

# DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING (DBR) IN COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW FOR PARENTS

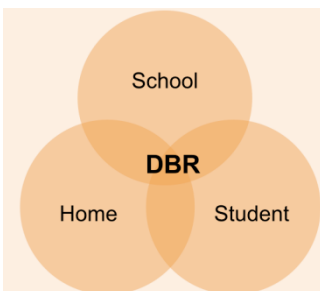
By Rose Jaffery, Sandra M. Chafouleas, & T. Chris Riley-Tillman

Family-school partnerships have long been noted as critical to student success in school, and communication is an essential part of establishing and maintaining an effective partnership. Direct Behavior Rating (DBR) can be used to facilitate this communication. In fact, DBR-like tools were initially presented as a means for communicating between home and school (e.g., Home-School Note). However, it is important to note that DBR can also be used to communicate among several key people in a child's life (e.g., teacher-child, parent-child, parent-teacher, and teacher-teacher).

## **Why is home-school communication important?**

Since the majority of a child's time is spent outside of school, just changing what happens *in* school will not necessarily have a significant impact on life *outside* of school<sup>2</sup>. In order to make school-based behavior supports most effective, it is important to address all contexts surrounding a child, particularly the home<sup>3</sup>. Including a family-school communication component can be important in order a) to maintain productive parent-teacher relationships and b) to facilitate consistency in how behavior is handled across school and home settings<sup>1</sup>. Using DBR can help simplify the process for communication, thereby creating a frequent, consistent system for feedback among parents, teachers, children, and others involved in the child's life.

## **Who can use DBR in communication?**



DBR can be used by anyone involved with the child:

- Teachers and other school personnel (e.g., counselor, school psychologist, speech therapist)
- Parents, guardians, and other family members
- Even the child!

## **Potential Benefits of Using DBR in Communication:**

- Provides immediate and consistent feedback about student behavior
- Fosters shared responsibility for student well-being
- Enhances consistency across settings in responding to student behavior
- Increases opportunities for positive attention in response to pro-social behavior

## **How can my child's school use DBR to facilitate homeu school communication?**

Using DBR in communication can be easy, once procedures for completing DBR have been put in place (see [www.mydbrconnect.com](http://www.mydbrconnect.com)). You just need to determine with whom the information will be shared (e.g., parent, teacher, child, counselor) and how often (e.g., daily, weekly). Decide if you want to simply provide the information or if you want to establish a communication loop (e.g., sign and return with comment) across settings. Don't forget to followS through as questions arise! **How is a DBR created to communicate about child behavior<sup>4</sup>?**

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Downloadable at [www.directbehaviorratings.org](http://www.directbehaviorratings.org).

**Step 1:** Select what behavior you want to target for communication (e.g., attention in class, homework), and if used as part of an intervention, define goals for behavior change.

**Step 2:** Establish how the target behaviors and goals will be defined (e.g., correctly completing at least 80% of assignments, following direct requests during transitions).

**Step 3:** Determine the periods in which information will be recorded about the child’s behavior (e.g., completing assignments during independent morning work, decreasing disruptive behavior on the bus).

**Step 4:** Set criteria for use during the most relevant parts of the day, generally not the entire day (i.e. evaluate behavior for three different activities, not just overall at the end of the entire day).

**Step 5:** Schedule a meeting between relevant parties (e.g., teacher, parent, child). Discuss how DBR might best be used in communication and intervention. Ensuring that everyone involved is motivated to take part in this communication effort is key to enhancing its success. And don’t forget to explain what DBR is and how it will be used to the child in a positive way!

**Step 6:** If used as part of an intervention, establish a home- and/or school-based incentive system. Allow the child to choose his/her own incentives from a pre-approved list. You can arrange incentives so that fewer or less preferred incentives are earned for fewer positive marks and more desirable ones are earned for more positive marks.

**Step 7:** Monitor the effectiveness of the communication by examining DBR data and modify as needed. For example, you may need to change the frequency with which communication is shared, and modify goals and/or incentives. Consider additional options for behavior supports, if appropriate.

### Example of a DBR Form Used for Middle School Students

- Used as part of a self-monitoring intervention with an incentive system
- Both the teacher and student rated the student’s behavior after the class period
- The teacher communicated with the student about his/her behavior, with the student’s other teachers, & sent a copy of the DBR form home for the child’s parents

Student’s name: _____		Day: M T W Th F		Date: _____	
<b>How well was I prepared for class?</b> <i>Examples:</i> Seated when bell rang, immediately began Schema Activators, instructional materials open, covered textbook/pen/pencil/paper ready, eye contact with teacher when lesson began					
<b>How engaged was I during class activities?</b> <i>Examples:</i> Writing, raising hand, answering a question, talking about a lesson, listening to the teacher, reading silently, taking notes appropriately, or looking at instructional materials					
Add All Points: (use teacher rating if different)					
# of Bonus Points Earned: (1 pt for each match within 1 pt)					
Total Points for Day:					
Copy Sent Home: Yes No		Reward Chosen: (if earned)			
Comments:		Teacher Initials: _____ Parent Initials: _____			

<sup>1</sup>Kelley, M.L. (1990). *School-home notes: Promoting children’s classroom success*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

<sup>2</sup>Christenson, S.L. & Buerkle, K. (1999). Families as educational partners for children’s school success: Suggestions for school psychologists. In C. Reynolds & T. Gutkin (Eds), *The handbook of school psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 709-744). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

<sup>3</sup>Esler, A. N., Godber, Y., & Christenson, S. L. (2002). Best practices in supporting home-school collaboration. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology IV* (Vol. 1, pp. 389-411). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

<sup>4</sup>Center for Children and Families. (2010). *How to establish a daily report card*. Retrieved 7/12/10 from [http://ccf.buffalo.edu/resources\\_downloads.php](http://ccf.buffalo.edu/resources_downloads.php).