



Special Connections

A newsletter connecting our Special Kids, Families and Schools

Using Routines and Schedules in Behavior Management

By Joel Farb, M.A.

Routines and schedules offer a valuable base of support for efforts at managing behavior. Routines and schedules make a child's, or an adult's, universe more predictable and, one might suggest, less stressful. Also, once routines are established, parents can spend less time and effort prompting and instructing the child.

Routines and schedules, by themselves, do not manage behavior. Instead, they provide a structure within which situations and the consequences of behavior can be more reliable and consistent (e.g., first is homework; afterwards, the child can use the telephone – situation : behavior : consequence).

On the other hand, an absence of routines *can* contribute to the development and maintenance of behavior problems. Some common examples are as follows: (1) There is no established routine for going to bed; (2) There is no time established for a child to start his/her homework; (3) There is no routine followed in the morning; etc. In the absence of routines, both parents and children are struggling to navigate a new maze everyday.

Establishing routines is not difficult, but it is important to proceed gradually. It is advisable to start with a simple routine that has a strong likelihood of being easily accomplished. Often, this can be done by adding a step, a task, or a time to an existing routine behavior. For example, if a child is already feeding the family dog, the parent might add an additional task such as walking the dog, or the parent might ask that the dog be fed by a specific time.

Some of the most helpful routines in managing behavior were mentioned above (e.g., a bedtime routine, a homework routine, and a morning routine). Whenever I work with a family, these three routines are often a focus of attention.

In addition to creating routines for children, parents must also create and maintain routines for themselves. Some parents will need to schedule time to check a child's homework or to ensure that assignments are properly placed in the child's notebook. In other cases, parents will need to schedule time to work on specific skills with a child (e.g., reading skills, social skills, communication skills, etc.).

Routines and schedules are not a substitute for systematic behavioral programs. However, they can provide a framework for establishing a *predictable* and *consistent* environment which is essential for effective behavior management programming.

Joel Farb, M.A., is a consulting psychologist at The Arbor School and executive director of The Center for Behavior Therapy, Houston, Texas. He holds a master's degree in human development and psychology from the University of Kansas. Joel has worked in applied behavior analysis and behavior therapy for more than 25 years and has done extensive consulting with public school districts and private schools.

He has presented numerous workshops, seminars, and professional papers and published more than a dozen scientific articles in books and professional journals. Joel is on the Professional Advisory Committee of the Attention Deficit Disorders Association. He is also a member of the Association for Behavior Analysis, the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy, the American Psychological Association, and the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders Foundation.

Guardianship and Special Needs Trust Workshop - January 23, 2003, 7:00-9:00 PM, Boardroom- 10300 Jones Rd. Houston, TX 77065

"How To Teach Social Understanding: Social Stories and Other Related Instructional Techniques"

Presented by Carol Gray
February 1, 2003, 8:30 AM-3:30 PM
Cy-Falls (watch for registration information in the mail)

After High School, What NEXT?
" Transfer of Rights" occurs at 18 years of age, who will need or legally be able to make medical or financial choices for your child?

March 4th, 2003, 7:00-9:00 PM
ISC Conference Rooms C/D- 10300 Jones Rd. Houston, TX 77065 State agencies, service providers, support groups, residential-care providers, universities, community colleges and anyone you request will be invited to provide information at a transition fair, After High School, What NEXT?

Strategies for parents of Students with Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD)

Dorothy Carlton Center
22602 Hempstead Hwy.
7:00 – 8:00 PM
January 21, 2003
February 25, 2003
April 8, 2003

Upcoming Features

The next issue will have an article by Mark Marak with tips for parents on the transition process.

Further issues will have timely information to assist you.

Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

Did you know that there is a group of interested parents who meet monthly with special education administrators in Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District? Did you know that networking with other parents can be one of the most helpful activities you can do for your own child?

Cy-Fair ISD is so fortunate to have a great Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC). Monthly, a group of interested parents and school district staff meet and discuss new information regarding special education at the federal, state and local level. We discuss issues and concerns related to special education issues and monthly, the SEPAC recognizes school district employees who go the extra mile for students with disabilities. This is a fun activity you will not want to miss.

The SEPAC schedule for the year is:

- Meetings are held at the Instructional Support Center (ISC) at 10300 Jones Rd.
- Aug. 27, 9:15 am - ISC Rm. 632
- Oct. 8 , 7:00-9:00 pm - ISC Board Room
- Nov. 12, 9:15 am - ISC Rm. 632
- Dec. 12, 9:15 am - ISC Rm. 632
- Jan. 21, 9:15 am - ISC Rm. 632
- Feb. 11, 7:00-9:00 pm – Modifications Showcase - ISC Board Room
- Mar. 18, 9:15 am - Falcon Annex Sp. Ed. Conference Room
- Apr. 8, 9:15 am - Falcon Annex Sp. Ed. Conference Room
- May 13, 9:15 am - ISC Rm. 632

Additionally, most schools have a SEPAC liaison - another parent who stands ready, willing and able to be a resource to you. For the liaison at your son/daughter's campus call Martha Sahualla at 281-897-6483 or E-mail Rachel Irby at rachel.irby@cfisd.net.

We invite and encourage each one of you to join the monthly SEPAC meetings.
For more information call Rachel Irby at 281-580-6334.

CY-FAIR PREPARES FOR DEC

Preparations are underway for the upcoming District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visit conducted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Teams of monitors made up of members of the TEA and school district administrators from across the state will be in our district February 3 – 7, 2003. These district visits are a part of the system TEA uses to monitor the implementation of federal and state laws governing federal programs in the schools. During their time in the district, team members will evaluate campus planning and decision making and the quality of services.

To monitor the special education program, a team of 20 will review student eligibility files, make campus visits, interview staff, observe in classrooms, and review district achievement and demographic data. A parent roundtable is scheduled for Monday, February 3, 2003, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Instructional Support Center on Jones Road. This meeting is a structured discussion about the services provided to students enrolled in the federal programs in our district. All parents of students who receive special education services are invited and encouraged to attend this roundtable. Watch the mail for an invitation with more details.

Other federal programs included in the upcoming visit are Bilingual/ESL, Career & Technology Education, PreKindergarten, Gifted and Talented, Title I, Title IV-Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Eisenhower Professional Development.