The Good Behavior Game – Version II

Step 1: Class Meeting to Review Expectations and Reasons for Them

It is important to start ***The Good Behavior Game*** by explaining to students ***why we are playing it.*** Even if it has already been done, I would recommend repeating the opening day framing around expectations the reasons for having them. It may even be that the principal and teacher do this together to make emphasize the importance of this. Here is an example of what it could sound like:

"Class, we have something really important to talk about. The last several days, we haven't used our time as wisely as we should and we didn't learn as much as we could have. This worries me deeply. I would like to change this.

My goal for each of you is this: By the end of X grade, each of you will be ready for (the next) grade. We have a lot to learn in between now and the end of X grade, and there is no time to waste. It is my responsibility to make sure I am helping each of you prepare for (the next) grade, and it is my responsibility to make sure we are using our time wisely.

Here are some things you can expect of me:

> ***1. I will treat you with respect. I believe every student in my class has the right to be treated with respect. I will always be respectful when I talk to you.***
>
> ***2. Each day, I will prepare a lesson that helps you make progress toward meeting benchmarks (or standards) and preparing for 3rd grade. I'll try to make the lessons as fun and interesting as possible, but it's also going to be work, and the most important thing is that you will leave my class having learned what we expect 2nd graders to know.***
>
> ***3. What other expectations of me do you have?***

Now let's talk about expectations for students. Let's have a discussion. There are some things that are critical to me, but I want to hear your ideas first. What should students do to make sure they are learning?

(Listen to what they say --- use reframing when necessary so that their statements fit into the core concepts of Safety, Respect, and Responsibility. If someone gives a flippant answer, look them directly in the eye and say *"Lets try to reframe that as a concrete learning goal."*

After a few minutes of this, if students have already hit on the most important expectations, highlight them and compliment the children their contributions. Then say:

"All of these are good ideas. I've been meeting with our principal and with Ms. Stiller who you met the other day, and we think there are a couple of things that are especially important:

> ***1. Always respond immediately to the Attention Signal***
>
> ***2. Voices off unless you raise your hand and are called on; or you are working in a group and talking quietly about the work (not socializing)***

Step 2: ***The Good Behavior Game***

There are many ways to play ***The Good Behavior Game.*** The game is recommended when it is suspected that social reinforcement (praise) by itself will not be enough to turn the behavior around. ***The Good Behavior Game*** is a point game wherein the students earn simple, easy to deliver activity reinforcers for meeting very clear expectations. It is recommended that the entire class is involved in the game and that they are collectively earning an activity reward. There will also be small consequences for students who clearly are not putting any effort into meeting expectations.

Specifics: Teachers can adapt the game and make changes mid-stream to account for individual differences in groups. The general ideas are clarity of expectations; tight monitoring; and a ratio of reinforcement approximating 4 reinforcers for each time a negative consequence is delivered.

Points: The class, as a whole, earns points for meeting two expectations:

> ***1. Appropriate response to Attention Signal:*** *Each time the attention signal is given, the class has an opportunity to earn a point. You can do this Student Points v. Teacher points, or Positive v. Negative points. Most groups love to beat the teacher, but it is up to you.*
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> *They get a positive point if approximately 90% of the students responded to the Attention Signal within 5-10 seconds (5 seconds if the activity is structured and they are at their desks; 10 seconds if they are in a movement activity or interactive activity). They get a negative point if less than 90% of the kids respond appropriately within 5-10 seconds.* ***If less than 90% of the kids respond appropriately, praise two or three students who did respond appropriately, and then say "Darn. I need more of you for a positive point. Let's try harder next time".***
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> ***2. Voices Off Points:*** *Points are delivered at a high rate whenever students are meeting the Voices Off expectation. How often they get points depends on the maturity level of the group. Obviously, mature groups don't need the game at all! The more immature the group; the more often points should be at stake.*

For this particular group, I'd recommend every 2-3 minutes during structured classroom activities until they are reliably winning the game. Once they are reliably winning the game, you can fade to putting a point at stake every 4-6 minutes. As with the the Attention Signal points, they should get positive points when about 90% of the kids are clearly trying. They shouldn't have to be perfect. So, if you have had one or two minor infractions over the last 3 minutes, you can say ***"We've been doing much better with voices off for the last several minutes. That's a positive point".*** *If there have been multiple infractions, follow the same procedure as for the Attention Signal points.* ***Praise some kids who were clearly trying but inform them it is a Teacher or Negative point.***

3. Winning the Game: *Class wins the game if they earn 80% of the possible points. They should win the game at least 80% of the time. If they are losing the game more than 20% of the time, steps must be taken to make sure they win. Examples of steps:*

> *1. Increase the frequency with which points are given from 3 minutes to 2 minutes.*
>
> *2. "Prime" a kid or two. Conference individually with children who tend to be high fliers but are also responsive to adult attention, and tell them "You're an important member of the class. Students look up to you. If you can set a good example, you can earn the class bonus points".*

4. What do they win? *If students win the game, they should earn a simple activity reinforcer that is easy to deliver and consumes no more than 2-3 minutes of instructional time. Examples are: A game (Heads Up Seven Up; the Concentration Game; Simon Says); 2 minutes extra recess; a video they like to watch. It is recommended this class play the game 2 X daily: Arrival to morning recess; and after morning recess to lunch.*

5. Consequences for High Fliers

Avoid excessive use of correction strategies and negative consequences for rules infractions. You should be able to manage 85-90% of the problems by reviewing expectations and reinforcing correct behavior at a high rate. However, some children are more reinforced by peer attention for inappropriate behavior than by adult praise or even activity reinforcers. It is important to send a clear message to children who have repeated infractions and you suspect peer attention is the motive. For those children, here is the recommended sequence for correction:

1st Infraction within a given time frame: Observe the student closely. Catch him/her doing the right thing and praise. Something like "Monica,

thanks for setting a good example" is ideal because it calls attention to the child for appropriate rather than inappropriate behavior.

2nd Infraction within a given time frame: Warning. State the expected behavior, and inform the child she/he has a warning "Monica, voices off. You have a warning".

3rd Infraction within a given time frame: Consequence. Student loses two minutes of recess.

4th Infraction, etc. Two more minutes for each subsequent infraction.