

ECHO IDAHO

**K12 Supporting Students
with Autism**

Behavioral Strategies: How to determine function and prevention strategies to use

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Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to list the four functions of behavior.
- Participants will be able to identify some prevention strategies to use in the classroom/school environment.



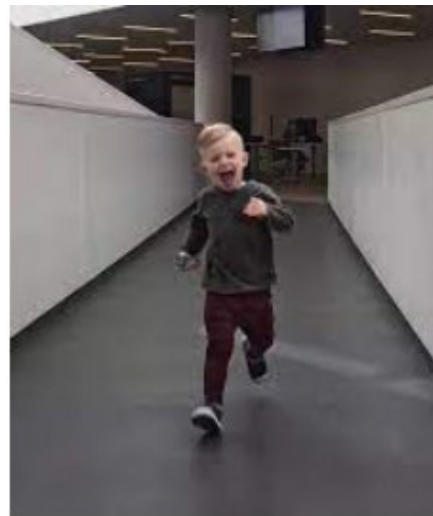
ABCs of Behavior

Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

- A = antecedent – what happened just before the behavior?
- B = behavior – specifically define what it is so everyone can observe it and measure it
- C = consequence – what happened just after the behavior?
- We need to understand the relationship between the antecedent, behavior and consequence to change behavior.

Behavioral Functions

- ABC data can help us hypothesize why the behavior occurs.
- The why = the function of the behavior.
- Behavior occurs for four reasons :
 - A **TANGIBLE** function
 - An **ATTENTION** function
 - An **ESCAPE** function
 - An **AUTOMATIC** function



How do we know the Function of a Behavior?

- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Collect ABC data – gold standard is 2 wk of data
- Interview those who work with the student
- Begin to formulate a hypothesis/look for patterns
- A lot of observation, across time, settings, adults, days of the week – get the whole picture of what's going on
- Observe peers to see what they're doing in the same situation (discrepancy analysis)

Why do we want to know the Function?

- To choose the correct strategy:
- Example: 2 children in the classroom making funny noises during independent seat work, sent to principal's office.
- 1st child - escape function (math was too hard)
- 2nd child - attention function (peer attention)
- Same behavior - different function
- Strategies would look different based on the function

Knowing Function...

- Can help us find a replacement behavior to teach that is more appropriate
- Look for an incompatible behavior
- Replacement behaviors should serve the same function and:
 - Work every time
 - Require less effort
 - Work quickly for the child
 - Be something that the child can already do

Antecedent Intervention

- **Preventing** a behavior from occurring, getting out ahead of it!
- Examples:
 - Doing things in Small Doses
 - Functional Communication Training
 - Control the Environment
 - Avoid situations or people
 - Auditory or Visual Cues (Visual Schedule, timers, lists)
 - Change the order of Events
 - Change how you ask or respond (Providing Choice)
 - Respond to Early Signs of the Problem
 - Addressing Setting Events

Doing things in Small Doses

- Only present math problems a few at a time, seeing a whole page may trigger behaviors
- Come to the last 10 minutes of a special or the first 10 minutes, if the environment is too chaotic, loud, or overwhelming
- Only do part of an assembly
- Chunk up assignments so they're not overwhelming and give a visual of how much work is expected until they get a reinforcer



Control the Environment

- Remove items that are dangerous, keep things put away if off limits
- Keep peers separated that might trigger the student
- Transition before/after the class
- Decrease clutter/stimuli in the environment
- Have the materials you need in your control
- Try to keep the wait time to a minimum – this is where lots of behaviors happen because we're not always prepared enough ahead of time (or give them something to do while waiting)

Avoid Situations or People

- Think outside the box
- Eat lunch in alternate location
- Transition before/after the class
- Take a different route to the location to avoid a common trigger
- Be very thoughtful about group assignments
- Sometimes switching to a different staff member is very effective



Auditory or Visual Cues



- Visual Schedule!!! (Choiceworks app)
- Visual timer, auditory timer
- Visual of expectations for the activity (quiet hands, eyes forward, quiet mouth)
- Visual outline of their spot/space
- Visual of how much work

Change the Order of Events

- Avoid going from a highly preferred activity to a non-preferred activity
- Slip in a neutral activity if possible (coming to the table/classroom)
 - Kinetic sand/thera-putty to come to table
 - Picture book of her doing her favorite things
 - Reading a story
- Change the time of the demand (maybe clean up in the afternoon)
- First reading then time on the iPad

Change how you ask or respond

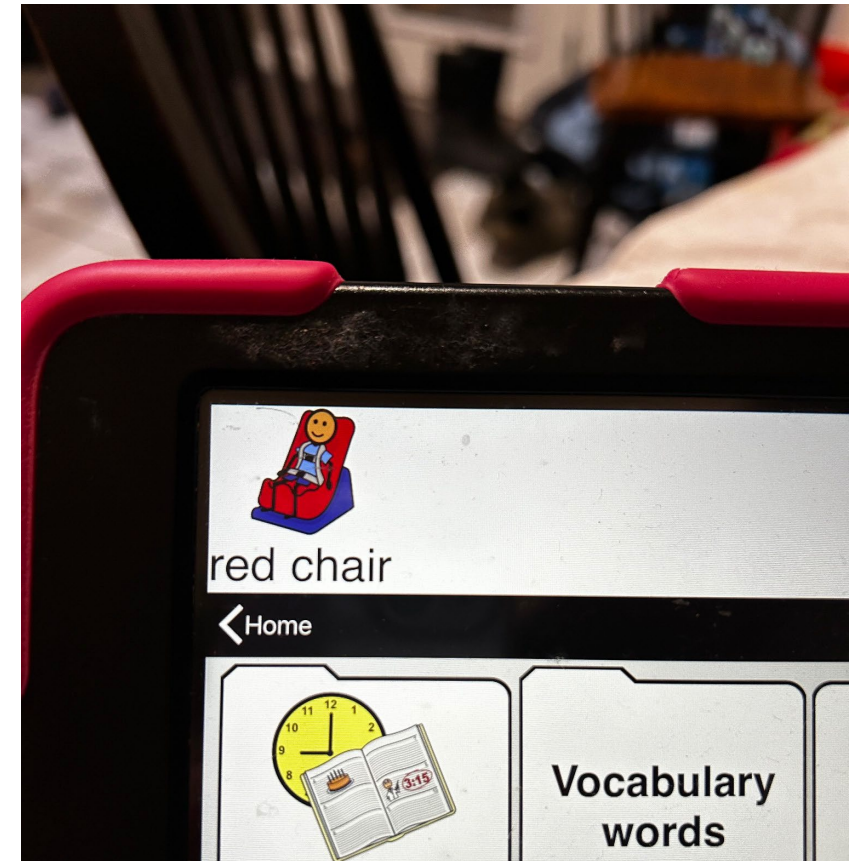
Give choices!!

Give warnings (5 minutes until we need to stop this preferred activity and transition)

Consider your tone and body language

Keep it Positive – Praise:Demand Ratio (5:1)

What words are you using, is it too many, can you use a visual instead?



Respond to Early Signs of the Problem

- Learning those early warning signs (precursor behaviors) and step in when those are exhibited
 - Head down on desk, hood on
 - Body gets tense, breathing rate increases
 - Face gets red
 - Whining, complaining
- Offer help, give more prompts
- Prompt to get a drink or go for a walk



Addressing Setting Events

- Hunger, Tired, Missed Medications, Fight on the bus, parent out of town, changed schedule, substitute teacher
- Mitigate as best you can, offer snacks throughout the day, cat nap, medications at school for missed dose, warn them about changes, practice tolerance for change
- A day vs B day expectations – have these planned ahead of time



Questions???

References

- Cooper, Heron, Heward. 2016. Applied Behavior Analysis, 3rd Edition.
- UC Davis Mind Institute Modules:
<https://health.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/centers/cedd/adept.html>
- Autism Internet Modules:
<https://autisminternetmodules.org/>

