



PES Principal's Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

December 2011

Principal's Message

It is hard to believe the first marking period is complete and we are headed into our Winter Break. The school continues to be focused on the initiatives shared in the beginning of the year; implementation of Scientific Research Based Instruction and Intervention known as SRBI and developing a positive school climate starting with our STAR program. Our STAR students have been working hard. Hallway behavior has greatly improved and the students are also responding to the STAR expectations in their classrooms, cafeteria and recess. Many teachers are using Responsive School practices in their classrooms and as a school we are working at moving toward Logical Consequences, also a Responsive School approach. The progress we are making with this approach is having a noticeable impact on the learning environment at PES. I look forward to continuing this good work with the staff. I wish all families a happy and healthy holiday season. I hope everyone enjoys the winter break.

Fondly,
Theresa Forish

Punishment vs. Logical Consequences

What's the Difference?

The following is taken from the *Responsive Classroom* Newsletter: August 1998. It compares the approach we are implementing in terms of consequences here at PES with the more traditional, punitive approach that was used in the past. This is a change that cannot happen overnight however, we are working diligently to make this transition. I have had several parents ask about the new approach, that is why I thought you would like to read excerpts from this article, the entire article can be read online @ www.responsiveclassroom.org and clicking on resources for educators.

The use of logical consequences is one part of an approach to discipline used in the *Responsive Classroom*. It's a powerful way of responding to children's misbehavior that not only is effective in stopping the behavior but is respectful of children and helps them to take responsibility for their actions.

Teachers often ask, "How are logical consequences any different from punishment?" It is a critical

question because there are some basic and important differences between the two—differences that must be understood in order to use logical consequences well. Take the following example:

Six-year-old Jacob is zooming around the classroom when suddenly he trips and falls into Michelle's block building. Michelle lets out a scream and the teacher comes over.

This first scenario involves a teacher who uses punishment. Feeling irritated, the teacher looks at Jacob and says loudly in front of the other children, "I have told you over and over again not to run in this classroom. Now see what you've done with your carelessness. Go sit in that chair and don't move until it's time for lunch."

What might be going on for Jacob? He might be thinking, "I wasn't even running. The teacher doesn't know what she's talking about. She's always picking on me. Now everybody's looking at me. I hate this school. It was a stupid building anyway."

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year!

Punishment vs. Logical Consequences (continued)

Now, here's what might happen with a teacher who uses logical consequences. The teacher, although also feeling irritated, takes a deep breath and makes herself begin by describing what she sees: "Michelle is very upset right now because Jacob knocked over her building. I need to talk with Jacob first and then we'll figure out how to help Michelle."

The teacher takes Jacob aside and begins by asking him a question.

"What happened?"

"I just tripped and fell into it accidentally. I didn't mean to knock it over."

"Hmmm. So it was an accident. I did notice that you were running before it happened. Could that have been why you fell?"

"Maybe."

"When kids run in the classroom, accidents often happen. That's why our rule says to be safe. What do you think you could do to help Michelle?"

"I don't know."

"Maybe she would like some help putting the building back up."

Jacob nods and the teacher walks back with him to the block area. Michelle accepts Jacob's offer to help and together they build for the rest of the period.

Now, what might be going on for Jacob? He might be learning, "When I knock things down I have

to help build them back up. I can fix things when I mess up. My teacher helps me solve problems. I have to remember to walk in the block area."

Teachers frequently ask, "Is it ever okay for a child to feel bad about their behavior?" Of course it is. When children misbehave, chances are they already feel bad. Our job is not to make them feel worse but to help them choose a better course of action the next time.

As Ruth Sidney Charney says in [*Teaching Children to Care*](#), "Our goal, when children break rules, is never

to make them feel 'bad' or defeated, although they may, in fact, feel bad. Our goal is first to help them recover self-control and self-respect. When I observe a child acting the part of the bully, or sneaking out of a job, or putting down a classmate or teacher, it is not a picture of self-control and self-respect. It is a sign of distress and a signal for help. Something needs to stop. The use of logical consequences urges respect for the rules and the people they are designed to guide."

	Punishment	Logical Consequences
Intention	To ensure compliance by using external controls that make the child feel ashamed or bad in other ways.	To help children recognize the effects of their actions and develop internal controls.
Underlying belief	Children will do better only because they fear punishment and will seek to avoid it.	Children want to do better and can do better with reflection and practice.
Teacher's approach and tone	Reacts automatically with little thought; voice is angry and punitive.	Gather more information before reacting; voice is calm and matter-of-fact.
Nature of the consequence	Not related to the behavior or the damage done; not reasonable for the child to do.	Related to the behavior and helps fix the damage done; reasonable for the child to do.
Message to the child	The child is the problem.	The damage done, not the child, is the problem.
Long-term effect on the child	Encourages child to use evasion and deception in the future.	Helps child know what to do next time.

Reference: Brady, Kathryn, Mary Beth Forton, and Deborah Porter. 2011. *Rules in Schools*, 2nd ed. Turners Falls, Massachusetts: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.

Hall Star Winners

September

Whole School Winner:
Mr. Battaglia's Grade 5 Class

Grade Level Winners:
Mrs. King's AM Kindergarten Class
Mrs. Rosa's AM Kindergarten Class
Mrs. Kloss's 1st Grade Class
Mrs. Fein's 2nd Grade Class
Ms. Conner's 3rd Grade Class
Mrs. Musante's 4th Grade Class

October

Whole School Winner:
Mrs. Fein's 2nd Grade Class

Grade Level Winners:
Mrs. King's AM Kindergarten Class
Mrs. King's PM Kindergarten Class
Miss. Kloss's 1st Grade Class
Ms. Szondy's 3rd Grade Class
Mrs. Musante's 4th Grade Class
Mrs. Canty's Grade 5 Class

November

Whole School Winner:
Mrs. King's PM Kindergarten Class

Grade Level Winners:
Mrs. Kloss's 1st Grade Class
Mrs. Fein's 2nd Grade Class
Mrs. MacCallum's 3rd Grade Class
Mrs. Matthew's 4th Grade Class
Ms. Stoddard's 4th Grade Class
Mrs. Canty's Grade 5 Class

A Reminder of Some School Policies

TOYS

No toys are allowed in school because they can be disruptive. They should remain at home except when specifically approved by a teacher as part of a school project. Dangerous toys such as skateboards, hard balls, Frisbees, bats, and kites are not allowed in school under any circumstances. No cell phones or electronics are allowed. If toys, Pokémon cards, electronic games, etc. are brought to school, students will be asked to put them away, or they may be confiscated by school personnel. If this occurs, the toy or item can be picked up by the parents. (Pg. 29 Student Handbook)



OUTDOOR RECESS

Children are expected to come to school properly clothed for weather conditions. Whenever possible, students go outdoors for their recess period. When the wind-chill is below 20°, indoor recess is held. Students receive a 20 minute recess daily.

An extra change of clothing kept in the locker or backpack in case of a slip in the mud would minimize disruption to class time. (Pg. 17 Student Handbook)

FOOD IN SCHOOL

Every class has a snack time during the day at the teacher's discretion. Students should not bring "junk" food for snacks. Nutritious snacks such as the following are encouraged: fruits, vegetables, crackers, and cheese.

We ask you not to bring nut products into the school due to cases of severe allergies at PES. If your child is in a classroom that has a child in it with nut allergies, absolutely no nut products will be allowed in that class. (Pg. 18 Student Handbook)

In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all students, we expect that only non-food items be used for incentives, rewards, and celebrations. The following are some ideas for parents wishing to send in something for their child's birthday: donate a book in the child's name to the classroom library, stickers, pencils, bookmarks, erasers. (Pg. 16 Student Handbook)

A Giving School Community



The Southbury Police visited PES to thank the children for their generosity. Below left; members of Ms. Conner's 2009 3rd grade class pose with the gifts they collected. Their effort inspired the school wide effort of the past two years. Now 5th graders, many of the students are pictured with Ms. Conner below. The efforts of the PES community helped make the Holidays special for hundreds of Southbury children.

