Principals and teachers consider student tardiness to be a serious issue.

Especially challenging with elementary children often dependent on an adult to get to school on time.

Frustration that late students disrupt instruction and require re-teaching.

Tardiness is widespread and associated with:
- Lower academic achievement
- Use of drugs/alcohol in secondary school
- Employment difficulties later in life

School policies often punitive, but ineffective.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) interventions may help.

Teacher praise is a positive strategy shown to be effective for problem behavior.

**Purpose**

To evaluate the effect of teacher written praise notes on elementary school student on-time behavior.

**Introduction**

- Principals and teachers consider student tardiness to be a serious issue.
- Especially challenging with elementary children often dependent on an adult to get to school on time.
- Frustration that late students disrupt instruction and require re-teaching.
- Tardiness is widespread and associated with:
  - Lower academic achievement
  - Use of drugs/alcohol in secondary school
  - Employment difficulties later in life
- School policies often punitive, but ineffective.
- School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) interventions may help.
- Teacher praise is a positive strategy shown to be effective for problem behavior.

**Method**

**Setting**
- Urban K-6 elementary school
- 646 students 80% Caucasian
- 25% low SES
- 18% mobility
- 6% Asian
- 5% Other

**Participants**
- Each teacher selected a student exhibiting moderate to severe tardiness.

**Demographics**

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</table>

**Design**
- Multiple baseline across students

**Procedures**

**SWPBS Context**
- Clear expectations
- Character development program
- Student recognition system
- Teacher written praise notes for respect, responsibility, service, and learning
- Students on time for the whole month received a reinforcer

**Independent Variable**
- Principal letter to parents
- Teachers wrote praise notes for students arriving on time

**Dependent Variable**
- Number of minutes late per week

**Recommendations**
- Important to select students who show a pattern of being late over several recent weeks.
- Reasons for tardiness and whether this would be an appropriate intervention should be discussed.
- To be implemented effectively, praise notes should:
  - Include specific statements about being on time
  - Be written consistently
  - Be used with reminders or reinforcers to help teachers be more consistent
- Other interventions (e.g., punishment) should be removed to decide if notes cause improvement.
- More research is needed in elementary schools.

**Results**

**Severely Tardy Students**

**Moderately Tardy Students**

*This study will soon be published in the journal *Intervention in School and Clinic.*