



West Virginia Department of Education

**We ARE... MARSHALL.**




## A Broken Record: Positive Descriptive Feedback

Ashley LaRue, Early Childhood Behavior Support Specialist




**Please sign in**

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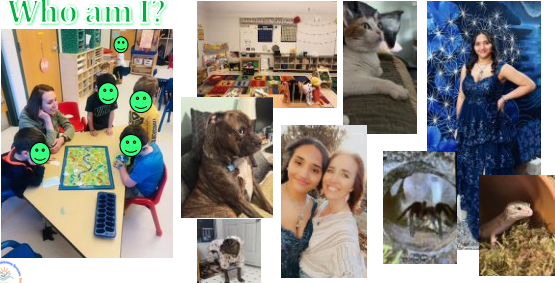
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## Who am I?




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The West Virginia Behavior/Mental Health Technical Assistance Center is proud to be a collaboration between the West Virginia Department of Education and the West Virginia Autism Training Center at Marshall University.

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**EXPECTATIONS**

**BE PROMPT**

**BE RESPECTFUL**

**BE INVOLVED**

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**Today's Agenda**

-  Provide a definition of positive descriptive feedback that supports engagement and learning.
-  Benefits of positive descriptive feedback
-  Provide suggestions for teachers on how to improve their ability to provide positive descriptive feedback to children.

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**Where do we start?**



- Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- Aka "The Pyramid Model"

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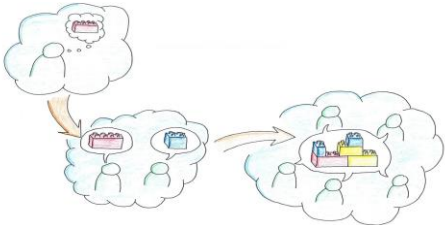

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What is feedback?

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Verbal Encouragement

Informal      Happy dance      Smile

Clapping      Thumbs up      Specific

Wink      Special handshake      Formal



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## Understanding Feedback

Think of something you have learned successfully. It could be from a formal school setting or from a sport, hobby or any other aspect of your life.

What did you learn?

When did you learn it?

Why did you learn it?

How did you learn it?

What kind of help did you get?

What kind of feedback did you receive?





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## Why Praise?

- ✓ **Boosts self-esteem**
- ✓ **Boosts self-confidence**
- ✓ **Build positive relationships**





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## Building Relationships



**Making Deposits 5:1**



Figure 1: Making relationship deposits

Figure 2: Making relationship withdrawals

**Let's get started...**






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## Positive Descriptive Feedback



Positive descriptive feedback is a practice we are using to help children learn what is expected of them during different classroom activities. Positive Descriptive feedback tells children exactly what they have done and encourages them to use that behavior in the future.



Henneman, M.S., D'Amico, M. M., & Fox, L. (2020). Unpacking the Pyramid Model: A Practical Guide for Preschool Teachers (p. 104). Paulist: Brookline Publishing Co.

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## Guidelines

- Deliver while the child engages in the behavior or immediately after
- Be SPECIFIC
- Deliver with genuine feeling and emotion
- Deliver in proximity and at eye level
- Be CONSISTENT
- Vary the verbal statements
- Highlight improvements



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## Describe the Behavior

- This tells the child exactly what behavior is being acknowledged and is part of the process of teaching that behavior.
- Identify and provide feedback about skills.
- Provide feedback that describes the process the child used.



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WE ARE... **MARSHALL****Acknowledge Publicly**

- Public acknowledgment can reinforce the skill or process for the child you are acknowledging and provide a model for other children.
- For example, you might acknowledge Elinor for using her "inside" voice when you want the other children to lower their voices.
- PDF can cause a domino effect.



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WE ARE... **MARSHALL****Individualize**

- Use the child's name.
- Be on the look-out for children who practice skills and competencies you are teaching.
- Learn a phrase you can use as part of your feedback in the home language of the child who is a dual language learner.



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WE ARE... **MARSHALL****Be Consistent and Equitable**

- Make sure all the adults in the classroom know how and when to give positive descriptive feedback.
- Pay attention to how and how often you and others give positive descriptive feedback. Are all adults in the classroom providing more positive feedback than correction?
- Ask yourself whether positive feedback is delivered equitably. Are all children acknowledged when they demonstrate a skill, follow directions, meet expectations, or are engaged?



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### Identify the Child, Family and Cultural Norms



- Make a point to talk to the family about how and why positive feedback is given in the classroom.
- Ask the family what they do at home. Different cultures and family groups may have different and very specific ideas about providing positive descriptive feedback.
- Work with the family to identify ways to give feedback that respects their culture but also provides children with the information they need about their behavior.

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### What does research say?



Praise is one of the most effective school-based strategies that teachers can use to decrease problem behavior and increase positive behavior. (Cavanagh, 2013)



- The use of praise (i.e., positive descriptive feedback) can increase the occurrence of appropriate behavior, promote positive teacher-child relationships, and foster a supportive learning environment (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002; Hester, Hendrickson, & Gable, 2009; Gable, Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009).

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### What PDF is NOT

#### Directions and Corrections

Directions tell students what they should be doing.

Corrections tell students what they should be doing instead of what they are currently doing.

**What does this sound like?**

You need to sit down.  
He had it first, give it back to him.  
What are you supposed to be doing right now?  
We don't climb the shelves here!  
Stop running!



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**What PDF is...**

**POSITIVE**- Immediately follows a positive behavior, something you want the child/children to be doing.

**Descriptive**- Describes EXACTLY what the child did.

**Feedback**- It's a sign of recognition and acknowledgement.



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**Say What You See!**



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**Examples**

When Johnny hangs his coat in his cubby, the teacher can acknowledge it by saying, "Johnny, you did a good job hanging up all by yourself. You are responsible. Well to go!"



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**Example 2**

Gina, look at your work!  
Great job!




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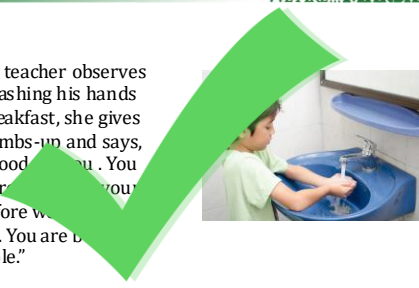

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**Example 3**

When the teacher observes Patrick washing his hands before breakfast, she gives him a thumbs-up and says, "Daniel, good job! You remember to wash your hands before breakfast. You are responsible."

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**Example 4**



Emily cleaned up the toys in the center but not the toy animals. The teacher comments, "Emily, you are doing a better job cleaning up your center. You put the blocks back on the shelf. Thank you for helping to keep our room safe and organized!"



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**Example 5**

I like the way you are being a friend to Chris!




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**Why use PDF? Building Language**



- Children learn language and concepts by hearing words relating to what they are doing in the moment.
- You are teaching them the language and concepts relating to social and emotional skills and abilities.


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**Why use PDF? Builds Cognition**

Positive descriptive feedback gives SPECIFIC information students can use. It focuses on their strengths and ways to improve.




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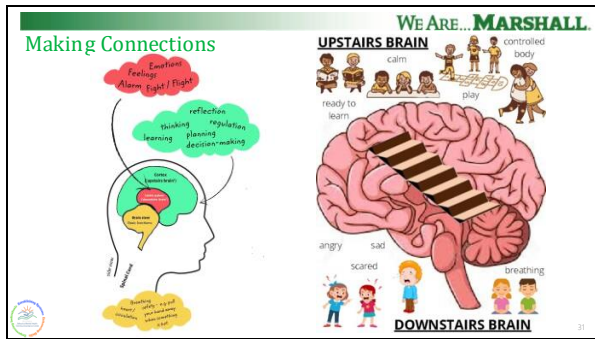
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### Building Self-Concept

- What we say to children starts to become what they say to themselves—like a broken record.
- "You are so responsible; you picked up all the blocks and put them back on the shelf" becomes "I am a responsible person."
- We should be providing inspirational messages for students to carry with them about themselves and their abilities.  
Ex. "I'm becoming independent! I can do hard things!"  
"I'm a problem solver."  
"I worked hard to finish that. I didn't give up."  
"I'm helpful"  
"I'm a great friend"  
"I can't do it yet but I'm getting better!"

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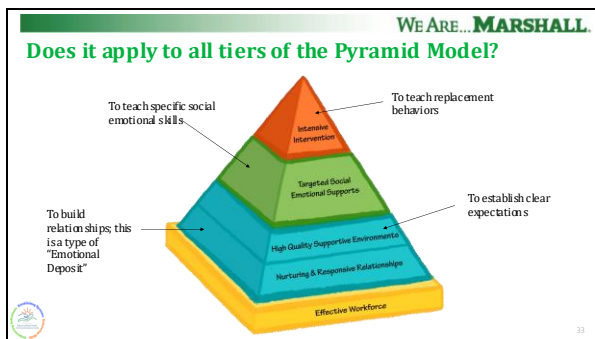
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## PDF + what?

## PDF +

- Expectations
- Outcomes/Results/Impacts
- Desired Characteristics



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## PDF + Expectations

- Expectations are a framework for the behaviors that are expected of everyone (students, staff, families)
- Expectations are the "WHY" behind the rules.



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## How are we using expectations?

- Be kind
  - There are many opportunities throughout the day to comment and acknowledge kind behavior or words. This can occur in small group, large group, centers, outdoor, etc.
- Be Safe
  - Looks different throughout the day. Catch them in action!
- Be Responsible
  - Responsibility comes in many forms. They are responsible for themselves, classroom materials, and helping friends when needed.



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### Examples of PDF + Expectations

| PDA  | + |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| You took turns with your friends on the slide...   | + | that was kind of you!    |
| You are using your walking feet inside....   | + | you are being safe!      |
| You came into the classroom, put your things away, and washed your hands for breakfast.... | + | how responsible you are! |

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### Examples of PDF + Outcomes/Results/Impacts

What does the child's behavior lead to/allow/produce?

| PDA   | + |   |
|---|---|---|
| Wow! Look at you sitting on the carpet..... | + | that shows me you are ready to listen to the story. |
| You are staying in your own body space....  | + | you are being safe and we can all dance together!   |

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**Examples of PDF + Desired Characteristics**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>PDF</b></p> <p>You are really concentrating on this puzzle....</p> <p>....you kept your hands to yourself and we found a solution.</p> <p>Great listening! She asked you to stop and you did,</p> | + | <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>+</b></p> <p>you are a <b>PROBLEM SOLVER!</b></p> <p>You were really angry but....</p> <p>You listened to your friend</p> |
|--|---|--|


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## Celebrate Efforts!




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## Time to Think

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## How do I do this?

- Put it into practice!
- Track your progress
- Listen to others doing it
- Hear it coming from yourself
- Write it down!

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### Classroom Resources

**Use Positive Words**

Use the word "positive" in a sentence about you. Write a positive word and a sentence about it. Share with a friend.

**NCMHI Providing Positive Feedback and Encouragement**

**Some Stories for Giving Positive Feedback and Encouragement**

**Classroom Encouragement**

- Encourage students to try new things.
- Encourage students to help others.
- Encourage students to be kind.
- Encourage students to be brave.
- Encourage students to be responsible.
- Encourage students to be respectful.
- Encourage students to be honest.
- Encourage students to be hardworking.
- Encourage students to be creative.
- Encourage students to be curious.
- Encourage students to be confident.
- Encourage students to be calm.
- Encourage students to be clear.
- Encourage students to be consistent.
- Encourage students to be committed.
- Encourage students to be courageous.
- Encourage students to be caring.
- Encourage students to be capable.
- Encourage students to be cheerful.
- Encourage students to be clean.
- Encourage students to be close.
- Encourage students to be comfortable.
- Encourage students to be confident.
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- Encourage students to be capable.
- Encourage students to be cheerful.
- Encourage students to be clean.
- Encourage students to be close.
- Encourage students to be comfortable.

[classroom.pdf](#)

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### Happy Grams- Partner with Families

**HAPPY-GRAM**

For child's teacher:

For child's parent:

**Happy Go Home Note**

For child's parent:

**Happy Gram**

For child's teacher:

**Happy Gram**

For child's parent:

**Happy Gram**

For child's teacher:

**Happy Gram**

For child's parent:

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### Resources for Home

**NCMHI Emotional Piggy Bank**

Fill up a child's "piggy bank" every day!

**Words to create confidence**

**Positive words for parents**

**For child's parent:**

**For child's teacher:**

[https://www.ncmhi.org/parents/parents-are-the-key-to-a-childs-emotional-health/](#)

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**Thank you!**

Ashley LaRue, EC Behavior Support Specialist | [laruea@marshall.edu](mailto:laruea@marshall.edu)

<https://www.marshall.edu/bmhtac/>  
[www.phis.org](http://www.phis.org)  
<https://challengingbehavior.org/>



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