

## Quick-Reference Charts

Use these charts to find action-verb clues that identify the three common underlying goals of challenging student behavior – power, attention and avoidance. Then look at the teacher’s feelings and reactions that come after the student’s behavior. The last column describes how to respond appropriately to the student’s behavior based on an understanding of the behavior’s goal or function.

### POWER

STUDENT BEHAVIOR	TEACHER REACTION		APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
	Feeling	Behavior	
being aggressive, talking back, ridiculing, stubbornness, ignoring, hostility, bullying, vandalizing, refusing, being disruptive, contradicting, being argumentative	upset, angry, challenged, provoked, threatened	arguing, threatening, giving ultimatums, punishing, humiliating, giving in	withdrawing from conflict, giving student a way out, address after a cooling-off period, supplying constructive options for the student to use power or have influence

## ATTENTION

STUDENT BEHAVIOR	TEACHER REACTION		APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
	Feeling	Behavior	
clowning, making mischief, interrupting, persistent begging or pleading, showing off, dressing for attention, interrupting, pleasing too much, lying, tattling, refusing, acting helpless, being overtly sexual	irritated, annoyed, exasperated, aggravated, harassed, impatient	responding to bids for attention, nagging, scolding, showing irritation	ignoring, minimizing attention given, removing audience, avoiding doing for student what he/she can do for self, recognizing appropriate behavior

## AVOIDANCE

STUDENT BEHAVIOR	TEACHER REACTION		APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
	Feeling	Behavior	
withdrawing, being late, looking hostile, giving up/ quitting, not trying, acting helpless, ignoring, underachieving, avoiding school, forgetting, lying, acting helpless, not talking, not participating, not doing the work	discouraged, resigned, helpless, hopeless, demoralized	ignoring, giving up on the student, demonstrating hopelessness, baiting or nagging	building a relationship with the student, modifying assignments to build success and confidence, providing peer tutoring/ support, focusing on successes, recognizing achievement, helping student develop strategy/small steps to success

## Summary: Power Struggles



Students who engage in power struggles want to be in control or prove that no one can boss them around. By understanding the goal of a student's behavior and selecting an appropriate response, you can shift the dynamic in the relationship and channel the student's behavior productively. The following summaries will help you understand students who engage in power struggles and productively re-channel their behavior.

### Typical behaviors of students who make bids for power include:

- being aggressive
- arguing
- talking back
- ignoring
- ridiculing
- disobeying
- being hostile
- bullying
- vandalizing
- refusing
- being disruptive
- contradicting

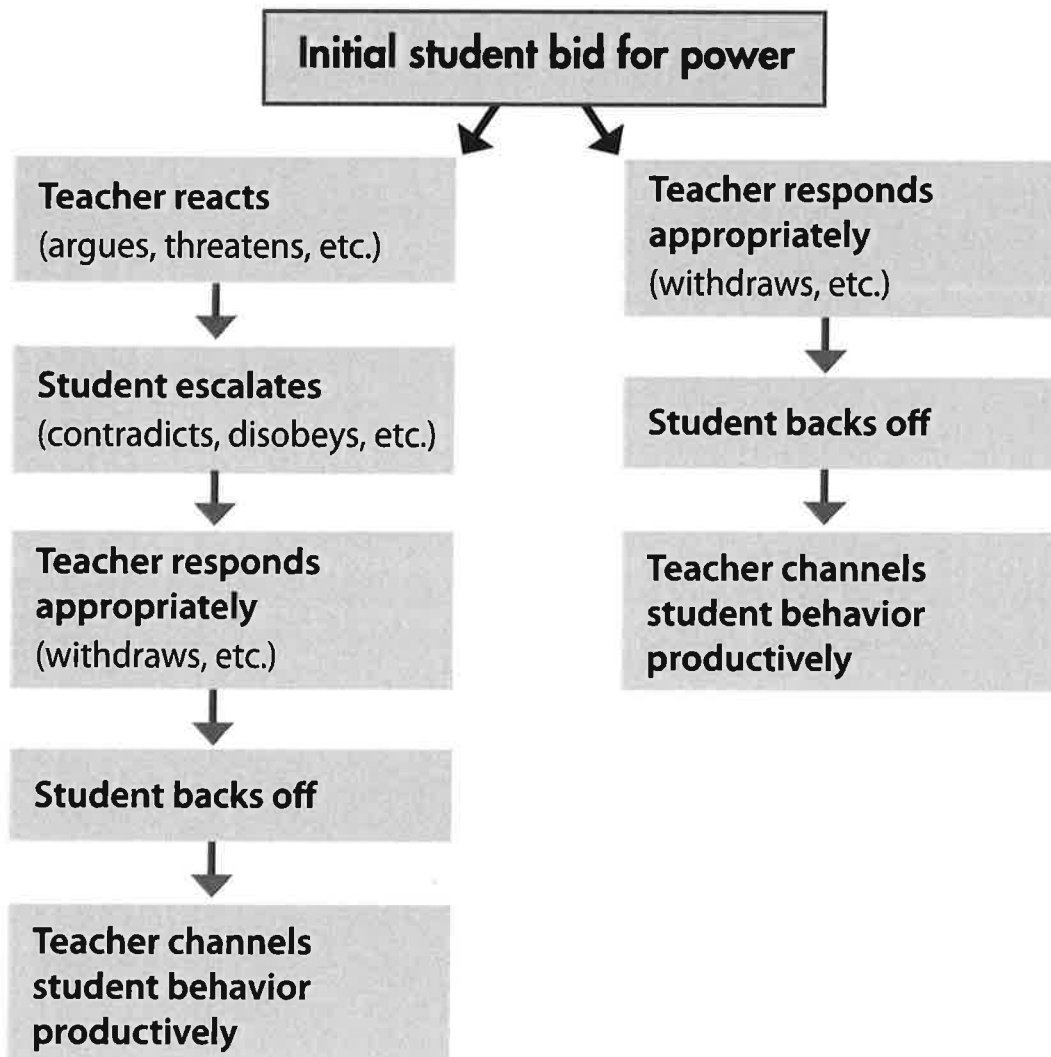
### Teacher reaction to student bids for power

FEELINGS	COMMON INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR
Upset, angry, challenged, provoked, threatened	Arguing, threatening/giving ultimatums, punishing, humiliating, giving in

Teachers who recognize bids for power can reduce the frequency and/or intensity of power struggles by:

- Withdrawing from the conflict
- Giving the student a way out
- Talking about it after a cooling off period
- Providing the student with constructive options for using power

These suggested strategies will work to reduce power struggles at any point in a challenging situation as the following diagram illustrates.



## Summary: Attention Seeking



Students who seek attention usually behave the way they do because they want to be recognized. By understanding the goal of a student's behavior, and selecting an appropriate response you can shift the dynamic in the relationship and channel the student's behavior productively. The following summaries will help you understand students who seek attention and re-channel their behavior to help them get attention in more productive ways.

### Typical behaviors of students who seek attention include:

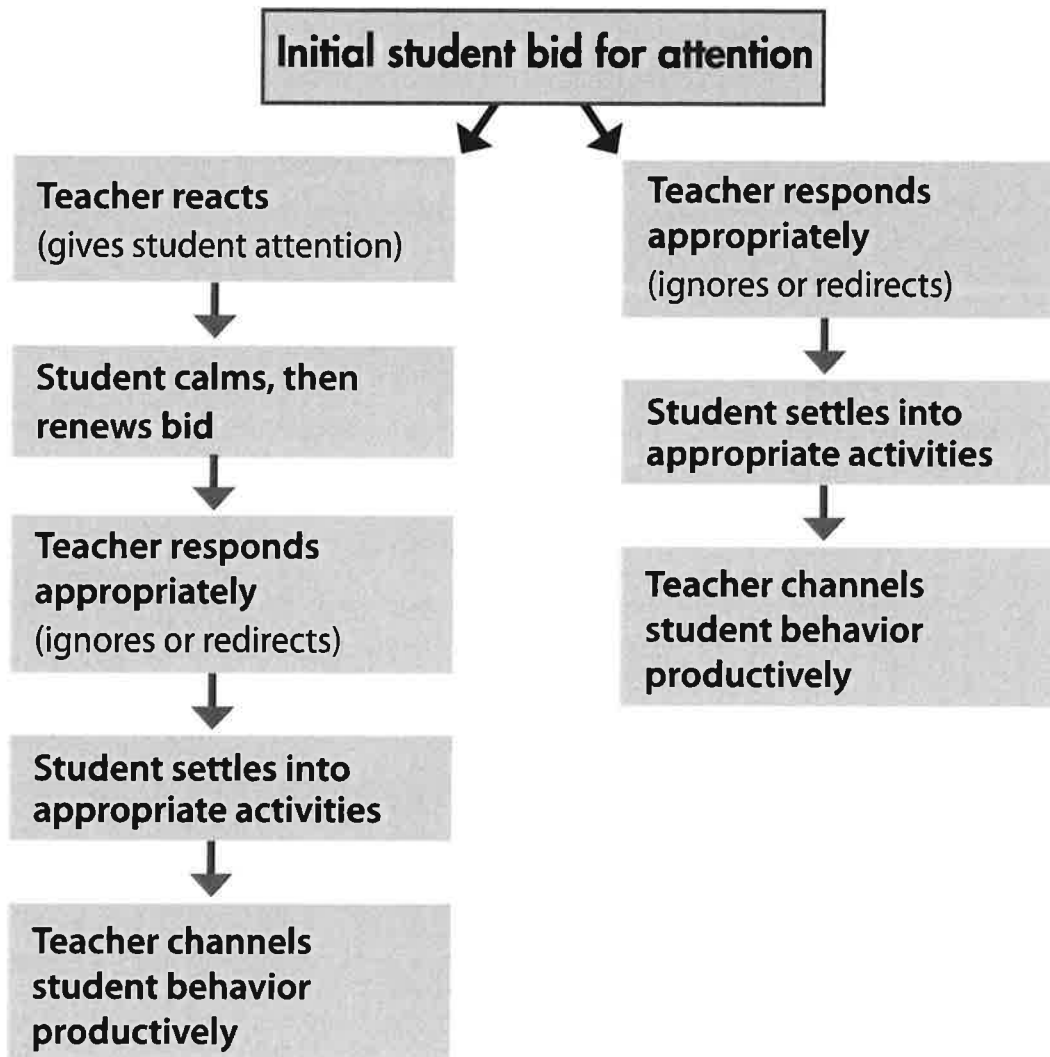
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clowning</li> <li>• making mischief</li> <li>• interrupting</li> <li>• showing off</li> <li>• dressing for attention</li> <li>• acting helpless</li> <li>• interrupting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persistent begging or pleading</li> <li>• pleasing too much</li> <li>• lying</li> <li>• tattling</li> <li>• refusing</li> </ul> |
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### Teacher reaction to student bids for attention

FEELINGS	COMMON INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR
irritated, annoyed, exasperated, aggravated, harassed	giving in to the bids for attention, nagging, scolding, showing irritation, impatience

Teachers who recognize bids for attention can reduce the frequency and/or intensity of the attention seeking by:

- Ignoring the bids/minimizing attention given
- Redirecting/distracting the student (ask a direct question or favor)
- Moving student away from audience
- Avoiding doing for student what he or she can do for self
- Recognizing appropriate behavior



## Summary: Avoidance



Students who avoid work often do so out of a fear of failure. By understanding that the student's goal is to avoid (or protect herself) from failure, you can shift the dynamic. By taking the time to get to know the student, by restructuring her experience with modified assignments, and by providing lots of encouragement, you can help the student build up her confidence and experience success.

Typical behaviors of students who avoid work because they feel inadequate and perhaps fear failure, include:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• withdrawing</li> <li>• being late</li> <li>• looking hostile</li> <li>• giving up/quitting</li> <li>• not trying</li> <li>• forgetting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lying</li> <li>• not talking</li> <li>• not participating</li> <li>• not doing the work</li> <li>• acting helpless</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ignoring</li> <li>• being uncommunicative</li> <li>• underachieving</li> <li>• avoiding school</li> </ul> |
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### Teacher reaction to student avoidance

FEELINGS	COMMON INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR
discouraged, resigned, helpless, hopeless, demoralized	ignoring, giving up on the student, demonstrating hopelessness, baiting or nagging

At first glance it might be difficult to appreciate how avoidance is an effort to belong or be accepted. Students who feel inadequate or fear failure, though, can use avoidance to protect themselves from rejection if they think they are going to fail or appear inadequate fail or don't measure up.

### THE FAST METHOD

Teachers who recognize avoidance from fear of failure can help students overcome their feelings of inadequacy by:

- Building a relationship with the student
- Modifying assignments to build success and confidence
- Providing peer support/tutoring
- Teaching the student to ask for help
- Focusing on successes (no matter how small); recognizing achievement
- Helping the student develop a strategy/small steps to complete work

