

BEING THE BOSS

Dr Cath Laws, Principal, Fowler Road School

Dinkmeyer, McKay, & Dinkmeyer developed a summary table describing the goals of misbehaviour.

Goals of Misbehaviour	What child might be thinking	How adult might feel and react	Child's response to adult's action	What might we do?
ATTENTION	I count only when I am being noticed or served.	Annoyed; wants to remind, coax.	Temporarily stops disturbing action when given attention but soon continues May begin new behavior to gain attention.	Ignore when possible Give attention in unexpected ways for positives not on demand.
POWER	I count only when I am dominating, when you do what I want you to do, when I can do whatever I want.	Provoked, angry; generally wants power; -challenged; "I'll make him/her do it"; "You can't get away with it."	Intensifies action when reprimanded Student wants to win, be boss: defiance.	Withdraw from conflict; act, rather than talk. Be friendly. Establish equality. Redirect efforts into constructive channels.

REVENGE	I can't be liked; I don't have power but I'll count if I can hurt others as I feel hurt by life.	Hurt; "How can he/she do this to me?"; - retaliates, tries to get even.	Wants to get even. Makes self disliked. Seeks more revenge.	Maintain order with minimum restraint. Avoid retaliation. Take time help. Build trust.
INADEQUACY	I can't do anything right so I won't try to do anything at all; I am no good	Despair, hopeless, discouraged; "I give up."	No reprimand therefore no reaction. Feels there is no use to try. Passive and no improvement	Encourage any positive effort; Have faith in a child's ability; Don't give up, pity or criticise. Be patient.

- Each of us has the resources needed for change and the potential to learn and grow.
- An environment that support positive behaviour facilitates change more than one that focuses on negative behaviour.

- All behaviour is communication. A person cannot not respond. Even no response is a response – although an ambiguous one. All communication matters and is worthy of respect.
- We cannot change past events. We can change the impact they have on us.
- If what you are doing is not working – do something different!
- Need help in processing information.
- Tasks need to be broken down into smaller steps or presented in a few different ways.
- Avoid verbal overload. Be clear. Use short sentences.
- Need preparation for all changes in routine.
- Respond well to positive statements and challenges “You can’t do that, can you?”
- Uneven skills development - sometimes good at maths but poor at writing; can need specific learning program.
- Will often have detailed knowledge about interests and this can be used to stimulate learning.
- Normal levels of auditory and visual input can be perceived as too much/too little. This is sometimes the same for temperature.
- Often need training/support in organisational skills such as using a diary, noting down homework. Need specific reminders to “don’t forget to use your diary” or “this is homework, you will need to get this done by (give specific date).”
- Need help choosing partners/forming groups - work better when seated beside a good student, so appropriate behaviour can be modelled.
- Sometimes have problems with abstract and conceptual thinking - need very concrete interactions and instructions especially if being inappropriate.
- Use and interpret speech literally. Avoid: idioms (eg., save your breath, jump the gun); double meanings (jokes have double meanings); sarcasm; nicknames or ‘cute’ names (e.g., Pal, Buddy). Irony can be absolutely lost and read as criticism.
- Facial expression/other social cues may not work - needs a direct, calm statement such as “Inappropriate, Sam.”
- An increase in unusual/difficult behaviours can indicate an increase in stress often caused by feeling a loss of control. “Sam, I can see this is stressful. Do you need to take some space?” often works. They really want to be seen as ‘normal’. Have a place in the school where they can go to get it together.
- Poor behaviour is usually the result of efforts to survive experiences which may be confusing, disorienting or frightening. Often have extreme difficulty reading the reactions of others.
- Consistent treatment and expectations from everyone is vital.
- Interrupt and re-direct repetitive verbal arguments/ repetitive questions.
- Do not rely on them to relay important messages to parents about school stuff. Phone calls to home work well.

Resiliency might mean....

- problem-solving skills
- the capacity for productive work and a sense of competence and environmental mastery;
- emotional security, self-acceptance, self-knowledge, and a realistic and undistorted perception of oneself, others, and one’s surroundings;
- social competence and the capacity for warm and caring relating to others and for intimacy and respect
- autonomy
- a sense of purpose and future.

What can schools do?

- Provide strong transition programs
- Increase opportunities pro-social relationships - clubs and social organisations
- Set clear, consistent boundaries
- Teach study skills
- Teach non-violent conflict resolution
- Make sure there is academic mastery
- Teach life skills
- Provide care and support

- Set and communicate high expectations
- Make sure there are strong vocational and career programs
- Talk up strengths and help work on needs
- Provide opportunities to celebrate all achievements - including those outside the school