

Structured Breaks

WHAT

Some students benefit from a chance to remove themselves from the high demand of the classroom space before becoming frustrated and losing control. Students who need regular redirection or often get overwhelmed with content or peer interaction are given the opportunity to ask for a break in the classroom through a predictable method and move to a predetermined “take-a-break” space in or away from the classroom for a set amount of time, typically 3-5 minutes. Students are trained in how to ask for a break, activities they are permitted to engage in during the break, and how to reintegrate back into the classroom once the timer goes off.

WHY

- ◆ Students in stressful situations are provided with a positively structured escape
- ◆ It helps teachers and students avoid power struggles
- ◆ It provides students with the cool-down time, fidgets, or sensory breaks they need

WHO

Students:

- ◆ Exhibit mild to moderate behavioral problems
- ◆ Frequently become overwhelmed, frustrated, or upset
- ◆ Attempt to escape certain activities, places, or people
- ◆ Often off task or disruptive

Facilitator:

- ◆ A teacher or Tier 2 facilitator can teach the student how to ask for a break, activities they are permitted to engage in during the break, and how to reintegrate back into the classroom once the timer goes off.
- ◆ The teacher needs to know how to honor the break request and track the use of the breaks to ensure they are not being abused.

HOW

Students meet with a teacher or Tier 2 facilitator to discuss the intervention. Parents are informed about the intervention being provided and are shown the structured break protocol if possible. A laminated card with the protocol and the work break is given to the student. In addition, the student will need a timer or access to a timer in the classroom. The student goes to the designated “take-a-break” space in the classroom for no more than five minutes. Then, the student returns to work when the timer goes off. The teacher should thank the student and reinforce the appropriate use of the structured break protocol.

TIPS

- ◆ Students will need to be intentionally weaned from this intervention with plenty of positive reinforcement as they need fewer or shorter breaks.

Reference

<https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/breaks>