

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS: BANKING TIME: SUPPORTING THE TEACHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP



WHAT IT IS:

Banking Time is a strategy to ensure positive, sensitive, and supportive interactions between a teacher and child. Banking Time sessions are one-on-one meetings that occur regularly (2-3 times a week for 10-15 minutes each). The sessions are child-led and do not involve teaching the child a skill. Sessions are **not** contingent on the child's behavior (not a reward or punishment). A teacher's role during Banking Time sessions is to convey interest, sensitivity, and understanding in order to foster a positive connection with the child.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

- Jordan is often noncompliant, and impulsive. His teacher often interacts with him by giving commands and correcting his negative behaviors. Jordan rarely comes to the teacher for help or even just to talk. She decides to develop a stronger relationship with Jordan by implementing Banking Time sessions, spending 10 minutes playing with just Jordan, three times a week during nap. After a few weeks, she finds herself seeing him more positively, and Jordan is seeking her out for comfort and conversation.
- During a Banking Time session the teacher begins by *observing* Jeffrey building a block tower. She notices and accurately *labels* his frustration as the tower tumbles by saying, "You said 'arrgh!', You sound frustrated". Then she *narrates* his actions as he rebuilds saying, "You are stacking the blocks right back up again." He becomes angry when the tower falls again. The teacher uses a calm voice and says, "I am here for you even when things are not working out." Jeffrey asks the teacher to help him rebuild the tower and the teacher says "Sure, let's try it again together."



WHY IT WORKS:

Relationships with adults are critical resources for children. Banking Time helps teachers invest in this relationship capital (i.e. the teacher and child are "banking" positive relationship time). When problems or conflicts arise, the teacher's prior sensitive and responsive interactions with the child and the child's sense of the teacher as a listener and a helper will allow the child to draw upon the capital that they have invested in each other, to help solve these issues. Children who

display challenging behaviors are frequently reprimanded by adults. Banking Time helps to balance out these more negative interactions with adult-child interactions where the child is in control and can see the adult as a supportive person who accepts the child for him or herself.

WHEN IT MAY BE USED:

Banking Time should be used when many of the teacher-child interactions include resistance, negativity, and conflict and/or if the child does not initiate positive interactions (for example, communication, seeking help) on a regular basis. These strategies can also help a teacher focus on the positive attributes of children whose behavior drains his/her energy. Banking Time sessions should be used when the teacher-child relationship doesn't improve from the implementation of less intensive relationship-building techniques.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS/TO-DO'S:

1. Review the Banking Time manual (link provided below).
 2. Prepare engaging materials for child exploration.
 - ✓ Choose materials that lend themselves to child-directed play instead of teacher-directed. For example, use art materials, pretend items, or blocks **instead of** a competitive game, a task that involves a right-wrong answer, or books (which tend to be teacher-led activity).
 3. Choose a location for your sessions.
 - ✓ It is best to meet outside of the classroom (for example, library, hallway), but if you must meet in the classroom section off a quiet corner and have another adult present to attend to the other children so you can give your uninterrupted attention to the child.
 4. Meet one-on-one with the child for 10-15 minute sessions 2-3 times a week in a quiet location free from distractions.
 - ✓ Follow the **child's lead**.
 - Limit questions and commands.
 - Allow students to use materials in any way they want (within safety). There are no "right" or "wrong" ways to do something during a Banking Time session.
 - ✓ **Observe**.
 - Carefully watch and take mental note of the child's behavior, words, and feelings, as well as your own thoughts and feelings.
 - ✓ **Narrate** the child's actions and words.
 - Describe out loud what the child is doing – *Sportscaster technique*. For example, "You picked a purple crayon and now you are drawing a house with purple windows!"
 - Listen to the child's words and repeat them with slight modification – *Reflection*. For example, if the child points to a picture and says, "Sad". You could reply, "Yes, his face looks sad."
 - Non-verbally and quietly imitate what the child is doing-*Imitation*. For example, if the child is stacking blocks, you also build with blocks.
 - ✓ **Label** the child's emotions, both positive and negative.
 - Communicate out loud the child's emotional state. "I see that you are feeling frustrated."
 - ✓ Develop **relational themes**.
 - Relational Themes convey a message to a child about the importance of your relationship with him or her. Example themes: *I can be a helper, I am interested in you, You can trust me, or I think you do things well.*
- ❖ The time spent in a Banking Time session is different from other time you spend with children in the classroom. For example, in a Banking Time session, we do not want you to praise certain behaviors and correct others. Instead, we want you to give your undivided attention, interest, and enthusiasm to the child in order to convey unconditional acceptance of him or her. These differences are fully described in the Banking Time manual.

For more information and resources for how to apply this strategy:

<http://www.lookconsultation.org/resources/BankingTime-Resource1.pdf>