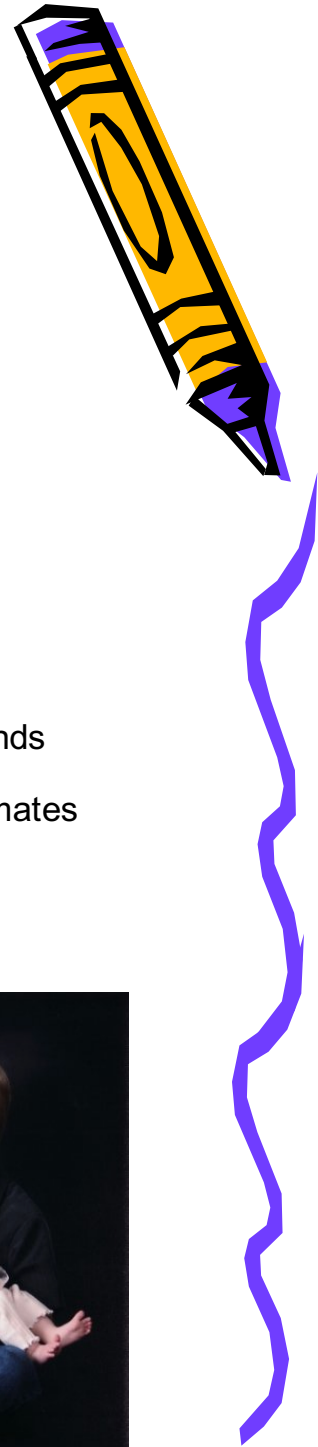


Changing My Amazing Son ~ Without Changing My Amazing Son



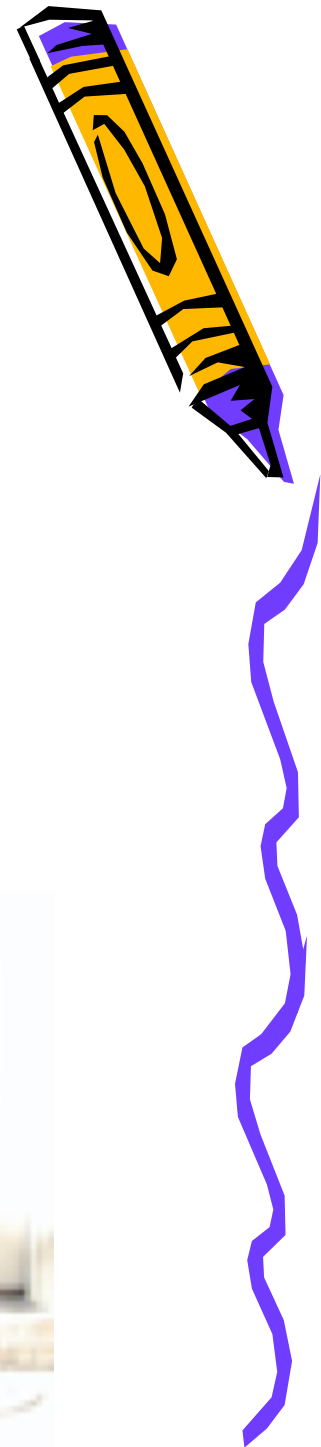
Description of Brandon...

- Seven years old, 2nd grade
- Three siblings ~ Two brothers (11 & 9), One sister (3)
- Fun loving with a great sense of comedy & humor
- Capable of succeeding academically, but behavioral issues get in the way
- His teacher suggested he be tested for ADD
- Historically, excellent grades; however, with consistent conduct referrals
- Grades have slipped the last couple marking periods
- Often acts as the class clown ~ constantly silly & disruptive
- As the youngest of three brothers, he often acts out to get the attention of his older siblings & their friends
- He will do inappropriate, and sometimes destructive things in an attempt to get a laugh from his classmates
- These actions result in discipline at school, more often than his classmates

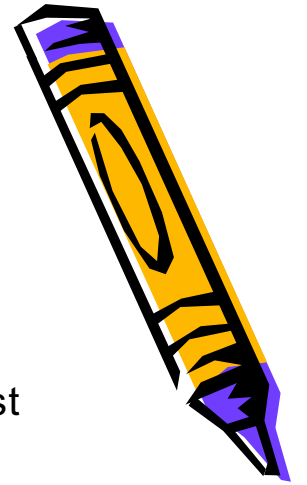


Brandon's School Environment...

- Attends a K-8 Catholic School
- Current teacher is excellent, but extremely rigid and strict
- Teased often because of his size
- Discipline methods at school:
 - Check marks next to their name on board
 - Losing recess for too many behavior marks
 - Green, yellow, red daily behavior chart
 - Sending students to the principal's office
 - Detention



Problem Behavior...



- ***Impulsivity***

- Blurts out answers without being called upon in class
- Says and does inappropriate things in class without thinking first
- Does not filter his thoughts before blurting them out
- Does not consider the consequences of his actions prior to doing them
- Demonstrates remorse after an incident, but actions continue
- Does not thoroughly read schoolwork before proceeding, causing mistakes
- Silly, “class clown” behavior



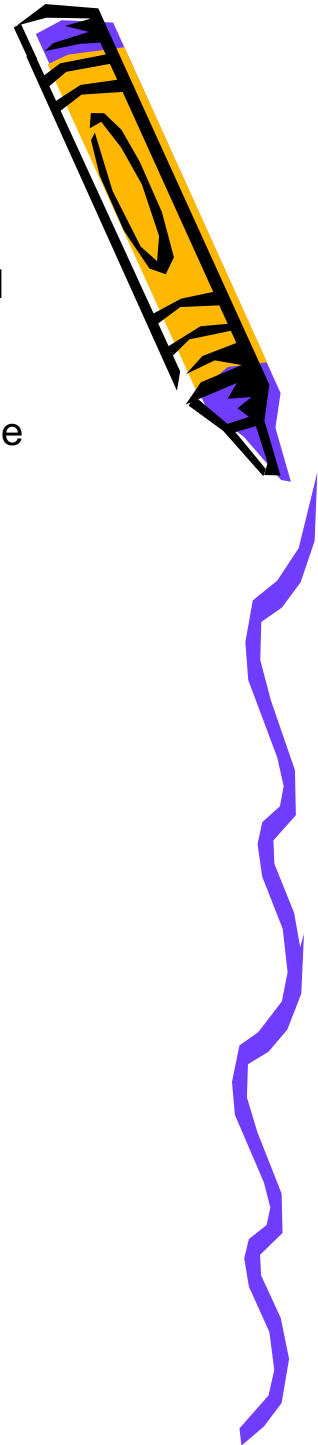
- ***Inattention***

- Difficulty staying on task in the classroom
- Particularly slow start in the morning
- Doesn't follow instructions
- Fails to finish tasks he has started
- Sloppy work in the classroom, but capable of beautiful work at home
- Easily distracted by other students or stimuli

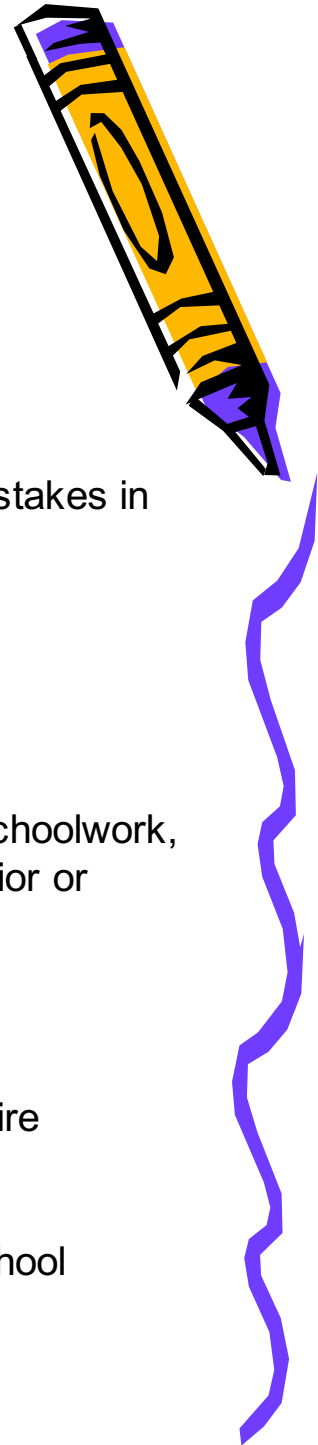


Data Collection...

- Data was collected at home and at school, for a period of one week, by his teacher and myself
- Data was collected, via observation form, that included: when he stays on task, when he has impulsive/disruptive behaviors, and when the behaviors occurred less frequently
- Form sections included:
 - **Behavior** (Inattention or Impulsivity)
 - **Antecedents** (What happened right before the behavior?)
 - **Setting** (School, Home, Recess, Lunch)
 - **People** (Were their other children around? Did the behavior occur before, during or after the children were around?)
 - **Activity** (What was he involved in when the behavior occurred?); Comments (General comments/observations that we felt pertained to the data collection).



Data Analysis ~ Inattention...



Based on the criteria for symptoms of *Inattention* (DSM-IV), Brandon displays the following:

- a) Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or other activities
- b) Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- c) Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- d) Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)
- e) Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- f) Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or homework)
- g) Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)
- h) Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli



Data Analysis ~ Impulsivity...

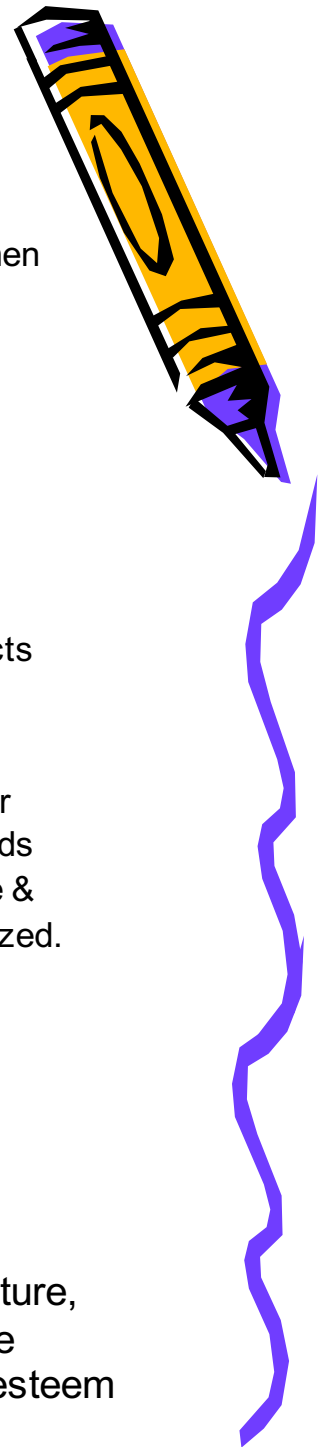
- More impulsive when other children are present
- Impulsivity related to trying to invoke laughs and gain peer acceptance
- More impulsive when tired
- Less impulsive when his teacher is present



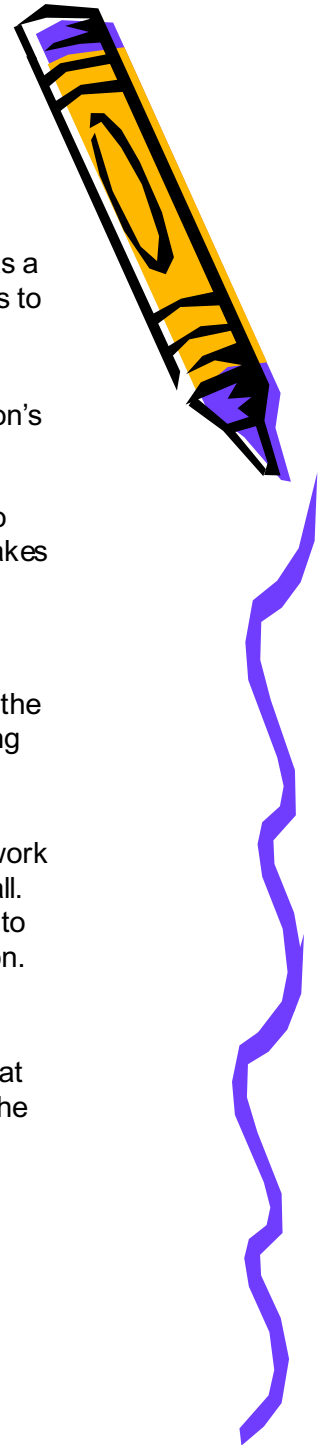
The Plan...

- **Reinforcement and Vicarious Reinforcement** ~ Brandon responds very well to praise, especially when his brothers are praised (he tries to behave like them). Ultimately, Brandon's desirable behavior will increase.
- **Contingency Contract** ~ Brandon is motivated by rewards, and is being rewarded based on school behavior. The goal is to increase the number of days Brandon turns in neat/complete/quietly done assignments, with as few disruptions as possible.
- **Behavior Awareness** ~ The goal of this strategy is to increase his awareness of his behavior, its effects on his teacher and his classmates; ultimately, helping him develop better self-control.
- **Tutoring** ~ I set Brandon up with a teacher to tutor him that has all the attributes that contribute to their success in socializing. His current teacher is great, but she is the exact opposite of what Brandon needs in a teacher. His tutor has patience, determination, flexibility, acceptance, enjoyment of students, care & concern, sense of humor. The goal here is to see if Brandon learns better, and becomes better socialized.
- **Fine Tuning the Learning Environment to Better Suit Brandon's Needs** ~ Brandon's teacher has placed his desk at the front of the classroom, in close proximity to her, so the other children are at his back. We have also placed a positive role model on the side of him.

It is my hope, that with the strategies I have chosen, Brandon will mature, learn to stay more focused, and learn to manage his impulses. As we strive to reach those milestones, I'm hoping his confidence and self-esteem will begin to grow.



Strategy Effectiveness...



- **Reinforcement and Vicarious Reinforcement** ~ Highly effective strategy. This worked well because the reinforcement was a constant, immediate thing, given from Brandon's teacher and myself. Every day that we use it, Brandon's behavior continues to improve.
- **Contingency Contract** ~ Worked well after tweaking. The tracking form that supported the contract was filled out by Brandon's teacher and sent home every Friday. If Brandon didn't like what it said, he threw it in the garbage. It is now scanned and emailed. Brandon being able to choose his own rewards allowed him to get excited & motivated to achieve the goals set for him. Also, allowing him to accumulate days of good behavior, in lieu of consecutive days of good behavior, gave him room to make mistakes without having to start over. After all, one can't be expected to climb a huge mountain the first time out... it takes several attempts!
- **Behavior Awareness** ~ This strategy yielded amazing results. After our initial conversation, Brandon put together that he wasn't invited to birthday parties or sleepovers the way his brothers are. He immediately saw the connection between being the disruptive child and fewer friends. This strategy also worked on his older brothers. Once I explained to them that their teasing of Brandon could be contributing to his feelings of inadequacy, the teasing subsided.
- **Tutoring** ~ We have made wonderful progress here. She zeroed in on the fact that Brandon was doing sloppy, incomplete work just so he could get to the free time after each assignment. Additionally, his writing has improved, and his school work overall. She does have the benefit of working alone with him, with no distractions, so only time will tell. We have asked the Principal to place Brandon in her class next year. Personally, I believe it is her attributes that contribute to her effectiveness with Brandon.
- **Fine Tuning the Learning Environment to Better Suit Brandon's Needs** ~ This strategy required some tweaking. The changes made to his environment at school produced terrific results; however, it was the changing of the bedtime at home that sealed the deal. Putting him to bed at 7:30, instead of 8:30, on school nights made a huge difference in how he engaged in the morning at school.



Professional Stance...

In terms of effectiveness, I think all the strategies together are what prompted results. My greatest shift from pre-strategy to post-strategy stance is within my *Teacher-Student/Parent-Student* relationship. I enjoy interacting with my children; however, our relationship can definitely be too friendly which causes me to lose my identity as an authority figure. As important as it is to help Brandon make changes, I've had to take a long, hard look at necessary changes I need to make in my stance. More than a friend, I am his parent... his teacher... and it is my responsibility to help him, not have fun with him.

In my opinion, it is far more difficult for teachers to implement multiple strategies as they have other children to teach. That is not to say that they shouldn't do what they can to help every child; however, by the time one figures out what makes the child tick (and there may be a handful of challenging children in the class), decide the best intervention (which may include multiple strategies), implement the intervention, the school year is over and the child has moved on. As much as we would like to see first hand the changes that our strategies have brought about, it may simply be that we have only improved the foundation for others to build on... and that is GREAT! In the end, I see it as my responsibility as a parent to modify my child's challenging behavior, with input from his teacher, and send him to school prepared to learn.

Would I recommend these strategies to a teacher? Absolutely! BUT... I would be more likely to recommend them to parents that have a challenging, amazing child like mine!

