



# TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

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Funding and support from:  
DE Positive Behavior Support Project – School Climate & Student Success

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## MODULE STRUCTURE

- Module series goal:
  - Provide information to schools that can lead to improvements in **school climate** and **behavioral outcomes**.
- Module narratives provide additional information to accompany PowerPoint Presentation.
  - Endnotes throughout slides correspond to the references in the module narrative.
- Gold star = Resource on Delaware PBS website

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## WHAT ARE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS?

- Quality of the interactions between teachers and students within a classroom and school-wide context
- Teacher-student relationships often considered to have three different qualities:
  - *Emotional support*
  - *Classroom organization*
  - *Instructional support*<sup>1</sup>



- **Emotional support** is the focus in this presentation

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## DELAWARE SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

- On the *Delaware School Climate Survey*, teacher-student relationships is captured by items assessing:
  - **Teachers caring about students**
  - **Teachers liking students**
  - **Teachers listening to students when they have problems**
  - **Teachers treating students of all races with respect**
- Primary focus of this module is student perceptions of teacher-student relationships

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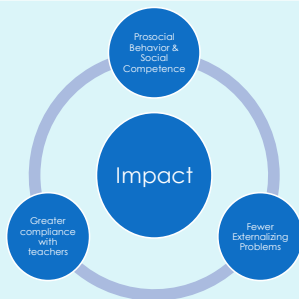
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## WHY ARE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT?



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## IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Greater peer acceptance and friendships<sup>20-23</sup>
- Greater comfort in seeking help from teachers and other adults in school, such as when being bullied<sup>15</sup>
- Greater academic achievement<sup>14, 24-25, 71</sup>
- Greater academic initiative and engagement<sup>26-29</sup>
- Greater self-esteem, cognitive competence, and internal locus of control<sup>30</sup>
- Greater school satisfaction, liking of school, and school completion<sup>31-33</sup>

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## IMPACT FOR CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL

- At classroom and school level, teacher-student relationships influence norms and group behavior
  - **Mostly through classroom management**



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Teacher-Student  
Relationship  
**Contributing  
Factors**

**Student  
Characteristics**

**Classrooms  
&  
Teachers**

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## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Students with the following characteristics tend to have less close relationships with teachers:
  - **Frequent antisocial or aggressive behaviors and behavior problems<sup>35-36</sup>**
  - **Shy tendencies<sup>37</sup>**
  - **Greater internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression<sup>10</sup>**



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## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Important Notice

- Although not malleable, student age, gender, and race also are related to teacher-student relationships
- **Perceptions decrease with age**<sup>36-38</sup>
- **Girls have closer relationships**<sup>1,35</sup>
- **African-American students tend to view these relationships less favorably**<sup>36</sup>




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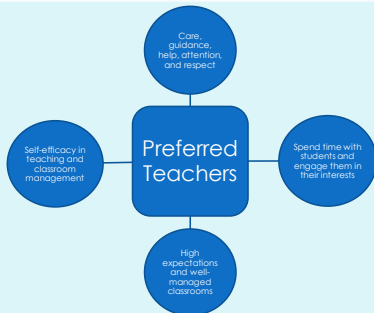
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## CLASSROOMS AND TEACHERS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS




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## CLASSROOMS AND TEACHERS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Students prefer teachers who:
  - **Use proactive and positive techniques rather than punitive techniques**<sup>49</sup>
  - **Make learning fun**<sup>45-46</sup>
  - **Foster student autonomy and self-determination**<sup>46,50</sup>
  - **Communicate often with their families**<sup>36,51</sup>

Important Notice

• These same themes emerge in studies of students of various cultures and backgrounds, including studies focusing on African-American and Hispanic students, students who feel alienated, and students living in poverty.<sup>46</sup>

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## CLASSROOMS AND TEACHERS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

• Teachers who have:



Tend to have more negative relationships with their students

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### Teacher-Student Relationships Contributing Factors



### Recommendations for Relationship Improvement

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## RECOMMENDED EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- Tier 1: designed to be implemented for all students at the school-wide and classroom levels
  - I. Data to determine needs, strategies and interventions
  - II. Implement classroom management strategies for prevention of behavior problems and promotion of positive teacher-student relationships
  - III. Employ strategies and provide opportunities that build and maintain positive teacher-student relationships
  - IV. Implement an evidence-based SEL curriculum that has been shown to strengthen students' social-emotional competencies while also fostering positive teacher-student relationships
- Tiers 2&3: designed to be implemented with students who have the most difficult time forming positive relationships with teachers.

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## DATA ANALYSIS

### RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES & INTERVENTIONS: TIER 1

- Examine data, such as from *Delaware School Climate Survey*
  - Are teacher-student relationships viewed favorably across students, teachers/staff, and parents, and across subgroups within those respondents, including grades (e.g., ninth versus twelfth grade), racial/ethnic groups, and gender?
- If an area of need:
  - Gather and examine more data to determine why these relationships are not viewed positively
    - Other subscales
    - Specific items
  - Share results of the additional data with focus groups



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## CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

### Focus group guide

- Information on:
  - Designing questions
  - Recruiting participants
  - Conducting the group
  - Analyzing data
- Provides examples

#### Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group

Focus groups are a useful method of data collection and analysis. When well conducted, focus groups can be a valuable tool for understanding the views and experiences of people. However, focus groups are not a substitute for other methods of data collection and analysis. They are most useful when used in conjunction with other methods.

Focus groups are most useful when used to explore issues that are not well understood or to explore issues that are not well understood or to explore issues that are not well understood.

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from Duke University  
([https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/documents/How\\_to\\_Conduct\\_a\\_Focus\\_Group.pdf](https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/documents/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf))

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## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE

### RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Classroom management strategies
  - Wise and strategic praise/rewards for prosocial behavior
  - Model prosocial behavior
  - Clear expectations, routines, and procedures
  - Fair rules and consequences
  - Close monitoring of student behavior
  - Collaborate with families



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## EFFECTIVE USE OF PRAISE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Provides general strategies for effectively praising and rewarding students
- Gives specific script examples of what to do or what to say to students
- *Activity for staff practice also available.*

**Effective Ways to Acknowledge and Praise Students**

- Focus on praising the efforts, rather than controlling student behavior (some control is fine, however, when recognition is lacking)
  - Explain the collaborative nature and controlling function of praise and rewards
  - Do not say:
    - "I will give you a sticker if you finish your work."
    - "If you behave, you will get \_\_\_\_\_."
    - "You get a sticker because I thought you being good."
- Instead, say:
  - "Thank you to all your parents and for them having been steady your behavior has improved. You completed all assignments this week, and without arguing."
  - "Wow, because lots of you finished homework at once, there is no homework tonight!"
- Avoid teaching students that the most important means to act responsibly is to earn approval or to be praised (or to avoid punishment). Link the behavior to other underlying thoughts, emotions, and dispositions that support prosocial behavior.
  - "This is not necessarily the most developmentally or socially most successful way to go about it (see examples above of what not to say)."
    - Instead, let us understand thoughts, emotions, and dispositions that underlie prosocial behavior. Such as feelings of pride, empathy, autonomy, responsibility, caring, kindness, teamwork, etc.
  - For example, avoid saying "You got a sticker for not teasing or hitting today, especially when the other students were 'laughed at'." Instead, describe when you were happy and that you can do it again having others. "You should be glad about yourself. Thanks for being kind to others."
- Other good examples:
  - "Good! You should feel really proud of yourself for reading so hard!"
  - "You are looking about others. The class really appreciates what you did."
  - "You are really confident in the class work now!"
  - "Thank you so much, but I know that you would help. Cause even if you didn't, you are a really nice person about others!"
  - "Thanking the class 12 minutes of late time because you demonstrated responsibility by being so well behaved when a substitute was here!"

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## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Corrective strategies
  - Correct misbehavior privately, not publicly
  - Recognize positive behaviors
  - Emphasize impact of student's behavior on others
  - Communicate your dislike for behavior – not student
  - Communicate shared responsibility
  - Communicate optimism for future




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## REFLECTIVE ACTION PLAN

- Plan completed by students to help them:
  - Reflect on their behavior
  - Problem solve to prevent future behavior problems

**Reflective Action Plan**

The following action plan can be completed by students to help them reflect on their behavior and problem solve to prevent future behavior problems.

The Reflective Action Plan is written to help \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name) be responsible for his own behavior and reach \_\_\_\_\_ (the problem behavior).

What is why I did it? \_\_\_\_\_

If it is understood that there are several good reasons why it is important not to \_\_\_\_\_ (the problem behavior), they are \_\_\_\_\_

The punishment this time is \_\_\_\_\_

The punishment next time will be \_\_\_\_\_

What are 3 more good reasons why this behavior is wrong?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

To correct for the problem now, I will \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of doing the same thing next time, I will \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU \_\_\_\_\_

DO THIS \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the following \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ needs to be taught or shown how to do this.

\_\_\_\_\_ should know how to do this.

Other than not getting into trouble again, here's why it is important not to do what I did before and instead do the following \_\_\_\_\_

Courtesy of G. Bear – DE-PBS: Developing Self-Discipline Workshop 2011-12

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**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**  
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Get to know every student
- Spend time individually with students
  - At least one positive interaction daily
  - May be more intensive like Banking Time<sup>47-56</sup>
- Greet students every morning
- Notice when students have difficulties; listen, show concern
- Treat students equally



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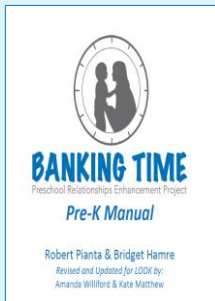
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**BANKING TIME**

- Designed for children in preschool and early elementary grades, but aspects of it would apply to all grades.
- Teachers spend individual time with students
- Help prevent behavior problems and reduce teacher-student conflict when problem behaviors occur.



From **LOOK Consultation**  
([www.lookconsultation.org/resources/BankingTime-Resource1.pdf](http://www.lookconsultation.org/resources/BankingTime-Resource1.pdf))

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**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**  
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Communicate your own experiences, thoughts, feelings
- Join students for lunch occasionally
- Have fun and use humor
- Attend sports/extra curricular activities
- Reflect upon how well you know your students
  - Knowing your students activity



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## KNOWING YOUR STUDENTS ACTIVITY

- Teacher fills in three columns: 1 = students names in class, 2 = something each student likes or is interested in, 3 = note if the student is aware that the teacher knows this about him/her.
- Missing information may indicate that teacher needs to spend more time with child, engage in conversation more often, and/or connect with them more.

Adapted from Responsive Classroom  
<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/how-well-do-you-know-your-students>

**How Well Do You Know Your Students?**

*Instructions:*

- First column: List student names on your class. Write them from memory and do not try to list them based on order in the classroom seating arrangement, alphabetically, etc.
- Second column: Write one thing the student likes to do or is very interested in.
- Third column: Make a star if you're sure the child knows that you know this about him/her.

*Additional tips/notes:*

- Make three student names you forgot to include in the first column? You might need to spend more time with the child.
- Did you have difficulty writing one of their interests? Spend more time with the student engaging them in conversation.
- What about the third column? You might need to connect with them more as well.

List student names	List students' interests	Do students know you know this about them?

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## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Provide school-wide activities that include teacher and student participation
- Advocate for your students
- Communicate positive messages about students to their homes




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## IMPLEMENT AN EVIDENCE-BASED SEL PROGRAM RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Use one that has been shown to strengthen social-emotional competencies and teacher-student relationships
  - Responsive Classroom
  - 4Rs
  - RULER
  - Second Step
- See CASEL.org for a list of such programs, and descriptions of each




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## SECOND STEP

- Targets comprehensive SEL skills
- Tied to improved social skills and prosocial behavior
- Reduces several externalizing and internalizing behaviors related to peer acceptance<sup>65-67</sup>

**Social-Emotional Learning**  
Why it matters

**What is SEL?**  
SEL and the Workplace

Here at Committee for Children, we believe teaching social-emotional learning (SEL) is as important as teaching math or language arts. But what is SEL, exactly?

Most schools have been teaching social-emotional learning (SEL) for years. But now the term is working its way into the public consciousness—and even business leaders are acknowledging the importance of SEL in the workplace. However, there are some kinks to work out: in some cases, expanded definitions call for us to learn more about SEL, what it looks like in the classroom, and how it's relevant to business. Read on.

**What SEL is**

- Recognizing emotions in oneself and others
- Managing strong emotions
- Making empathy for others

From Committee for Children  
(<http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step>)

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**Recommended Strategies**  
Students with Tier 2 & 3 support needs

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### STUDENTS AT TIER 2 & 3 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Apply the strategies already mentioned as appropriate at the universal level and for all students
  - With greater frequency and intensity
  - More comprehensive
  - More individualized
- Provide social skills/SEL training related to prosocial skills
  - Universal or Tiers 2/3




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## STUDENTS AT TIER 2 & 3 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Collaborate with families
- Where appropriate (e.g. Tier 3) develop a behavioral contract
  - Targeting specific social skills
- Consider implementing elements of Check & Connect intervention
  - Students less likely to drop out of school<sup>68</sup>
  - Related to increases in school engagement<sup>69</sup>




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## CHECK AND CONNECT INTERVENTION

- A school staff member regularly assesses the student's behaviors associated with engagement
- The staff member connects with others to implement interventions to increase engagement
- Example of monitoring form for teachers and administrators

**Check & Connect High School Monitoring Form**

Student: ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check**

Monitoring date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days in school	Number of days engaged	Number of days absent	Number of days suspended
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Behavior Data**

Behavior	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Engaged							
Disengaged							
Absent							
Suspended							

**Check**

Communication	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
With student							
With family							
With staff							
With community							

from University of Minnesota  
<http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/resources.html#adminresources>

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**Making a Plan**  
 Who is going to do  
 what actions by  
 when?




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## THANK YOU

- Based on areas of need identified by data, check out other resources provided through the **School Climate and Student Success Module Series**.
- [www.delawarepbs.org](http://www.delawarepbs.org)
- Questions can be directed to Sarah Hearn
- [skhearn@udel.edu](mailto:skhearn@udel.edu)



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