



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Internal Communique ■ Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled

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Information concerning other available resources, programs, etc., is not to be construed as an endorsement by Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled for any specific product, organization or philosophy.

Self-Injurious Behavior

By Merv Blunt, Director for Program Services, Central Office

Watching students exhibit self-injurious behavior (SIB) is distressing for both parents and MSSD staff. Approximately 10-15 percent of students with autism or intellectual disabilities show some form of SIB. That percentage is higher for individuals living in residential facilities and for individuals with more severe impairments.

Typically, SIB occurs when the actions a child performs results in physical injury to the child's own body. SIB includes:

1. Hitting oneself with the hand or other body parts
2. Head banging
3. Biting oneself
4. Picking at the skin or sores
5. Scratching or rubbing oneself repeatedly.

Before addressing the issue of a student's SIB, it is necessary to try to determine the behavior's cause and motivation. There is no definitive test to find out what is causing SIB in a student. However, there are several possibilities that can be investigated by MSSD staff and parents. This will help in finding potential solutions to either decrease or extinguish the behavior.

To help discover what could be the SIB's cause, it is necessary to conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The *Functional Behavioral Assessment* (7-760-806) form is available on the MSSD intranet. Hopefully, the FBA results will provide insight into possible reasons for the student's SIB. Parents and staff can then decide on a possible cause and which interventions should be implemented. As part of the FBA, it is appropriate to fill out an ABC chart, which identifies the antecedent to the behavior, the behavior itself and the consequence that occurred

after the behavior. An ABC chart often gives a great deal of insight into the reasons why a behavior took place.

It is important to remember that one behavior could have multiple meanings, and multiple behaviors might have the same meaning. For example, a student might bite his hand at lunch because he cannot communicate that he is still hungry; he might also bite his hand during a sorting activity because it is too difficult and he is frustrated. An example of multiple behaviors with the same meaning is a frustrated student who bites her hand during sorting, bangs her head during P.E. and pokes her eye while riding the bus.

Data should be taken on the frequency, duration and severity of SIB episodes. The FBA's focus and the data collection should be on the specific behavior (biting the finger) and not on the behavior category (self-injurious behavior). The more specific in identifying the behavior, the better and more reliable the data will be.

Possible causes of SIB

1. Seeking attention

Reason for SIB: The student wants someone's attention.

What it looks like: Staff is not paying attention to the student. The student then exhibits SIB, and all staff rush to his desk or start talking to him. This behavior has worked in the past so the student continues to use it to get attention.

Intervention: Make sure the student receives attention from the staff even if it has to be scheduled. (Every five minutes, someone could speak to the student or

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Self-Injurious Behavior

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take a look at whatever the student is currently working on.)

2. Inability to communicate (frustration)

Reason for SIB: The student either does not understand what was said or does not have the ability to communicate with staff, a parent or a caregiver.

What it looks like: Someone speaks to the student, or the student tries to communicate. Then, SIB occurs.

Intervention: The student needs to be taught a functional vocabulary or some type of augmentative and alternative communication system.

3. Biochemical

Reason for SIB: The student might not feel the pain associated with SIB. Endorphins are released in the brain and produce a euphoric feeling.

What it looks like: Since this SIB is based on biochemical interaction, there is no specific relationship between SIB and the student's environment.

Intervention: Nutritional and medical interventions can be implemented in the hope of normalizing the student's biochemistry.

4. Pain

Reason for SIB: The student might be in pain. To relieve the pain, he either hits himself where the pain is or hits himself in another part of his body to reduce the original pain.

What it looks like: This SIB occurs sporadically. The student might appear to be ill or in pain on the days this SIB takes place.

Intervention: Discuss with the parents the possibility that the student is having headaches, migraines, stomachaches, etc. The student might need to visit a doctor.

5. Gaining access to a preferred item/event

Reason for SIB: The student exhibits SIB and is given a preferred or desirable item. Then, SIB ceases. This could be reinforcing inappropriate behavior.

What it looks like: The student exhibits SIB, and a staff member says, "Let's go for a walk," or "Let's get a drink."

Intervention: Provide a way for the student to communicate wants/needs. Implement a visual schedule. Do not give the student something special after an SIB episode.

6. Avoiding, escaping or delaying an undesirable item/event

Reason for SIB: When SIB is exhibited, the undesirable item/event is removed.

What it looks like: The student is told to sort silverware, which she does not like to do. The student exhibits SIB, and the silverware is removed so she does not throw it.

Intervention: Staff members need to follow through with their request. The student might not have to finish everything, but completing one or two items of the request is appropriate.

7. Seizures

Reason for SIB: This SIB is part of the seizure activity, which is located in the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.

What it looks like: Seizure-induced SIB is involuntary, and you might not be able to observe a relationship between this SIB and the student's environment. If SIB starts or gets worse with the onset of puberty, consider the possibility of seizure-induced SIB.

Intervention: The student should be under a doctor's care. Drugs are available to control seizures; however, these medications are often associated with adverse effects.

Hopefully, the information in this article will provide you with a plan on how to address SIB that a student might exhibit. By completing an FBA and an ABC chart, you are gathering the necessary information to decide on which interventions to implement.

For more information, contact Merv Blunt, director for program services, at 573-751-0407.

Sources

- "Understanding and Treating Self-Injurious Behavior" by Stephen Edelson (www.autism.com/ind_self-injurious_behavior_treat.asp)
- "Autism and Self Injury" (www.brighttots.com/Autism/Self_injury)
- "Self Injury" (www.child-behavior-guide.com/self-injury.html)
- "Behavioral Disorders/Self Injurious Behavior" (www.kennedykrieger.org)

Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) Chart

An ABC chart is a direct-observation tool that can be used to collect information about events occurring within a student's environment. "A" is the antecedent, event or activity that immediately precedes a problem behavior. "B" refers to the observed behavior, and "C" is the consequence or event that immediately follows a response. This chart is used in a Functional Behavioral Assessment.

Time/Date	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence

Dynamic Learning Maps

Missouri is a member of the Dynamic Learning Maps Consortium, which is led by the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation at the University of Kansas. Missouri is collaborating with other member states in reviewing the Dynamic Learning Maps being developed as part of a new alternate assessment system (a new MAP-A) for the 1 percent of students who cannot be tested on general assessments even with accommodations.

As our students fit into this category, MSSD is providing input by way of two teachers and one administrator who are working with the consortium.

- As a dynamic test, the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AAS) will select items and tasks for a student based on that student's previous responses. In this way, the test measures more than just the skill being tested. Instead, it also measures precursor skills.
- A learning map is a network of sequenced learning targets. Dynamic learning maps are designed to show not only the mastery of a single tested skill but also all the related skills that the student needs to master to get to that skill. When we typically think of learning, we think of one skill building on another single skill.
- A learning map, by comparison, shows a learning landscape in which multiple skills are related to many other skills. Because learning maps show multiple relationships among

skills, they illustrate more than one way to learn tested skills. Learning maps give teachers and parents a clearer view of a student's knowledge.

The DLM-AAS differs from current alternate assessments (MAP-A) in several ways:

1. The DLM-AAS will be based on learning maps. Learning maps allow students to demonstrate their knowledge even when they take alternate pathways to achieve that knowledge. These alternate pathways give students more opportunities to show that they can learn challenging content linked to the Common Core State Standards, which are a shared set of academic standards developed from evidence and input from teachers, parents, experts and administrators. The standards include English language arts and mathematics and have been adopted by Missouri and a majority of the other states.
2. The DLM-AAS provides an instructionally embedded version that is integrated into the teaching process. This allows teachers to know what students can do and make adjustments to instruction in real time. There will also be a stand-alone summative assessment available.
3. The DLM-AAS will incorporate instructionally relevant item types. These items will be similar to what students actually do during instruction. Item types will also utilize technology such as drag

and drop, hot spots, keyword lists, numerical responses, and other types to be determined. These new item types will allow the rigor and challenge of the assessment to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Two types of assessments are being developed for Dynamic Learning Maps. The first is a stand-alone summative assessment that is adaptive. This will be given in the spring to assess what knowledge and skills have been learned throughout the year. The second is an instructionally embedded assessment that will be given throughout the year. Regardless of which assessment is used, students, parents and teachers will be given detailed information to help guide learning.

While most students who participate in the alternate assessment can use the computer to answer questions, some students will need additional help. Students who are capable of using assistive technology to communicate will be allowed to use it on the assessment. For students unable to use computers independently, teachers can administer the test offline and enter the answers into the computer.

Field-testing of the DLM-AAS will take place during the 2014-15 school year, with the assessment ready for use in 2015-16.

(Information in this article was first published on the Dynamic Learning Maps website and is reprinted with permission. Visit dynamiclearningmaps.org.)

B.W. Sheperd Receives Bronze Award for Positive Behavior Support

B.W. Sheperd in Kansas City is currently in its third year of participating in a program that teaches all students appropriate social behaviors. Some of these behaviors are: keeping your hands and feet to yourself, respecting the space of others, being where you belong, and cleaning up after yourself. Staff members have developed lesson plans, and the social skills are taught through a variety of positive interactions, teaching strategies, visual materials, adaptations, methods and skill-specific key words. Although B.W. Sheperd is one of the first MSSD schools to participate in the Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) program, the school has been highly successful. Students are learning lifelong lessons and are using appropriate social skills in a variety of settings. Students, parents and staff all show a strong sense of pride in these accomplishments. In June, B.W. Sheperd received the Bronze Award for SW-PBS, which is given to schools that have demonstrated outstanding effort and success in implementing the program.

Congratulations to everyone at B.W. Sheperd on this accomplishment!

MSSD Intranet: A Helpful Resource Tool for Staff

By Debbie Stover, Supervisor for Business Services, Central Office

The MSSD intranet is a tool simplifying how information is distributed from Central Office to MSSD schools statewide. It also allows staff access to resources in a convenient and expedient manner.

The MSSD intranet can be accessed either through the *DESE Intranet* icon on the school computer's desktop or at deseintranet.dese.state.mo.us (once the main page loads, click on the *Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled* button). The MSSD and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education intranets can be viewed only on computers with access to the Department's network.

On the MSSD intranet, you will find relevant information and resources to use in your classrooms and buildings, along with forms and answers to commonly asked questions. Information is being added continuously; not all sections are populated with information but will be in the future. If you have suggestions for additions, submit them through the email address on the MSSD intranet's front page.

In an effort to expand use of the intranet by staff in schools throughout the state, this article includes an overview of what is available and where it can be found. The middle of the MSSD intranet home page contains current news and information. To access information on a specific topic, click on

the buttons on the left-hand side of the home page. These topics are:

- **BUSINESS:** includes information on travel guidelines, telephone systems, procurement, state vehicles, etc.
- **CALENDAR/CONTACTS:** includes professional development opportunities, meetings, the school calendar and an administrative service area map. It also includes directories for MSSD schools, area offices and Central Office, and supervisors for instruction.
- **COMPLIANCE:** includes the Department's procedural safeguards, the Parent's Bill of Rights, information on the IEP process, notice of action and related services.
- **FORMS:** includes all current MSSD forms (with instructions). These forms can be accessed by an alphabetical index or by category. Most forms can be completed on the computer. Please print forms from the MSSD intranet to ensure the most current versions are being used.
- **HEALTH:** includes manuals, forms, articles and resources on health-related issues for MSSD students. This information is provided by the supervisor of school health services.
- **HUMAN RESOURCES:** includes information related to MSSD employment, including benefits, conditions of employment, job descriptions, personnel policies and

vacancies. Tuition reimbursement and bulletin postings are also included here.

- **MANUALS:** includes the Administration and Instruction Guidebook, the school handbook, nurses manuals, instructional manuals, and manuals for ATIS and the school lunch program.
- **RELATED SERVICES:** includes wording for therapy contracts and multiple resource documents.
- **STAFF RESOURCES:** includes resources for curriculum, instruction and MAP-A, along with procedural safeguards and tuition reimbursement. Staff Highlights and Parent Focus newsletters are found in this section, as are the Staff Resources and Parent Resources resource papers. All resource papers are topic-specific and are designed to relate to a target audience rather than all MSSD staff or parents. If you have ideas for a resource paper, email Debbie Stover at debbie.stover@dese.mo.gov.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** includes the current transportation contract, forms and other transportation-related resources.

As the MSSD intranet grows and develops, your feedback will be taken into consideration for continued improvement. Please be sure to take advantage of this valuable tool that is available at your fingertips.



MISSOURI SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED

dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools

NOTE: If you have items of interest for Staff Highlights, please call 573-751-0706, 800-735-2966 (Missouri Relay) or forward them to Debbie Stover, Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; or send an e-mail to debbie.stover@dese.mo.gov.