**Case Study:**

Conrad is a six year old boy who sits in the back left corner of the rug each day. He was expelled from a charter school kindergarten because of his unacceptable behavior. He was then kept home for a year with his parents to mature a bit more before starting kindergarten again. His current teacher believes it was a good idea that he stayed home for a year because of his immaturity, and she could only imagine how he would have been a year ago.

At home he really enjoys video games, cartoons, and toys. During lessons, he is very fidgeting but enjoys when the class stands up for a song or a dance. During recess Conrad likes to run and be active. Conrad is extra egocentric for his age. He often pesters other children on purpose and likes to get them riled up. At recess one day he kicked a ball away from another child and said, “Take that, Mario! That was a turtle shell.” He felt bad after he realized the other child was unaware of his games. I told Conrad to be nice and ask the other boy if he wanted to play SuperMario with him. He looked at me with a big smile and said, “Okay!”

Usually after every fun activity he has a melt down and yells something like, “Ah! I didn't even get to finish my book!” Almost every time recess ends he falls down to the ground and starts yelling, “It's not fair, she always has to do that to me!” Obviously, she is not trying to hurt his feelings, but he still gets angry at her. One day when he was mad, instead of lining up, he went and sat on the curb. Another teacher-aid asked for his help in putting a soccer ball away. He did that but then went right back over to the curb and sat down. By this time, everyone else was inside and I didn't want to spend a lot of time talking to him in case he was looking for attention. Instead, I just walked by him and said, “Hey I bet I'll beat you to the door!” He instantly ran in the door and joined the rest of the class.

One day he cried when centers ended because he did not want to sit on the rug with everyone else. He remained at the back table while group time started. The teacher and the other children ignored his fake cries. Once the lesson started though, he was interested, so he went to the rug and listened. During math time that day, everyone had their own whiteboard and marker to write problems with. Conrad kept hitting his board with his marker and was given a warning from his teacher. When he proceeded to hit the board she took it away. He was very sad about not being able to use the materials and sat angrily with his head down.

Over the semester I observed the different types of conversations Conrad held with others. I noticed that he often liked to talk about his favorite television shows, toys, and hobbies. His conversations are often one-way because they are usually negative. For example, at the start of an activity during group time, Conrad said, “No, not thiiisss!” The teacher responded, “Conrad, I don't want to hear anything negative” and the other children yelled out things like, “I like this activity!” Whenever I first saw Conrad in the morning he was very kind to me. One morning he said to me, “Good morning, I missed you a lot.” That same day he pointed out a Band-Aid on a girl’s finger and said, “Oh, I'm sorry, what happened to your finger?” His conversations range from sympathy to complaints.

I also observed reactions of students and the teacher. Other kids often ignore him when he is misbehaving. They do not respond to him mainly because they do not want to get in trouble but also because they want to participate in the lessons or activities going on. The teacher ignores his talking-out most of the time, unless he is talking loud enough to block out her voice. When this happens, she reminds him to be respectful and if it happens again she sends him to a table by himself until he is ready to listen. Conrad plays a lot on his own but does have one friend in the class he likes to play with and talk to. He is not necessarily shy but others don't attach to him well because of his short temper.

I noticed that his teacher has a certain way to deal with misbehavior, which works for her most of the time. If Conrad or any other students speak out of turn during rug time, they get a chit chat minute. Each chit chat minute is a minute that the student stays inside during recess with their head down on the desk. Conrad often gets chit chat minutes and is encouraged to think about what he could do better the next day. One day he cried because he got a chit chat minute, but once the teacher told him that he could also get minutes for crying, he soon stopped.

For better management, Ms. Godfrey often chooses subjects that the children can relate to. One day the objects used in math were toy cars. Conrad told me earlier how much he loves cars and he was also wearing a Car's t-shirt. During the math lesson he sat very quietly and paid attention the whole time. Ms. Godfrey uses a technique when choosing students to help her. She says, “I'm going to pick someone who is sitting crisscross-applesauce.” When she says this I see Conrad doing all he can to sit quietly with his arms folded.

Ms. Godfrey set up a plan with Conrad and his parents to help with his in-class behavior. Conrad is sent home every day with a note about his behavior with a number 1-5 on it. The better behavior during class, the higher the number. The higher number he gets, the more time he has to spend on the computer each day at home. The students who are respectful during the day go home with a stamp on their hand. However, if Conrad gets less than three points on his note he does not receive a stamp. He really likes getting stamps so the plan helps his behavior.

I talked to Conrad's teacher about his behavior and asked what she thinks caused his misbehavior problem. She told me that his parents got divorced and his dad got remarried. He felt really left out once his father found a new wife and felt that she had replaced him. He recently got divorced again and Conrad moved down with his mom. He had a hard time adjusting to the changes. The teacher also believes that his home life is a lot less structured than school and that his parents allow him do what he wants for the most part. When he gets to school he feels like he can walk all over everyone. However, she did say that he is a lot better than he was at the beginning of the year, both his behavior and his academic level. The more his behavior improves the more his academic skills improve.

Conrad gets his feelings hurt quite often and gets frustrated very easily. I was told by his teacher that he used to kick his head when he didn't get a turn or when he had to do something he didn't want to do. He seems to have poor self-esteem which may be a result from being told “No” or from being ignored by other children.

As I observed Conrad, many management ideas came into my head. As I observed further, I saw that his teacher had already thought of those techniques. So I decided there must be something about this child that just is a little but different. He is a defiant student and often talks back and has tantrums when he doesn’t get his own way. So I thought, how in the world can this child be managed?

I think that Conrad would do better if he sat in the front of the rug so he wasn't distracted as easily. He does fine if he gets into the activity or lesson, so I think he needs to be closer to the smart board.

I think that he needs to be portrayed more to the class as a good student. I strongly believe that if you tell a child he is naughty, he will act naughty and if you tell a child he is a wonderful student, he will live up to that expectation. I do like the idea that his teacher is using to reward him with computer game minutes at home.

Although I would rather reward than punish, consequences for misbehavior are indeed necessary. At the beginning of the year I would go over a few classrooms rules while also having the children come up with some. Although it is difficult, I believe it is very important to remain consistent with rules throughout the year. If a child breaks a rule he or she will have some sort of consequence, every time. This way children who have more freedom at home will not immediately walk all over the teacher. I would also point out positive behaviors in children to them, their parents, and also to other students. I think that these behavior modification techniques would work well with Conrad.

When Conrad talks out of turn or talks-back I think he should be ignored. If the teacher creates a conversation out of his back-talk, he will be likely to repeat the misbehavior to gain attention. However, I would encourage Conrad to participate in the activities and lessons by giving him a turn to tell a story, an idea, or tell something about himself. If he is given time to talk to the whole class, he may not feel the need to try and steal their attention every second of the day.

By observing Conrad, I have found him to be a sweet boy with a creative mind. He is often seen as naughty by other children but he is just different in the ways he chooses to misbehave. He is not intentionally cruel to people, he just wants attention or wants to see someone react. I believe that his teacher is a wonderful because she is very patient and does not get angry or raise her voice. His behavior has improved throughout the school year and I believe he will continue to improve as long as his future teachers use behavior modification techniques and are patient with him.