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SYDNEY

# BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

By Lily Hubble & Aneesa Eldick



# Your Speakers



Lily Hubble



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We acknowledge the tradition of  
custodianship and law of the Country on  
which the University of Sydney campuses  
stand. We pay our respects to those who  
have cared and continue to care for Country.



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# **Today's agenda:**

- 1. What impact can remote learning have on children?**
- 2. What can we do to improve behaviours in the classroom?**
- 3. Ways to improve educational outcomes**
- 4. Time for questions**



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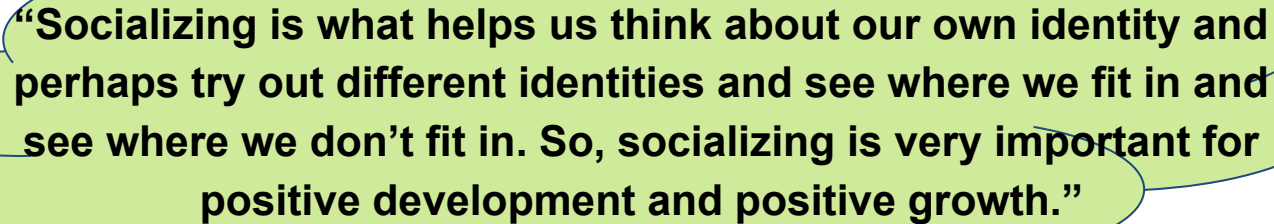


**What impact can  
remote learning have  
on children?**



# Child Psychiatrist Dr. Jeremiah Dickerson on COVID-19 remote learning & its impacts

- Reduced socializing → decreased positive growth:



**“Socializing is what helps us think about our own identity and perhaps try out different identities and see where we fit in and see where we don’t fit in. So, socializing is very important for positive development and positive growth.”**

- Home environment is different to the classroom environment  
→ Less focused on tasks → avoidance behaviours in the classroom.



- **Increased screen-time** → hinder the growth of certain areas of the brain, *“Especially the areas of their brains that are responsible for focus, concentration, making solid judgments, planning and organizing.”*
- **Academic levels** → restricted ability to monitor student progress, interrupted learning support for children with special needs and different levels of access to resources

# Some of the behaviours you may observe:

General classroom etiquette e.g., talking whilst the teacher or others are talking, forgetting to put their hand up in class discussions

Difficulty working with others - they've spent a lot of time working independently, they might struggle taking turns with peers or working well in group settings

Difficulty staying on task when completing physical tasks e.g., reading using a book, writing using a pen and paper as they are so used to the digital world



**What can we do to  
improve behaviours?**



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**Give students a lot of praise & positive reinforcement when they're doing tasks!**



# Why is positive reinforcement in the classroom important?

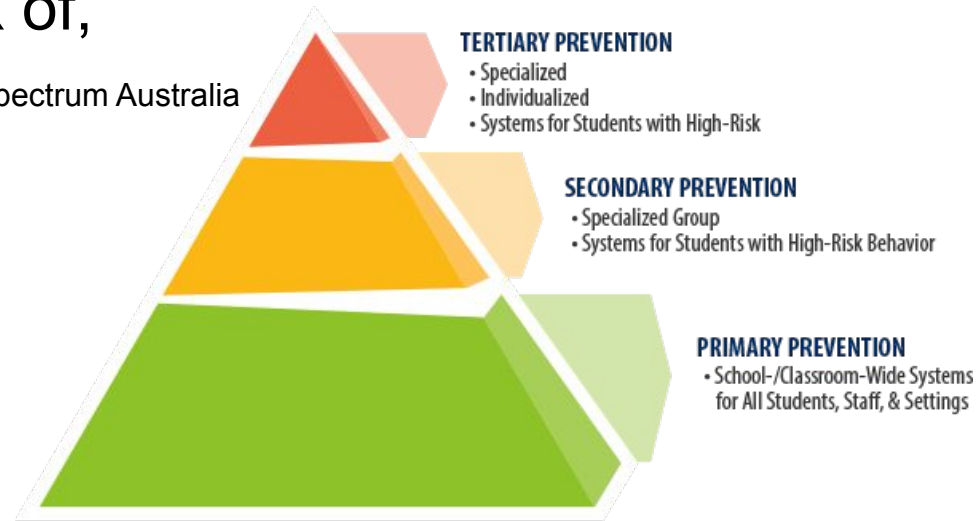
- Students enjoy being present & enjoy learning more
- Heightens enthusiasm in the student → increases motivation
- Enforces the idea of accomplishments being celebrated



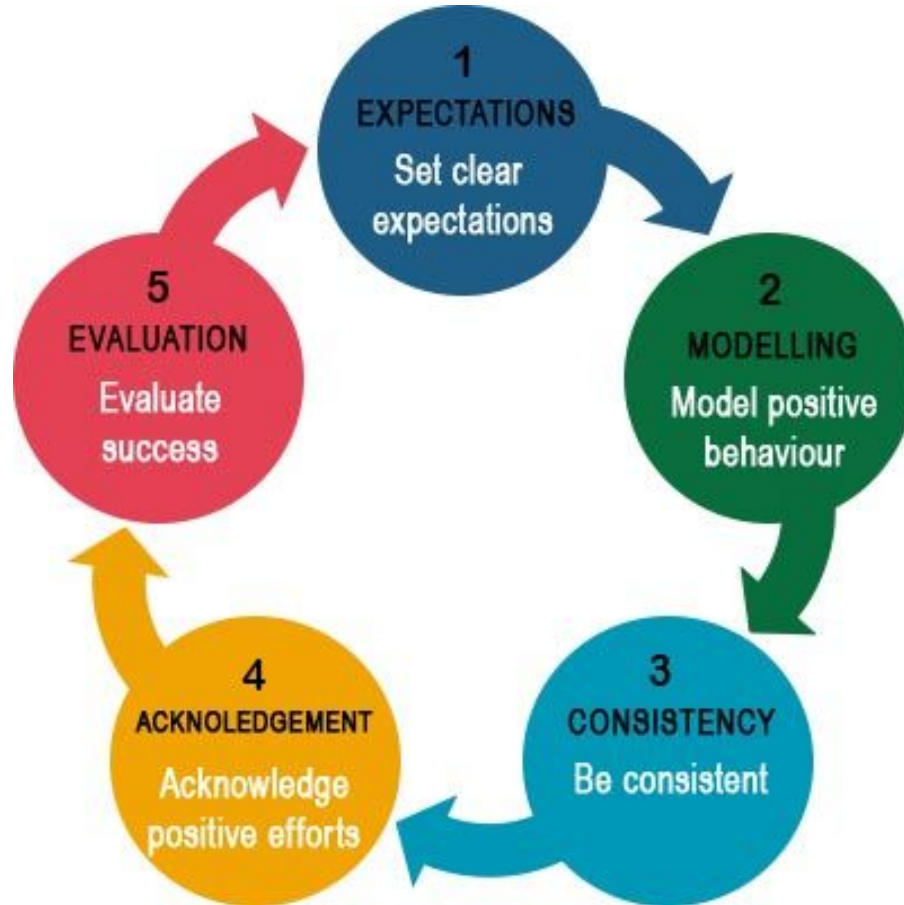
# Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Framework

‘Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a person centred framework for providing support in situations where there is, or there is a risk of, challenging behaviour.’ – Autism Spectrum Australia

PBS is an approach that was initially created to support individuals with disabilities, but has since developed to support individuals at a whole-school level



# 5 ways to implement PBS in the classroom



# Ways to implement positive reinforcement?

1. Direct reinforcers
2. Social reinforcers
3. Activity reinforcers
4. Tangible reinforcers
5. Token reinforcers





# Direct Reinforcers

Directly results from the positive behaviour e.g., if a student enjoys a group activity, they are more likely to return and be invited back to that group (Smith, 2017).





# Social Reinforcers

They include positive comments/phrases e.g., “I can see that you’re trying really hard today!”, written approval e.g., writing “good job!” on their work, other expressions e.g., clapping, smiling, nodding etc.



# Activity Reinforcers

Rewarding students → preferred activity e.g., choosing a game if they complete an activity, allowing them to ask a friend to join in.



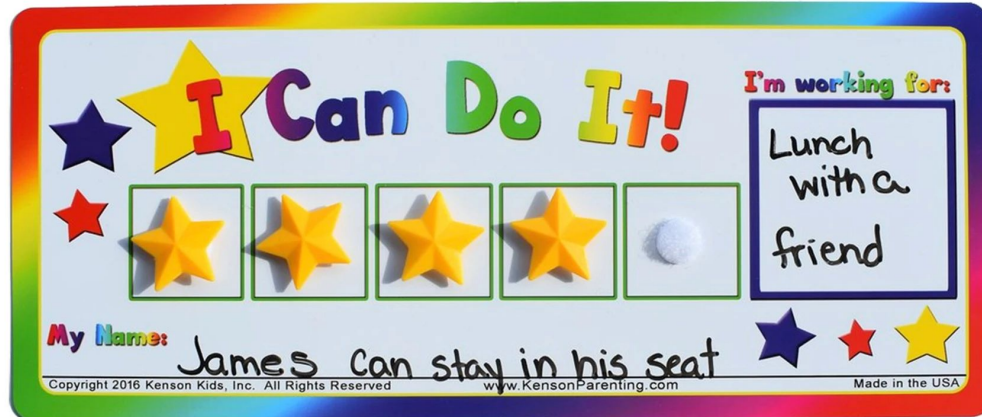
# Tangible Reinforcers

E.g., certificates, letters to take home to parents, displaying work to the rest of the class



# Token Reinforcers

Points or tokens are rewarded for positive behaviour e.g., creating a reward chart for the student during an activity and setting an amount of tokens to achieve before receiving a prize or allowing them to play a game of their choice





# Ways to improve educational outcomes



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# Building Rapport

When first meeting a student, it's important to build rapport. It can:

- Help to minimise anxiety for the student
- Increase learning and student engagement
- Increase motivation in the classroom

**To effectively build rapport, it is important to establish joint attention.**

# Joint Attention

Joint attention is where two people engage with each other during social interaction through a shared focus (such as an object, person, event, or concept).

**E.g.** if a parent and child both look at a toy, they are engaging in joint attention.





# Joint Attention Development

0 - 8 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Development of eye gaze</li><li>● Development of facial expressions (e.g smiling as a response to parent's voice)</li></ul>
8 - 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Begins to follow a parent's eye gaze</li><li>● Responds to gestural cues (e.g following a parent's point)</li></ul>
12 - 16 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Initiates gestural cues</li><li>● Uses babbling to gain attention</li><li>● Can consistently follow parent's eye gaze at longer distances</li></ul>
16 - 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Able to participate in sustained basic joint attention (e.g gestural, facial, and simple verbal cues pertaining to a tangible object or person)</li></ul>

# Joint Attention Development

Joint attention skills continue to develop in preschool aged children, as they continue to develop language, reading, and social skills.

Children also develop the ability to engage in joint attention related to concepts and events.



# Why is Joint Attention Important?

Joint attention skills are vital for participating in social interaction. The development of joint attention is important in understanding and responding to:

- Gestural and verbal cues
- Eye contact and eye gaze
- Body language
- Facial expression



# What strategies can we use to help a child engage in joint attention?



# Strategies for Joint Attention

Initiate joint attention for the child. Responding is much easier than initiating joint attention for children with difficulties. You can initiate through:

- Gestural cues (pointing to an object)
- Eye gaze (looking towards an object)
- Verbal cues (saying “look at this!”)



# Strategies for Joint Attention



To effectively engage in a turn taking activity, joint attention relating to said activity will need to be established. This can further help to facilitate other forms of joint attention (e.g pointing towards a particular section of the activity, or utilising eye gaze).

**→ Turn taking activities can be a fun and relaxed way to create joint attention without forcing the interaction**

# Strategies for Joint Attention

## Follow the child's lead!

- Allow the child to pick the activity
- Respond to any verbal and gestural cues from the child
- Initiate joint attention through objects the child seems interested in



**The video displays preschool teachers who are following the lead of their students. How can we adapt the strategies shown in this video for school children?**

**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R16dUajQSOo&t=26s>





# Strategies for Joint Attention

Finally, be enthusiastic! Using a lively tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures will help to engage the child, and therefore create joint attention.

Ensuring all interactions are positive will also encourage the child to continue engaging in joint attention.



# Joint Attention in the classroom

Joint attention is essential to learning! From viewing information to listening to a lesson, a student will need to engage in joint attention with their teacher.

**How can we use joint attention to help our students learn?**

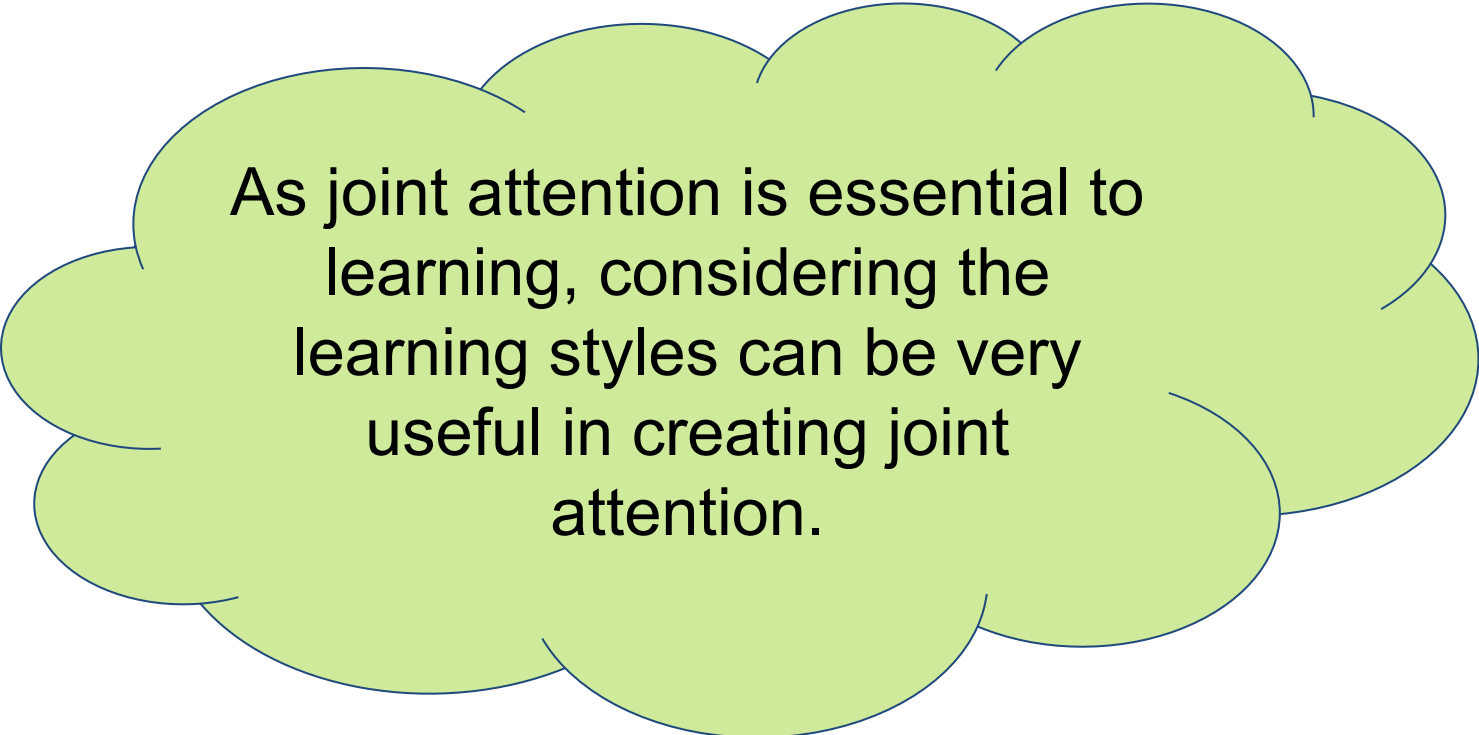


**V - visual** → Learning through graphics and diagrams

**A - auditory** → Learning from information that is heard

**R - reading / writing** → Learning from information displayed as words

**K - kinaesthetic** → Learning through experience and practice

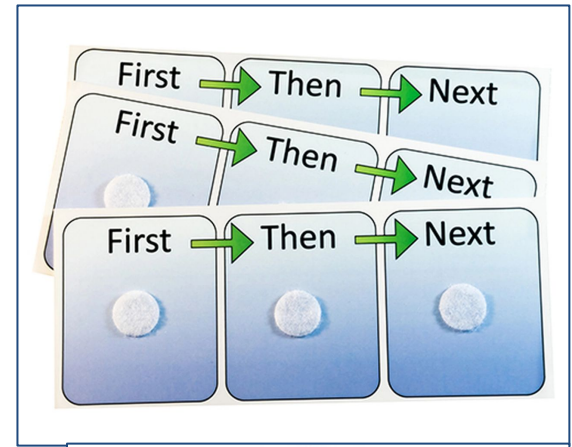


As joint attention is essential to learning, considering the learning styles can be very useful in creating joint attention.

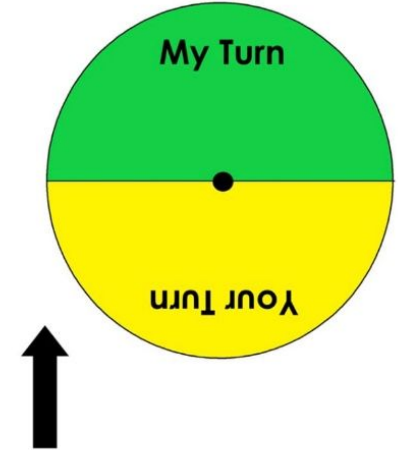
# Visual

- Visual timetables e.g First / Then
- Visual guides

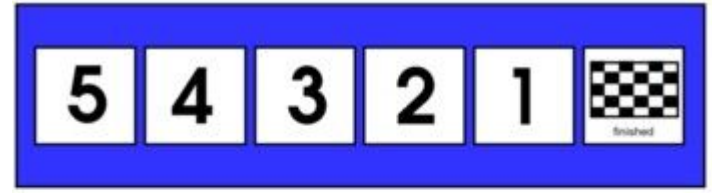
**Note:** Visuals require more than pictures and words. Flowcharts, diagrams, and arrows can all be used to create visual guides.



Turn Taking Spinner



## Visual



Implementing a visual timetable can aid a child to participate in a lesson

- Can help to avoid anxiety and confusion by providing structure to the lesson
- Increases motivation (e.g. “Look at your timetable! We only have one more activity left before we can play a game!”)

# Auditory



- Verbal teaching and instruction  
→ First / Then can be used to verbally instruct. It is also beneficial to verbally increase motivation for student who are unengaged.

**E.g.** “First we will do maths, and then we will read.”

“Let’s do 5 more questions, and then we can play.”

# Auditory

Consider the ways you can utilise your speech to create interest for the student.

- “Wow! Look at that!”
- “This looks so interesting! I wonder what it is?”



**If you sound enthusiastic, a child is more likely to follow your eye gaze and engage in joint attention.**



# Reading / Writing



Joint attention can also be observed when two people are reading together

- Reading together can help you to ensure the student understands written content
- Written instructions and guides can help create understanding for activities



# Kinaesthetic

We can help students to learn kinaesthetically by ensuring that activities which are focused on reading and writing are broken up with hands-on approaches.

- Ensure that students are able to participate in activities through experience and practice
- If a student is restless during an activity, it may help them to get up and move around before the next activity

# Kinaesthetic

It's important to allow the child to use the visual timetable independently. Moving activities to the finish line helps children to kinaesthetically engage with the timetable



# Using VARK in the classroom

A 2014 study of tertiary students indicated that **86.8%** of those assessed were multimodal in their learning.

**Consider the ways in which you can use all the learning styles to facilitate learning AND engage the child in joint attention.**

# Case study

**When you return back to school, you're placed in a mainstream kindergarten classroom. You work with a student who appears to be disengaged and is not completing the work. You remember the student playing with the building blocks that morning before class started.**

**What might you do to engage the student?**



# Final note on also taking care of yourself

## Remember:

- You're a volunteer in the classroom. It's not your responsibility to deal with challenging behaviours. Seek assistance from the teacher!
- To debrief, speak to other volunteers and your supervisors about your challenges and wins!

# QUESTION TIME!



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# THANK YOU!

We hope you enjoyed our presentation



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