

**Monitoring Student Engagement, Tolerance
and Program Participation**

**Teacher Guidelines for Providing
Parent Feedback on Student Performance**

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Teacher Guidelines for Providing Parent Feedback on Student Performance

This document is intended as a guide for teachers, so they can help parents make the transition from anecdotal notes (as the primary form of school-to-home communication about student daily performance) to numerical ratings. Other performance information will also be provided (Green Zone performance, Credit Check success), but the primary daily information will be in the form of a Student Performance rating scale. Teachers should choose points, from the information below, that they believe will be most useful in helping parents understand the change (maybe highlight what you want to say). Do not provide all this information to parents because it is likely to overwhelm, rather than clarify and reassure. If parents have additional questions, provide as much of the following information as necessary to answer those questions. Simple and brief is best, expand if needed. The best way to convey this information is in a face-to-face meeting, but a telephone call is a good second option. For more comprehensive information about this issue, see (<https://kevinplummerphd.com/monitoring-student-engagement-tolerance-and-program-participation-bbtipc/>).

Problems With Anecdotal Notes

There are many problems with the practice of writing narrative, anecdotal notes home at the end of the day. Above all, it is a time-consuming exercise that forces the teacher to be brief, to sum up the entire day with just a few sentences. Furthermore, not many people can remember accurately, at the end of the day, what took place earlier in the day, and it's almost impossible to measure progress from one day to the next based on brief narrative notes.

More Reliable Information

We want the communication between school and home to provide parents with a view of the entire day, not just selected events that staff can remember, and we want it to be an objective, rather than an anecdotal measure of student performance. It should be based on a rating scale, for example, that can be used to make comparisons throughout the day (across subjects and time) and from one day to the next. Also, the information should be authentic, so the report should be filled out during the day, at the conclusion of each part of the day (not just at the end of the day).

Reporting on What Matters Most

A great program is not a great program for the child who is not engaged in it, who isn't tolerant of the school day, who can't participate because of tolerance problems. A great set of goals and objectives means nothing if there is no opportunity to work on them because the child is unavailable, disengaged. The information that matters most on a daily basis is a report that informs staff and parents about the extent of the student's participation in the program. The essential question we want to answer on a daily basis is: How much effort has the child made and to what extent has the child

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 been able to engage in or participate in the various activities of the school program
 (academic and otherwise).

Specific Descriptions of the Information Parents Will Receive

Tolerance, Engagement and Participation. Parents will be provided with student ratings on a periodic basis (some students will be rated every day and others who are consistently doing well will be rated a couple of times a week). The frequency of the ratings will be worked out with each parent and each parent will understand why the frequency is relevant. The 5-point scale ranges from excellent engagement and participation (5) to minimal engagement and participation (1) and each point along the scale is described in a separate scoring key. Students who are struggling at school are provided with increased therapeutic support, so we expect the numbers to rise when the intensity of the program is sufficient. High performance numbers indicate that students are doing well, but those numbers become more meaningful when we also know how much support it takes (intensity) for students to do that well. Student progress is shown by lowered levels of intensity of support while maintaining high performance numbers.

Within the program, the data from the daily ratings will be used to measure progress toward goals (ensuring that the numbers are going up) or to identify a problem that needs closer attention (responding when the numbers are going down). The rating forms should not be used to provide consequences at home. The performance rating is a measure of performance, not necessarily an indication of willful misbehavior, and we want to ensure parents that the program at school has a comprehensive response to all behavior. We can always create home follow up programs with parents on an individual basis, if needed.

Green Zone Performance and Credit Check Goal.

The green zone is a visual display with three color zones (green, yellow, and red). It is used to give students feedback on their performance, to show them they are doing well, or to show them they are improving, or to show them they need to make a change and start making improvements. Anytime throughout the school day, a student marker can change position to communicate a message about performance, and students have the opportunity to recover and improve and have their marker quickly moved back into the green (if it has been moved down). When students' markers are in the "green zone", they are being told that they're doing very well. Students are expected to spend their day in the green and the day is supported in a way to make this a realistic expectation, just as they are expected to achieve high numbers on the performance rating scale. How much of the day is spent in the green is coded in the following way on the Student Performance Rating:

- 5) the student is in the green zone 85% of the school day
- 4) the student is in the green zone 75% to 85% of the school day
- 3) the student is in the green zone 65% to 75% of the school day
- 2) the student is in the green zone 50% to 65% of the school day
- 1) the student is in the green zone less than 50% of the school day

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Students earn credit for following routines, for exerting effort, for abiding by the social/community values of the classroom, and for following the guidance of the staff. Credits (check marks on a credit sheet) are given right at the moment when they're earned and they accumulate until they are later cashed in (some students cash in once a day and others cash in twice a day) for privileges during "credit check" (a brief period of chosen activities). The Student Performance Rating will indicate "yes" or "no" for each credit check. A "yes" indicates that two conditions have been met: 1) The student has enough credits to earn the top level at credit check and 2) the student is in the green zone at the time of credit check.

Intensity of Therapeutic Support.

Therapeutic support can be adjusted as students require it. Student improvement is measured by decreased intensity of therapeutic support (i.e., students are still successful under conditions of less support). When support is minimal, the student is successfully accessing the educational program with support that is typical of a student in a resource program. Program Intensity levels are reviewed once per quarter, so the ratings of intensity from one day to the next do not change. The numeric scale is as follows:

1. minimal level of therapeutic support
2. a little therapeutic support
3. moderate level of therapeutic support
4. considerable level of therapeutic support
5. extreme level of therapeutic support

Soft Skills.

All students have soft skills they are working on and these are addressed every day throughout the day, as the opportunity presents itself. Soft skills are a combination of social skills, work habits, communication skills, character traits, and attitudes that enable students to work well with others and manage the demands of learning and working. There are a multitude of important soft skills, but some examples of these skills are listed below. For each student, selected soft skills are embedded in the student's goals of the IEP. Progress with soft skills is measured by a 5-point rubric scale, and adjusted quarterly. That scale describes how often the student shows proficiency with the selected soft skills (percentage of time when there was an opportunity) and how much support was required to show proficiency (how much structure was provided, how many verbal or visual reminders, etc.).

Examples of soft skills:

express feelings clearly and politely
 stay focused, stay engaged
 maintain a positive attitude when things don't go as planned
 transition easily between activities
 listen and pay attention
 remain calm when corrected
 share materials
 respect the opinions of others

Tolerance, Engagement and Participation Scoring Key

5 Level of tolerance, engagement, and participation is excellent, response time is quick and on task, cooperation is without protest, effort is strong and consistent. Student is responsive to redirection, settled, engaged with staff, other students and learning materials. Mood is even or upbeat, shows enthusiasm, talks freely, looking forward to some activities, accepts correction, cooperates freely with routines and procedures, adapts easily to changes in the day.

4 Level of tolerance, engagement, and participation is good, response time is reasonable and on task, cooperation is with minimal urging, effort is good with some reminding. Student is responsive to redirection, settled, engaged with staff and learning materials with some reminders. Student is agreeable, compromises when needed, and recovers quickly from minor disappointments. Student language is civil and respectful, voice tone and volume is calm, and student is able to wait.

3 Effort, level of tolerance, and level of participation is fair, response time is slow or misdirected, but redirection is possible with frequent verbal and visual prompts. Verbal protests are fairly frequently occurring, student needs frequent breaks, mood is fair, gets discouraged on difficult tasks, becomes somewhat impatient, complains about some of the work but eventually completes it. Has some trouble waiting as well as dealing with unexpected changes in the day. Student often becomes impatient, is sometimes annoyed, and expresses occasional irritation.

2 Level of tolerance and participation is minimal. Student completes very little of what is asked, verbally protests most staff requests, with occasional physical protests (physical toward objects or materials). Nearly all transitions are difficult, satisfactorily completes less than 20% of the activity or assignment, finds it difficult to settle, gets very discouraged on difficult tasks, complains about most of the work, is often annoyed, stops before tasks are complete and needs several breaks within a short time. Student frequently becomes impatient, is often annoyed, frequently expresses irritation, sometimes whines or pouts about not getting what (s)he wants.

1 Poor effort and minimal engagement. Student completes very little of what is asked and protests most staff requests. Prompting is nearly constant, level of tolerance and participation is poor to none, unable to engage in any of the activity. Mood is poor, very discouraged, pessimistic attitude, chronic irritability, complains about the noise and interference from other children, doesn't want to talk or interact, head down on the desk, shouts or yells at others, kicks the desk, slams materials, runs to another part of the room, obstinate, frequently overwhelmed, rigid or inflexible response to requests, perseverates on frustrations or disappointments, complains about nearly everything.