

Discussion on the Development of Family-School Partnership in Positive Behaviour Support System Based on Educator Perspectives

Yuting Jin

School of Education, Western Sydney University, Sydney, 2200, AU

Abstract: Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) emphasizes understanding the underlying needs of students' behaviours through functional behaviour assessment, and providing effective support to students by adjusting the environment and cultivating skills. For this work to achieve practical results, cooperation between home and school is indispensable. Based on the policy background provided by the "Opinions on Improving the Mechanism for School-Family-Society Collaborative Education" in 2023 and the "Work Plan for the School-Family-Society Collaborative Education 'Education Alliance'" in 2024, this paper studies the specific requirements for teachers in implementing family-school collaboration stipulated in these two documents. This paper examines the implementation of PBS family-school cooperation from the perspective of teachers' daily work. The challenges include: a single mode of communication; low parental involvement; and a lack of systematic school support. Teachers, who are in the middle of families and schools, transform the old concept of controlling behaviour into a new one that focuses on understanding needs and providing support. At the same time, establish a hierarchical collaborative framework centered on prevention in practice. Based on the above, a regular communication path will be created, parent skills training will be organised, and an evaluation-and-feedback mechanism will be optimised. These measures are in support of each other to form a set of actions that front-line teachers can apply flexibly in their classes.

Keywords: Positive Behaviour Support; Family-School Collaboration; Teacher Perspective; Behavioural Support; Collaborative Education.

1. Introduction

Collaborative education involving schools, families and the community has been added to the whole plan for national education development. In 2023, the Ministry of Education and 13 other departments issued the "Opinions on Improving the Mechanism for School-Family-Society Collaborative Education" [1], and schools were required to promptly inform parents of changes in students' behaviour. In 2024, the Ministry of Education and 17 other departments issued the "Work Plan for the School-Family-Society Collaborative Education 'Education Alliance'", and designated the "Education Alliance" as a cooperative model to promote good cooperation among schools, families and society, with the school at the center and the region as the main body, and resources as the links. The above policies show that the nurturing of students' good habits and mental health support are no longer solely the responsibility of schools, but require the joint effort of families and schools.

Although PBS originated in the field of special education, its concepts and methods have gradually been extended to the context of regular schools. In the late 1980s, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) first emerged in the field of applied behaviour analysis. In short, PBS seeks to understand the individual and the function of their behaviour, and to provide support by modifying environments, teaching functional skills, and enhancing participation, wellbeing, autonomy, and quality of life. PBS is a broad framework that extends to all settings, while PBIS is its school-wide application. PBS is a positive-guidance and preventative model of management, not punishment. The occurrence of behaviours that require support usually stems from the mismatch between the environment and individual needs, and should not be simply

attributed to the students' subjective attitudes. Effective behavioural support should focus on understanding the function of the behaviour, adjusting the environmental conditions, and teaching alternative adaptive behaviours [2].

The actualisation effect of PBS depends on how well families and schools work together. Students' behaviour at school and their performance at home are not always the same. If there is no shared understanding of the function of the behaviour and the goals of support, the effectiveness of the support will be limited. This does not mean that home and school must use identical strategies, but rather that they should agree on the underlying purpose and adjust approaches to fit each context. Some scholars, based on questionnaires distributed to teachers and parents, have identified some practical problems in the implementation of family-school cooperation, such as a lack of field connections, large cultural resource gaps, and conflicting educational habits. Teachers are the first to communicate with parents and need to manage both the daily running of the class and communication and cooperation with parents. According to the above research, problems in family-school cooperation are often due to a lack of communication and collaboration skills among teachers. Research on the family-school link of positive behaviour support from teachers' perspectives has both theoretical exploration value and practical guidance.

2. The Intrinsic Demand for Family-School Collaboration in the Positive Behaviour Support System

Positive behaviour support is not an independent management plan in the school; rather, it is an all-encompassing system that needs to work together in all areas

where students are present. There are structural reasons at the theoretical level for the system's need for family-school cooperation.

Students' behavioural characteristics often span different settings. Inattention in class or conflicts with peers may be better understood by examining the environmental and contextual factors across both school and home settings, rather than attributing them to a single source. Children who adapt easily to the home environment at home may still have difficulty adjusting to school life because of the unfamiliarity with group rules or a lack of social skills. Positive behaviour support requires organised intervention in natural settings, and all links in the chain of functional assessment, plan development and implementation need to consider both school and home environments [3]. If teachers only make plans from the school's side, parents may not be aware of them or unable to cooperate at home; thus, the effectiveness of the intervention will be significantly reduced.

At the base of positive behaviour support is the idea that, instead of punishment, we will provide positive guidance and teach skills by preventing behaviours that need guidance. Traditional practice is to "deal with the problem after it occurs"; parents often think that their children's behaviour is because they "did not listen" or "deliberately acted out", and thus prefer criticism or punishment. To provide positive behaviour support, change the environment and teach the child a new way of behaving. If the support strategies used at school are not aligned with the approaches used at home, the child may receive mixed messages about behavioural expectations, which can reduce the effectiveness of support.

Within the PBIS framework, the three-level prevention system also includes family-school cooperation. Primary prevention aims to create a good atmosphere for all students; secondary prevention offers early intervention for students who may benefit from additional support; and tertiary prevention provides personalised support plans for students who may benefit from more intensive support. The responsibilities of parents change gradually at the three levels: in the primary prevention stage, they cooperate with the school to transmit consistent behaviour expectations; in the secondary prevention stage, they share behavioural information with teachers and analyze functions; in the tertiary prevention stage, they participate in the planning and implementation of the plan together with [4]. Without cooperation between family and school, the positive behaviour support will not be effective.

3. The Policy Basis and Practical Foundation for Promoting Family-School Collaboration through Positive Behaviour Support

Without the participation of families and schools, positive behaviour support will not be effective. Thus, have the existing policies addressed this issue? Recently, the institutions have also introduced such arrangements. The demand for and feasibility of applying positive behaviour support through family-school cooperation are not merely based on theoretical reasons; rather, they are supported by the fact that in recent years, policy systems and grassroots explorations have provided practical support for it [5].

At the level of policy, collaborative education among families, schools and society has been added to the national education strategic planning. In early 2023, the Ministry of

Education and thirteen other departments issued the "Opinions on Improving the Mechanism for School-Family-Society Collaborative Education", established a basic framework of "school as the main initiator, family as the primary responsible party, and society as the effective supporter", and required schools to promptly communicate with parents about students' thoughts and emotions, academic performance, behaviour, as well as their physical and mental health during their time at school. In November 2024, the Ministry of Education and 17 other departments issued the "Work Plan for the School-Family-Society Collaborative Education 'Education Alliance'", which set a clear schedule: by 2025, half of the counties and districts would establish "Education Alliances", and nationwide coverage was to be achieved by 2027. The plan will link responsibilities, resources and space to help parents and all other parties in society address the actual problems in students' growth together. The extended scope of the policy chain provides a specific operating plan for schools to introduce positive behaviour support in their family-school cooperation system.

Many good experiments have also been conducted in practice. Some schools have already introduced practices in the framework of positive behaviour intervention and support (PBIS). A lecture report from the Department of Psychology at Zhejiang University indicates that applying PBIS can help improve the positive behaviour of primary school students, reduce the occurrence of behaviours that require additional support, enhance the campus atmosphere, and also have a positive effect on family-school cooperation and parental support for education. In the United States, schools implementing school-wide PBIS have demonstrated positive outcomes in both behavioural support and family engagement. For example, Sugai & Horner (2006) describe how schools implementing SWPBIS establish predictable, positive, and consistent expectations across all school settings, and engage families through regular communication about behavioural expectations and student progress, and encouraged parents to create an environment that provides positive behaviour reinforcement at home; thus, a joint effort between the school and family gradually formed at both ends. Parent education programmes, such as those implemented within the SWPBIS framework in the United States, provide systematic instruction and case studies to help parents learn the basic ideas and application methods of positive behaviour support, thus offering strong support for family-school cooperation.

Based on the above exploration, family-school cooperation in positive behaviour support has begun to be implemented [6]. Both the policy basis and the practical experience are accumulating, but more progress is needed from individual attempts at widespread institutional construction.

4. The Current Practical Difficulties in Promoting Family-School Collaboration through Positive Behaviour Support

Many problems still exist in the actual implementation at the front line of teachers. Although there is policy support and the idea is cooperation, in practice, there are still problems; the concepts are different, and a specific way of working has not been determined. Both parents and teachers have their own problems.

There is frequently a discrepancy in the perception of behaviour between the school and the family. Teachers

generally assess behaviour by frequency, duration and scope of impact according to their own professional norms. Parents, on the other hand, mainly see their children in the context of the family, and their interpretations of behaviour are often shaped by their daily experiences and limited access to professional support. The broader social and systemic environment has not always provided sufficient resources or guidance to help parents understand and respond to their children's needs. A specific manifestation of this cognitive gap is the conflict between "whether to manage" and "how to manage".

The other is a problem of communication. Many family-school communications still take the form of parent-teacher conferences, phone calls and WeChat notifications, and their content is mainly about grades and discipline records. When the parents receive a call from the teacher, their first thought is often that their child has behaved in ways that require guidance, and thus, the family-school relationship is likely to be in opposition. What positive behaviour support requires is another kind of communication: deep and able to follow up continuously, and focused on analysing the function of the behaviour and coordinating the strategies of both sides [7]. In fact, frontline teachers have a large number of students and many other tasks; thus, it is difficult for them to give individual attention to all the students.

Parents' Degrees of involvement vary from one another. Parents need to be actively involved in positive behaviour support and cannot simply sign a paper or hear an announcement. Many parents are unfamiliar with the basic methods of observation or positive reinforcement, and even if they want to participate in the cooperation, they do not know how to do so. How to extend the school's strategy at home? How to Record a Child's Performance? How to Teach a Child to Use positive behaviours to Replace behaviours that require support. Parents do not know how to handle this problem independently without training.

The school system also has defects; the need for family-school cooperation cannot be met by individual teachers alone. At present, most schools have not integrated this into the general plan, and there is no clear division of responsibilities, standardised procedures, nor any tracking and evaluation of effectiveness. Teachers need to handle professional support, communication coordination and parent education, take on multiple roles at the same time, and are thus likely to lose focus [8].

5. The Role Positioning and Capacity Building of Teachers in Family-School Collaboration

Teachers hold a crucial position in the family-school cooperation for positive behaviour support.

The first is a behaviour observation and assessment. The ultimate goal of the teacher's role is not to eliminate behaviours that require support themselves, but to help students develop more effective ways of adapting by understanding the needs underlying their behaviours. Positive Behaviour Support starts with Functional Behaviour Assessment. First, one should learn about the triggers, particular forms and results of a behaviour, and then understand the message the behaviour is communicating—for example, what the student might be trying to achieve or express through this behaviour in a given context. Teachers should observe the behaviour patterns of students in daily life,

record how often and when they occur, and thus form an initial hypothesis about the function of that behaviour. This judgment will directly change the direction of family-school communication and the reasons for intervention. Some scholars believe that schools should establish an in-house professional team to enhance the teachers' skills in behaviour analysis and assessment, and consider the functional origins of students' behaviours that require support.

The second is building a family-school communication bridge. A good working relationship among teachers does not happen automatically and needs to be built consciously. Some head teachers promote a change in communication mode from "complaint" to "alliance"; rather than waiting for problems to occur before contacting parents, they actively provide positive information regularly and build trust through good news and care. Family-school communication under the framework of positive behaviour support should focus on three specific issues: What behaviours do students exhibit at school and at home? What is the cause of this? What the school and family can do separately. Communication is not a one-way announcement but a joint analysis and problem-solving by both parties [9].

The third is teaching parents how to support behaviourally. Most parents are willing to cooperate; they just do not have particular ways to do so. Teachers should convert the idea of positive behaviour support into ways that parents can implement at home; for example, instead of merely saying "You are very good", they can say, "I noticed that you organised your schoolbag today". They should teach parents to adjust environmental factors that may contribute to behaviours that require support, and to provide proactive support before such behaviours occur. The above specific ways can help parents better understand [10].

In response to the above, one should continuously strengthen one's own strength. First, professional knowledge such as functional assessment methods, design and implementation of support plans, and data collection and analysis; Second, communication skills, the ability to translate professional terms into language that parents can understand; Third, finding feasible solutions between school systems and family conditions to avoid the failure of ideal plans during implementation.

6. Establishing a Practical Path for Promoting Positive Behaviour Support through Family-School Collaboration

First, specify what the teachers need to achieve, and then determine how to achieve it. Four particular ways have been proposed by the front-line teachers in their daily work.

First, strengthen communication channels at home and in school. Communication with parents is only initiated in response to problems now. This speed may not be typical behaviour for either of them. Positive behaviour support advocates for contacting parents at the beginning of the school year to explain the class's behaviour rules and positive reward strategies clearly [11]. Regularly provide updates on the children's learning and development to inform parents of any issues early. Include parents in the formation of class rules. The rules agreed upon by all parties are more likely to be accepted by the parents, and trust between teachers and parents will gradually be formed. Teachers can draw a rough plan and set the time, content and ways for teaching.

Second, offer parents some special courses. Many parents are not opposed to cooperation, but they do not know how to do so. Schools can use channels such as parent education programs and parent meetings to inform parents about the basic ideas and general ways of positive behaviour support. Teach some easy tips that can be used at home, such as how to observe and record children's behaviour, how to praise effectively, how to set rules that children are willing to follow, and how to respond when children are in a bad mood. The Form is not rigid. In addition to lectures, Scenarios can be set up, roles can be switched, and case discussions can be held to let parents practice in a real-life environment. Some places have already done the same thing.

Third, the three kinds of cooperation. The first level is for all students; schools and parents share information and align their views here. The second level is for students who need additional support, and teachers and parents will work together to understand why the behaviour occurs and what measures to take. The third level is for students who may benefit from more intensive support, and a team of teachers, parents and professionals needs to be formed to develop individualised support plans and conduct regular evaluations and dynamic adjustments. In this way, the teachers have a plan in advance and will not use the same method for all the students.

Fourth, use data for assessment and optimisation. Positive behaviour support requires data-based observation as the basis. Teachers collect daily behaviour data on the frequency, duration, and intensity of behaviours that require support. Based on the above objective data, evaluate the effect of the support measures. Periodically offer the parents with data and let them know how their child is doing. At the same time, learn about any changes in the child's behaviour at home and add this family feedback to the general assessment to create a closed-loop system of information between home and school [12].

7. Conclusion

The four above paths address the operational difficulties faced by frontline teachers in their actual work from the perspectives of communication, training, stratification and data, respectively. The reason why cooperation between schools and families is necessary is that the differences in students' behaviours in different situations often reflect the degree of compatibility between the environment and individual needs, rather than the students' subjective likes or dislikes. Not concentrating in class and having conflicts with classmates often reflect mismatches between the student's needs and the environmental demands of the setting, which may include factors across both school and home contexts. The three-level prevention system for positive behaviour support, from the primary prevention for all students, to the secondary prevention for students with varying levels of support needs, and to the tertiary prevention focusing on individual cases, each level requires the participation of parents. A unilateral support plan from the school, if not continued in the family environment, will have a significant reduction in effectiveness.

There are already institutional arrangements at the policy level. The "Opinions on Improving the Mechanism for School-Family-Society Collaborative Education" and the "Education Alliance" plan provide a foundation for schools to conduct family education guidance. Some local attempts at PBIS in schools have also gathered some reference practices.

The policy text does not align with the actual implementation at present.

From the perspective of frontline teachers, there are still issues in the actual operation. The judgments of both parties on the behavioural problems are often inconsistent, communication is one-way notification, parents lack specific ways, and schools lack systematic support. Teachers must switch among professional guidance, communication coordination and parent training, and the division of labour is unclear.

The four paths mentioned in the previous text are specific responses to the above problems, are interdependent with each other, and constitute a relatively complete action system.

The contents of this paper are based on research by others and my own teaching experience, and there has been no formal data collection. The general applicability of the above conclusions has not been fully verified. With the continuous deepening of the construction of the "Education Alliance", family-school cooperation is expected to move towards institutionalisation gradually, and teachers will remain at the centre of this process.

References

- [1] Ministry of Education. (2023). *Opinions on Improving the Mechanism for School-Family-Society Collaborative Education*. Beijing: Ministry of Education.
- [2] Minke, K. M., & Anderson, K. J. (2005). Family—School collaboration and positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 7(3), 181–185.
- [3] Sugai, G., & Horner, R. R. (2006). A promising approach for expanding and sustaining school-wide positive behavior support. *School Psychology Review*, 35(2), 245–259.
- [4] Garbacz, S. A., McIntosh, K., Vatland, C. H., Minch, D. R., & Eagle, J. W. (2018). Identifying and examining school approaches to family engagement within schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 20(3), 127–137.
- [5] Albright, M. I., & Weissberg, R. P. (2010). School-family partnerships to promote social and emotional learning. In *Handbook of school-family partnerships* (pp. 246–265).
- [6] Smith, T. E., Sheridan, S. M., Kim, E. M., Park, S., & Beretvas, S. N. (2020). The effects of family-school partnership interventions on academic and social-emotional functioning: A meta-analysis exploring what works for whom. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 511–544.
- [7] Muscott, H. S., Szczesiul, S., Berk, B., Staub, K., Hoover, J., & Perry-Chisholm, P. (2008). Creating home—school partnerships by engaging families in schoolwide positive behavior supports. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(6), 6–14.
- [8] Bambara, L. M., Nonnemacher, S., & Kern, L. (2009). Sustaining school-based individualized positive behavior support: Perceived barriers and enablers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 11(3), 161–176.
- [9] Sheridan, S. M., & Kratochwill, T. R. (2007). *Conjoint behavioral consultation: Promoting family—school connections and interventions*. Boston, MA: Springer US.
- [10] Hieneman, M., & Fefer, S. A. (2017). Employing the principles of positive behavior support to enhance family education and intervention. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 26(10), 2655–2668.
- [11] Moore, K. J., Garbacz, S. A., Gau, J. M., Dishion, T. J., Brown, K. L., Stormshak, E. A., & Seeley, J. R. (2016). Proactive parent engagement in public schools: Using a brief strengths and needs assessment in a multiple-gating risk management

strategy. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 18(4), 230–240.

[12] Dunlap, G., Strain, P. S., Lee, J. K., Joseph, J., Vatland, C., & Fox, L. K. (2017). *Prevent-teach-reinforce for families*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.