

Implementation Report of Spain

We implemented the TaSDi-PBS project in an urban school called “Escola Arrels”. This school is located in Solsona, a city in the north of Catalonia. This school is defined as an inclusive school. It aims to provide a high quality of education to all students by not only promoting their presence in school setting but also to promote their engagement and access to the curriculum. There are two lines per course and about 400 students attend to this school in Primary Education (which involves children from 6 to 12 years old). About 13% of the students engaged in this school have significant needs. These can be related to social or educational needs as some of the students have been diagnosed as having some disabilities. In Arrels school there is a “Special Unit for Special Education” which aims to provide a better and more specialized support to those students that may need it. In Primary Education there is a total of 25 professionals.

The participation to the TaSDi-PBS project was welcomed for leadership team as well as for all staff members. For more than 80% of the staff of this school, problem behavior was identified as an issue that should be address. They were willing to implement a systemic and organized framework that let them to address problem behavior from a preventive and educative perspective. School discipline was an issue that worried professionals and the most important and prevalent behaviors in the school were tantrums (specially in the playground area), verbal and physical aggressions and disruptive behaviors (i.e., not respect other children when doing activities in class; or not respecting teachers or staff). In this sence, the participation, the participation to the project and implementation of

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), was a good opportunity for them to think about those practices that were using, analyse them and think until what extend they were educative practices and let them to accomplish their objective.

Therefore, the participation to the TaSDi-PBS project was offered to the leadership team and all teachers and they positively reacted to this opportunity. The SWPBS leadership team consisted on the principal and the psychologist of the school and several teachers of different levels of the school. Moreover, as leadership team and all staff were willing to participate, the project was implemented not only to Primary education but also to childhood education (3 to 6 years old). Therefore, some staff representation in childhood and primary education were involved in the project.

In order to implement SWPBS in the school, some meetings were conducted with the leadership team as well as with all staff members. All personnel actively participate from the beginning of the project by providing interesting reflections about the issue addressed as well as by letting the project go further. The leadership team identified core values of Escola Arrels. The three behavioral expectations identified by staff and leadership team were as follow: be respectful, be collaborative and be responsible.

Due to work on the identification and final consensus of these values, two main actions were conducted. On one hand, leadership team had to identify most important values of the school. Those values that are included in the School Educational Project. On the other hand, they had to identify behavioral problems

that students engaged in educational setting. If some behaviors were identified in non-classroom settings (such as school trips), these behaviors were also identified. Based on both, ideology of the school and also behavioral problems, the three behavioral expectations were identified. Once professionals identified the three behavioral expectations, these were defined. Moreover, a matrix explaining that each behavioral expectation means on each school area (i.e., playground, corridor, class, etc.) was developed and behavioral sub-expectations were identified. Based on these behavioral subexpectations teachers had to develop specific modules to teach appropriate behaviors and a system to reinforce these behaviors.

Results from a Focus group and interviews with teaching staff about the design and implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports as well as its impact

Once the first year of School wide Positive Behavior Support implementation was done in Escola Arrels, discussion with professionals about this process was conducted. Although some meetings and were conducted during the process, it was required to conduct a final meeting to assess strengths and weaknesses of the process followed. During the meeting and also during all the process, some interesting points were identified and discussed. This topics are described as follow:

The first idea teachers mention was that one year implementation was not enough in order to clearly assess if school discipline had improved or not. That is, as a teacher mentioned *“School Wide Positive Behavior Support has an impact to the school culture and, in order to implement it we need time... ..*

because we do not only need to change our practices but also our way of thinking". Indeed, the literature affirms this idea, SWPBS does need time to be implemented, and the length of time will depend somehow on the school knowledge about problem behavior. The need for a shared and common language is needed between all professionals in order to change our practices. However, behavioral improvements were seen in the school class not only on the students but also on the way teachers were implementing their practices.

Discussion between professionals came up with the practices that sometimes were used in the school. For example, time out and some other reactive strategies were used to address problem behavior engaged by students. However, as they mention, the participation on this project as well as the implementation of Tier 1 of Supports of Positive Behavior Support let them think about more preventive strategies to be implemented in order to work on the behavioral expectations. Within this perspective, teachers recognized that sometimes not social skills are not addressed as they should be. That is, as a teachers we should not understand that some social skills are already learned by students, but some work should be done in class to clearly teach these abilities. Moreover, what is expected in that particular setting should be also taught to all students.

Teachers also recognized how important is to understand behavioral needs as an important element of we want them learn *"Although each child may have different needs, we need to explore behavioral needs these children have. We usually focus on the academic part"*. An interesting discussion then emerged about the idea that sometimes as a teachers we spend more time trying to deal with a specific behavior instead of teaching what it should be expected. Therefore, as a result of this

discussion they confirmed the need to implement preventive strategies to deal with school discipline. From their perspective, it is imperative to make use of preventive strategies in educational practices. Accordingly, this is one of the core features that literature uses when defining Positive Behavior Support.

The development of behavioral specific praise was important for teachers. This task had an impact for all teachers because it let them specifically think about the way they were teaching students. Within this perspective, they look for some materials, activities and adapt those that consider important to be implemented (according to the behavioral expectations). The development of specific activities and praises was important for all teachers but took time to work on it. At the end though, they had a bank of activities they could use to teach specific behavioral sub-expectations to all children.

In this sense, a positive idea that emerged when discussing the implementation of Tier1 of Positive Behavior Support was that personal was willing to share and cooperatively work. They understand that the education of those children was for all students, and teachers will benefit more if they are able to share practices.

Although the positive impact that the TaSDi project had on their practices, some important aspects need further work. First, the involvement with families on the project is necessary. In this sense, they have the feeling that it is important to share experiences with families. That is, not only to teach behavioral expectations in class or other school settings, but also to work at home. If this teaching

can be reinforced by experiences at home and other settings, the generalization of the knowledge will be gathered.

Secondly, professionals have recognized that during this period the way teachers acknowledge students when focusing on behavioral expectations has improved. However, it is needed to keep working on a reinforcement system for all students. That is, not only those who present severe problem behavior. However, teachers understand that the implementation of a reinforcement system to educational practices and its culture need time.

Thirdly, systematic assessment of problem behavior. Similarly to last idea (reinforcement system), teachers need to keep recording data. During this year, they have been collecting data about number of incidents, places, time, major consequences and people involved. All this information provides a unique data to understand the school climate as well as to provide significant practices according to behavioral needs' students may have.

Finally, people understand the impact that Positive Behavior Support framework provides to schools. The development of more preventive and educational practice is in the same line of the school believes. As a consequence of the work done, the project has been included in the Educational planning, specifically to the "Convivence plan" of the following years and it is expected that all these issues would be addressed. Doing so, the SWPBS leadership team has the challenge to keep working on the development of SWPBIS as well as implementing those practices according to the behavioral needs of those students who present challenging behavior.