



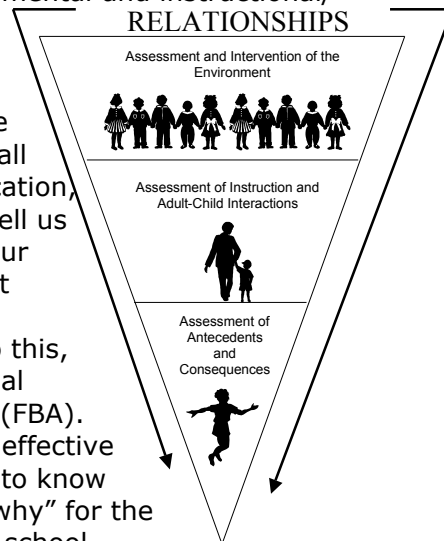
BEAM Newsletter

Bridging Education and Mental Health



BEAM topic: Child-Specific Interactions

As we make our way down the BEAM pyramid, we come to child-specific interventions. These are the most time intensive interventions, and should be used when you are addressing a challenging behavior with a specific child that has not resolved itself after implementing environmental and instructional/interrelational interventions. When talking about children's behavior we must remember that all behavior is communication, the child is trying to tell us something, and it is our job to try to figure out what this message is. In order to help us do this, we can use a functional behavior assessment (FBA). In order to design an effective intervention we need to know the function, or the "why" for the behavior. Typically, a school psychologist or another support person will help in conducting a formal FBA for special education purposes; however, we can conduct informal FBAs in our own classrooms. To do this we need to ask ourselves a few questions. First, what does the challenging behavior look like, how would we describe it? Second, when does the behavior occur and when does it not occur, is it related to other events happening in or out of the classroom? Third, why is this behavior occurring, what is being communicated, and what is the child getting as a result of this communication? Function typically falls into one of two categories: to obtain something or to avoid something. There are several different methods to use to determine function, some are direct, such as observation, and some are more indirect such as interviews or record review. Once we have determined the function, we can design an intervention based on the gathered information.



These interventions are aimed at altering antecedents and consequences, that is, what happens right before and right after the intervention. A good intervention is: planful, consistent, preventive and proactive; considers the "why" of the behavior; and includes data collection. An example of a child-specific intervention is rewarding the child for performing the desired behavior by using an enjoyable activity or tangible reward for the child. Another child-specific intervention strategy is setting up a "cozy corner" in the classroom designated as a quiet or cool-down area for the child.

Featured BEAM program

Northeast Child Development Center

Northeast Child Development Center is a year round early childhood education program for 109 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 8 years. NECDC offers full and part time day care on a sliding fee scale which is funded by the United Way.



Organized in 1915, East Side Neighborhood Services, Inc. (ESNS) is a nonprofit human service agency that provides social and other services to individuals, families and neighborhoods primarily of Northeast and Southeast Minneapolis and surrounding communities. East Side Neighborhood Services built a new facility in their current location in 2001. The facility houses several different programs such as Family and Youth services, Senior Services, and Employment Services.

Featured BEAM coach: Christopher Watson



Christopher Watson is Director of Professional Development and Education at CEED. Prior to his work on BEAM, Christopher was the Coordinator of the Minnesota Infant Mental Health Project and worked on the PAVE project, a violence prevention and intervention program for early childhood educators. Christopher was a BEAM coach with PICA Head Start.

BEAM Updates:

On February 23rd and 24th, the BEAM project held a "make and take" training at PICA Park Place for providers from early childhood centers in the Minneapolis area. There were approximately 30 attendees. The training had four activity centers where attendees made materials to use in their classrooms. It was a great success, and we look forward to more trainings in the future!



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BEAM is a program at the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota. The mission of CEED is to improve developmental outcomes for children through applied research, training, and outreach. BEAM is funded by the FY04 federal Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) Grant provided to the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board. The pilots will run in 2005-2006, with evaluation results available in late 2006.