



# A Guide to Helping Your Child with Problem Behaviors

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# What is Behavior?

- Behavior is every activity in which living organisms engage
- Children with Autism often have difficult behaviors because they lack the ability to communicate their needs and wants in an appropriate way.
- To eliminate the unwanted behavior, the child needs to be helped to have their needs and wants met in a constructive way.

# Functions of Behavior

- According to ABA principles, all behaviors occurs or more of the possible functions.
- Attention
- Escape
- Tangible (wanting to have access to items or activities)
- Automatic Reinforcement

# Applied Behavior Analysis

- The analysis focuses on the principles that explain how learning takes place. Positive reinforcement is one such principle. When a behavior is followed by some sort of reward, the behavior is more likely to be repeated.
- Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the use of these techniques and principles to bring about meaningful and positive change in behavior.

# Before You Begin

- Before you begin to address problem behaviors it is important you conduct a preference assessment.
- This will help you determine what is really reinforcing to your child.
- You might want to isolate a really powerful reinforcer and only use it for a particularly challenging behavior.

# Identify the Target Behavior

- Describe problem behaviors that need to be changed.
- How long has the behavior been a concern
- When was it first noticed?
- By whom?
- To identify possible reasons for the behavior, keep a log of what happens before the behavior, the behavior itself, and what happens after

# ABC Data

- A - Antecedent
- B - Behavior
- C – Consequence
- Helps you identify the circumstances surround the behavior. If can pinpoint and change some of the circumstances maybe you can change or eliminate the problem behavior.

## ABC Analysis Data Sheet

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of behavior(s) of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments/Function

# Behavior Intervention at Home

- After keeping this log for several days to a week, try to identify the cause of the behavior.
- In the above example, Steve's tantrums are the result of a desired item (fruit snacks) being taken away after he tried to access them inappropriately
- Provide a way for the child to get their need met in an appropriate way.
- Depending on the skills of the child, he could be taught to ask for a snack (I want a snack please). For a non-verbal child, provide pictures of snacks the child likes, and teach him to present the picture for a snack when he is hungry.

# Behavior Intervention at Home

- If you have correctly identified the cause of the problem behavior and provided a solution that works for the child, the undesired behavior should decrease.
- If the behavior does not decrease, go back to making a log of the behavior, and look for different possible causes and/or solutions.

# A Little Note on Tackling Stereotypy

- If you feel that stereotypy is becoming intrusive in your life and that of your child's you might want to consider implementing a DRO.
- DRO – Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior.
- As the name suggests you will be reinforcing your child for other behavior that is not stereotypy or problem behavior.

# Setting Up a DRO

- Start by reinforcing the absence of stereotypy (or other targeted behavior) on a fixed interval schedule.
- Start reinforcement on a short time schedule.
- Increase time in small increments as behavior decreases.
- For example: Start reinforcing the absence of flapping every 15 seconds. After a few days of success slowly increase the time schedule. A 3-5 second increase at first. The time increments can also increase with success.
- As with challenging problem behaviors you might want to isolate a specific reinforcer for your DRO.

# Using the Resources Around You

- Some helpful websites
- <http://www.positivereinforcementforkids.com/>
- <http://www.educateautism.com/token-economy.html>
- <http://www.behaviorbabe.com/acronymsandterms.htm>
  
- Consult your child's behavior team at school. Talk to his or her case manager. Your support team has a wealth of information and tips they can share.