**Intervention Case Study 17**

The goal of this intervention was to decrease problem behaviors during recess at an elementary school.

**Introduction**

Guy Lee Elementary School has approximately 600 students in kindergarten through 5th grade. Children often display problem behaviors during recess. Recess presents issues that a classroom setting does not including more children and fewer trained adults. The playground includes typical equipment such as swings, basketball courts, climbing structures, and an open field.

**Measurement**

In this particular school, minor problems were handled by the teacher. More serious or frequent problem behaviors resulted in the child being sent to the office. The information included in the office discipline referral form (ODR) included the student’s name, the problem behavior, location, time, date, and the adult the referral came from. Researchers and school officials summarized the office discipline referral forms to look at where the most ODRs were taking place, what students were receiving the most ODRs, and what types of behaviors produced the most ODRs. Many of the problem behaviors occurred at the playground during recess. The most frequent problem behavior on the playground was fighting or aggression. Observers saw students display problem behaviors such as fighting, chasing, and teasing.

**Functional Behavior Assessment**

Observers found that the rules regarding recess were not clear. There was not a typical routine followed at recess, the allowed play area was not well-defined, and there was a lack of communication between the educational aids who watched the children at recess and teachers. Researchers proposed that the high amount of problem behavior during recess was because of the unclear rules and the unpredictability.

**Intervention**

Researchers worked with teachers, educational aids, and administrators to come up with a plan for recess rules and routines. It was also important to come up with a plan to train staff the guidelines for recess. Staff and students attended three 45 minute trainings on outside recess and three 30 minute trainings on inside recess in groups. Trainers led teachers and their class around the playground to show them the boundaries of play and spent time at each piece of equipment explaining the rules. They also saw demonstrations of the rules. Students were told safety guidelines for each play area and what the expectations were for how they should behave at each play area. Teachers reviewed the guidelines for recess with their students once a month.

**Results**

Office discipline referrals during recess decreased 80% after the plan and training occurred. Staff also indicated that they were satisfied with the training and thought it should be continued each year. ODRs remained at the same low level during a second year of training.