

BESO Tip: Pre-Referral Process

There are many responsibilities when you are a teacher. One of your greatest responsibilities is to help all your students be successful in your classroom. If you have students who may need additional support in their education in addition to the accommodations you have been providing, it may be time to seek assistance from other school personnel through your campus pre-referral team.

As a teacher, you work with your students on a daily basis and get to know your students very well. You are aware of your individual students' strengths and weaknesses in the classroom and their present levels of performance. When you work closely with a student and realize that he/she is not making progress within the general curriculum, it is important that you contact your school administrator for further assistance. Since each school district has its own specific process and guidelines, you should seek guidance from your campus administrator. Typically, school districts have a pre-referral team which can go by many names (e.g., problem solving team, student support team, student intervention team, RTI team, etc.). These teams are designed to help students succeed at school by brainstorming strategies and interventions that can be implemented in the school setting.

Within these team meetings, you, as the teacher, must be able to clearly verbalize the areas of concern whether they are academic or behavior. For example, a broad statement such as, "Johnny has difficulty in math" is not appropriate when attending your campus pre-referral team meeting. You need to be specific with the concern and state what kind of problem Johnny has in math. In addition, it is important that you provide work samples and any information regarding strategies you have tried in the classroom, which have been both successful and unsuccessful.

As a member of the team, you will need to be an active participant. You will be the primary implementer of any strategies or interventions. Therefore, be sure to ask many questions, listen carefully, and let the team know if the strategies and interventions are feasible in your classroom. Once you get back to the classroom, you need to collect data and be ready for your next pre-referral team meeting. Data does not solely include anecdotal notes, but something that you will be able to graph. Be able to show the team what Johnny was able to do prior to the intervention (baseline) and what he was able to do during and after the intervention. Be certain that your data tracking includes the name/description of the intervention, who implemented the intervention, the date it was implemented, and the amount of time the student received the intervention on that particular day.

Key things to remember:

1. Contact your campus administrator when you need assistance working with your student.
2. Attend pre-referral team meetings on time and be prepared. Do not attend a pre-referral team meeting empty-handed. As the teacher, you should have collected data with regards to the area of concern. Bring work samples, discipline referrals, and attendance logs to your meeting. Also bring grades, curriculum based measures, and any progress monitoring data you may have.
3. Do not only focus on weaknesses. Provide the pre-referral team with information about the student's strengths and see how you can use the student's strengths to guide interventions.

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