

# A Family Guide to PBIS *in Connecticut*



This booklet has been prepared for families and community members to provide information about the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in their local schools. It describes PBIS and outlines how it supports student success in school, at home, and within the community.



Families are children's first and most influential teachers and play a critical role in their social, behavioral, and academic growth. What families do at home can shape whether their children thrive at school, and when families and schools work together, this partnership gives children the best chance to succeed in school and beyond.

Of course, families trust that schools will be safe environments in which everyone is valued, as well as hopeful places where their children can focus on learning and achieve their full potential. Education, after all, is not about getting through the school day, but about preparing students for life.

One way that schools and families can promote this atmosphere of encouragement and respect is through a framework called PBIS.



“The Connecticut State Board of Education believes education is a shared responsibility throughout a student's life from birth to adulthood. Families, school staff and community members make important contributions to student success and the best results come when all three work together as equal partners. The purpose of these three-way partnerships is to support students' success in school and through life.”





# What is PBIS?

PBIS is a framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. This means that in schools that adopt PBIS, the entire school environment supports respect for self and others. Expectations for behavior are clearly defined in all areas of the school, and students are recognized and rewarded for meeting those expectations. The students discover that this respectful behavior helps them improve social interactions, succeed academically, and accomplish their goals.





# What are the three major elements of PBIS?

A School-based Team ♦ Tiers of Support ♦ Families

## 1 A School-based Team

This team consists of six to eight members of the school staff that could include an administrator, a guidance counselor, a school psychologist, and general and special education teachers. Family members are often included as well. Together, this group:

- Develops and defines school-wide behavioral expectations for students during all aspects of daily activity and works with teachers to be sure that all children in the school are taught these expectations;
- Helps teachers implement PBIS practices in the classroom;
- Monitors progress using a school-wide data system to track office discipline referrals (ODRs); and
- Uses data to count ODRs and track which students are involved, where, how often, and what behaviors they exhibit to see if interventions and expectations are working.

## Tiers of Support

In order to meet the needs of all students, PBIS employs three levels, or Tiers, of support for all students regarding school-wide behavioral expectations.

### Tier I (Universal):

All students receive meaningful instruction on the school's expectations for their behavior and methods of positive reinforcement. Tier I provides recognition and reinforcement for all students. In most cases, 80% or more of a student population responds positively to school-wide behavioral expectations.

### Tier II (Targeted):

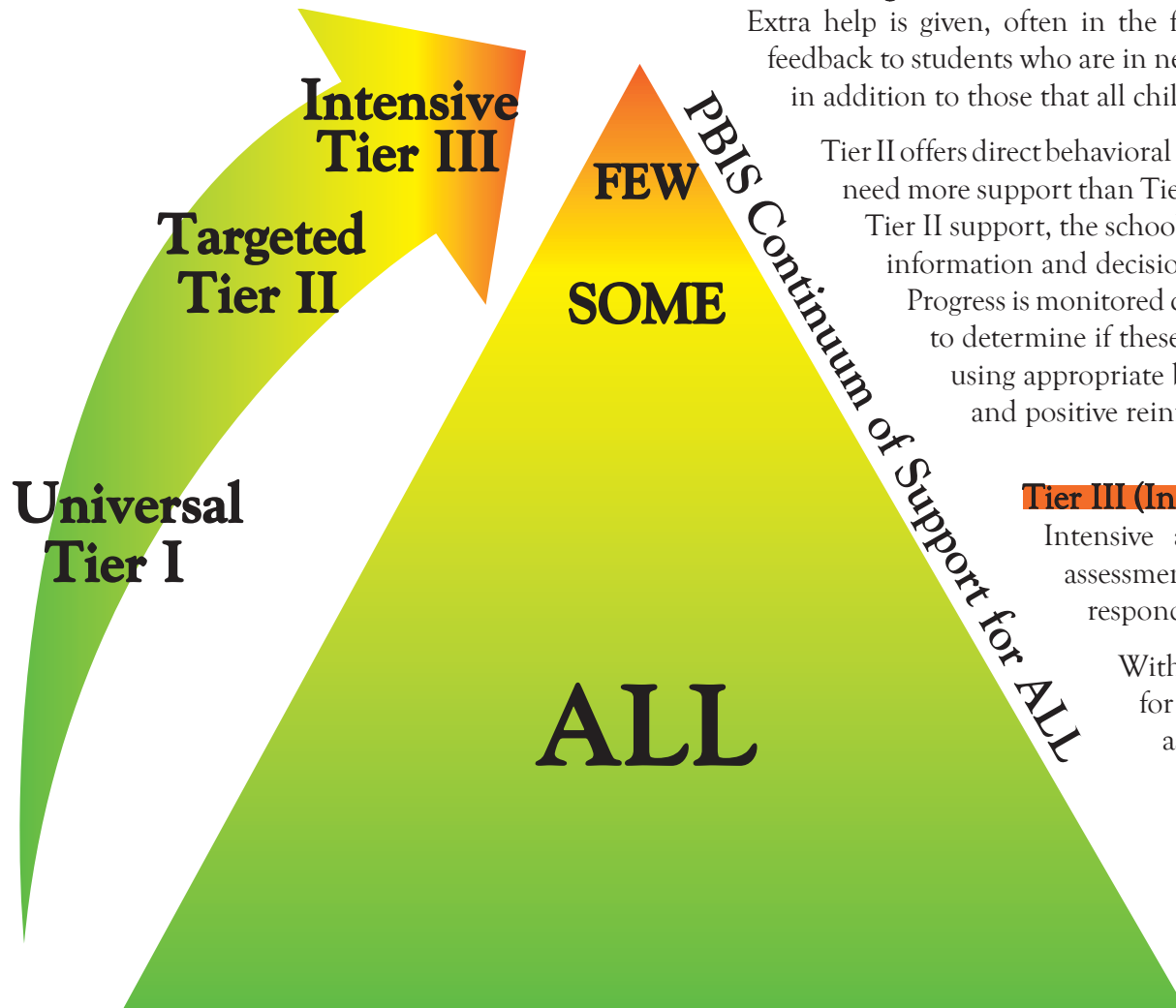
Extra help is given, often in the form of group-based instruction and continuous feedback to students who are in need of more targeted supports. These supports are in addition to those that all children receive from Tier I.

Tier II offers direct behavioral and social strategies to small groups of students who need more support than Tier I affords. Once a student is being considered for Tier II support, the school engages family members as active contributors of information and decision-making as planning and monitoring take place. Progress is monitored closely for about four weeks, or as long as necessary, to determine if these strategies have been effective. Once students are using appropriate behaviors consistently, they gain social acceptance and positive reinforcement from the school community.

### Tier III (Intensive):

Intensive and individualized behavioral instruction and assessment are provided when and if a student is not responding positively to the supports of Tiers I and II.

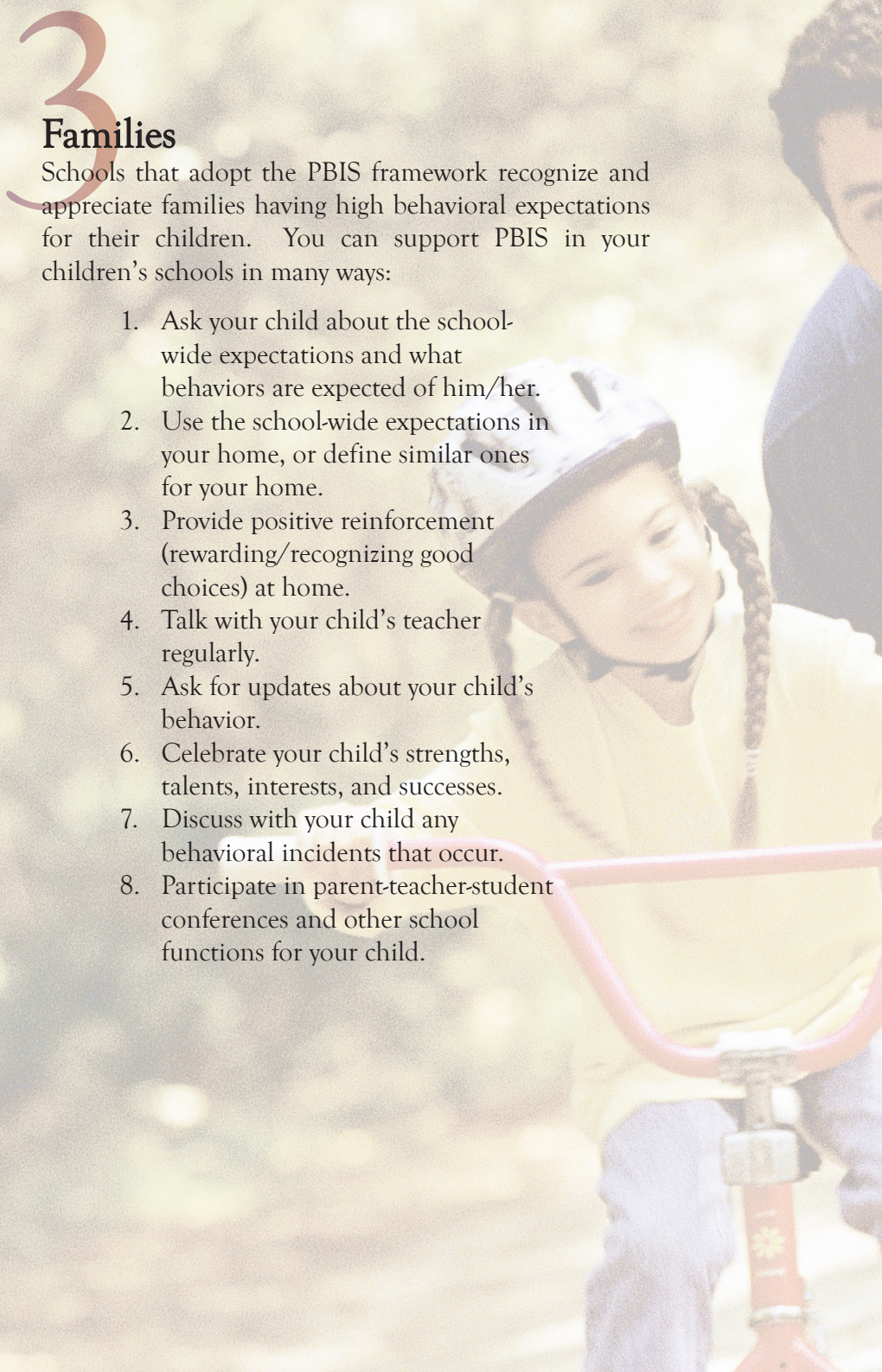
With Tier III supports, family involvement is critical for providing the student with consistency across all aspects of life, school, home, and community. With the family's agreement, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is given to determine the cause of the challenging behaviors. Then a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) is developed with the family to teach and promote appropriate social behavior.



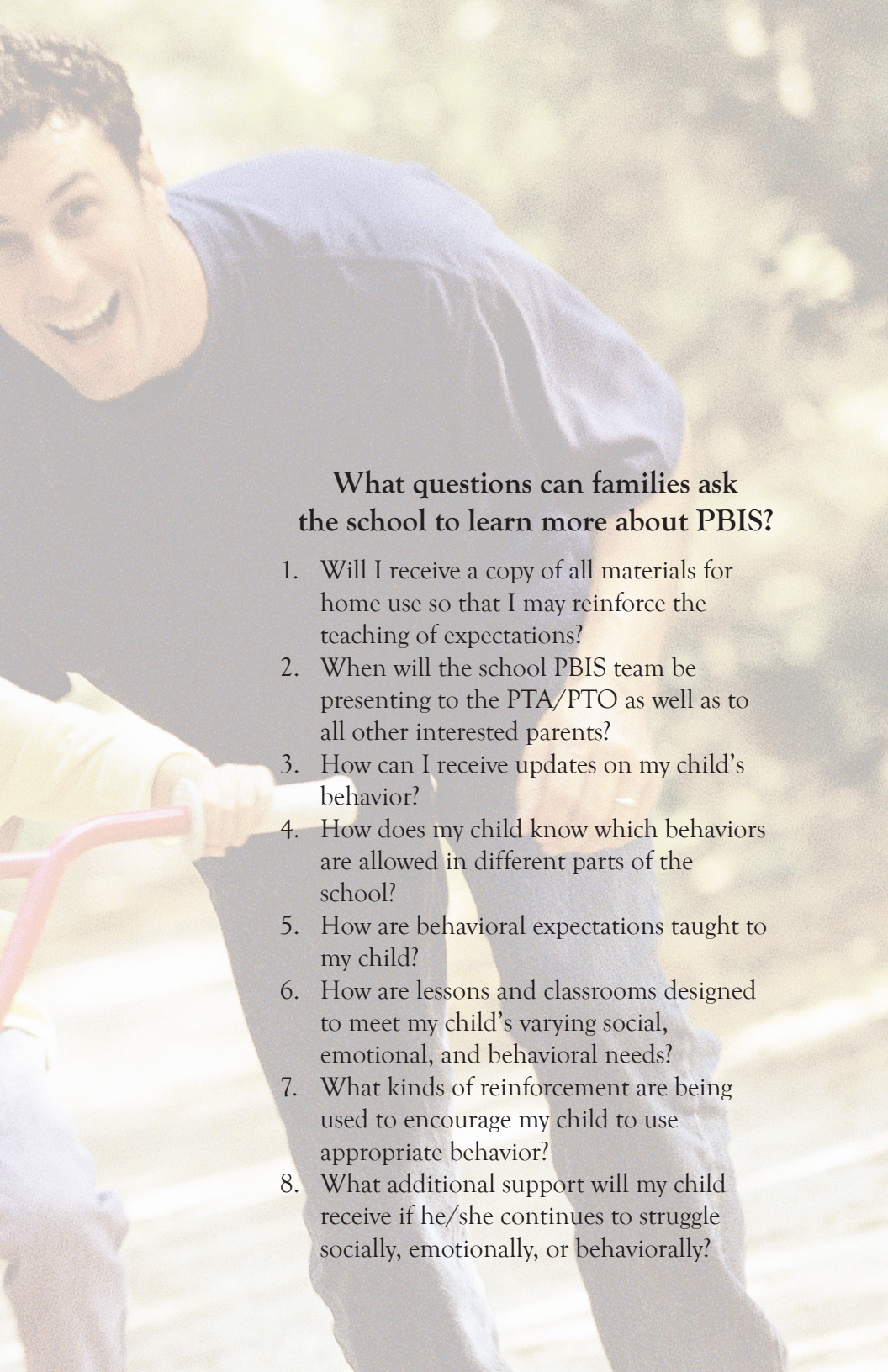
# 3 Families

Schools that adopt the PBIS framework recognize and appreciate families having high behavioral expectations for their children. You can support PBIS in your children's schools in many ways:

1. Ask your child about the school-wide expectations and what behaviors are expected of him/her.
2. Use the school-wide expectations in your home, or define similar ones for your home.
3. Provide positive reinforcement (rewarding/recognizing good choices) at home.
4. Talk with your child's teacher regularly.
5. Ask for updates about your child's behavior.
6. Celebrate your child's strengths, talents, interests, and successes.
7. Discuss with your child any behavioral incidents that occur.
8. Participate in parent-teacher-student conferences and other school functions for your child.





A smiling man in a blue shirt is leaning over a child who is sitting on a red tricycle. The man is looking down at the child with a joyful expression. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

### **What questions can families ask the school to learn more about PBIS?**

1. Will I receive a copy of all materials for home use so that I may reinforce the teaching of expectations?
2. When will the school PBIS team be presenting to the PTA/PTO as well as to all other interested parents?
3. How can I receive updates on my child's behavior?
4. How does my child know which behaviors are allowed in different parts of the school?
5. How are behavioral expectations taught to my child?
6. How are lessons and classrooms designed to meet my child's varying social, emotional, and behavioral needs?
7. What kinds of reinforcement are being used to encourage my child to use appropriate behavior?
8. What additional support will my child receive if he/she continues to struggle socially, emotionally, or behaviorally?





## Can PBIS help prevent bullying in schools?

By recognizing and rewarding positive behaviors, PBIS schools are creating a school culture that helps deter bullying. This culture embraces individuality and the diversity of students' backgrounds. Through direct instruction, students learn what acceptable social skills look like and are given appropriate tools to resolve issues.

Bullying prevention also must involve the larger school community, including families, community leaders, and others. PBIS teaches both adults and students:

- (a) what bullying looks like,
- (b) what to do when bullying behavior is observed,
- (c) how to educate families about what they can do, and
- (d) how to establish a positive and proactive environment that reduces the occurrence and impact of bullying behavior.

Adapted in part from Ross, S., Horner, R., and Stiller, B. *Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support for Middle Schools*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon College of Education, Educational and Community Supports. Retrieved September 2011 from [http://www.papbs.org/filestorage/moduleupload/BullyPrevention\\_PBS\\_MS.pdf](http://www.papbs.org/filestorage/moduleupload/BullyPrevention_PBS_MS.pdf).

For *More* Information



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All children deserve a positive educational experience to grow socially, emotionally, and behaviorally as well as academically. PBIS allows them to focus on learning in an atmosphere of security and respect.



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