

# A Treatment Package for Improving Playground Behavior Among Elementary Students

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## ABSTRACT

Referrals of elementary students who engaged in aggressive behavior on the playground prompted the implementation of a school-wide treatment package as a non-classroom intervention in conjunction with a PBS program. The package consisted of (a) teaching students new playground rules during Physical Education class, (b) providing reminders of the rules, (c) modifying the playground to facilitate appropriate play, (d) encouraging playground monitors to take a more active supervisory role, and (e) conducting a self-management program for students who consistently engaged in aggression. The effects of the program were evaluated by recording three students' levels of aggression and appropriate play and by asking the playground supervisors to rate the recess behavior of all students during baseline and treatment.

## PARTICIPANTS/SETTING

Children  
3 Boys  
2 First Graders  
1 Third Grader  
Ages 6-9  
Referred by P.E. Teachers and Principal  
Two P.E. Teachers  
Eight Playground Supervisors

School Gym  
Playground (Lunch Recess)  
Two grassy fields  
Playground equipment

## DATA COLLECTION

Observers  
Two primary observers  
One on the North (grades 1-2)  
An undergraduate at Brigham Young University studying Psychology  
One on the South (grades 3-6)  
An undergraduate at Brigham Young University studying Spanish and with a certification in Special Education  
One reliability observer  
Interobserver agreement for both North and South ends of the playground  
Interobserver agreement  
A second observer collected data on 25% of the sessions  
Mean = 96% for all sessions  
Range = 83% to 100% for all sessions



## RESULTS

Joseph  
Baseline  
Verbal aggression .73 per minute  
Physical aggression .72 per minute  
Percentage of intervals of appropriate play = 23

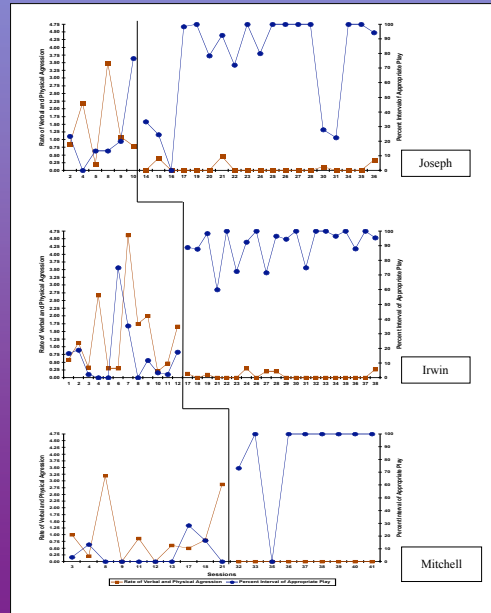
Treatment  
Verbal aggression .004 per minute  
Physical aggression .067 per minute  
Percentage of intervals of appropriate play = 74.2

Irwin  
Baseline  
Verbal aggression .42 per minute  
Physical aggression .85 per minute  
Percentage of intervals of appropriate play = 11

Treatment  
Verbal aggression .026 per minute  
Physical aggression .034 per minute  
Percentage of intervals of appropriate play = 89.95

Mitchell  
Baseline  
Verbal aggression .25 per minute  
Physical aggression .76 per minute  
Percentage of intervals of appropriate play = 5

Treatment  
Verbal aggression 0 per minute  
Physical aggression 0 per minute  
Percentage of intervals of appropriate play = 85.9



## REFERENCES

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## DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Physical Aggression  
Kicking, kneeling, hitting, poking, pushing, shoving, tripping, and throwing objects

Verbal Aggression  
Name calling, taunting, or criticizing another individual while in their presence

Appropriate Play  
Following the five playground rules while participating in an organized activity or while using playground equipment

## INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

School-wide Positive Behavioral Support Plan  
New playground rules  
Teacher reminder of rules  
Modification of playground  
Playground supervisors trained, prompted, and reinforced

Individual Positive Behavioral Support Plan  
Self-management program

## EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Multiple baseline across students

Baseline consisted of normal playground behavior and supervision without any modifications

Intervention consisted of posted playground rules, playground rules taught in PE, playground supervisor training, playground modification and self-management programs

## DISCUSSION

Strengths:

- Functional relationship between independent and dependent variables to reduce aggressive behavior and increase appropriate play behavior on the playground
- Alignment of FBA and the designed BIP for targeted students
- Systematic replication of Walker et al.'s (1981) and Dougherty et al.'s (1985) research incorporating self-monitoring and a point system
- Anecdotal evidence that the program was acceptable and feasible to school personnel

Implications for Future Research:

- Participants limited to students with externalizing behavior problems v. internalizing behavior problems
- Participants limited to identified students v. all students in the school
- Independent variable was a "package" - component analysis needed
- No systematic investigation of social validity

