

*Common Reason for Social Behavior Failure:* They have not learned the behavior  
*Intervention Name:* **Sit and Watch (Contingent Observation)**

*Brief Description:*

The goal of this intervention is to help children learn appropriate behavior through structured observation. This intervention also has a time-out procedure. The student's contingent observation is used to promote appropriate classroom behavior through peer modeling.

*What "Common Problems" Does This Address?*

Children have not learned the desired social behavior and therefore are unable to demonstrate it. Research indicates that "Sit and Watch" is especially effective in decreasing aggression and noncompliance. This intervention can be used as a follow-up to the "Active teaching of classroom rules" intervention, also found in this manual.

*Procedures*

1. When a child displays an inappropriate behavior, describe it to him/her: "Amanda, do not pinch other children."
2. Next, explain to the child what would have been an appropriate behavior: "Amanda, keep your hands in your personal space."
3. Then tell the child to go to the Sit and Watch chair and observe the others behaving appropriately, "Amanda, go to the Sit and Watch chair and watch how other children keep their hands to themselves."
4. After the child has sat in the Sit and Watch chair for a brief amount of time (approximately 1-3 minutes) ask if he/she is ready to rejoin the group and behave appropriately. "Amanda, where are we supposed to keep our hands? Are you ready to return to the group and keep your hands where they belong?"
5. If the student indicates that he/she is ready to return and behave appropriately, allow him/her to do so. If the student continues to have difficulty, they are asked to observe until they are ready to behave. For example, "Amanda, sit here and watch until you think that you can play while keeping your hands in your personal space."
6. Allow the student to sit and watch a few minutes more. Then repeat Steps 4 and 5
7. When the student returns to the group and displays the appropriate behavior, give positive reinforcement as soon as possible "Amanda, I like how you are keeping your hands to yourself."

*Critical Components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:*

A clear set of rules and desired behaviors must be established prior to implementing this intervention, such as, described in the Active Teaching of Classroom Rules intervention, also in this manual. Students must be explicitly taught the purpose of the Sit and Watch chair. Role playing a situation where use of the Sit and Watch chair would be used is helpful. Each of the procedures should be implemented in order for this intervention to be successful

*Additional Procedures:*

If the child cries for an extended period of time or continues to disrupt the group, while in the Sit and Watch chair, move him/her to a designated "Quiet Place." This can be in the same room or elsewhere, as long as the child is unable to make contact with the group. Allow the child to remain in the "Quiet Place" until he/she calms down and is able to return to the group. "Amanda, since you are not sitting and watching, you are going to the Quiet Place to practice sitting quietly." When he/she is calm, return the child to the Sit and Watch chair and proceed through the steps described above.

*Critical Assumptions/Problem-Solving Questions to be Asked:*

*Assumptions:* The student is able to demonstrate the ability to perform the desired behavior. Other students are modeling the desired behavior.

*Limitations:* This intervention has been particularly successful with preschool through elementary aged school children. Children who are unable to recognize desired social behaviors in others may not benefit from this intervention; therefore, ask yourself . . . Does the student demonstrate the ability to perform the desired behavior?

- If yes, then proceed with the intervention.
- If no, then teach the appropriate behavior through direct instruction.

*Materials:*

1. A “Sit and Watch” chair placed within view of group activities
2. A “Quiet Place” within the classroom (or elsewhere), but as far away from the group as Possible
3. A classroom rules chart clearly displayed

*References*

- Porterfield, J. K., Herbert-Jackson, E., & Risley, T. R. (1976). Contingent observation: an effective and acceptable procedure for reducing disruptive behavior of young children in a group setting. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 9, 55-64.
- White, A. G., & Bailey, J. S. (1990). Reducing disruptive behaviors of elementary physical education students with sit and watch. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 23, 353-359.