

WERK It! Worksheet

Recognizing that a strategy doesn't work is a good start—but don't stop there!
Strategies Don't Work, People Do.

Strategy that doesn't work: _____

Note: The page numbers listed are for *Push Past It! A Positive Approach to Challenging Classroom Behaviors*, available through Gryphon House www.gryphonhouse.com However, you don't need the book to use this self-reflection form.

Why a Strategy Might Not Work	WERK It! Action Plan and Materials Needed
Do you have a positive relationship with the child and the family? No strategy will work unless you have a positive relationship with a child. If you are in a difficult or contentious relationship with the child, build a foundation by committing to spending at least two consecutive minutes per day with the child. (pp. 42–43, pp. 51–53, p. 147)	
Is your team at school consistently implementing the strategy? (p. 115)	
Does the strategy address the reason or reasons behind the behavior? (p. 107, pp. 152–153)	
Does the strategy address only part of the reason or reasons behind the behavior? A behavior can serve more than one function. For example, sometimes a child hits because she doesn't know how to share. Sometimes she hits because she is sleepy. Sometimes she hits because she gets frustrated. Try to address each reason.	
Is the strategy organized into a three-pronged intervention plan? Is the strategy uneven? The most effective behavior planning must include preventions, replacement skills, and new responses or consequences. Perhaps your strategy only includes preventions and doesn't change responses or teach replacement skills. (pp. 121–139, p. 154)	
Is the situation bringing up your own trauma? Are your emotions or back story affecting the effectiveness of the strategy? (pp. 47–50, p. 118, pp. 82–90)	

Do you have unrealistic expectations of the implementation process? For example, other children may be confused or frustrated by the strategy in the first few weeks. Four to six weeks of consistent implementation is just a starting point. It can take several cycles of implementation to successfully end a challenging behavior. Novel ideas take time for adults to learn, the child to understand, and other children to understand and process. (pp. 115–119, 141–144)	
Does the strategy strengthen your relationship with the child? (pp. 51–53)	
Does the strategy escalate the child’s behavior?	
Is the strategy geared toward the child’s individual strengths and interests? For example, if his favorite character is Scooby Doo, include that character in the strategy. Or if he is a visual learner, the strategy is visual. (p. 115)	
Is the strategy reactive, or is it part of a detailed plan based on the triggers and reason behind the behavior? (pp. 141–144)	
Do you need to give the strategy more time? Implement the strategy for four to six consistent weeks before adapting or abandoning the strategy. (pp. 115–119, 141–144)	
Is the strategy, personalized and individualized to that child? For example, insert her photo into a social story, include photos of the classroom into the story, or give the child her own personal copy of the story and have another copy for the classroom. (p. 115)	
Is the strategy is too complex for the adult or the child? For example, the strategy may work at school but is not easy for a parent to implement in home. Or the strategy has words the child can’t comprehend. Young children are concrete learners, and emotions are abstract. (p. 115)	
Are you implementing too many new strategies in a short time period? When I hear adults have “tried everything,” they are often implementing too much at one time. (pp. 115–119)	
Are you implementing the strategy as it was intended? If you adapt a strategy too much, the strategy can be less effective. (p. 116)	
Is the strategy personalized to you and your teaching style? The strategy should be implemented in a consistent manner as it was intended; however, there are small adaptations an adult can make to personalize the strategy. For example, one teacher uses a visual board, but	

another teacher prefers using visuals on a key ring. (p. 115)	
What is your tone/body language when you implement the strategy? Are you calm or frustrated? Are you at child's level? The calmer the adult is, the calmer the child will be. Children notice speech, attitude, tone, and more. (pp. 36, 116)	
Is the strategy evidence based or research based? How do you know? (p. 33)	
Does the strategy match your evidence-based quality-assessment system and professional guidelines—for example, CLASS, ECERS-3, ITERS-3, Danielson Framework, Pyramid, and/or REACH? Usually these tools are evidence based and include quality strategies. Those strategies might run counter to your personal strategies. How do you know whether the strategies match? (pp. 38–39, 41–42)	
Is the strategy too much or too little? Are you using too many words? Are the visuals too small or too big? Should they be in color? Is the social story too long? Think about how to adjust the strategy to fit the child, situation, or classroom.	
Are you making changes or adaptations based on data or frustration? How do you know a strategy is working? Behavior doesn't just end; it decreases over time. Did you measure frequency before you started your strategy? If you don't know how much it was at the start, how do you know if it is getting better or worse?	
Do you include peers in the strategy? For example, does the child have peer buddies or other children as problem solvers? Sometimes children learn best from other children. Support is a team effort; children are aware of the problem and can potentially support implementation.	
Have you or your team checked for implicit bias? This is not an attack against your moral character. Bias and stereotypes tend to surface in everyone when faced with a child who exhibits challenging behaviors. Implicit biases are unconscious often run counter to your moral beliefs. (pp. 29–34)	

Other observations: