Behavior Management Philosophy

As a speech language pathologist (SLP), I believe…

- That the focus of behavior management should be positive reinforcement and not punishment.
- That a consistent plan for behavior management should be utilized in the different learning environments.
- Proactive strategies such as establishing rules or guidelines of expected and unexpected behaviors can help to prevent problem behaviors.
- That behavior management needs to be delivered at the appropriate developmental, cognitive and functional level of the student.
- Behavior is communicative in nature and it is important to understand the function of the behavior in order to provide a more appropriate way to meet the student's needs.

I believe that the focus of behavior management should be positive reinforcement and not punishment.

Positive reinforcement is a behavioral strategy that focuses on strengthening positive behaviors versus remediating negative behaviors. Desired behaviors can be increased by deciding what behaviors are wanted from students and reinforcing these when they occur, making sure students know what is expected and letting them know why they are being reinforced, and by reinforcing appropriate behavior immediately. Additionally, research has shown that effects of punishment are not as successful and that it should be resorted to only if reinforcement for appropriate behavior has been tried and failed.

I believe that a consistent plan for behavior management should be utilized in the different learning environments.

Students need to be aware of what is expected of them in all school environments and what the consequences may be for unexpected behaviors. An established behavioral plan with a clear definition of consequences is effective when used consistently among educators and students alike.

I believe proactive strategies such as establishing rules or guidelines of expected and unexpected behaviors can help to prevent problem behaviors.

Planning for behavioral management can make a difference from the start. Setting school and classroom rules and procedures and establishing a clear definition of expected and unexpected behaviors will be helpful in preventing undesired behaviors. Displaying visual representations of the expected and unexpected behaviors in each classroom helps to constantly cue students of what is expected of them and can often be referred to when students need to be reminded.

I believe that behavior management needs to be delivered at the appropriate developmental, cognitive and functional level of the student.

The children that I will be working with as an SLP may have difficulty understanding the established rules or expressing themselves in an appropriate manner due to receptive and expressive language delays or disorders. Therefore, the language used to establish these guidelines needs to be communicated at the individual student's level to ensure understanding. This is an important consideration that needs to be addressed because if the established rules are not understood by some, the behavioral plan is not going to be effective for them and could lead to confusion or frustration.

I believe behavior is communicative in nature and it is important to understand the function of the behavior in order to provide a more appropriate way to meet the student's needs.

Some common functions of negative behavior are to seek attention, to escape or avoid, acceptance among peers, power or control, or personal gratification. Once the function of the negative behavior is understood, a positive behavioral intervention can help the student meet this needs in a more appropriate and functional way.