



## Project Pre-K TIPS

# Planned Ignoring

### Definition & Rationale:

Planned ignoring is the intentional ignoring or withdrawal of attention from a child engaging in minor misbehaviors. Minor misbehaviors may be irritating or slightly disruptive but are not dangerous and are likely to resolve without teacher intervention.

Many minor student misbehaviors are driven or unintentionally reinforced by teacher attention. Therefore, planned ignoring effectively reduces these behaviors by withdrawing or withholding teacher attention.

### Characteristics of Planned Ignoring:

- **Used for annoying but harmless behavior**
  - Do not use planned ignoring for harmful behavior (i.e. dangerous to self or others, destructive to property, morally or ethically wrong)
- **Removal of attention**
  - Paying attention to some misbehaviors can accidentally reinforce the behavior
    - Do not look at the student or speak to them during planned ignoring
  - Often the undesirable behavior being ignored will increase in intensity or duration before it decreases. Be prepared and continue to ignore it unless it becomes harmful
- **Remain calm**
  - Turn your attention to an activity or to the appropriate behavior of others
- **Reward appropriate behavior**
  - As soon as the student complies with the command given, return your attention to the student and praise the desired behavior

## **Examples of Planned Ignoring:**

- During clean up time, ignore child tapping blocks on floor instead of cleaning
  - Attend the second the child begins to clean up and praise "Great job cleaning up those blocks!"
- Paul comes into the classroom from recess extremely active. When the teacher ignores his antics he soon sits down and begins working. The teacher provides praise as soon as he begins his work.
- Jimmy shouts out in class when answering and asking questions. The teacher ignores his calling out behavior and only calls on him when he raises his hand.

## **Next Steps:**

- Think about how you can use planned ignoring in your classroom
- Practice planned ignoring in different situations within the classroom
- Plan and prepare for increases in misbehavior when you begin planned ignoring
- Use the worksheets provided to plan, practice, and monitor your use of planned ignoring

## **Literature References:**

Carroll, E., Tynan, D., Lines, M. M. (2009). Planned ignoring, parenting tips, ages 2-8. *Nemours Health and Prevention Services, EBH 13, 1.*

Webster-Stratton, C. (2009). *The Incredible Years: Teachers and Children Series*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.

## ***Brainstorming Activity - Ways I Can Stay Calm When Ignoring***

When you first start ignoring misbehavior, it is important to stay calm because the misbehavior often gets worse before it gets better. Having strategies to stay calm will reduce the likelihood that you respond to the increase in misbehavior. If you give in, and respond to the intensified misbehavior, that misbehavior will be reinforced and the student will learn that by protesting loudly, or increasing the misbehavior, the student can get his/her own way.

Remaining calm while ignoring misbehavior can be very challenging but is crucial to success. Try to think ahead and brainstorm ways to stay calm when ignoring misbehavior.

### ***Ways to Stay Calm While Ignoring***

*Take slow, deep breaths*

*Think positive thoughts*

*Listen to music*

*Other relaxation techniques*

***Goal:*** When a child protests, I will commit to using the following techniques to stay calm and ignore the misbehavior \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## **Brainstorming Activity – Behaviors to Ignore**

Behaviors that are annoying but aren't dangerous or physically harmful, such as pouting, whining, screaming, and arguing will typically disappear if they are systematically ignored. The ignoring technique should not be used with behaviors that cause significant disruption of important activities or behaviors that could lead to physical injury or property damage.

It can be very difficult to control our own emotions when dealing with misbehavior, and it may be tempting to criticize the student. However, ignoring, followed by praise for compliance when it happens is one of the most effective strategies you can use, especially if you can teach other students to ignore the misbehavior as well.

### ***Student Behaviors I Will Ignore***

*e.g., pouting*

*whining*

*arguing*

*tantrums*

**Goal:** I will commit to ignoring \_\_\_\_\_

behavior whenever it occurs. I will praise \_\_\_\_\_

behavior (the positive behavioral opposite of the behavior I am ignoring) as soon as it occurs.

## ***Brainstorming Activity – Using Selective Ignoring***

Sometimes, students display positive and negative behaviors at the same time. For example, a student might follow directions (positive behavior) while whining or rolling their eyes (negative behavior). The *Selective Ignoring* technique calls for teachers to praise or reward the positive portion of the behavior and simultaneously ignoring the negative behavior. Using the same example above, a teacher might praise the student for following directions, while ignoring the whining and eye rolling. This procedure helps the student learn that positive attention is provided for some behaviors, while other behaviors (e.g., arguing) do not result in attention.

Brainstorm some situations when you think you could use selective ignoring effectively.

### ***When Would Selective Ignoring be Effective?***

*e.g., when a student is following directions but giving me "attitude" at the same time, I will praise compliance with directions, while ignoring the attitude.*

***Goal:*** I will commit to praising \_\_\_\_\_  
behavior while ignoring \_\_\_\_\_  
behavior.