

Intensive Intervention Practice Guide: Intensifying Check-In Check-Out for Students With or At-Risk for Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities

Rachel Kunemund, Virginia Commonwealth University
Caitlyn Majeika, Vanderbilt University
Veronica Mellado De La Cruz, Southern Methodist University
Sarah Wilkinson, University of Connecticut



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What is Check-In Check-Out?

Check-In Check-Out (CICO), or the Behavioral Education Program (BEP), is one example of a targeted (i.e., Tier 2) intervention used within a system of school-wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS). The core components of CICO include: (a) an adult monitor, (b) daily communication between adult monitor, teachers, parents, and students, (c) frequent behavioral feedback through the Daily Progress Report (DPR), and (d) reinforcement for appropriate behavior (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010). CICO is typically implemented by school staff (i.e., teachers, paraprofessionals, or coaches) and is regularly monitored by a school's behavior, SWPBS, or CICO team. Members of this team may include administrators, school psychologists, or behavior specialists.

For Whom Is Intensified Check-in Check-out Intended?

CICO was designed to reduce the frequency and severity of problem behavior among students who did not respond to Tier 1 interventions. Due to the nature of the procedural components and continual access to teachers and monitors, CICO has been most successful for students with problem behavior maintained by adult attention (McIntosh, Campbell, Carter, & Rossetto Dickey, 2009). For example, Campbell and Anderson (2011) suggest scheduled interactions with a teacher that end on a positive note may reduce the effectiveness of teacher attention as a reinforcer for problem behavior during class. Students with behavior maintained by other functions (e.g., escape-maintained) may not respond if CICO is not modified. As a result, researchers have successfully adapted CICO for students who are nonresponsive to the traditional procedures (March & Horner, 2002). This practice alert addresses the use of intensified check-in check-out for situations in which students do not respond to the standard version.

How Does It Work?

Standard Check-In Check-Out

Two cornerstones of CICO are adult attention and feedback, which are integrated throughout CICO procedures. Each school day begins with a student check-in with a designated adult monitor. At check-in, the monitor provides each student with a DPR, helps set the daily goal, and plans the reinforcer to be earned for meeting that goal. Choosing a preferred reinforcer (e.g., computer time, lunch with a friend, tangible item) provides a built-in opportunity to individualize CICO. The DPR is a sheet of paper, typically aligned with the school-wide behavioral expectations (See Figures 1-3; Everett, Sugai, Fallon, Simonsen, & O'Keefe, 2011). For guidance on daily goals and other details

of CICO, see the resources section at www.pbis.org. After each class period, teachers share verbal and written feedback with the student and award points based on how well the student's behavior aligned with school-wide expectations. At the end of the day, students check out with the adult monitor. During check-out, the monitor tallies the points to determine if the student met the daily goal. Students bring the DPR home and return it the next day with a parent signature.

Intensified Check-In Check-Out

Generally speaking, intensified CICO has taken the form of “dosage” increases, modifications to standard components, or supplemental targeted components. One way to intensify CICO is by increasing the frequency of standard components, such as opportunities to earn reinforcers or meetings with adult monitors (Boden, Ennis, & Jolivette, 2012; Swoszowski, McDaniel, Jolivette, & Melius, 2013). For example, Swoszowski (2014) explains some students may benefit from an additional opportunity for adult attention or reinforcement when they have an additional check-up midday (“check-in/check-up/check-out”; CICUCO). It is also possible, however, that students respond well to additional meetings because more frequent prompts for expected behavior and problem solving facilitate both learning and successful performance.

Another method to modify CICO is related to evidence that standard CICO differentially benefits students based on the function of their behavior (e.g., to escape academic tasks or to access peer or adult attention; Ennis, Jolivette, Swoszowski, & Johnson, 2012; Hawken, O’Neill, & MacLeod, 2011). Evidence suggests this method of intensification uses Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) results in order to work; mere administration of FBA without subsequent changes to standard CICO may be insufficient for preventing problem behavior (Lane, Capizzi, Fisher, & Ennis, 2012; Swoszowski, Jolivette, Fredrick, & Heflin, 2012). Evidence of varied outcomes based on the function of student behavior suggests individualized CICO may work by changing antecedents or consequences (Ennis, et al., 2012; Hawken et al., 2011). For example, adding a process for student-requested breaks from schoolwork may render behavior meant to help a student avoid classwork useless (Boyd & Anderson, 2013; Kilgus, Fallon, & Feinberg, 2016). Kilgus and colleagues (2016) modified CICO for students with escape-maintained behavior by incorporating a “bonus clause” whereby students could earn exemption from a supplemental academic task by meeting their daily point goal. For students with peer attention maintained problem behavior, adaptations may include checking out with a buddy or earning lunch with a friend (Campbell & Anderson, 2008). Function-based intensification addresses more types of student-classroom interactions than standard CICO.

A final approach to intensification supplements CICO with an additional targeted intervention. This approach targets specific skills based on failed screening items or by domain-relevant skills more broadly. For example, Ross and Sabey (2015) added a social skills training program for students nonresponsive to typical CICO. Similarly, Collins, Gresham, and Dart (2016) combined social skills training, peer-monitors, and CICO, creating a peer-mediated intervention with DPR goals focused on participants' specific social skills. Researchers have also explored supplements to CICO for students demonstrating internalizing behaviors. Cook and colleagues (2015) added general training on managing emotions via the Courage and Confidence Mentor Program (CCMP) prior to implementing CICO. In addition to addressing middle schoolers' problem behaviors through instruction, CCMP adult monitors provided mentoring along with supervision. A third example of supplementing CICO with an additional intervention can targeted skill in requesting breaks. Boyd and Anderson (2013) incorporated the "Breaks are Better" (BrB) intervention in conjunction with CICO. BrB helped students to ask for breaks during instruction. CICO teams might also consider pairing CICO with an intervention targeting attendance with students for whom escape related behaviors or disciplinary consequences interfere with program implementation and success (Ennis et al., 2012).

How Effective Is It?

Overall, standard protocol Tier 2 CICO appears to be an effective program for reducing rates of problem behaviors and is easily intensified for students who are nonresponsive. In a review of the literature, Maggin, Zurheide, Pickett, and Baillie (2015) found that among studies that considered the function of behavior, attention-maintained behavior was most responsive to CICO. One study has explored the effectiveness of individual CICO components (Campbell & Anderson, 2011), but evidence is inconclusive and involves only a portion of the daily intervention cycle. Other limited evidence from dosage intensification suggests that monitor meetings are one "key ingredient" of CICO (Boden et al., 2012; Swoszowski et al., 2013). It is arguably the combination of elements, via various mechanisms suited for various situations and needs, that makes CICO successful.

For students who are nonresponsive to traditional CICO, it appears that both changes in dosage and modifications based on student or situational characteristics hold promise. Modifications to CICO that target the different functions of behavior have also been successful. The following sections address evidence of effectiveness of CICO intensification via the modifications and supplemental interventions summarized above.

Modifications to Typical CICO

CICO individualized to student needs has been effective in improving a number of student outcomes. In a study offering exemption from an academic task in order to target escape-maintained behaviors, the modified CICO had significant benefits for students both in promoting academic engagement and in decreasing disruptive behavior compared to typical CICO (Kilgus et al., 2016). Swoszowski and colleagues (2013) found a dosage increase (the addition of a midday “check-up”) was effective in improving a non-responder’s problem behavior as compared to his performance during typical CICO. In another iteration that specifically targeted peer attention maintained behavior by individualizing reinforcers, problem behavior decreased for students across reading and math settings (Campbell & Anderson, 2008). The individualized reinforcer was effective in promoting generalization of more desirable school behavior.

CICO + Additional Interventions

As summarized above, many studies have combined CICO with an additional behavioral intervention. Two of these studies did not demonstrate effectiveness. The addition of daily social skills training for non-responders yielded no clear effects, as there was high variability in the data for all participants during all phases (Ross & Sabey, 2015). Similarly, when applying CCMP prior to CICO, Cook and colleagues (2015) documented a reduction in internalizing behaviors. However, there is no data to support the effectiveness of that intervention in combination with later participation in CICO. Despite these findings, some studies have found positive effects for combining interventions to supplement CICO.

Two additional studies demonstrated positive results for combined interventions. Boyd and Anderson’s (2013) combination of BrB and CICO resulted in a drastic decrease in problem behaviors for all participants (i.e., 84%, 39%, and 81%). Collins and colleagues (2016) did find positive outcomes when CICO was combined with social skills training that was implemented via peer-interventionists in lieu of adult mentors. In this version, social skills training resulted in findings with a moderate effect size for the relationship between peer-mediated CICO and participant social skills. In addition, there was a significant increase in appropriate social skills for all participants as measured by a teacher rating scale (i.e., SSIS-RS). These results were achieved working with students exposed to CICO for the first time, with teacher-selected target skills for the training, and with goals developed for those specific social skills. This emerging evidence suggests domain-specific intervention that does not target individual student needs may be less effective than intensification that individualizes various flexible aspects of CICO. However, there is insufficient evidence to substantiate such a link at this time.

How Adequate Is The Research Base On Intensified CICO?

Reviews of the Research

In a recent review of the research, Maggin and colleagues (2015) employed the *What Works Clearinghouse* standards to evaluate 22 studies focusing on CICO as a Tier 2 intervention. Based on analysis of data across 5 single-case studies, the researchers concluded that there is sufficient evidence for CICO to be classified as an evidence-based practice. The 17 group studies, however, did not meet that standard. The authors recommend researchers conduct future studies that more formally consider the function of participant behavior to verify the intervention's effectiveness for other behaviors (e.g., escape-maintained).

In a second review, Wolfe et al. (2015) used the standards proposed by Horner et al. (2005) and Gersten et al. (2005) to evaluate 16 studies. Overall, the researchers concluded that there is sufficient data to support the use of CICO as an evidence-based practice for students who exhibit behaviors maintained by adult attention. They found there was not enough data to meet the standard for an evidence-based practice for behaviors maintained by other functions. These reviews establish the adequacy of evidence for CICO as a Tier 2 intervention and serves as a backdrop for a discussion about the evidence base for intensified CICO.

Research on Intensified CICO

Overall, there is a wide research base for intensified CICO as a targeted intervention strategy. Several single-case and group design studies have been conducted in diverse settings and with students of all ages. While individual studies are methodologically sound, CICO has not consistently met the effect size standards to be considered an evidence-based practice. Although there are promising results in existing studies, and researchers have implemented experimental methods to test intensification of CICO, there is limited research focusing on students whose problem behaviors persist with implementation of typical CICO. In this respect, the evidence base is as yet inadequate. In addition, there is not a sufficient research base of experimental studies that focus on each method of intensification. These promising practices require further studies in order to recommend modifications to CICO as an effective intensive intervention backed by scientific evidence.

How Practical Is It?

Teachers, students, and parents commonly rate CICO as easy to implement, helpful and worth the time and effort, making it a “user friendly” intervention (Hawken & Horner, 2003). CICO is easily intensified and adapted to be responsive to student characteristics and can be successfully used across multiple school contexts and grades. Flexible in its implementation, CICO has been intensified to meet individual needs of students who have diverse behavioral functions or are considered at-risk for developing severe problem behaviors (Boyd & Anderson, 2013; Cook et al., 2015). At least some individualized versions rely on changes to the flexible aspects of CICO and might be similarly cost effective, at least in comparison to developing a separate intensive intervention.

From a pragmatic stance, CICO is a feasible and efficient program. Day to day procedures for CICO typically only require two school personnel to implement. In some cases, peers are able to act as student interventionists, carrying out the check-in and check-out processes with other students themselves, further alleviating the need for additional school personnel (Collins, 2006). While most schools also employ a CICO team to analyze data and oversee implementation, this team usually meets bi-weekly and consists of members of the school’s behavior or SWPBIS team. As an additional feasibility factor, CICO can be considered a temporary intervention for some students. In one study, students responsive to the traditional intervention moved from teacher-ratings to self-rating with results similar to or better than the traditional CICO phase (Miller, Dufrene, Olmi, Tingstrom, & Filce, 2015). In a systematic review of the standard CICO literature, 81% of the studies collected social validity data, and there was a consistently high rate of support for the targeted intervention (Wolfe et al., 2015). This indicates CICO to be a well-accepted, cost-effective, and adequately manageable intervention.

What Questions Remain?

Questions remain about whether CICO can be modified (and how best to do so) for students who require a more intensive or individualized program. Individualized CICO’s effectiveness for acquisition vs. performance deficits and attention vs. escape maintained behaviors is not yet clear. For students who do not respond to traditional CICO and therefore demonstrate the most persistent problem behaviors, the following questions remain: How “individualized” does CICO need to be? Which intensifications are most helpful? Finally, which essential standard protocol features might most successfully be modified? Relatedly, it is unclear what would result from expanding CICO’s flexibility to emphasize specific environmental antecedents and consequences. We know little about the types of alterations to the learning environment, or to the mentor or setting of CICO, that might help address barriers to improved class behavior within standard CICO (Myers, Briere, & Simonsen, 2010; Swoszowski, 2014).

Where Can I Learn More?

- **General CICO online resources:**
www.pbis.org
- **Intensified CICO online resources:**
www.pbisworld.com/tier-3/check-in-check-out-cico/
- **For a step by step description of how educators might intensify behavior intervention from traditional CICO see the following article:**
Wehby, J. H., & Kern, L. (2014). Intensive behavior intervention: What it is, what is its evidence base, and why do we need to implement now? *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 46, 38-44.

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Figure 1.

Example of DPR that can be used with block scheduling. Reprinted from *School-Wide Tier II Interventions: Check-In Check-Out Getting Started Workbook* by Everett, S., Sugai, G., Fallon, L., Simonsen, B., & O’Keefe, B. Copyright (2011) by OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and University of Connecticut. Reprinted with permission.

| Name: | | | | | | | Date: | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|---|---|
| GOAL | SAFETY | | | ORGANIZATION | | | ACHIEVEMENT | | | RESPECT | | |
| | <i>Keep my hands to myself</i> | | | <i>Turn in my work</i> | | | <i>Complete my work</i> | | | <i>Raise my hand to talk</i> | | |
| Red Block 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Red Block 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Red Block 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Red Block 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Blue Block 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Blue Block 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Blue Block 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Blue Block 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total Points: | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| |
|--------------|
| Key |
| 2=Great |
| 1=OK |
| 0=Tough time |

Total Points: _____ Today's %: _____ Goal %: _____

Signatures: _____ Comments: _____



Figure 2.

Example of DPR that can be used in middle school. Reprinted from *School-Wide Tier II Interventions: Check-In Check-Out Getting Started Workbook* by Everett, S., Sugai, G., Fallon, L., Simonsen, B., & O’Keefe, B. Copyright (2011) by OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and University of Connecticut. Reprinted with permission.

| Period # (Teacher Initial) | Name: | | | | | | Date: | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------|---|---|
| | 3 = Great 2 = OK 1 = Try Again | | | | | | | | |
| | Safe | | | Responsible | | | Respectful | | |
| Period 1 (_____) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Period 2 (_____) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Period 3 (_____) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Period 4 (_____) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Period 5 (_____) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Period 6 (_____) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Today's Goal _____ | | | | | | Today's Total Points _____/48 | | | |
| Signatures & Comments | | | | | | | | | |
| CICO Coordinator _____ | | | | | Parent(s) _____ | | | | |

Figure 3.

Figure 3. Example of DPR from an elementary school. Reprinted from *School-Wide Tier II Interventions: Check-In Check-Out Getting Started Workbook* by Everett, S., Sugai, G., Fallon, L., Simonsen, B., & O’Keefe, B. Copyright (2011) by OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and University of Connecticut. Reprinted with permission.

|  | | <h3>Chippewa Star Daily Progress Report</h3> | | | | | |  | |
|---|-----------|---|-------------|---------|--|----------------------------------|-----------|---|--|
| Key ☺ = 2 ☹ = 1 ☹ = 0 | | Jefferson Elementary <i>Daily Progress Report</i> | | | | Name: _____ Teacher _____ | | Date _____ | |
| Goals | 8:00-9:45 | Recess | 10:00-12:00 | Lunch | 12:30-1:20 | Recess | 1:35-3:15 | | |
| SAFE | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | |
| TRUTHFUL | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | |
| RESPECTFUL | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | |
| RESPONSIBLE | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | |
| Total Points | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | ☺ ☹ ☹ | |
| Comments | | | | | | | | | |
| Signatures | Student | | | Teacher | | | Parent(s) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy made & sent home for parent signature | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Entered into SWIS CICO: _____ Date: _____ | | | | |