Text Box: When do I need to collect data on students?
In about 80% of the cases we do NOT need to collect data. Most students respond to our classroom policies and rules. The interventions we routinely use (posted schedules, “the look”, reinforcers, etc.) work just fine.
But there may be a student (or students) who seem unable (or unwilling) to do what is expected. Behaviors get in the way of learning/socializing, and you find it difficult to teach your class. You might suspect a psychological impairment or the student might already be under medical care, getting counseling, and/or special education services.
You have probably expressed your concerns to the parents, your principal, the special education department, and anyone else who you feel might help. You may even keep an anecdotal daily behavior record. But this ends up stuck in some file...too much for anyone else to read.
This can be a lonely place!
Good data collection will support your concerns. It will identify the target behavior(s) using graphs, charts, and numbers. It can tell us when and where  behaviors are seen. It can tell how often behaviors occur. It can tell us the intensity of the behaviors.
With this data we can be precise when asking for help. We can develop interventions. Then, the data will tell us if the changes we are making are working.
Behavioral data collection is an integral part of a behavior plan and/or a functional behavior assessment. Behavioral data collection is mandated by law.
IT’S PART OF OUR JOB!


Text Box: Which Behaviors should I track?
Generally, track the behaviors of greatest concern. These may be behaviors that are seen often such as disruption, work refusal, tardiness, or behaviors that are dangerous or aggressive, bullying behaviors, etc.
I have found that teachers who have no adult classroom assistant can easily track four behavioral goals by themselves.


Text Box: How do I choose the correct assessment tool?
Familiarize yourself with the tools that are available. Take a look at the forms and programs on this site. Read the explanations of any that interest you. Try one out with a pretend student to see how it works (or jump right in with a real student of concern).
I have tried to make data collection/analysis easy!


Text Box: What are Behavioral Interventions?
When we make a change, any change, we have implemented an intervention. If our purpose is to affect behavior, then it is a behavioral intervention.


Text Box: Tell me more about interventions…
There are two points to keep in mind before choosing an intervention.
1. The child’s behavior is satisfying a need for that child.
2. Because of this, YOU cannot change the child’s behavior (unless you find an alternative way of satisfying that need).
Feeling hopeless?
Let’s look at some of the things we CAN change:
ENVIRONMENT—Where does the child sit, desk or table, near the window/door, back of room, alone, in group, etc.? Is the room too noisy/quiet, cluttered/plain, bold & bright colors? Are there smells (perfume, ink/markers…)? How’s the lighting? Does the clock tick, florescent lights hum, do you play music, etc.?
CURRICULUM/WORK: Too easy/hard, too much/not enough, too many breaks (or not enough), do behaviors happen in specific classes/activities, are activities structured/unstructured, etc.
INTERACTIONS:  Who does the student associate with, how much group work, staff/student relationship, independent expectations, etc.
Focus on what YOU can change, and behaviors will fall in line.
We cannot expect student behavior to change 
if WE are not willing to change!


Text Box: How do I know if my interventions are working?
Behavioral change is often slow. We may not notice day-to-day, but analysis of data over time will show progress. So, data helps guide us and motivates us!


Text Box: I need some ideas for interventions.
This site focuses on data collection. Check out the Links page for some great sources of intervention ideas for dealing with student behaviors.


Text Box: “This kid already takes all of my time! I don’t have any more time to give!”
Think of how much time you would have if the behaviors disappeared! Spend a little time collecting data so you can apply interventions that pinpoint and specifically target the causes of the behavior. Change things that WE can control and watch the behaviors fade away.
Spend a little time on change—it’s worth the investment!
