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# CES MEMBER NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025

## LEAP: Transforming Education Through Teacher Preparation

The Licensure for Education Alternative Preparation (LEAP) program, offered by CES, is revolutionizing teacher training in New Mexico. This one-year cohort-based program supports aspiring educators in obtaining their Level 1 teaching license while empowering them to become impactful leaders in their classrooms and communities.

### *What is LEAP?*

LEAP is designed to address the teacher shortage in New Mexico by turning individuals with bachelor's degrees into licensed teachers in just one year. Candidates simultaneously begin teaching in classrooms while engaging in rigorous coursework and professional development tailored to their unique needs.

Key components include:

- **Comprehensive Coaching:** Each participant is paired with a full-time coach who offers consistent, hands-on guidance throughout the year.
- **Practical Learning:** Monthly professional development sessions cover classroom management, culturally responsive teaching, social-emotional learning, and instructional design.
- **Content-Specific Support:** Specialized coaching is provided for various teaching fields, such as math, social studies, special education, and more.

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### *What Sets LEAP Apart?*

Unlike traditional teacher preparation programs offered by higher education institutions, LEAP emphasizes practical, community-centered training:

- **Coaching Model:** Coaches provide personalized, non-evaluative mentorship, visiting classrooms regularly and offering holistic support.
- **Cultural Relevance:** LEAP integrates culturally and linguistically responsive teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of New Mexico's students.
- **Flexibility:** With weekend sessions, virtual options, and adaptable timelines, the program accommodates participants' professional and personal commitments.

### *Success Stories and Community Impact*

Since its inception, LEAP has trained hundreds of teachers who have gone on to make a lasting difference in their schools and communities. Graduates often pursue advanced degrees, take on leadership

roles, and return to mentor new LEAP participants. Notable outcomes include:

- Graduates who have become school board members, district leaders, or advocates for educational equity.
- Participants contributing to systemic changes in their regions
- through culturally sustaining practices and strong community connections.

### *Tailored Training for Diverse Needs*

LEAP also offers specialized tracks to address specific challenges in education:

- **Special Education:** Candidates receive additional coaching to navigate the complexities of special education, from IEP writing to collaborating with specialists.
- **Indigenous Educator Track:** In partnership with the NACA-Inspired Schools Network, LEAP supports Indigenous candidates with culturally specific training and full scholarships.

### *Why Choose LEAP?*

LEAP provides an unparalleled opportunity for aspiring educators to

quickly transition into the classroom while receiving extensive support and training.

With:

- **Individualized Coaching**
- **Hands-On Experience**
- **A Focus on Equity and Community**

LEAP empowers teachers to succeed in diverse educational settings and pursue long-term growth in their careers.

### *Join the LEAP Community*

Applications for LEAP are typically open in the spring, with late-entry options available to accommodate unexpected vacancies. Upon completion, graduates gain licensure and access to a robust alumni network, providing ongoing opportunities for collaboration and professional development.

Whether you're looking to start a new career in education or add new credentials to your teaching portfolio, LEAP is the program that turns potential into impact.

Learn more at [cesleap.org](https://cesleap.org).

by Jared Bomani



*Onsite teacher observation by a LEAP coach*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2/1 PCSNM: Las Cruces School Fair  
 2/2 Groundhog Day  
 2/4 TAP: Special Education Discipline Rules & Behavioral Interventions to Prevent the Need for Discipline  
 2/5 TAP: Learn to Think Like a Behavior Specialist: Decrease Challenging Classroom Behaviors  
 2/6 TAP: Executive Functioning Skills: The brain's "Air Traffic Controller" - Tools for your students and YOU!  
 2/11 TAP: Designing Successful Functional Behavior Assessments & Behavior Intervention Plans  
 2/12-13 TAP: Facilitating and Developing Compliant IEPs (Two-Day IEP ALL Day Training)  
 2/13-15 NMSBA Board Institute  
 2/14 Valentine's Day  
 2/17 Presidents' Day  
 2/18 TAP: Section 504  
 2/18-20 NMPED School Safety Summit  
 2/19 TAP: Unleashing Potential: Understanding the Overlap Between Neurodiversity & Giftedness

2/19-21 NMASBO Winter Conference  
 2/20 NM Legislature: Deadline for introduction of bills  
 2/20 TAP: Unlocking the Power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Special Education Practices & IEP Planning (Part 2 in a 2-Part Series)  
 2/25 TAP: Evidence Based Instructional Practices: Prompting  
 2/26 TAP: Teach Self-awareness, Self-management & Calming Strategies  
 2/27 TAP: From School-Wide to the Individual Student: Implementing Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports

February 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

## ORDER CORNER

Regarding Vendors Quotations:

- Vendors are required to provide CES members quotations showing an itemized detail of all charges. No lump sum quotations are allowed. Neither CES nor its members can perform contract and price compliance review with a lump sum amount. The CES member has the right to request quotations showing the detail.

- At a minimum, vendor quotations should include the following elements:

- Quantity
- Part Number
- Description

- Unit of Measure/Packaging
- List Price Extended or Final Price

- Ensure quotations received include all applicable local and state taxes. It can impact members' encumbrances.

- Vendor should not list the CES Contract Administrative Fee (CAF) as a separate line item in a quotation. \*Vendor remits the Contract Administrative Fee to CES, not the member.

- Upon receiving a quotation, we recommend that you ask the vendor if their pricing pages are current in CES' Bluebook so Member and CES can perform compliance review.

## PURCHASING NEWS

1. **Name Changes/Change of Ownership:**

Keers Remediation is now Keers Facility Services

2. **Contract Extensions:**

- Bloomboard-19-05N-C201-ALL
- Claro Consulting-19-05N-C103-ALL
- Cognia-19-05N-C105-ALL
- Heartland Payment Systems-19-06N-C101-ALL
- Insignia-19-05N-C202-ALL
- PCS Educational Services-19-06N-C102-ALL

3. **New Contracts Awarded:**

RFP	Awardee	Contract Number
2024-32 <i>Sole Source</i>	Physics in a Box	2024-32-C111-ALL
2025-02 <i>Elevator, Escalator, Motorized Walkways</i>	Jer & Co Elevators LLC US Electrical Corp	2024-27-C111-3567 2024-27-C112-ALL
2025-03 <i>Professional Services for Education Lot 1: College Community Career Readiness</i>	Catapult Learning West, LLC Collegiate Edu-Nation Corwin Press Digital Respons-Ability Future Focused Education	2025-03-C114-ALL 2025-03-C115-ALL 2025-03-C113-ALL 2025-03-C111-ALL 2025-03-C112-ALL
2025-03 <i>Professional Services for Education Lot 2: Grant Writing</i>	Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting New Mexico Grant Administration The Grant Plant	2025-03-C211-ALL 2025-03-C212-ALL 2025-03-C213-ALL
2025-03 <i>Professional Services for Education Lot 3: K-12 Tutoring</i>	Air Tutors, LLC Catapult Learning West, LLC iTutor.com Inc One on One Learning Reading Quest Sylvan Learning Center Ten Talents Enterprises, LLC University Instructors LLC	2025-03-C311-ALL 2025-03-C312-ALL 2025-03-C316-ALL 2025-03-C313-ALL 2025-03-C315-ALL 2025-03-C314-ALL 2025-03-C317-ALL 2025-03-C318-ALL

4. Current & Upcoming Solicitations:

RFP #	RFP Description	Release	Pre-Prop.	Due	Award
2025-04	<i>AEPA 25.5</i>	Feb 2025			
2025-05 (PaaS for PED)	<i>Community Schools Accreditation (NMPED)</i>	11/18/24	11/21/24	12/6/24	12/20/24 under development
2025-06 (2021-21 exp 2/1/25)	<i>Copiers, Printers, MDF's Products- Managed Print Services</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24	12/20/24	1/20/25
2025-07 (2021-19 exp 2/4/25)	<i>Computers, Devices, and Related, Products and Services</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24	12/20/24	1/20/25
2025-08 (2021-20 exp 3/2/25)	<i>IT Professional Services</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24	12/20/24	1/20/25
2025-09 (2021-24 exp 3/11/24)	<i>Music Instruments, Music, Performing Arts, Equipment, Materials, Supplies and Related</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24	12/20/24	1/20/25
2025-10 (2021-25 exp 3/23/25)	<i>Janitorial Products, Services and Related</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24	12/20/24	1/20/25
2025-11 (2021-27 exp 4/7/25)	<i>Student Management, Special Education &amp; Educational Managed Curriculum</i>	12/13/24	12/18/24	1/17/25	2/3/25
2025-12 (2021-28 exp 4/12/25)	<i>Temporary Employment and Recruitment Services</i>	12/13/24	12/18/24	1/17/25	2/3/25
2025-13 (2021-32 exp 4/19/25)	<i>Flooring Systems &amp; Related</i>	12/13/24	12/18/24	1/17/25	2/3/25
2025-14 (2021-31 exp 5/1/25)	<i>Health &amp; Training Supplies</i>	1/21/25	1/28/24	2/14/25	3/3/25
2025-15 (2021-30 exp 5/1/25)	<i>School Safety Audits, Inspections, Consulting and Training Services</i>	1/21/25	1/28/24	2/14/25	3/3/25
2025-16 (2021-23 exp 5/31/25)	<i>AEPA - eRate Consulting Services</i>	1/21/25	1/28/24	2/14/25	3/3/25
2025-17 (2021-05 A-C exp 6/30/25)	<i>Supplemental Employee Benefits</i> - a. <i>Section 125</i> b. <i>Retirement</i> c. <i>Other benefits</i>	<b>POSTPONED UNTIL MARCH 2025</b>			

## EDUCATION ARTICLES



### From Chaos to Calm

By Rene Rohrer, M.A.

LEAP Facilitator & TAP Consultant

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February 2025

### Supporting Students in the Classroom with Social-Emotional Skills: Focusing on Self-Regulation

As educators, we have seen a change in students' ability to self-regulate and manage behavior in a school setting, especially after the COVID pandemic. We can see firsthand the challenges of addressing classroom and behavior management post pandemic, with heightened feelings of anxiety and uncertainty from the unprecedented disruptions.

In a survey done by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) during the 2021-22 school year 87% of U.S. public schools reported negative effects on students' socio-emotional development post-pandemic. Specifically, respondents identified increased incidents of classroom disruption from student misconduct (56%) with increases in acts of disrespect towards teachers and staff (48%). Additionally, 84% of schools observed declines in students' behavioral development and a reported increase in chronic student absenteeism (70-74% range). (Retrieved January 2025 from [https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press\\_releases/07\\_06\\_2022.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/07_06_2022.asp))

Research outlined in an article by Raghunathan (2022), indicates modest declines in children's attention, task

persistence, and engagement, along with increased impulsivity during and after the pandemic. This article further asserts that "Child self-regulatory behavior may be a leading indicator of pandemic-related child disruptions. Self-regulation, the ability to monitor, evaluate, deploy and inhibit behavior or emotions to attain a behavioral goal<sup>5,6</sup> is closely related to emotion regulation, fear, and impulsivity.<sup>7</sup> Links between chronic stress and child self-regulation are well documented.<sup>5-7</sup> Poor self-regulation in childhood is linked to life course consequences for health and health behavior, educational attainment, and interaction with the criminal justice system." (Retrieved January 2025 from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8995397/>).

But we do not need researchers to tell us that the diverse social emotional needs of our students are not being met by the current way of doing things. We cannot continue to do what we have always done, or we will get what we have always gotten, and it is no longer enough.

In today's classrooms, fostering students' social-emotional learning (SEL) is as essential as academic achievement. Self-regulation—the ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors—is a cornerstone of SEL and critical for student success. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), self-regulation is a vital component of self-management, one of the five core competencies of SEL. By supporting students in developing self-regulation, teachers empower them to navigate challenges, stay focused, and engage meaningfully in learning. Here are strategies educators can use to foster self-regulation and resources to help them succeed.

### [Understanding CASEL's Core Competencies](#)

CASEL identifies five interrelated SEL competencies:

**Self-Awareness:** Recognizing one's emotions, thoughts, and values.

**Self-Management:** Regulating emotions, managing stress, and achieving goals.

**Social Awareness:** Understanding others' perspectives and showing empathy.

**Relationship Skills:** Building healthy relationships and communication.

**Responsible Decision-Making:** Making ethical and constructive choices.

Self-regulation lies at the heart of self-management, enabling students to stay calm under pressure, persist through difficulties, and adjust their behavior to meet expectations. It also influences other competencies, such as maintaining positive relationships and making responsible decisions. (casel.org)

Watch the video [The Missing Piece](#) for an overview of why SEL is important and what it is.

Visit [casel.org](http://casel.org) for great information and resources on SEL.

### **Seven Great Strategies for Teaching Self-Regulation**

#### 1. ***Create a Calm and Predictable Environment***

- Establish consistent routines and clear expectations.
- Designate calm-down spaces where students can take a break to regain composure.
- Use visual schedules to help students anticipate transitions.

#### 2. ***Model, Teach, Practice, and Reinforce Emotion Regulation Skills***

- Introduce emotion vocabulary and help students identify their feelings using tools like emotion charts, check-ins, visuals, and activities.
- Practice mindfulness activities, such as deep breathing or guided imagery.

- Model self-regulation by narrating your thought process when managing stress (e.g., "I'm feeling frustrated, so I'm going to take a deep breath before responding").

- Use Declarative Language and Reinforce with 5:1 Ratio

#### 3. ***Integrate SEL Activities into the Curriculum***

- Use literature or scenarios to discuss characters' emotions and how they handle challenges.
- Incorporate group activities such as cooperative learning, discussions, Socratic seminars, and project-based learning that build collaboration and problem-solving skills.
- Design reflective journaling prompts to encourage self-awareness and goal setting.
- Incorporate restorative practices like morning meetings or classroom discussions.

#### 4. ***Teach Goal-Setting and Problem-Solving***

- Help students break goals into smaller, manageable steps.
- Teach problem-solving frameworks like STOP (Stop, Think, Options, Plan).
- Encourage students to reflect on their progress and adjust their approach as needed.
- Incorporate scaffolding for peer interactions, discussions, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

#### 5. ***Incorporate Movement and Sensory Activities***

- Provide brain breaks with physical activities to help students release energy.
- Use sensory tools, such as fidget toys or stress balls, for students who need help focusing.
- Introduce yoga or stretching exercises to promote relaxation.

6. ***Build Strong Relationships with Students***
  - Develop trust by showing empathy and understanding students' perspectives.
  - Use restorative practices, such as circles, to build community and resolve conflicts.
  - Regularly check in with students to offer support and encouragement.
7. ***Build Your Own Social Emotional Skills***
  - Build your skills and practice mindfulness across your day.
  - Reflect and write in a gratitude journal or other practices.
  - Read, watch videos, explore free webinars, or listen to podcasts on self-compassion, teacher well-being, co-regulation, and other SEL topics.

Supporting students' self-regulation skills is a long-term investment in their academic success and emotional well-being. By embedding SEL strategies into daily classroom routines, teachers can create an environment where students feel safe, supported, and empowered to manage their emotions and behaviors. When educators leverage resources like CASEL's framework and SEL programs, they equip students with tools to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

#### **Resources for Educators**

**Zones of Regulation:** A curriculum designed to help students categorize and regulate their emotions. Learn more at <https://zonesofregulation.com>

## **Compliance Corner**

February 2025

By Cindy Soo Hoo, TAP Consultant

### **Is it Hit or Miss Regarding Your Prior Written Notice? (Part 1 of 4)**

**GoNoodle:** An online platform offering movement and mindfulness videos to help students manage their energy and emotions. Visit

<https://www.gonoodle.com>.

**Panorama Ed:** An overview of the landscape of social-emotional learning programs, including what criteria to consider when evaluating curriculum providers and a list of 20+ leading SEL programs and tools for K-12.

<https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/social-emotional-learning-curriculum>

**Common Sense SEL:** a resource center with free resources and activities to implement SEL in digital life in your school or classroom.

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/SEL>

#### **Books and Literature:**

*The Whole-Brain Child* by Dr. Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson.

*Co-Regulation Handbook* by Linda K. Murphy

#### Reference Cited

Raghunathan RS, Musci RJ, Voegtline KM, Chambers Thomas T, Johnson SB. Children's Attention and Self-Regulatory Behavior Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *J Dev Behav Pediatr.* 2022 May 1;43(4):e263-e268 doi: 10.1097/DBP.0000000000001027. Epub 2021 Oct 11. PMID: 34636362; PMCID: PMC8995397.

There are many circumstances that all of us experience in which protections are provided to us. This occurs when we are purchasing a new car, taking out a loan or getting repairs completed, to name a few examples. Our protections are written in



what is often called “the fine print” and explains what each party is responsible for in carrying out the agreement.

An important document pertaining to special education and the protections afforded to parents and students is the Prior Written Notice or PWN. It is a requirement for the district to provide and a right of the parent to receive. A PWN is provided to a parent, guardian or adult student in many situations involving the special education process. It captures the requested actions and the district’s decisions regarding those requests. The requests can originate from the parent, adult student or the district and would include agreements or refusals regarding the requests as well as explanations for the decisions that were made.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires school districts to provide notice to parents as outlined in 34 CFR §300.503:

*(a) Notice. Written notice that meets the requirements of [paragraph \(b\)](#) of this section must be given to the parents of a child with a disability a reasonable time before the public agency—*

*(1) Proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child; or*

*(2) Refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child.*

The IDEA provides timelines in certain situations in which a Local Education Agency (LEA) must provide a notice. Those instances will be discussed in subsequent editions. In addition, it is important to note the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) has amended rules that went into effect as of July 1, 2023, pertaining to the provision of a Prior Written Notice when a request for an evaluation has been received. NMAC

6.31.2.10 states:

*D. Evaluation requests and referrals.*

*(3) The public agency shall respond to a parental request for initial evaluation or reevaluation to the public agency no later than 15 school days from the receipt of the request. If a parent request for an evaluation or reevaluation is received within 15 school days before the start of a scheduled period in which student attendance is not required for at least 14 calendar days, the public agency shall respond no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the request.*

*(4) The public agency shall respond to a parental request for initial evaluation or reevaluation by:*

*(a) providing prior written notice consistent with 34 CFR Sec. 300.503 that proposes to conduct the requested evaluation or reevaluation, providing a copy of the procedural safeguards notice to parents required by 34 CFR Sec. 300.504, and seeking parental consent for the evaluation; or*

*(b) providing prior written notice consistent with 34 CFR Sec. 300.503 of the public agency’s refusal to conduct the evaluation or reevaluation and a copy of the procedural safeguards notice required by 34 CFR Sec. 300.504.*

*(5) When the public agency makes a referral for an evaluation without a parental request, the public agency shall provide prior written notice consistent with 34 CFR Sec. 300.503 that proposes to conduct the requested evaluation or reevaluation, providing a copy of the procedural safeguards notice to parents required by 34 CFR Sec. 300.504, and seek parental consent for the evaluation no later than 15 school days from the referral. If a referral for an evaluation or reevaluation is made within 15 school days before the start of a scheduled period in which student attendance is not required for at least 14 calendar days, the public*

agency shall request parental consent no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the referral.

As referenced above, there are many instances in which a PWN is required. Join me in the upcoming editions to discuss what those situations are. In addition, we will discuss what information must be included in a PWN, examples of what sources to use when

making decisions as well as some comprehensive and non-comprehensive examples when responding.

*The information included herein is not intended to provide legal advice. Should you need legal advice or guidance on any issue involving special education, please contact the appropriate person for your district.*



### Dear Ms. M, I Need Help Crafting my first Gifted Education LEA Plan!

The deadline for submitting your Gifted Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan to the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) is coming up fast—March 17! This plan is a big opportunity to make sure gifted students across your district have the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

#### What is the Gifted LEA Plan?

Simply put, the Gifted LEA Plan outlines how your district or charter school will serve gifted students. It is your blueprint for making sure gifted education is accessible and effective, and the PED will review it to ensure you are meeting state guidelines. Please check out the New Mexico Gifted Technical Assistance Manual (TAM) 2023 for detailed information and program self-assessments.

#### Why is it important?

This plan helps ensure that:

1. **All gifted students get the support they need**, no matter what their background.
2. **Teachers are prepared** with professional development on best practices for gifted education.
3. **Families and communities are involved** because their support is key to success.

#### How do we create it?

1. **Get input from everyone:** Talk to teachers, parents, and community members to make sure the plan reflects everyone's needs.
2. **Review what is working:** What is already in place, and where can you improve?
3. **Set clear goals:** Focus on measurable goals that align with state guidelines and your students' needs.
4. **Create a strategy:** Lay out how you will identify students, deliver services, and involve families, while also supporting teacher growth.
5. **Review and Revise:** Join CES/TAP on March 4: "Gifted LEA Plan Part II": we will review components 4,5, and 6 and Q/A

Session to help you finalize your plans for submittal.

6. **Submit it by March 17:** Once the plan's ready, submit it to the NMPED's Gifted Specialist Christopher Vian (Christopher.Vian@ped.nm.gov) for review.

### What's next?

The LEA Plan is not just paperwork, it is a chance to improve how we serve gifted learners. By working together, we can make sure every gifted student in New Mexico has the chance to reach their full potential. Let's make it happen!

If you need assistance or help looking over your draft, please reach out to me at [kmorris@ces.org](mailto:kmorris@ces.org), I am here to support you and your gifted students!

Kate Morris, MEd Gifted Education

*Kate Morris is CES's Gifted TAP Consultant. She has been in gifted education for 10 years as a gifted educator and gifted instructional coach. She works for Central Consolidated School District in northwest New Mexico serving gifted and talented students in CCSD's Gifted, Talented, and Creative Program.*

## Teacher Toolbox



Teacher Toolbox - February 2025  
By Margaret Wood, Speech-Language Pathologist and TAP Consultant [mwood@ces.org](mailto:mwood@ces.org)

***The Power of Positive Behavior Support: "BRIBERY" or "REINFORCEMENT"?!***

As we discussed during January's live-virtual workshops ***"ASD Toolbox Series: Challenging Behaviors Toolkit - Parts 1 and 2"***, challenging behaviors are... well, challenging! We learned that behavior always has a purpose (i.e., function) and may develop due to a variety of reasons, such as physical pain or discomfort (e.g., headache, hunger, or bathroom needs), difficulties with processing information, changes in the daily schedule, sensory sensitivities or aversions, or a hard time unexpectedly ending or transitioning between activities. All children experience

difficult behaviors at some point. However, some kids seem to have a more difficult time and go on to develop more frequent and sometimes more intense behaviors ranging from destruction of property to aggression toward themselves and/or others. Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) demonstrate communication challenges that often prevent them from expressing their needs and feelings, which often lead to behavioral outbursts that have a significant impact on the individual as well as their families, classmates, and teachers.

Regardless of whether a student receives general education or special education, ALL students require ongoing behavioral management from parents, teachers, and other adults to learn and grow. Therefore, if a student receives special education, this categorization does not guarantee, nor exempt, a student from experiencing additional behavioral support needs. We must remember that a student is a child

first – before they are a child with “X”, which may be any of the following 13 categories as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), under which 3- through 22-years-olds may be eligible for special education services if the disability impacts their educational performance such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Other Health Impairment (e.g., ADHD), Specific Learning Disability, etc.

There are a variety of positive behavior tools that are instrumental in helping us to teach students ways to learn, grow, mature, and eventually begin to self-regulate and, for some individuals, become an active participant in monitoring and managing their own behavior. Amanda Morin from [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org) mentions many of these research-based positive behavior strategies, such as:

- Create a classroom layout that supports students (i.e., Organize your furniture, materials, and students in a way so as to increase the likelihood of order & structure, which increases positive behaviors). Be sure to check out “Classroom Fixer-Upper” in the webinar library for an in-depth look at this important topic!
- Post and define positive behavior expectations (i.e., Create clear classroom expectations that are observable, measurable, positive, and understandable).
- Explicitly teach behavior expectations (i.e., Plan, teach, practice, and ***reinforce*** expected behaviors, routines, and procedures).
- Have systems to respond to behavior (i.e., Acknowledge

positive behavior when you see it and provide rewards, when appropriate, for demonstrating positive behavior – also known as ***positive reinforcement!***)

- Partner with families (i.e., Gather information about students from families and caregivers, engage the family when a student demonstrates challenging behavior, and follow up with families to share when a student is demonstrating positive behavior).
- Request support from others with special expertise and experience. (i.e., Meet with colleagues and specialists to discuss behavior challenges when you have used all the strategies that you know. They may have additional tools in their toolbox to suggest, such as how and when to collect data to look at the causes of the unexpected behaviors and how to create individualized supports for students in need of this level of attention).

In “Positive Behavior Supports – A Guide for Teachers” (Ruef, Higgins, Glaeser, & Patnode), the authors describe how positive reinforcement has been studied in great detail in the last 25 years and has proved to be an important part of the learning process (Repp, Dietz, & Dietz, 1976; Wolf, Hanley, King, Lachowicz, & Giles, 1970). According to dictionary.com, positive reinforcement is “the act of rewarding a positive behavior in order to encourage it to happen again in the future, as in Getting an A on the test was the positive reinforcement I needed to continue studying.” In other words, if an individual is rewarded for an action (i.e., their “behavior”), it shapes their future choices by encouraging the person to act in that way again, thereby increasing the

frequency of that behavior, whether it is negative or positive.

Consider the following actions of a child who is trying to gain someone's attention to gain access to what he wants, in this case, a crayon:

**Monday:** Johnny hits Sue to get her attention because he wants to use the red crayon, says "Gimmel," and Sue gives him the red crayon. Johnny's unexpected ("inappropriate" or "negative") behavior was just reinforced, so, the next time Johnny wants something, he will likely choose "hitting and demanding" to get attention, so he can get what he wants. Why? Because it worked... Johnny got what he wanted.

<<< *The teacher intervenes and spends some time with Johnny.* >>>

**Tuesday:** The same student, Johnny, taps Sue on the shoulder and asks, "May I borrow the red crayon please?" and Sue gives Johnny the crayon. Johnny's expected ("appropriate" or "positive") behavior was again reinforced, so now he is going to choose "tapping and requesting" the next time, right? Maybe - maybe not. We sure hope so! However, Johnny's next move depends on many factors, including the function of Johnny's initial "hitting" behavior and what other challenges he experiences (e.g., communication deficits, sensory issues, etc.), which should be further explored, if this was a real-life situation.

Let us consider the following question:

*What did the teacher do to change Johnny's behavior?  
Put him in time-out? Keep him in from recess? Call his parents?*

**Answer:** Nope... The teacher gave Johnny a reward.

Wait, what?! You mean, the teacher BRIBED him?! Hold on for just a minute. Let's not jump to conclusions. I did not say that is ALL the teacher did. The teacher DID indeed give Johnny a reward. However, we need to determine WHEN that occurred before we convict this teacher of bribery. We need to first learn the difference between bribery and reinforcement. Let's forget about Johnny for a moment and consider the following definitions:

**Bribery** is when something powerful such as money or an object (including an edible item) is given to a person to encourage them to engage in a specific behavior or complete an activity or task. Bribery is given **before** a person exhibits that desired behavior.

**Reinforcement** occurs when something (i.e., a "reward") is given or said to a person **immediately after** a specific behavior is exhibited that increases the future likelihood that that behavior will occur again in the near future.

Think of it this way. I will confess a less-than-stellar parenting moment that happened back in 2001. Squeezed in between two unfriendly individuals that apparently were not fond of children, I had to endure a long flight with my 18-month-old daughter who had just learned to walk and wanted nothing more than to walk up and down the aisle, which was of course against the rules. Therefore, I gave her M&Ms to distract her so she would not wriggle away, climb over our less-than-friendly neighbor, and toddle down the aisle, careening into the busy flight attendants. Was this bribery or reinforcement? I can check to see if this was a bribe or reinforcement by asking myself, "Did I give the candy before my daughter was sitting calmly on my lap or after?" If given beforehand, it would be considered a **bribe**. If given after she was

sitting down, it was **reinforcement**. In this instance, it was a bribe. Do not judge me – it worked – we survived the flight. Had I summoned the strength in that moment to teach her the desired behavior of sitting calmly on my lap and THEN given her the candy as a **reward**, I would have reinforced the expected behavior, making it more likely for that behavior to happen again.

So, whatever happened to our student Johnny and his teacher who we accused of bribery? Now you may be wondering, “When DID the teacher give Johnny the reward?” As it turns out, **AFTER** Johnny displayed the expected behavior, the teacher *smiled, gave Johnny a “High-5”, said “Way to go using your words, Johnny!” (genuine praise), and he earned a star on his behavior modification chart* to reward the desirable behavior of tapping Sue’s shoulder and requesting the crayon (instead of hitting her to get her attention AND the crayon). All the teacher’s intentional choices are considered **rewards** (a.k.a., *reinforcement*), since they occurred after his desired, expected behavior. As I mentioned earlier, that is not ALL the teacher did, of course. The teacher’s intervention also involved explicit teaching of the desired behavior, including teaching Johnny how to communicate more effectively with a polite verbal request and gentle shoulder tapping, instead of an aggressive demand and hitting. Explaining to Johnny the reason WHY he should choose this expected behavior (e.g., it gives others calm and safe thoughts and feelings about him) was a critical step as well. As

previously stated, behavior challenges are CHALLENGING! Therefore, let us remember to frequently apply the crucial tool of **positive reinforcement** and witness our students’ positive behaviors soar!

#### References and Resources

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/distressed-behaviour/all-audiences>  
<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/7-ideas-for-using-rewards-and-consequences>  
<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-are-positive-behavior-strategies>

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**The Reading Room:  
b/d/p Reversal & Transposition  
Problems & Strategies to Help  
Correct Them  
February 2025**

When folks think of dyslexia, they often think of students having b/d/p reversal problems. They believe that this is a sure sign of dyslexia. Well, the truth is that they are not entirely wrong nor are they entirely right.

Noted reading researcher and neuroscientist, Dr. Stanislas Dehaene calls this phenomenon, “mirroring.” Most children mix up these letters when they are quite young. Essentially these letters are all formed with the same elements, but in different positions. Before the brain becomes specialized for reading children do not differentiate their positional aspects. An example of this with something that is not a letter goes like this. If you see a chair upside down, it is still a chair. If you see a chair lying on its side, it is still a chair. If you see a chair hanging upside down on the wall, it is still a chair. Therefore, young children who have not learned to read will mix up these specific letters because they are essentially the same. The “letter box” area of the brain (occipito temporal area) has not been repurposed to attach particular sounds to these similar letters. For those of you who think that letter

reversals are a primary hallmark of dyslexia, you are partially correct. If children are still consistently making these errors after around eight years old, they may also exhibit other characteristics of dyslexia and possibly should be tested. As with any characteristic of dyslexia, we need to look at the whole picture and see if the child is struggling with other aspects of reading.

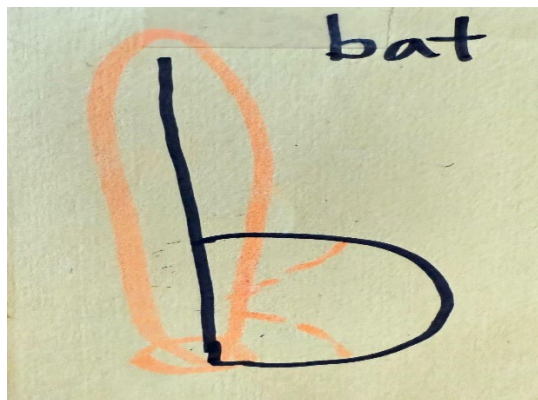
At the end of this article, I have attached some resources. Whatever strategy or strategies you choose to try, please remember that the strategy will be most useful if it is presented in a multisensory way and you will need to provide students with lots and lots of practice with the following letters: b, d, p, and sometimes q. As a Dyslexia Therapist for the last twenty years, I will share with you what have been the most efficacious strategies for my students over the years. I have worked with students who appear all along the Dyslexia Spectrum, from very mild to extremely severe. I have to say that I have never had a student who did not respond to a Structured Literacy approach to teaching reading. Those students with letter reversal issues also learned to identify the correct letters. This is not necessarily a quick fix. Some students will have to work for months to learn to accurately identify and write the correct letter, but eventually they will succeed. The first thing I do, once I identify students’ trouble spots, is to share with the students what they are having trouble with. There is research to support the notion that if students know and “own” their trouble spots, that awareness will help students focus on these issues. Students quickly know what letter/sound correspondences are problematic. At the beginning of every lesson, I have students verbally identify that bs and ds, ps and sometimes qs are trouble spots and remind them to use their index cards for

reference. When we start the writing portion of the lesson, I will ask them again to identify their trouble spots. Remember to plan your lessons with lots of words that include these letters. Do not avoid them! Students need lots and lots of practice with these letters, in both reading and writing.

That brings me to another important component of remediating b/d/p reversals and transpositions. We know that decoding (reading) reinforces encoding (spelling) and encoding reinforces decoding. Teaching correct letter formation can be very helpful in remediating reversal issues. Many students who struggle with reading also struggle with writing. These students often write their letters from the bottom up and reverse or transpose the positions of the components b, d, and p. Direct instruction in letter formation in the early grades is very important. Cursive writing instruction in second and third grade is very important as well. (see The Reading Room: Cursive Writing)

### Strategy 1.

Many programs use the keyword bat for b. Students say b - bat - /b/. For students who mix up b and d I have this simple graphic.



This photo is an actual index card that I use with one of my students. It is simply a drawing of a b with a bat and ball drawn in

orange. The b stands out in black. I place this card on the student's desk or table so that they have access to it at all times. They can use it to "check" on which letter is which. I over teach the b and then simply say the other one is the d. This works well for most students.

I say most students because recently I had to come up with another strategy for a student that just was not getting it with the card shown above. This student had persistent errors with b, d, and p.

### Strategy 2.

For this particular student I had to come up with a strategy that was a bit more powerful and thankfully it is working. He is now making at least 75% fewer errors with these letters.

First, I changed the keywords for d and p. I kept the keyword for b.

b - bat - /b/

d - doughnut - /d/

p - pole - /p/

When we begin a lesson I ask this student, "What letters are we going to pay particular attention to?" b, d, p. "What comes first on the b?" the bat. "What comes first on the d?" the doughnut. "What comes first on the p?" the pole. I ask these questions throughout the lesson to ensure that the student will focus on these trouble spots while reading and writing. We practice proper letter formation with these letters as well as others that are not formed correctly. This student has an unusual habit of writing capital s'es all the time, so we also focus on that. With this explicit, repeated practice my student has become much more accurate.

My hope is that these strategies will be useful to you and your students.

Remember to implement them in a



multisensory manner and to give your students repeated practice with reading and writing these tricky letters.

Eyes on Reading - Stanislas Dehaene & Emily Hanford  
[https://youtu.be/\\_4NWaTw36i8?si=dC8aAc\\_7loIWes3I](https://youtu.be/_4NWaTw36i8?si=dC8aAc_7loIWes3I)

The OT Toolbox - Multisensory Strategies for b/d/ Reversals  
<https://www.theotttoolbox.com/multisensory-strategies-for-b-and-d-reversals/>

Academic Study on b/d Reversals  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002221947300600604>

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