Behavioral Interventions and Strategies Series:
Choosing to Pass with Response Cost

When to use: To reduce the amount of disruptive behavior a student displays in an effort to avoid completing a task and increase the student's completion of the task.

Why Use: Students often engage in disruptive behaviors in order to escape unpreferred or difficult tasks or situations. By acting out and being removed from the classroom or situation, the student is allowed to avoid these tasks. This intervention teaches students to display appropriate behaviors that serve the same function as the disruptive behaviors (escape/avoidance of a task or situation) while reinforcing increases in task completion.

How to Use: *Choosing to Pass* allows students to avoid portions of an activity while reinforcing incremental increases in engaging in a task or activity. The student should be receiving academic support for areas or content he or she is avoiding. Students are taught how to use the passes, the number of passes they are allowed each day, when passes are allowed (they are best reserved for periods when disruptive behavior is most likely), what they can do instead of the activity they choose to use a pass for, what happens when all passes are used, and how to earn rewards for completing work.

A system for reinforcement needs to be in place. Students should earn verbal praise for using passes correctly. The reinforcement system should also include reinforcement for incremental increases in completing unpreferred or difficult tasks (e.g., a student earns points for completing some portion of the task and earns points for choosing to complete whole tasks instead of using passes). Students are given rewards based on points earned. To prompt students to complete all or portions of work, teachers can prompt the student by reminding him or her what they will earn if they choose to engage in the task. Points should be removed only when a student adamantly refuses to engage in a task.

Materials: Passes (some type of visual display that a pass has been used such as cards, tallies, etc.), packet of preferred activities for times when a pass is used, reinforcement system, tracking form

Procedure:
Introduction & Training
- Choose when a pass can and cannot be used and how many passes can be used during a day
- Plan for a reward system in which the student can earn points and subsequent rewards for completing work
- Teach student how to ask to use a pass to gain access to a preferred task or activity
- Discuss how the student can earn points and rewards

Implementation
- Briefly review rules and procedures with student at the beginning of the day, provide passes (if using passes rather than recording tally marks)
- At appropriate times, the student uses the signal to request a pass for an activity (raises hand, uses a particular sentence, flips over a pass card on his or her desk)
- Provide the student with the alternative (preferred) activity in place of the passed task and take pass (or mark a tally to indicate a pass has been used)
- When it is time to move to another activity, retrieve alternative activity from student
- At the end of the day, sign the tracking sheet with the student and administer points and rewards as earned
- Over time, gradually increase the amount of work the student is required to complete by reducing the number of passes allowed each day, placing limits on the amount of work a pass covers (e.g., the student must complete at least half the assignment when using the pass), and giving points as incentive for work completion
- If a student is refusing to complete work and has used all passes for the day: identify the minimum amount of work the student needs to complete, inform the student of the expectation and remind him or her that they will lose points if they continue to refuse

References: Stormont, M., Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., and Lembke, E. S. (2012). *Academic and Behavior Supports for At-risk Students*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.