



Inclusive Coaching & Positive Behavior Management

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- San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) - Behavior Support Specialist
- San Diego Autism Society - Surf Camp
- SDUSD - Speech Language Pathologist elementary school
- SDUSD - Assistive Technology Provider (Ages: Birth to 22)
- SOSC-Volunteer Bowling Coach - 2 seasons
- SOSC-Volunteer Games Management
- Consultant with PRC-Salttillo for SoCal
- SDUSD - Speech Language Pathologist middle school



What's your experience?

Brand New:

1st Time Coaching / Engaging with people with disabilities

New "ish":

Coaching for 3 seasons/years or less

Been Around the Block:

Coaching for 3-5 seasons/years

Seasoned Coach:

Engaging with people with disabilities as a coach, family/community member for 5+ seasons/years.

Veteran Coach:

Lifetime coach, family/community member supporting people with disabilities.



Let me win. But if I
cannot win, let me be
brave in the attempt.

-SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE OATH

Talk to Me: Treating People with Intellectual Disabilities with Respect



What did you hear the athletes say?



Positive Behavior Management Strategies

1. Evidenced based, proactive approaches, to changing challenging behaviors:
 - a. Establishing clear expectations
 - b. Actively reinforcing positive behaviors through praise and rewards
 - c. Modeling ideal behavior
 - d. Creating consistent routines
 - e. Building positive relationships with students
 - f. Engaging lessons
 - g. Providing specific feedback to acknowledge good actions



Positive Behavior Management Strategies

1. These strategies create a learning environment built on mutual respect and understanding
2. Supporting and responding to athletes' social, emotional, and behavioral needs



UNDERSTANDING INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES



Intellectual Disabilities

- There are lots of different types of disabilities:
- Disabilities have many different characteristics
 - Visual learners
 - Rigid
 - Black and white thinking
 - Difficulty self regulating
 - Stubborn
 - Slower processing time
- The majority of Positive Behavior Management strategies support all of these differences across disabilities

Athletes may need...

- Due to Cognitive Limitations: Athletes with intellectual disabilities may need extra time to process information or may struggle with abstract concepts, **requiring simplified explanations and hands-on teaching methods.**
- **Adaptive Behavior**: Individuals with intellectual disabilities may need support in daily activities, such as self-care, communication, or decision-making. **These challenges can also extend to sports-related activities.**
- **Social and Emotional Impact**: Athletes with intellectual disabilities may experience difficulties in social interactions or emotional regulation, **which can affect how they relate to others in a team setting.**

Positive Behavior Strategies



Positive Behavior Strategies

- Establishing clear expectations
 - Provide visual supports to create a consistent routine
 - Using visuals to show the steps of things (1- Stretch, 2-Run, 3- Kick soccer ball, 4- Play soccer game)
 - **Make a "Visual Schedule" Demo**
 - Visuals can also be Visually modeling a skill (watch a per demonstrate)
- Modeling ideal behavior
 - Physical demonstrations over verbal instructions ([example](#))
 - Use tactile cueing to support student behavior
 - tactile-touch
 - Hand under hand (instead of hand over hand)

Granny Style Bowling



Athlete started bowling and bowled with lining up and swinging ball with two hands between his legs and then rolling it down the lane (granny style).

I modeled how to bowl one handed with a countdown and repetition.

The result, he did both.

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Positive Behavior Strategies

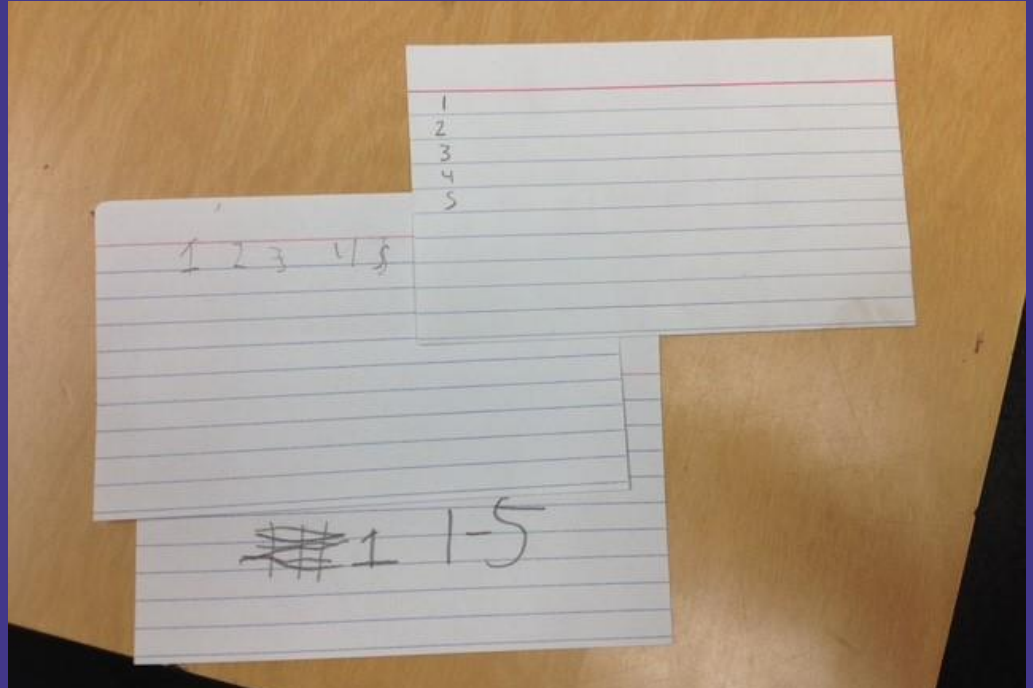
- Simplified Communication:
 - Use clear, simple language (example)
 - Break down directions into smaller chunks (chunking)
 - Provided lots of repeated opportunities to practice new skills
- Actively reinforcing positive behaviors through praise and rewards
 - Provide constant feedback to shape the skill

Notecard Directions

I had 3 students in a group.

They came into my speech office and I handed them all a note card and told them “Number the card one through five.”

I turned away to do something and when they were done I checked-in before moving on.



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1
2
3
4
5

1 2 3 4 5

~~1~~ 1-5

Positive Behavior Supports

- Patience and Time
 - Extra time to process information
 - Check-in with athletes and have them show you they understand (instead of asking do you understand?)
 - Avoid rushing through activities, we are on their time
 - Frequent breaks to *support* focus or frustration (example)
- Focus on Strengths
 - Start with strengths and build on those (example)
 - Adjust exercises and skills training to have athletes feel successful and confident

What does a Break look like?

I had an Athlete that waiting between their turn for bowling was very difficult for them. With parent input and permission we made sure that during the waiting, he could draw and then when it was his turn, we showed him how to read the bowling TV to know it was his turn. By the end of the season he was waiting (still drawing) but would monitor the screen to see if it was his turn.

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Team Captain

I had an Athlete that at the start of each practice, while I was splitting up athletes and staff into their assigned lanes, would pepper me with questions. While it was important information he was asking, I had a hard time being responsive and getting everyone organized all at the same time.


So I made him team captain. His strength was his social skills. He had a job at the start of each practice greeting athletes and marking them off of a list. He could come show me the list once all the other Athletes had arrived. Then I could come to him when everyone was settled and respond to his questions.



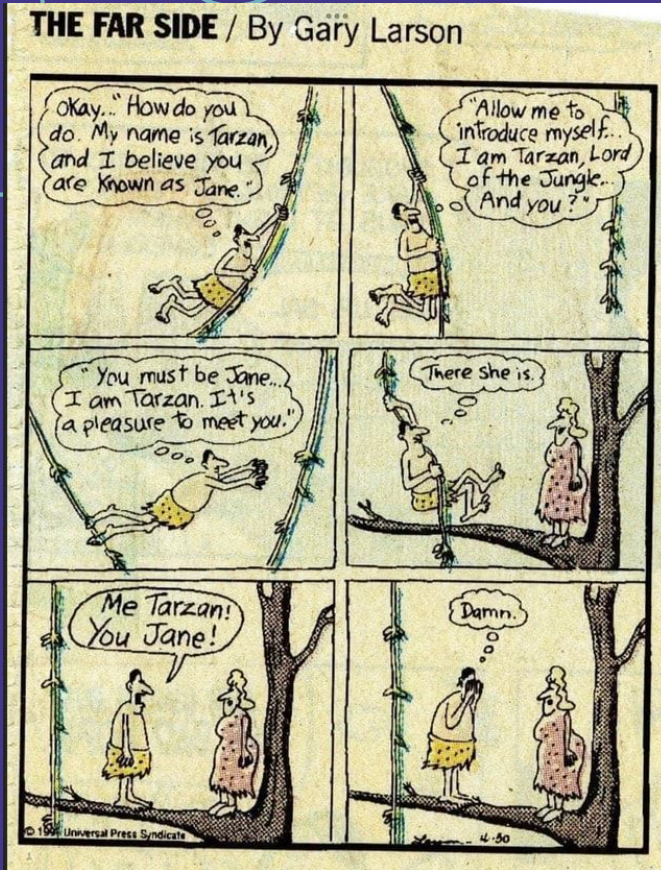
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Foster Emotional Regulation

- Some athletes may struggle with regulating their emotions
 - Regulation impacts our use and understanding of language
 - example
 - Teach them techniques like deep breathing or taking a water break when they start to feel overwhelmed.
 - If necessary create a calm down space at practice or games if athletes need to have a consistent place they can go to take a minute
 - Even if we don't understand what made them upset-
empathize with the feelings they are showing.
 - It doesn't feel good to be dysregulated.
 - example
- 

Tarzan and Jane



- Athletes could be upset because they didn't understand something
- Once they are upset it may be harder for them to understand even simple language
- **Fun Fact:** Our language processing/complexity decreases when we have heightened regulation
- Remember 'chunking' can help prevent frustration

Creating an Inclusive Environment

- Positive and Encouraging Atmosphere
 - Create a safe and supportive atmosphere
 - All athletes should feel valued
 - Encourage *all* of their efforts
 - Celebrate *all* success big and small
 - Infuse interests into practice to help engage Athletes
- Peer Support/Interaction
 - Foster team oriented culture
 - Assign roles (captains, stretching leader, cool down leader)
 - Pair athletes with teammates who can offer assistance in a positive and respectful manner
 - Be creative in how you pair athletes. Not always are similar skills the best pairing.



Creating an Inclusive Environment (continued)

- Include activities that promote social interaction
 - Your Turn: *How can you make something more athlete directed instead of coach directed?*
 - e.g. Athletes leading stretches
 - Consistent routines and Visuals give Athletes the opportunity to lead more
- Group activities can help athletes practice:
 - Communication (encourage athletes to communicate with each other by modeling language)
 - Cooperation (Emphasizing helping others and modeling language around being good teammates)
 - Problem solving skills (Provide opportunities for athletes to weigh in on problem solving)



Good Morning vs Bad Morning

I had a student at school they often had pretty loud bouts of dysregulation. I walked by her going into her class one day while she was upset and greeted her “Good Morning!”.

She yelled at me, “No!”

It was apparent that she did not feel as though she was having a good morning.

I then said, “Bad Morning?”

She stopped and looked at me and then huffed, “Yes.”

We changed how we greeted each other moving forward.

Use Positive Reinforcement / Redirect Attention

- Reinforce desired behaviors with **praise and reinforcers/rewards**.
- Acknowledge athletes efforts and compliance, *even with small tasks*
- High Fives! Compliments! Rounds of Applause! All can be very socially rewarding!
- If an athlete becomes distracted or agitated...
 - Try redirecting them to something positive (a preferred interest perhaps)
 - Provide them with an alternative task or a calming activity

Best Practices for Coaches



Educate Yourself

Learn more about individuals with intellectual disabilities and how it can impact athletes on your team.

Understanding their unique needs will enhance your coaching skills.

Foster Independence

Encourage athletes to take responsibility for their learning and growth.

Build on their skills and have a Growth Mindset.

Collaborate with Families

Talk to family members of athletes to learn valuable insights on how to best support them!

Promote Self-Esteem

Focus on athlete's achievements.

Building confidence with positive encouragement. Help athletes feel more capable and more motivated!

THANKS!

Do you have any
questions?

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