

Six Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

Allison M. Bernard, M. Ed.
Elise Sarasin, MSE
Kathleen Lynne Lane, Ph. D., BCBA-D, CF-L2
University of Kansas



Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education
R324N190002 University of Kansas

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Enhancing Ci3T Modules



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Access Today's Materials



6-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

Show empathy
1. Establish rapport and build trust with the student.
2. Listen to the student's perspective.
3. Acknowledge the student's feelings.

Keep instructor moving
4. Provide clear, specific instructions.
5. Monitor the student's behavior.
6. Reinforce positive behavior.

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Agenda

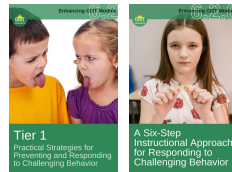
1. Welcome
2. Overview of Tier 1
3. Describing a 6-step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior
4. Connecting Students to More Intensive Interventions
5. Wrapping Up and Moving Forward



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Learning Objectives

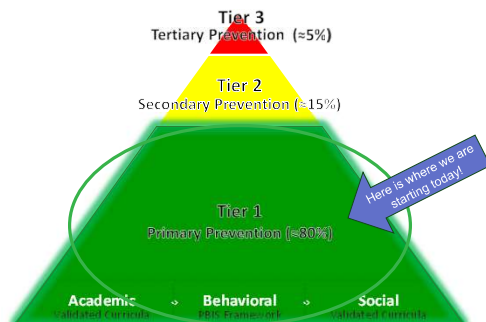
1. Describe a 6-step instructional approach for responding to challenging behaviors
2. Identify what to do (examples), why to do it (behavioral principles for shaping behavior) and what not to do (non-examples) for each step
3. Describe potential Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for students needing more than Tier 1 practices.



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Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered Model of Prevention

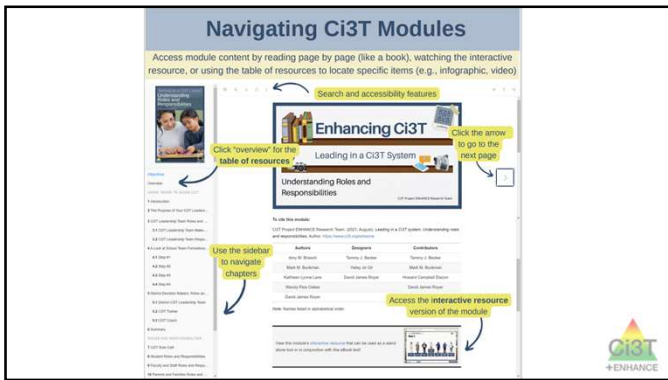
(Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009)



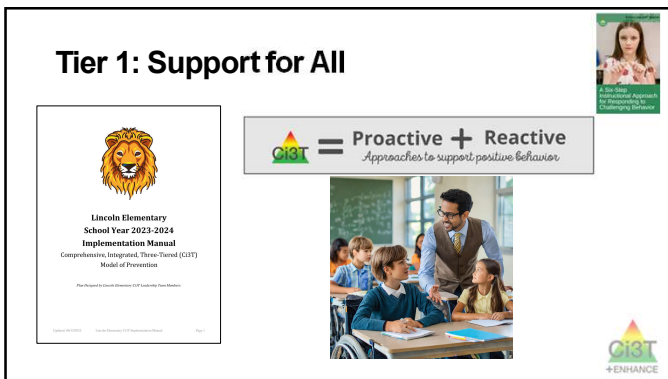
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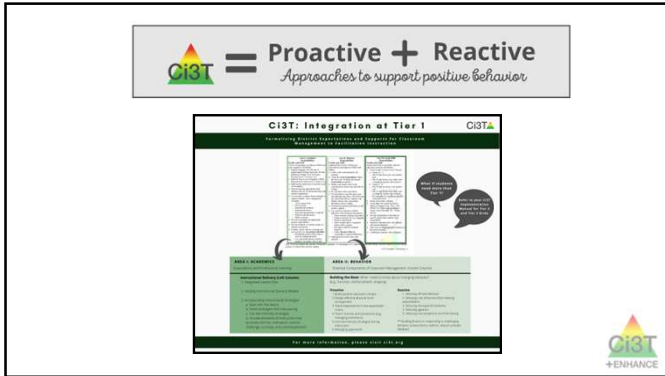
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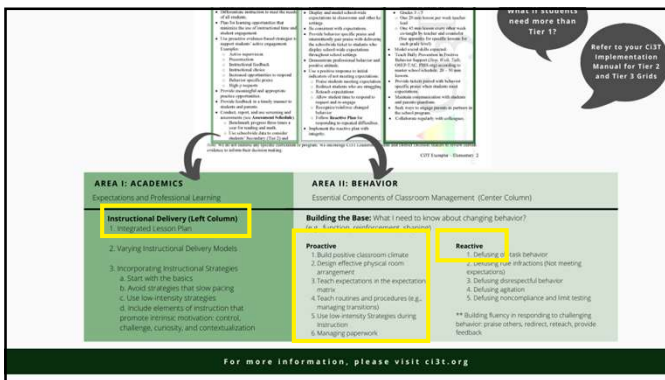
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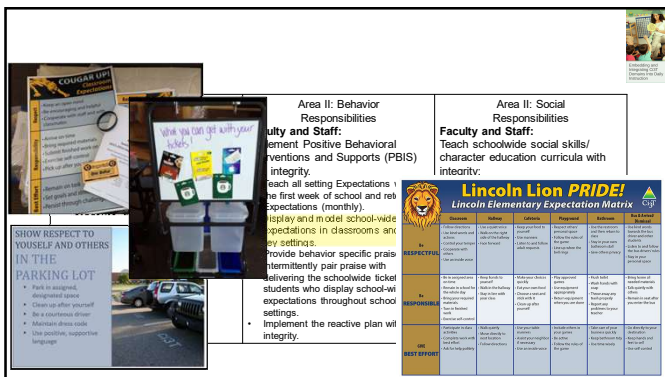
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6-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

How to Respond to Challenging Behavior

1. Identify the behavior
2. Determine the function
3. Develop a plan
4. Implement the plan
5. Monitor and evaluate
6. Adjust the plan as needed

6-Step Instructional Approach

1. Establish a baseline
2. Identify the behavior
3. Determine the function
4. Develop a plan
5. Implement the plan
6. Monitor and evaluate

How to Respond

How to Respond to Challenging Behavior

How to Respond to Challenging Behavior

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How are you currently responding to challenging behaviors during instruction?

Ci3T +ENHANCE

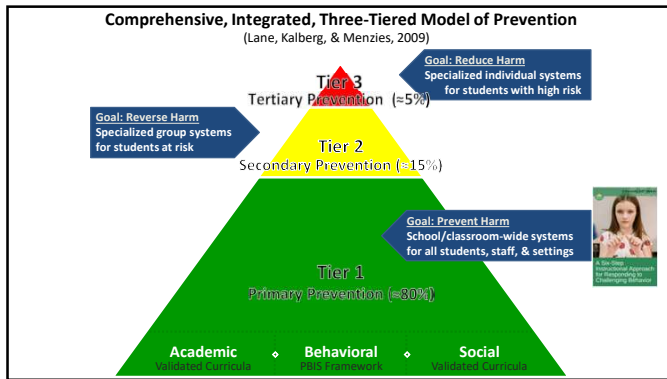
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Ci3T +ENHANCE

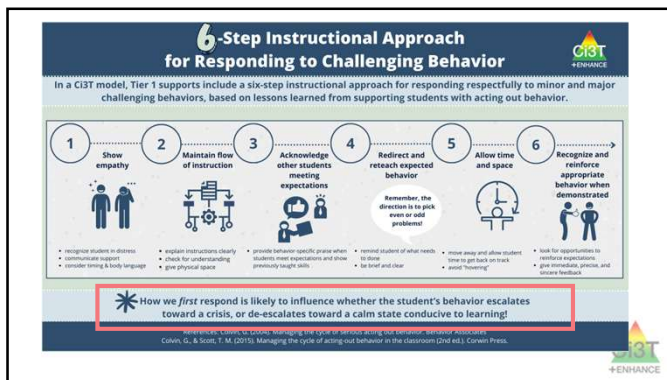
6-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

A Six-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

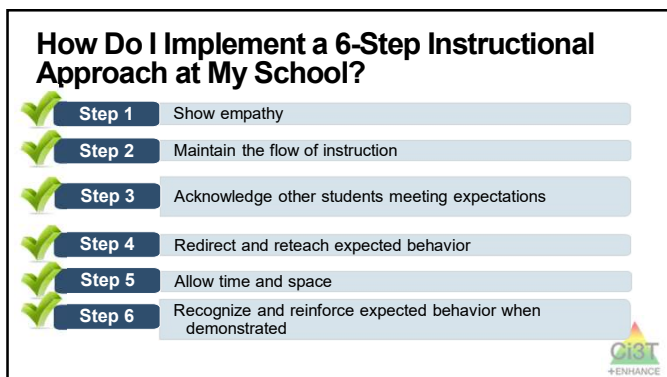
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Step 1: Show empathy

✓ What to do

✓ Why to do it


✓ What to avoid



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Step 1: Show empathy





em • pa • thy

'em-pa-thē • noun

1. the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner

Merriam Webster





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Step 1: Show empathy


What to do

- Connect privately
- Strategically pause instruction
- Body language
- Verbally acknowledge & validate emotions

Why to do it

What to avoid



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Step 1: Show empathy

What to do

Why to do it

- Builds relationships
- Less likely to lead to escalation

What to avoid

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Step 1: Show empathy

What to do

Why to do it

What to avoid

- Harsh & public communication
- Overbearing
- Long winded

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6-Step Instructional Approach: Effectively Showing Empathy

When showing empathy, the first step in our 6-step approach for responding to challenging behavior, we want to be short, to the point, and calm. Here are some examples of how and how not to respond with empathy.

AVOID: Being Long-Winded

It looks like you're having a hard day because your head is down, your eyes are closed, and you're not following the directions. Is there anything I can do to help?

Jeremiah, you're normally so good at following directions! When a game isn't working, they seem really down today. What can I do to help you?

Hey friend, I hope you know you're a valued member of this classroom. I really want to help you get started with your independent work. What can I do? I'm here for you!

INSTEAD: Be Brief


It looks like you're having a hard time getting started. I'll come back in a few minutes.

Jeremiah, how can I help you get started on your worksheet?

I'm sorry that it seems like you're having a tough day. I'm going to take a lap and come back to check in.

Remember, how we first respond is likely to influence whether the student's behavior escalates toward a crisis, or de-escalates toward a calm state conducive to learning!

for more information and additional resources, visit cist.org



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Illustration Background

Setting: 6th grade Science Classroom

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Date: October 25

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Illustration



Mrs. Hill heads over to Paul's desk. She sits in a chair next to him at the back of the room at the lab station. She makes sure to be respectful of Paul's personal space. In a confidential manner, Mrs. Hill says, "**Hey, Paul. I noticed you're sitting away from the desks today. Is there something I can do to help you get started on the bellringer?**" "No," he mumbles into his crossed arms. "I don't want to do this right now."



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Let's Chat!



What could Mrs. Hill say to Paul?

1. Nothing, walk away.
2. You know the rules, move.
3. I understand. I'll check back in a minute



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Step 2: Maintain the flow of instruction


What to do

- Repeat instructions in a positive, friendly tone
- Physical movement

Why to do it

What to avoid



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Step 2: Maintain the flow of instruction


What to do

Why to do it

Creates solutions-based environments

What to avoid



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Step 2: Maintain the flow of instruction


What to do

Why to do it

What to avoid

- Engaging in arguments
- Providing too much attention



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Illustration

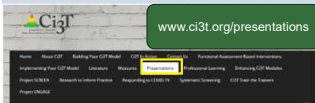
Even though Mrs. Hill sees that Paul is still sitting in the lab station, she keeps instruction moving forward by moving on to check on other students who are getting started on their assignments. She uses active supervision by moving through the classroom, visually scanning the room to see who might need help, and providing positive verbal interactions to acknowledge students who are meeting expectations.



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Let's Talk!

Use your handout to develop a few statements you could use in the moment



00:00



6-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

Show empathy
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Keep instruction moving
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



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Step 3: Acknowledge other students meeting expectations

What to do

- Behavior-specific praise
- Keep instruction moving forward
- Be calm and sincere

Why to do it

What to avoid



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Step 3: Acknowledge other students meeting expectations

What to do

Why to do it

Creates a positive, praise-rich environment to reinforce what is expected

What to avoid

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Step 3: Acknowledge other students meeting expectations

What to do

Why to do it

What to avoid

- Raising voice
- Body language that communicates distress or frustration






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Let's Chat!

On her way back to Paul, Mrs. Hill notices some students doing an excellent job of solving their selected problems and starting to check their work with their shoulder partner.

What could Mrs. Hill say/do with other students?






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Illustration

Mrs. Hill looks at Liza and Bree and tells them, "You both are doing a great job of explaining your answers." She hands them a ticket.

Next, Mrs. Hill takes a calming breath, smiles at Paul who is looking her way, and walks over to the lab station. In her mind, she thinks to herself, "You've got this..."

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Step 4: Redirect and reteach expected behavior


What to do

- Redirect the student to the task
- Provide reminders
- Reteach expected behavior

Why to do it

What to avoid



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Step 4: Redirect and reteach expected behavior

What to do

Why to do it

Gives the student a way to get back on track quickly and respectfully

What to avoid








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Step 4: Redirect and reteach expected behavior

What to do
Why to do it
What to avoid
Long conversations





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Illustration

Mrs. Hill smiles at Paul and makes eye contact. She says, "Paul, you did great with these problems yesterday. Remember, the digestive system diagram you will need is right here in the book [pointing to the box with the diagram]."

The good news is you can pick any five questions you would like." Mrs. Hill points to the answer sheet and says, "Which one would you like to start with?"



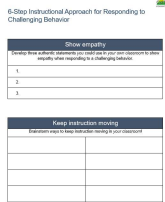
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Let's Talk!


Brainstorm ways to keep instruction moving in *your* classrooms!

- Turn & talk
- Preview & review
- Getting out materials

www.ci3t.org/presentations



00:00 



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Step 5: Allow time and space

What to do

Offer choice to get back on track

Why to do it

What to avoid




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Step 5: Allow time and space

What to do

Why to do it

Reduces perceived tension or pressure

What to avoid

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Step 5: Allow time and space

What to do

Why to do it

What to avoid

Hovering

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Illustration



After suggesting to Paul, he begin either #1 or #5 to, Mrs. Hill steps away and checks on Ben, a student seated close to the lab station.

She smiles at Ben, nodding at the progress he has made thus far and says, "Great progress, Ben. Looks like you are just about ready to talk through your answers with Paul."



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Step 6: Recognize and reinforce expected behavior when demonstrated



What to do

Provide the student with a reinforcer

Why to do it

What to avoid

Lincoln High School

Student: _____ Grade: _____
 Teacher: _____ Date: _____
 Location: _____ Gym _____ Bathroom _____ Hallway _____
 _____ Classroom _____ Arrival/Dismissal _____ Bus/Parking Lot _____
☐ Be respectful
☐ Be responsible
☐ Give best effort



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Step 6: Recognize and reinforce expected behavior when demonstrated



What to do

Why to do it

Performance feedback

What to avoid

Lincoln High School

Student: _____ Grade: _____
 Teacher: _____ Date: _____
 Location: _____ Gym _____ Bathroom _____ Hallway _____
 _____ Classroom _____ Arrival/Dismissal _____ Bus/Parking Lot _____
☐ Be respectful
☐ Be responsible
☐ Give best effort



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Step 6: Recognize and reinforce expected behavior when demonstrated

What to do

Why to do it

What to avoid

Being too enthusiastic

Lincoln High School

Student: _____ Grade: _____
Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Location: Gym Classroom Cafeteria
Hallway Annular/Dismal Bus/Parking Lot

☐ Be respectful
☐ Be responsible
☐ Give best effort

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Illustration

Out of the corner of her eye, Mrs. Hill notices Paul has moved to sitting in a desk next to Ben and completed #5. Mrs. Hill says, "Terrific, Paul. I appreciate you getting started. Thank you for sitting with Ben to talk through your answers."

She hands both Paul and Ben a ticket. Paul somewhat reluctantly takes the ticket from Mrs. Hill's hand and smirks a half-smile. "Thanks, Mrs. Hill. Are you ready, Ben?" says Paul.

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6-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behavior

In a CIST model, Tier 1 supports include a six-step instructional approach for responding respectfully to minor and major challenging behaviors, based on lessons learned from supporting students with acting out behavior.

1 Show empathy

2 Maintain flow of instruction

3 Acknowledge other students meeting expectations

4 Redirect and reteach expected behavior

5 Allow time and space

6 Recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior when demonstrated

Remember, the direction is to pick even as said problems!

How we first respond is likely to influence whether the student's behavior escalates toward a crisis, or de-escalates toward a calm state conducive to learning!

References: Cohen, G. (2004). Managing the cycle of serious acting out behavior. Behavior Associates. Cohen, G., & Scott, T. M. (2015). Managing the cycle of acting out behavior in the classroom (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.

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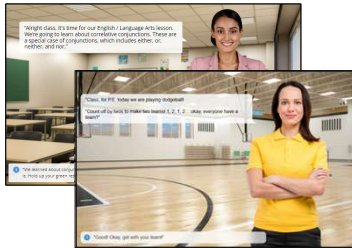
Continuing the Conversation

- If this occurred in your classroom/school, what might happen differently?
- What are some pitfalls and challenges you could see coming out of this situation?
- What are some potential ways to address these challenges?
- Who is someone you could ask in your building or district to troubleshoot a more complex or challenging circumstance, should one arise?



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Additional Practice



6-Step Instructional Approach
 A six-step instructional approach for responding to challenging behavior. This approach is designed to help educators effectively address challenging behaviors in a structured and consistent manner. The steps are as follows:

1. Identify the behavior.
2. Determine the function of the behavior.
3. Develop a plan.
4. Implement the plan.
5. Monitor the behavior.
6. Evaluate the plan.

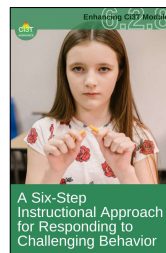


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Resources

You Might Be Interested In These Materials for Various Stakeholders

Resource	Thumbnail	Module Page	Link
about 4-step instructional approach for responding to challenging behavior (this module)		Page	Link
Interactive resource: 4-step instructional approach for responding to challenging behavior		18	Link
Infographic: CIP Integration at Tier 1		Page	Link
Infographic: 4-step instructional approach for responding to challenging behavior		Page	Link
Infographic: 4-step instructional approach: Effectively sharing equity		Page	Link
Video: 4-step approach for responding to challenging behavior		Page	Link

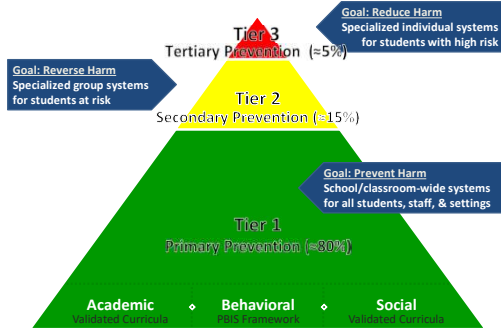


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Connecting Students to More Intensive Interventions

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Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered Model of Prevention (Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009)



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Tier 2 Supports

Secondary (Tier 2) Intervention Grid

Intervention	Target Population	Implementation	Monitoring & Evaluation
Check-in/Check-out	Students with behavior concerns	Teacher and student use a checklist to track behavior and academic progress.	Teacher and student review progress weekly.
Behavioral Contracting	Students with behavior concerns	Teacher and student create a contract outlining expected behavior and consequences.	Teacher and student review progress weekly.
Self-Monitoring	Students with behavior concerns	Student tracks their own behavior and academic progress.	Student reviews progress weekly.



Check-in/Check-out
A Tier 2 Intervention to
Support Student
Success

Behavior Contract Intervention Grid

Intervention	Target Population	Implementation	Monitoring & Evaluation
Behavior Contracting	Students with behavior concerns	Teacher and student create a contract outlining expected behavior and consequences.	Teacher and student review progress weekly.
Self-Monitoring	Students with behavior concerns	Student tracks their own behavior and academic progress.	Student reviews progress weekly.



Behavior Contracts to
Support Classroom
Behavior and
Engagement

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Tier 3 Supports












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Wrapping Up and Moving Forward

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Project EMPOWER+



EMPOWER+ Session	Date
Starting Strong: Effective Tier 1 Practices for Educators	September 24, 2025 (Wednesday)
From Data to Action: Using Systematic Screening to Inform Instruction	October 8, 2025 (Wednesday)
Ci3T In Action: Integrated Lesson Planning for Enhanced Instruction	November 18, 2025 (Tuesday)
Mastering Behavior Specific Praise and Precorrection	January 21, 2026 (Wednesday)
A 6-Step Instructional Approach for Responding to Challenging Behaviors: A Tier 1 Practice	February 10, 2026 (Tuesday)
A Tier 2 Support for Students Experiencing Anxious Feelings: Recognize, Relax, Record.	March 25, 2026 (Wednesday)
A Tier 3 Support for Students with Intensive Intervention Needs: Functional Assessment-Based Intervention (FABI)	April 28, 2026 (Tuesday)



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Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Calls

Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Calls

The purpose of our coaching calls is to provide ongoing support to Ci3T District Leaders, Ci3T Trainers, Ci3T Coaches, and other individuals supporting the design and implementation of comprehensive integrated, three-level Ci3T models of Professional Learning.

4:00-5:00 PM Central

Offered remotely via Zoom

Please email Steve Williams (steve.williams@ci3t.org) for more information.

Scan the QR code or register here!


Ci3T

ENHANCE

2025-2026 Dates

Aug. 20, 2025 (Wed)
Sept. 03, 2025 (Wed)
Oct. 01, 2025 (Wed)
Nov. 05, 2025 (Wed)
Dec. 02, 2025 (Tue)
Jan. 22, 2026 (Thurs)
Feb. 17, 2026 (Tues)
Mar. 10, 2026 (Tues)
Apr. 15, 2026 (Wed)
May 13, 2026 (Wed)

Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Calls Session	Date
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 1	August 20, 2025 (Wednesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 2	September 3, 2025 (Wednesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 3	October 1, 2025 (Wednesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 4	November 5, 2025 (Wednesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 5	December 2, 2025 (Tuesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 6	January 22, 2026 (Thursday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 7	February 17, 2026 (Tuesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 8	March 10, 2026 (Tuesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 9	April 15, 2026 (Wednesday)
Ci3T Trainers and Coaches Call 10	May 13, 2026 (Wednesday)



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#Ci3T

Thank you!

ci3t.org





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Tag us in your Ci3T highlights, we love to see Ci3T in action!

Follow us on **Instagram** for updates and new resources!



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