick and goes to the nurse for reasons other than being ill. That might start us on the path of collecting information to review it. The next step in the process is reviewing all the data and developing a hypothesis about why the behavior occurs, and if we think a consequence of her behavior keeps her doing it again and again.

The teacher or the team reviews the data. The goal is to consider what consequences maintain the behavior. If we see a pattern that Laura is sent to the nurse three times a week and always before math, we might wonder if Laura is avoiding math for some reason. We check the interview and see that Laura does not feel that throwing herself on the floor is disruptive, because she leaves the room fairly quickly to go to the nurse. We wonder if there is something going on with Laura related to math, and review the permanent products. We see that Laura is not doing well in math. She is often lost and

frustrated and has not done well on the last four quizzes. We decide that missing math is a consequence that maintains the behavior of throwing herself on the floor and yelling "I hate this!"

Now that we have a hypothesis—Laura throws herself on the floor and yells so that she can avoid math—we can develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) so that we can give Laura tools to ask for a break and experience success in math. We do this because it is not useful for Laura to miss math and throw herself on the floor.

When developing the BIP, we keep some key points in mind, including the philosophy that there is no such thing as a bad child. Laura is not bad; Laura has a need that is not being met, and it is our job to meet it. Here are some key points:

- Behaviors that you want to change are exhibited for a reason.

- You may be able to extinguish the unwanted behavior, but that does not extinguish the need behind it.

- Needs are always appropriate! The need to express needs is always appropriate.

- Some *ways* of expressing needs are not *always* appropriate.

- Teaching the student to express the need in a more appropriate way teaches a replacement behavior.

- Be careful to avoid using words like "always" and "never."

With these points in mind, we develop a plan for Laura. We consider that Laura needs to replace the behavior of throwing herself on the floor and yelling with a new behavior. We remember that replacement behaviors will not be learned right away. They will be learned bit by bit, over time. We consider: What skills does Laura need to acquire for the plan to be successful? What are the prerequisites for these skills? How much should Laura learn at a time? We also consider what we need to change about the environment: What about math needs to change? We consider the difficulty of the work, the amount of work, and the type of support Laura has been getting in math. We decide that we need to do three things: teach Laura that she can ask for a break during math, change the level of difficulty of the math Laura is expected to complete to match her skills, and add more small-group support for teaching new math skills to Laura.

Once we have developed a plan, we implement it and continue collecting data about the behavior in question. We set a date to review the plan in the relatively near future—probably 2 or 3 weeks. When we review the plan, we consider what has worked well, what needs adjusting, and what did not work. Then, we continue the cycle of teaching and monitoring.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we reviewed how to build and sustain community and how to begin to think about managing a classroom. We introduced the FBA and BIP process, which will come up again in Chapter 12. Remember that our fundamental belief that there is no such thing as a bad child informs all of our decisions about students and their behavior, and we hope the same is true for you when you become a teacher, because you are your students' guide, mentor, and role model for how to respond to each member of the community in good times and during hardship.

NARRATIVE 6.1. | RACHEL ZINDLER

The Value of Community Building in Classrooms   As an education consultant working in New York City public schools, I guide and support teachers in establishing and maintaining best practices in their inclusive classrooms. Over the course of the year, I am lucky to visit dozens of schools and hundreds of classrooms and get to meet with teachers with all levels of experience. We discuss lesson planning for a wide range of learners, strategies for working together as a professional teaching team, and ways to foster independence in students with high needs. These are crucial topics in an integrated classroom, but we always begin our work together with how to construct a comfortable and supportive physical and emotional environment for the kids.

A colleague once said to me that a child should be able walk into his or her classroom on the first day of school and say, "This is a place for me!" The kindergartener who is easily overwhelmed may find a cozy nook to sit in. The third grader who is still learning to read may spy a familiar listening center. The shy student recognizes that the little rug in the corner will be a comfortable place to sit for smaller group lessons, and the active teenager may see raised desks where he knows he will do his best work standing up. The way we design and structure the physical environment speaks volumes about our understanding of students' needs. I often spend the first few weeks of school arranging and rearranging the furniture with teachers until we find just the right balance for the current class.

Beyond the physical environment, children must feel welcomed by the faces around them to take risks and try the new, sometimes difficult, tasks we ask of them every day. The emotional environment involves many things: a smile and a greeting first thing in the morning, a question about the soccer game after recess, clear and reasonable rules agreed to by all members of the community, time and space to discuss social problems when they arise, and a deep respect for different ways of living and learning.

Many teachers rely on community-building activities to establish a sense of belonging and trust within their classrooms during the first weeks of school. Some teachers even devote the entire month of September to setting up routines and getting to know one another, scheduling at least one community-oriented activity per day. Students might draw and interview a partner, write and share stories about their family traditions, work in small groups to master physical challenges collaboratively, or create advertisements to showcase their strengths. A first grader's ad might read "Find me if you need help tying your shoes!" An eighth grader might publicize her computer savvy with a short video. When we encourage kids to share their strengths and personal stories early in the year, we promote self-reflection and respect for diversity, and we communicate the message that all students are valued for the unique abilities they bring to the group.

Although many teachers spend a lot of time on community building in the beginning of the year, by December many complain that their students have begun to push limits more frequently and are having difficulty with certain "behavior problems." At this point, I often ask, "What community-building activities have you been doing?" As the year gets under way, teachers feel pressure to spend precious instructional hours on academics alone. But when students are not able to follow directions or can't get along with each other, we end up trading instructional time for classroom management and redirection. Instead, when we continue to provide regular, scheduled opportunities for guided social interaction and direct teaching of social skills, we leave room for students to learn how to solve conflicts peacefully, to learn appropriate language, and to practice civility toward one another and their surroundings.
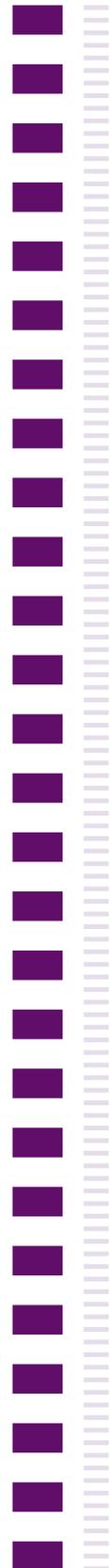
As students with language-processing disorders, autism, emotional challenges, and other needs become integrated into most classrooms, it is even more important that we provide direct social instruction and modeling of appropriate behavior *throughout the year*. In many of the successful classrooms I have visited, teachers schedule a "Community Meeting" into their weekly plan, during which they incorporate different activities based on the social climate of the classroom. One week, they might watch a short video, discuss bullying, and brainstorm ways to stand up for a friend. Another week, students might role-play different outcomes for a conflict that has come up repeatedly in the classroom. Yet another week, kids might be assigned secret buddies and practice writing compliments to them, later to be read aloud to the class.

Classrooms founded on mutual respect, where there is ample time and space for problem solving, have fewer behavior "problems." In these classrooms, students take responsibility for their own actions because they recognize the impact on their peers and their environment. In turn, teachers rely less on cumbersome systems for reward or punishment. Schools have a responsibility to teach children the skills they need to be successful outside of school, and while reading, writing, and arithmetic are critical to their success, the greatest asset a child can develop is the ability to socialize—to negotiate, collaborate, and communicate respectfully with their friends, family, and the world at large.