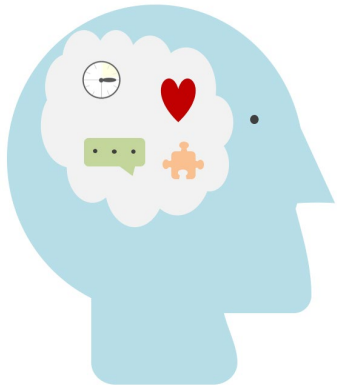# New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools

Funded by IDEA Part B 2025-2026

Everyday Prevention: Behavior Specific Praise

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At the conclusion of this video, you will be able to…

▶ Explain the difference between general and specific praise

▶ Name the three criteria for delivering behavior specific praise

▶ Provide examples of effort-oriented praise statements

Predictable
Consistency and stability in expectations allows students to anticipate what is expected of them across school locations
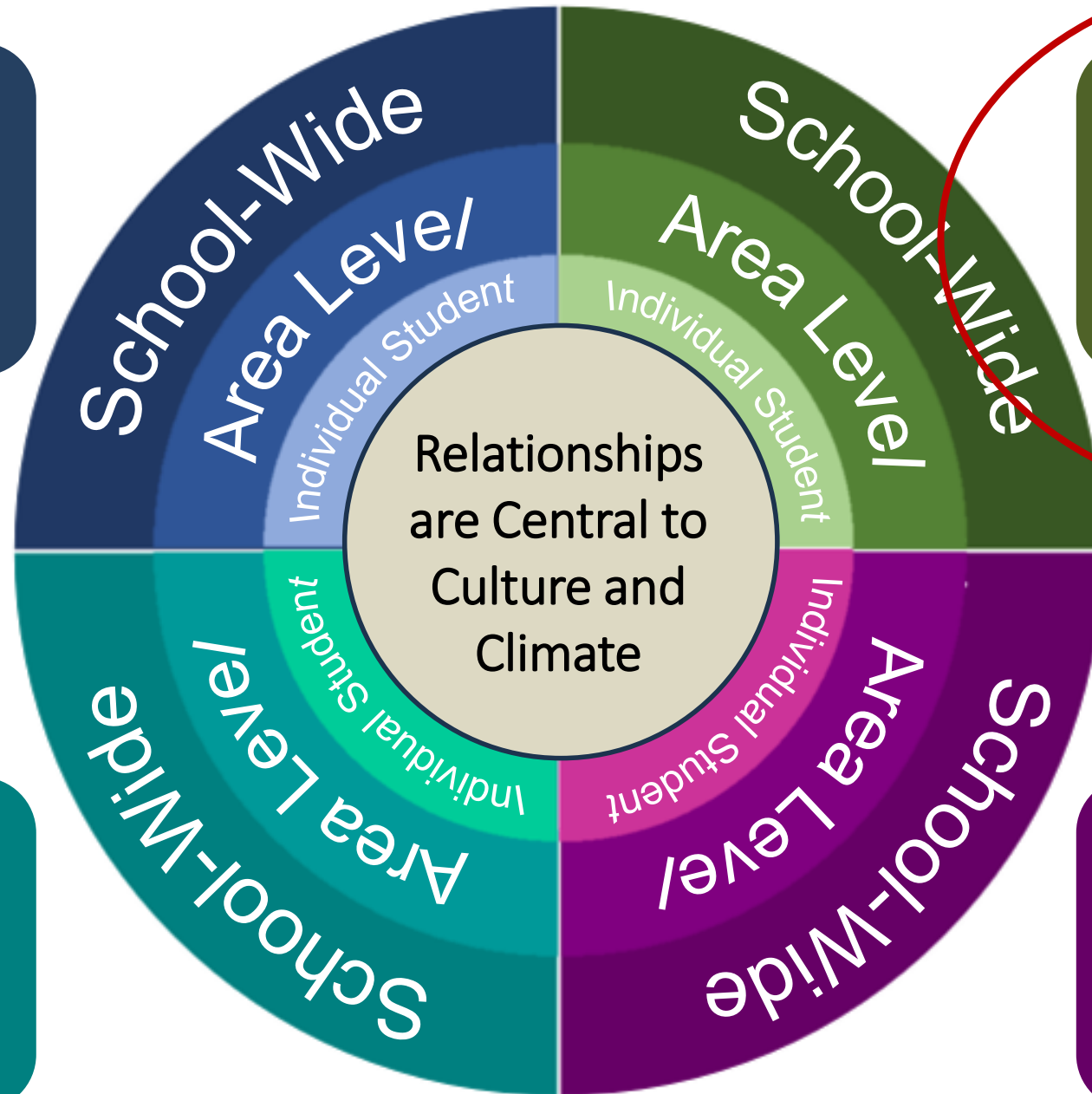
Positive
Interactions students receive from staff result in their feeling valued and connected to school

Present
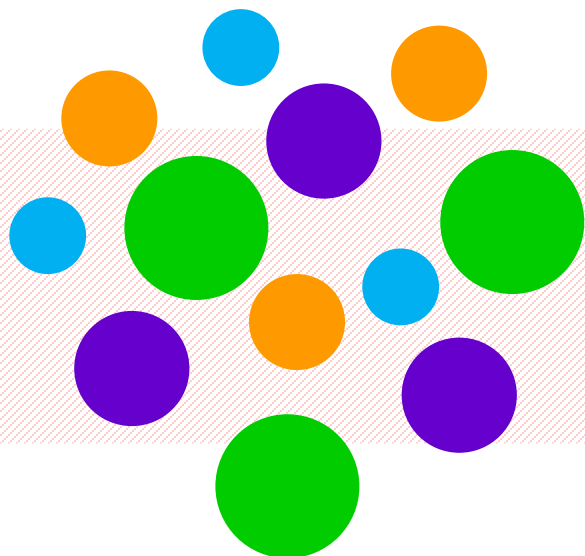Staff actively interrogate their own beliefs, perceptions, and unconscious biases to ensure that decision making is free from negative influence

Empowering
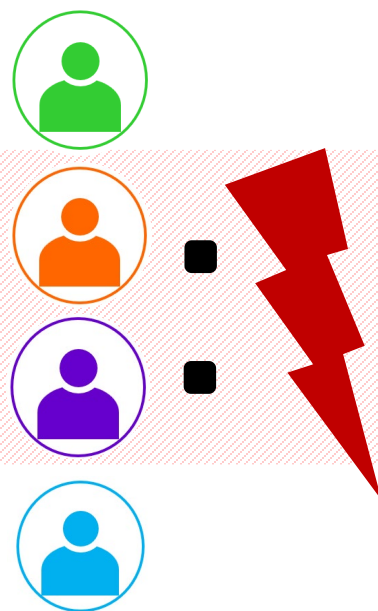The learning environment is supportive of student voice and choice to activate and direct their own learning experience

School-Wide
Area Level
Individual Student

Relationships are Central to Culture and Climate

Different Types of Messages to Achieve the 4:1 Ratio

Relationship Building Exchanges
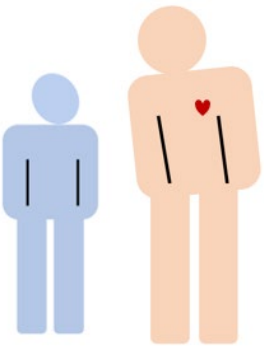
Instructional Interactions
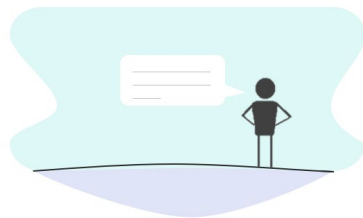
Help & Comfort

Behavior Specific Feedback

→Contributes to classroom climate (e.g., Caldarella et al. 2020 ; Drake & Nelson, 2021; Ennis et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2015; Monson, et al., 2020; Orr et al., 2020; Shuttleton, 2016; Wills et al., 2019)

→Associated with high rates of engagement and low rates of unwanted behavior (e.g., Caldarella et al. 2020; Drake & Nelson, 2021; Jenkins et al., 2015; Monson, et al., 2020; Orr et al., 2020; Shuttleton, 2016; Wills et al., 2019)

→Students across the age span want to experience praise from teachers (e.g., Burnett & Mandal, 2010; Llyod et al., 2023)

The brain recognizes and responds to praise as something 'good'

Praise and social acceptance are associated with neural activity in areas of the brain responsible for social decision-making

(Bhanji & Delgato, 2013)

Short, descriptive statements that reinforce a specific action are more effective than redirections (Drake & Nelson, 2021):

→*"Thank you for <u>entering quietly</u>"*

→*"I appreciate you're <u>getting started </u>with your work"*

→*"I notice that you have <u>all your materials ready</u>"*

→*"I noticed how you <u>stuck-with that problem </u>to get to the solution."*

Maximize behavior specific praise by being:

Concrete

Deliberate

Memorable
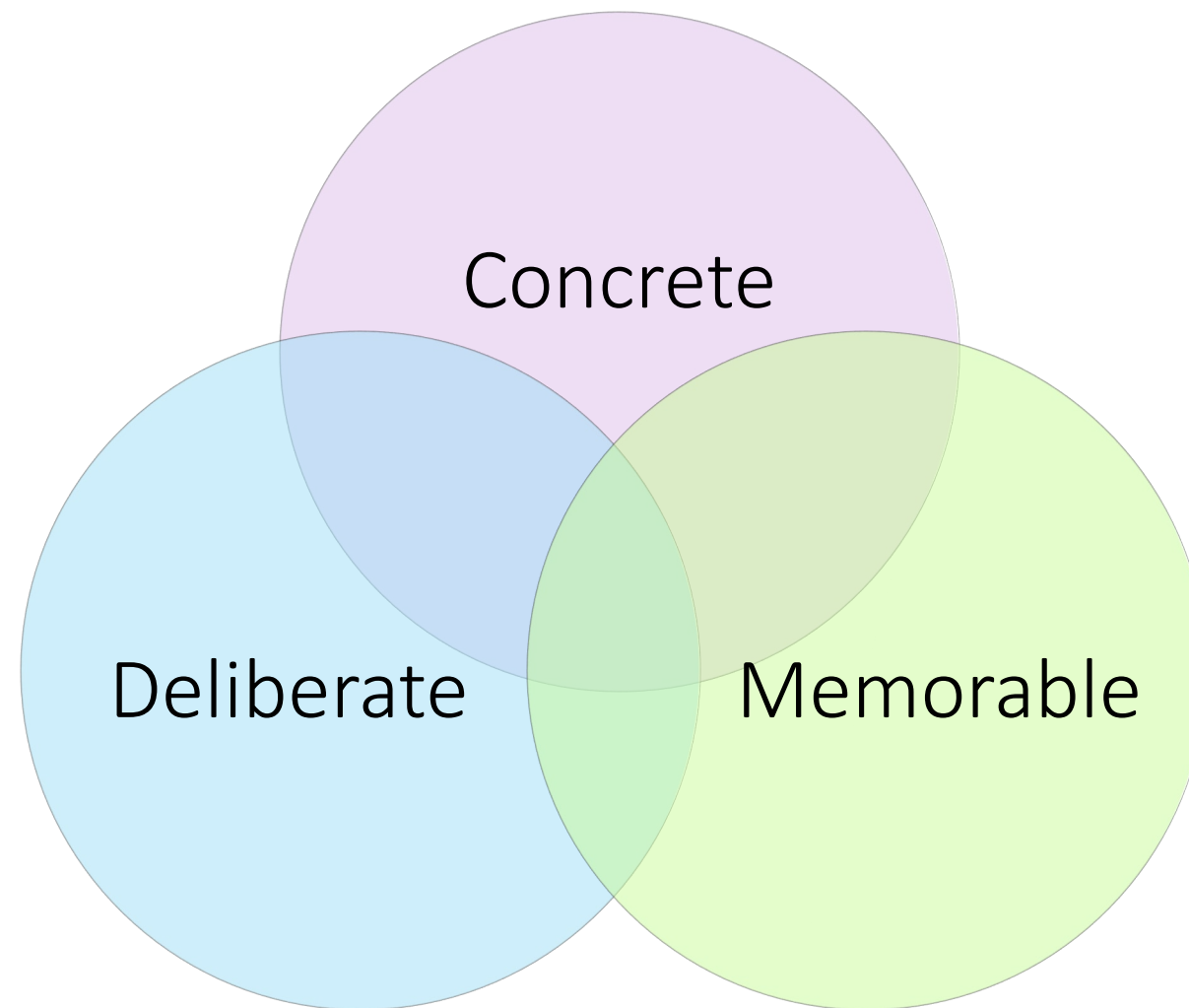
(e.g., Blaze et al., 2014; Brumelman, et al., 2014; Royer et al., 2019)

✓ Intentionally look for reasons to provide students with affirming feedback

✓ Use with enough frequency to make a desired impact

"Maria, thank you for <u>raising your hand</u>. What is your hypothesis?"

✓ State the specific skill, action, or habit you want to reinforce

✓ Emphasize effort put in to achieving an outcome

"Elijah, you put a lot of effort in this assignment. The <u>details you have included</u> provide a descriptive picture of what happened."

General Praise

'Good job!'

'Great work!'

'Nice going!'

'Way to go!'

Behavior Specific Praise

✓ *"Your <u>attention to details</u> made this assignment strong."*

✓ *"The <u>time you put into</u> writing a second draft made a difference in your final paper."*

✓ *"Your <u>effort to arrive on time</u> is appreciated."*

✓ *"I've noticed <u>how much effort you are putting toward</u> being responsible."*

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- ✓ Personally connect during the exchange
- ✓ Deliver 'hype-free' and genuine praise statements
- ✓ Stay present in the moment with the student
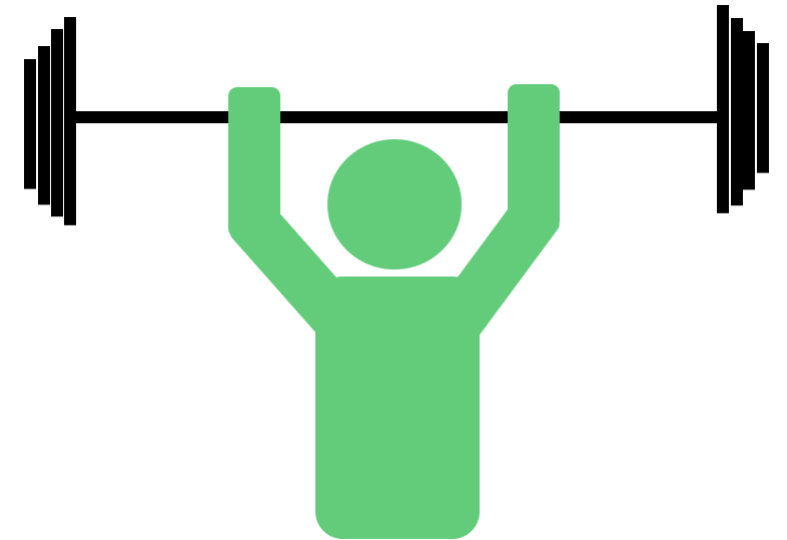
"Jamal, I noticed how quickly you started your work this morning."

Behavior specific praise...

...is a high leverage practice

...reinforces the subject of the praise statement

Maximize the impact of praise by...

...focusing on *effort toward* achieving expectations

...using concrete statements

...conveying genuineness

Use the Personal Implementation Tool to plan how you will use this practice within your daily routines

Everyday Practices Personal Implementation Plan Tool

Implementation Outcome: .		

Who can I go to if I have questions about how to implement this practice?	Name	Email or Room #

When are three times during the day that I will intentionally use this practice?	Opportunity 1	Opportunity 2	Opportunity 3

What do I need to prepare to use this practice?	Materials Needed?	Scripts or Prompts Needed?	Rehearsal Needed?

How will I remind myself about using this practice?	☐ Timer or alarm ☐ Visual prompt (e.g., post note) in lesson materials ☐ Review before students arrive ☐ Other:

| How will I reflect on implementation?	☐ Weekly Habit Tracker Tool ☐ Discussion at grade level or PLC meeting ☐ Other:

Use the Everyday Prevention Practices Habit Tracker to Reflect on Weekly or Daily Implementation

Everyday Prevention Practices Weekly Habit Tracker

Make the Environment Predictable		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Precorrect Expectations & Actions	Provide an explicit review what to do immediately before a routine begins	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
Visual reminders of expectations	Visual reminders and cues (e.g., poster, checklist list, etc.) for key routines that prompt what to do are visible to students.	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
Use High Rates of Positive Interactions		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Positive Greeting at the Door	Students are greeted at the door by name upon arrival to class.	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
Behavior Specific Praise	Short explicit statement affirming effort toward achieving an expectation are provided to students for effort toward achieving the expectations	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
4:1 Interaction Ratio	80% of messages to students are positive and affirming	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
Use Mindfully Present Decision Making		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Active Supervision	The environment is proactively monitored by continually moving, scanning, and interacting with students.	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
Neutralizing Routines	A brief pause is used before responding or deciding to clear the mind of unaware influences	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★★
TLC Redirection	Strategic approach to re-engaging a student when they are engaging in contextually incongruent behavior				
TLC Redirection: Tone	When responding to contextually incongruent behavior, a calm, neutral, and assertive tone of voice is used.	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
TLC Redirection: Language	When responding to contextually incongruent behavior, language is objective, labels emotions, paraphrases student statements, and uses positive fr	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
TLC Redirection: Coaching	When responding to contextually incongruent behavior, a concern inquiry is made (e.g., "are you okay?", re-engagement is coached, and regulation i	★★☆☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
Empower Learners		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Opportunities to Respond (OTR)	During instructional routines, 3-5 OTRs per minutes during fast paced instruction and 1 OTR per minute during practice opportunities are used.	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆

Refer to the reference list to learn more about behavior specific praise
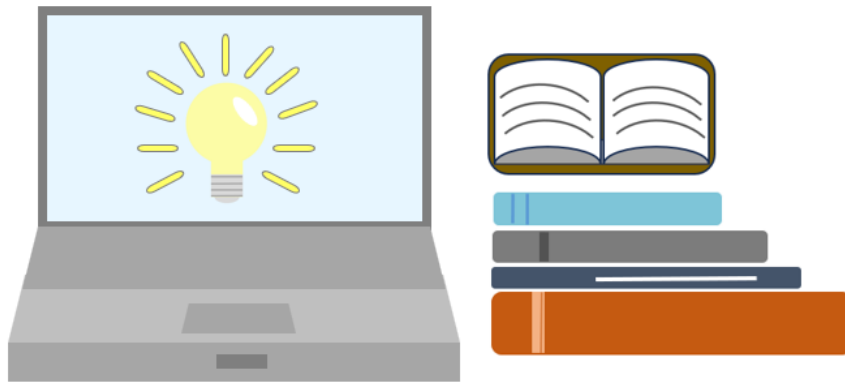
## Achieving the 4:1 Ratio
Related Readings and Research

Armendariz, F., & Umbreit, J. (1999). Using active responding to reduce disruptive behavior in a general education classroom. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions,1,*152–158.

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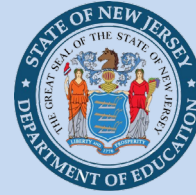
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