

Hitting, Kicking and Threatening, Oh My!:

Strategies to Deal with High Levels of
Physical & Verbal Aggression when the
Student is on the Spectrum

NELI 30th Annual Autism & Disabilities Conference

Dr. Heather Hughes, SSP, BCBA-D, LBA

Learning Objectives

1. CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR & the SCIENCE OF ABA

Review ABA technologies for
addressing challenging
behavior

2. SERVICE CONTINUUM

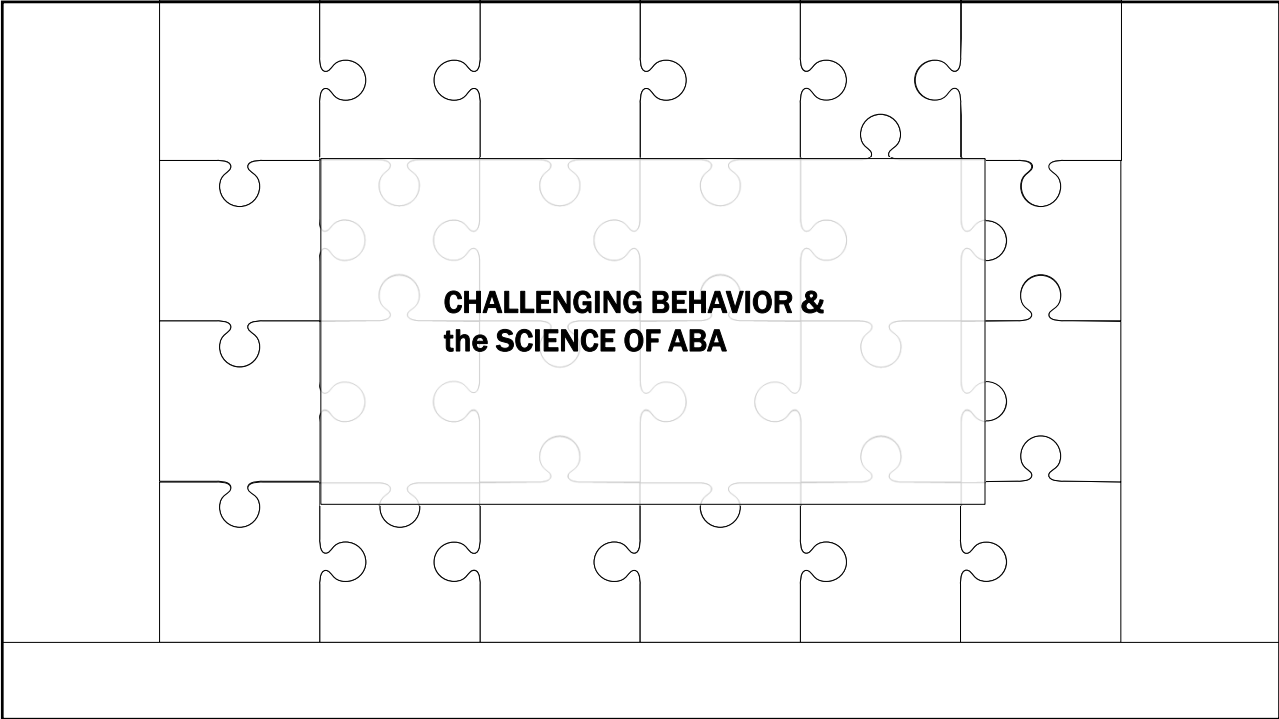
Discuss service continuum
for implementing student
IEPs

3. QUALITY PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Identify quality program
components for effective
intervention

4. INTENSIVE PROGRAM

Understand process for
establishing an intensive
program for challenging
behavior



Challenging Behaviors

- May include:
 - Aggression
 - Self-injury
 - Non-compliance
 - Inappropriate social behavior
 - Stereotyped behaviors

A graphic featuring a large circle on the left side. Above the circle, three puzzle pieces are shown in a slightly overlapping arrangement. In the bottom right corner, a single puzzle piece is shown with a dashed line around it, suggesting it is being placed or is missing.

Characteristics of Challenging Behaviors

INTENSE

PRESENT
PHYSICAL,
INSTRUCTIONAL, OR
SOCIAL CONCERNS

DISRUPT THE
LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT

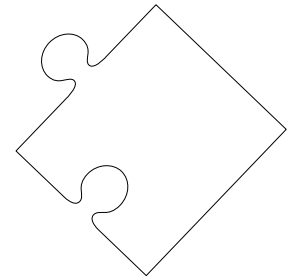
DANGEROUS TO
SELF AND OTHERS

OCCUR OVER A
LONG TIME PERIOD

FREQUENTLY
DEMONSTRATED

DIFFICULT TO
MODIFY

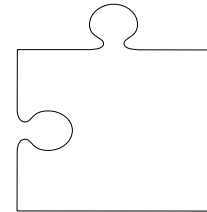
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)



An applied science of behavior analysis to real-world problems with the goal of effecting lasting and positive change in socially important behavior.

(Baer et al., 1968)

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)



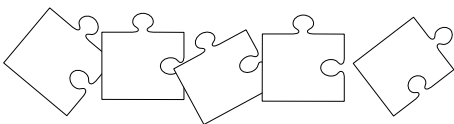
- Behavior can be studied and understood.
- Understanding leads to interventions:
 - Teach skills
 - Increase behavior that contributes to learning, independence, and happiness
 - Decrease behavior that interferes with the acquisition of new skills, is dangerous to self and others, or limits opportunities.
- Behavior is learned
- Behavior is shaped by the individual's interactions with people, objects, and events in the environment

- It is possible to arrange the environment to affect change in behavior.

In the education setting:

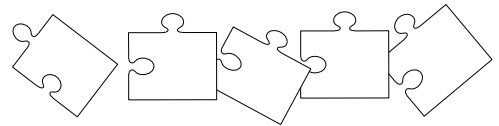
- Behavior analysis provides a scientific approach to designing, implementing, and evaluating instruction based upon analyzing interactions between what the teacher does and student learning.

(BACB, 2023)



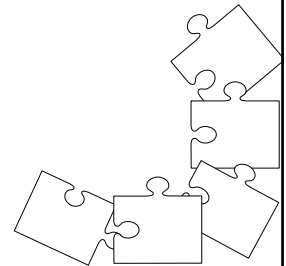
ABA-Based Components

- Positive reinforcement and stimulus control
- Intervention technology
 - Antecedent manipulations
 - Contingency management
 - Functional analysis
 - Functional assessment



Essential Components

- Collecting important student information
- Using daily behavior measurement systems
- Conducting indirect and direct FBAs
- Testing hypotheses through functional analyses
- Creating function-based, multi-component behavior intervention plans (BIPs):
 - Modifying establishing operations (EOs) and setting events
 - Using antecedent interventions
 - Teaching replacement behaviors
 - Modifying consequences



Collecting Important Student Information

Primary reason for the occurrence of challenging behaviors - insufficient skill repertoire (skill deficits):

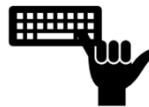
Student needs/desires something but cannot adequately communicate the need or desire

Student wants to get away from a condition or situation and is unable to request assistance

Student wants social attention or contact but has not learned how to properly interact with another person

Three Key Skill Areas to Assess:

- Functional communication skills



- Personal abilities



- Social skills



Assessment



Key skills the student possesses, as well as skill deficits



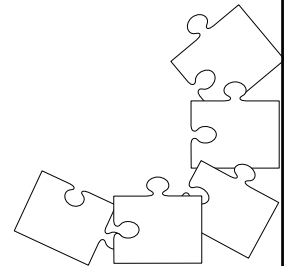
Informally through observation



Formally through adaptive behavior assessments

Functional Communication

- Level of development of expressive language
- Level of development of receptive language
- Ability to communicate wishes and desires
- Form of communication used to seek attention, inform another person of something, make a request
 - Assistance
 - Break
 - Food/object
 - Engage in an activity



Functional communication training should be a priority area of the IEP.



Personal Abilities

Visual and hearing ability

Attention

Sensory processing differences

Fine and gross motor abilities

Cognitive processing differences

Allergies/sensitivities

Ability to complete self-care routines

Need for supervision

Social Skills Repertoire

- Peer interactions
- Initiating interactions
- Response to feedback, correction
- Response to physical contact
- Response to directions/instruction
- Response to changes in the environment



**Sufficiently
comprehensive**

Understanding a student's relevant strengths and limitations leads to better interventions and improved student outcomes.

Use A Daily Behavior Management System

- Identify and operationally define significant challenging behaviors.
- Measure the occurrence of challenging behaviors identified for reduction and replacement behaviors to increase.
- Use observation forms for collecting frequency or duration data on behavior.
- Use graphs to display recorded behavior.
- Interpret trends on graphs and make decisions.

Data Collection

- Begin data collection prior to implementing an intervention
 - Establishes baseline or pre-intervention level of the behavior
- During implementation of the BIP
 - Continues throughout the intervention period and beyond
 - To determine the effectiveness of the intervention
 - Leads to informed decisions
- Continual measurement of behavior:
 - Collected 3-5 days per week
 - During the time of day when the behavior is most likely to occur
 - Remain constant for as long as data are collected
 - Under the same conditions (location, activities, people present)

A system for collecting and interpreting data is essential for determining whether or not the plan is working and for making intervention decisions.

Conducting Functional Behavior Assessments

Purpose of an FBA:

- Identify variables related to the occurrence of the challenging behavior
- Determine the function or purpose of the behavior
- Develop a function-based intervention.

Types of FBAs

- Indirect
 - Asking others for information
 - Completion of questionnaires about key events
- Direct
 - Direct observation & data recording to capture key information

Conduct Indirect Functional Behavior Assessments Using Interviews

- Identify establishing operations (EOs) and setting events that affect the occurrence of the behavior.
- Identify behavioral antecedents that trigger behavior.
- Identify behavioral consequences that reinforce and maintain the behavior.

Conduct Direct Functional Behavior Assessments

- Record specific behavior antecedents (A)
- Record challenging behaviors (B)
- Record what happens immediately after the behavior (C)

Create a Function- Based, Multi- Component Behavior Intervention Plan

If variables that cause and maintain challenging behaviors can be identified and modified, then subsequent occurrences of the behavior can be diminished.

(Cooper et al., 2007)

Function-based Interventions

Typically comprised of at least three components:

1. Altering conditions that precede the behavior
2. Teaching alternative/replacement behaviors
3. Altering the consequences of the behavior

1. Altering conditions that precede the behavior

Modify establishing operations and setting events:

- Medical interventions
- Dietary interventions
- Interventions for tiredness or fatigue
- Interventions for pain or discomfort
- Environmental interventions

Use antecedent strategies:

- Avoid behavioral triggers
- Modify the environment
- Modify curriculum and instructional practices
- Offer choices and preferred activities
- Provide non-contingent reinforcement
- Use interspersal training/behavioral momentum
- Increase predictability
- Teach social skills

2. Teaching Alternative/Replacement Behaviors

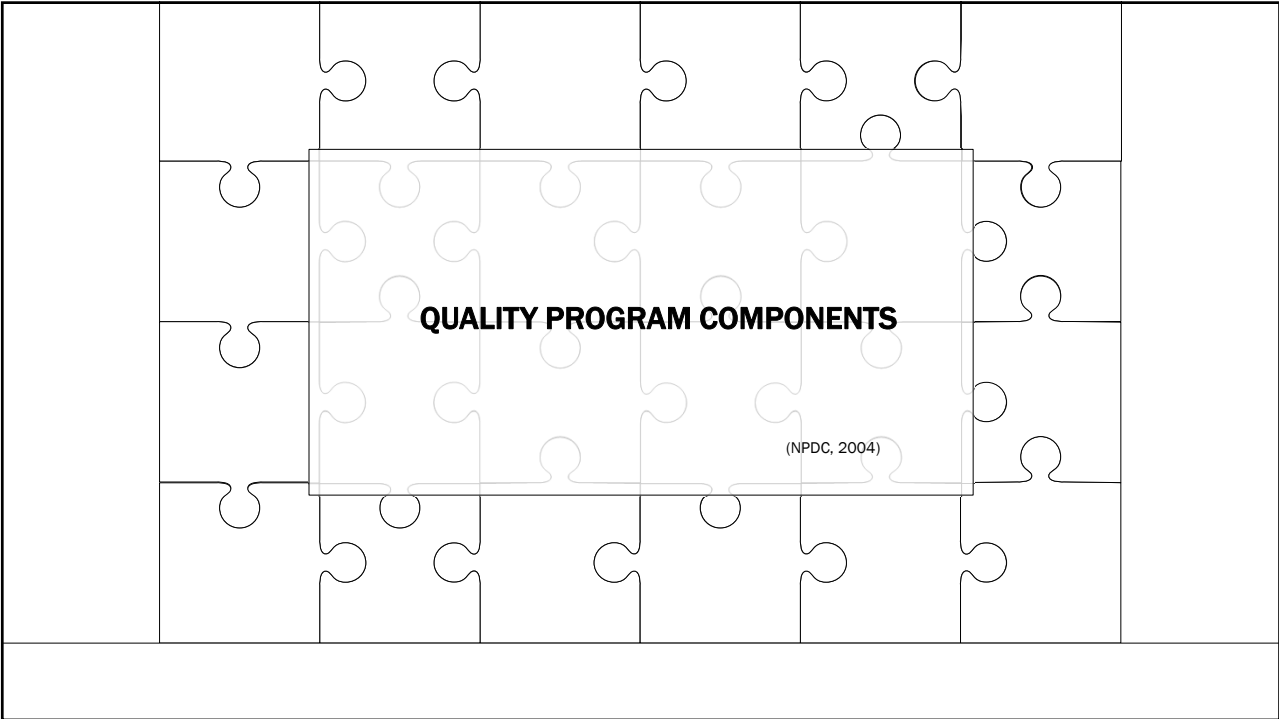
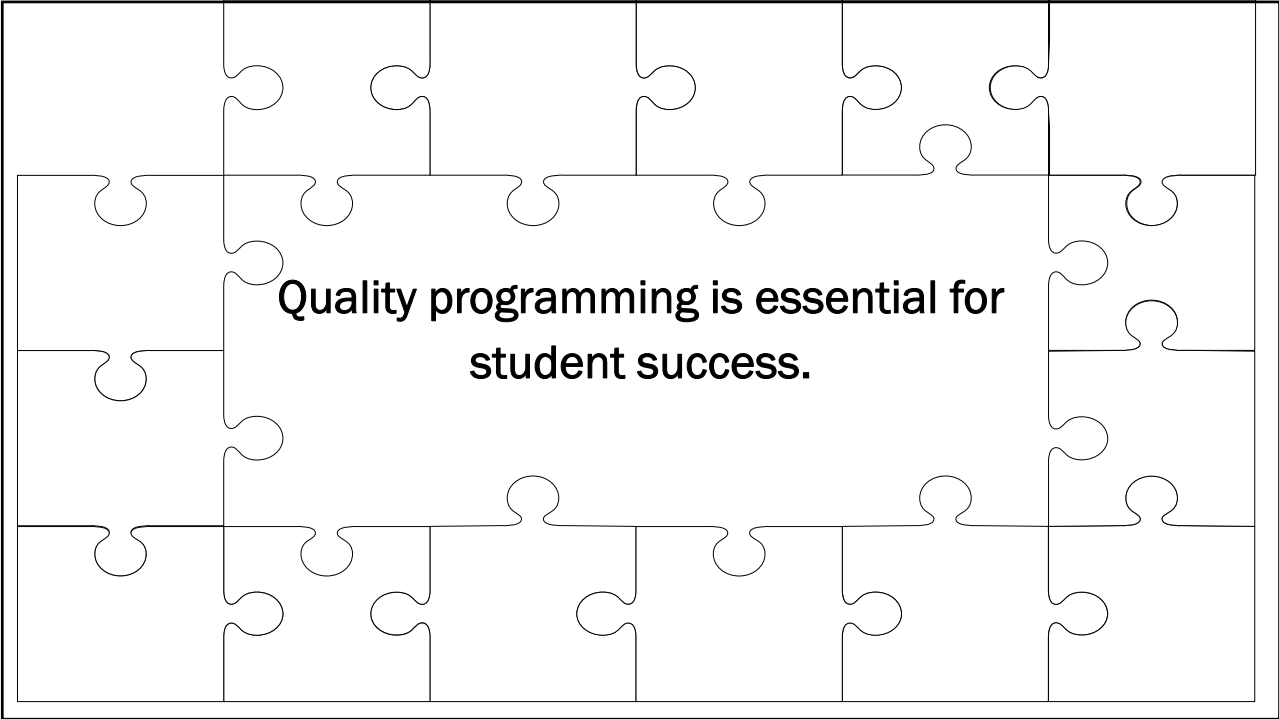
- Provide functional communication training (FCT)
- Teach self-instruction and self-direction
- Teach appropriate escape/avoidance skills
- Teach social skills

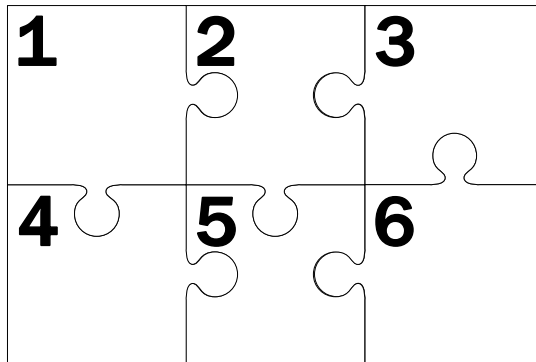
3. Altering Consequences of the Behavior

- Identify & eliminate the consequence that is reinforcing the challenging behavior.
- Put the challenging behavior on extinction.
- Reinforce the replacement behavior
 - DRA/DRI
- Avoid intermittently reinforcing challenging behavior

Data-based Decisions

- Collect, visually display, and analyze data on a regular basis.
- Make adjustments to the intervention based upon analysis.
- Seek assistance and support.
- Remain responsive to student needs.





1. Learning Environment

Safety, organization, materials, visual schedules, transitions

2. Positive Learning Climate

Positive staff-student interactions, staff behavior, staff training.

3. Assessment & IEP Development

Comprehensive, multidisciplinary, ongoing assessment of progress, IEP includes transition/futures planning

4. Curriculum & Instruction

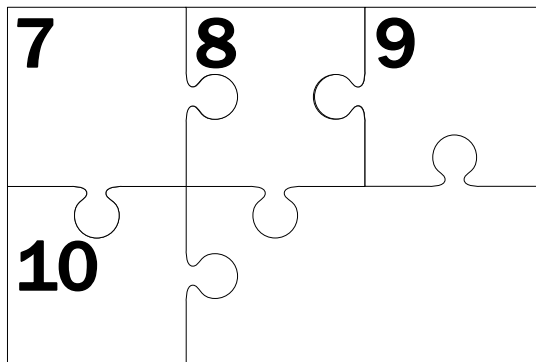
Active engagement, individualized, opportunity to generalize, prompting

5. Communication

Planning for communication, communication systems, communication-rich environment

6. Social Competence

Arranging opportunities, teaching and modeling, peer social networks,



7. Personal Independence

Self-advocate for accommodations, self-management, choices available

8. Functional Behavior

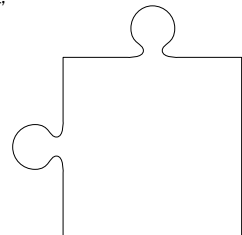
Proactive strategies, behavioral assessment, data collection, teaming

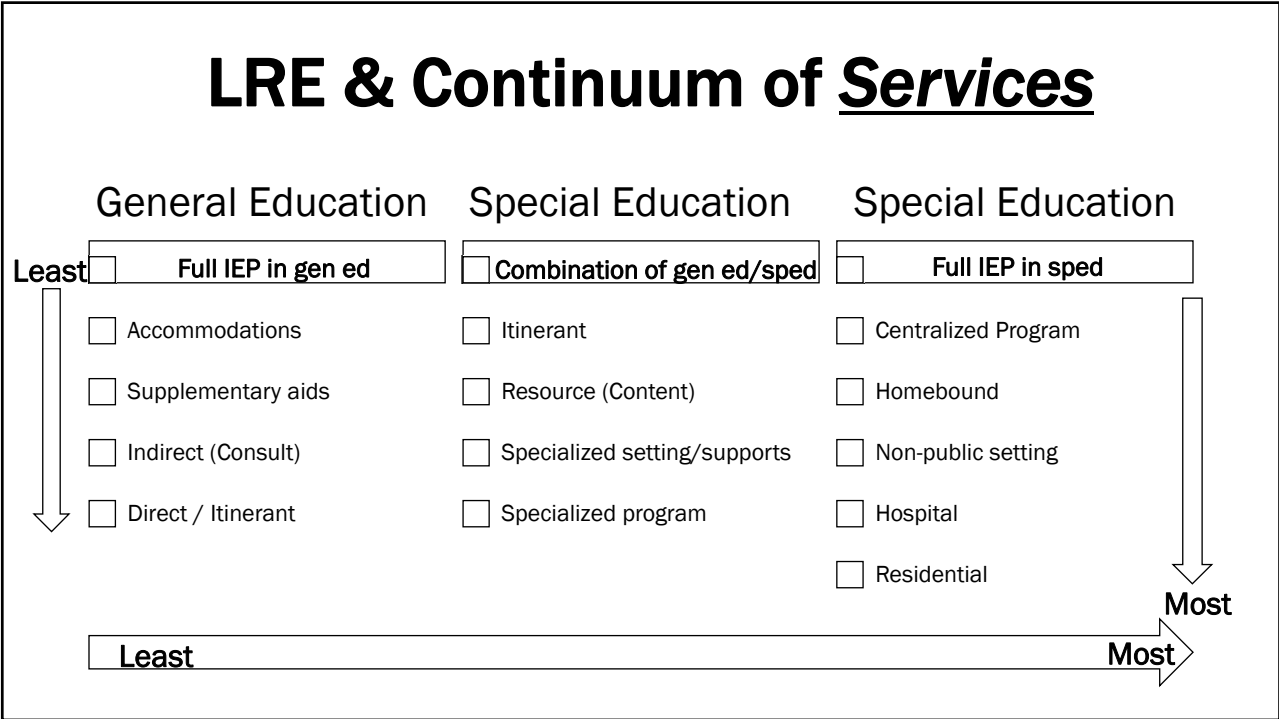
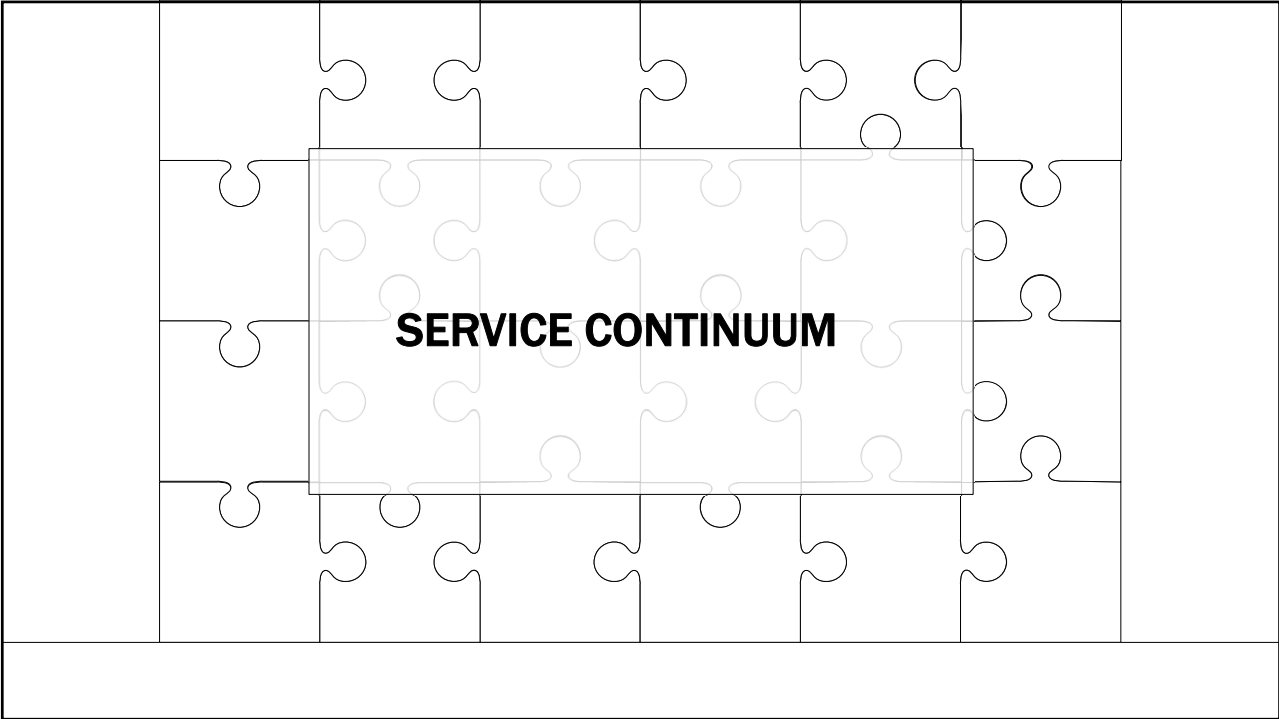
9. Family Involvement

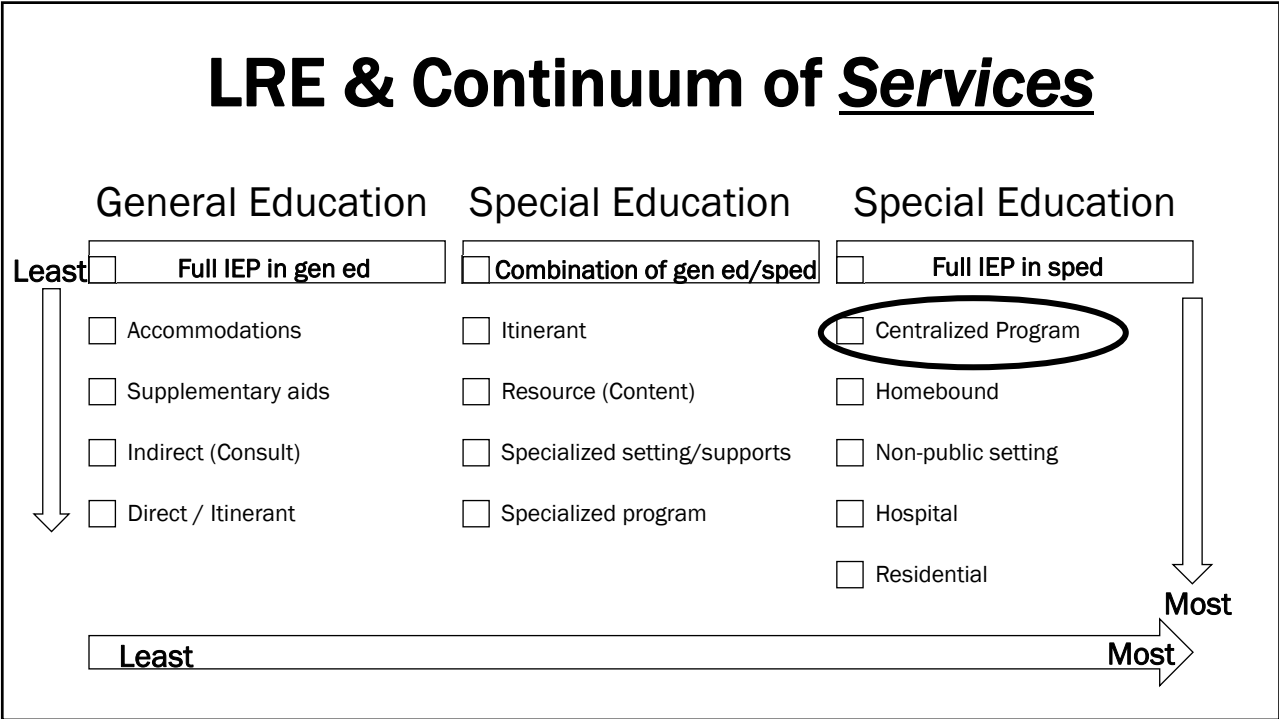
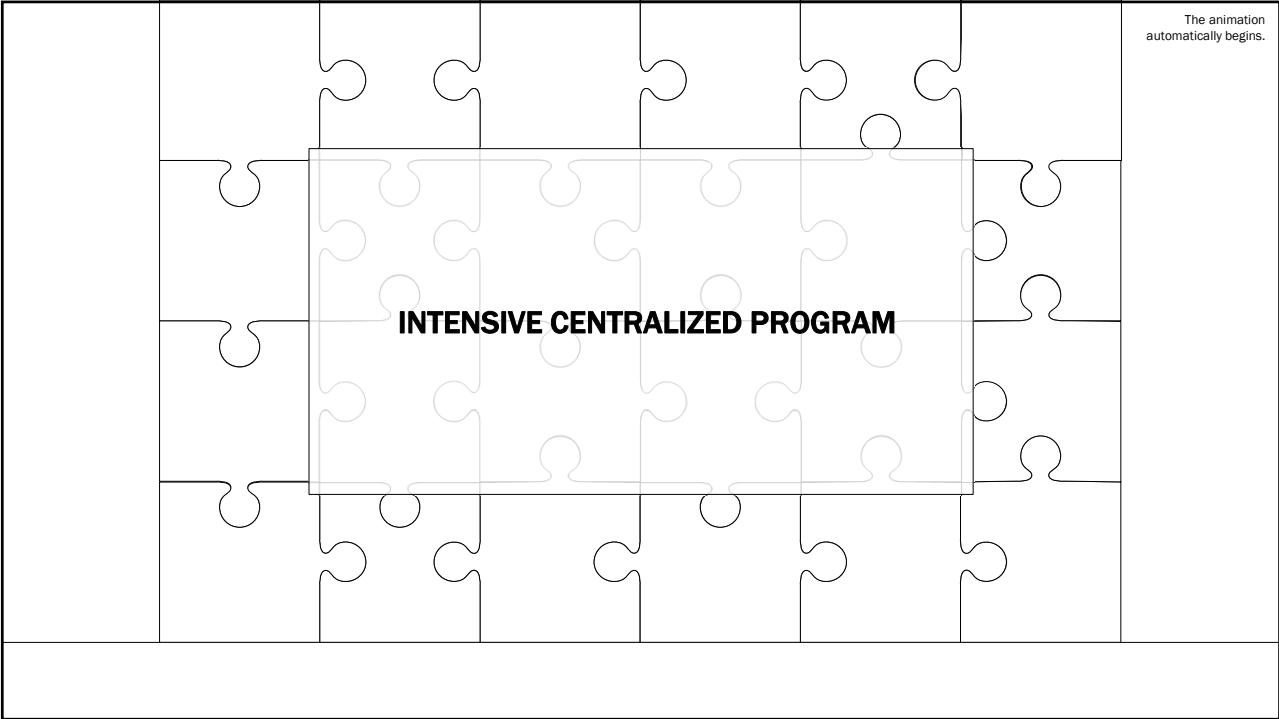
Communication, parent/teacher meetings, training, teaming

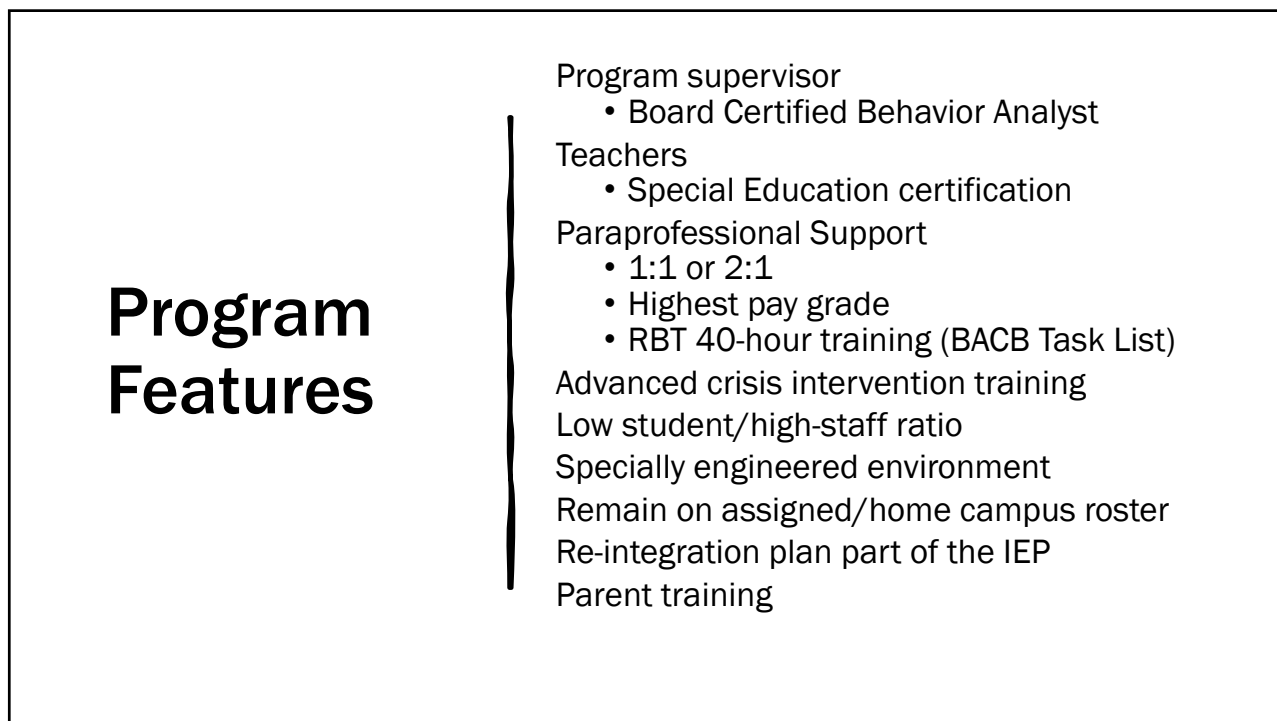
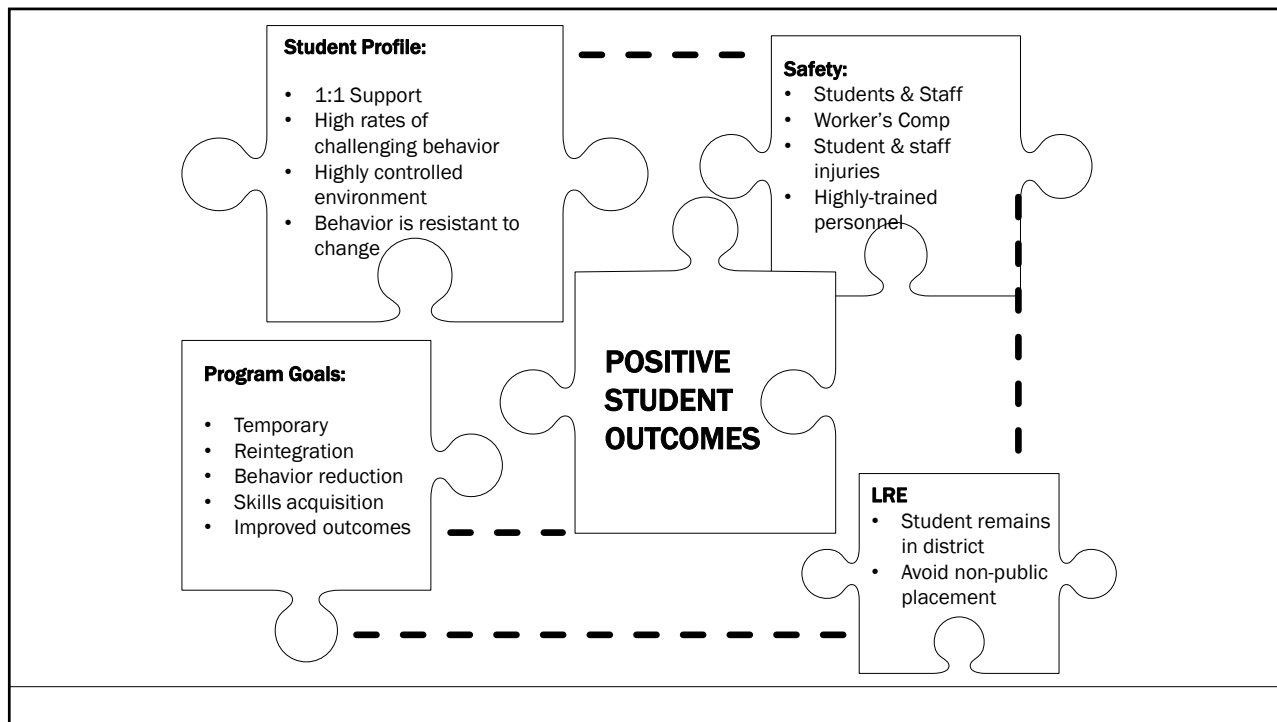
10. Teaming

Multidisciplinary, collaboration, team input, decision-making

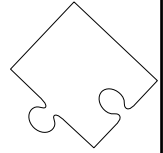








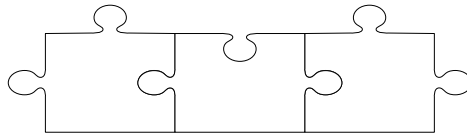
In closing...



Addressing challenging student behavior requires a comprehensive approach:

- Function-based, multi-component behavior intervention plan
- Implemented in a quality program
- In the least restrictive environment
- Responsive to student needs

Student may require intensive programming to achieve meaningful outcomes.



The animation automatically begins.

Thanks for joining me today!

Contact information:
Dr. Heather L. Hughes
hhughes@ems-isd.net

References

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