

UNM CDD/NMPED Educator Voices Podcast Evidence Based Practices – Antecedent Interventions

Antecedent intervention involves **altering the environment before the behavior of concern occurs, with the goal of preventing it from occurring.** In this case “the environment” means everything going on in the classroom – sights, sounds, smells, teacher and peer interactions or lack of interaction, routine, on and on! Most of the components of tier one supports in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support are antecedent interventions.

One perception about Applied Behavior Analysis is that it is focused primarily on stopping challenging or inappropriate behaviors. Actually, ABA is primarily focused on figuring out how to keep those behaviors from happening and to teach students more “functional” ways of interacting within their environments. In talking with teachers about challenging behaviors, I am sometimes asked “do you want to see it happen?” The answer is usually no, however, if it is clear what triggers a behavior, chances are there is at least one antecedent intervention that can help to prevent that behavior from happening or there is a way to “shape” interactions so that the student will eventually learn more functional ways of interacting with the environment. (That’s a topic for another podcast!)

While it is not possible to identify and describe all antecedent interventions, let’s think about a few that are commonly used. There are also some resources at the end that you can consult for further information.

- Choice – students may choose, for example:
 - Reinforcers
 - Materials
 - Order of instructional tasks
 - Partners/Peers
 - Locations
- Prompting (Listen to the prompting podcast)
 - Remember that prompts must also be faded in order to increase the student’s independence and avoid prompt dependence
- Priming – Prepares children for an upcoming activity or event that is usually hard for them. Priming is most effective if it is built into a classroom or individual routine
- High-probability sequence – The instructor quickly presents easy tasks that a student consistently does on their own before presenting the task (or part of the task) that a student does not do. (Also known as behavioral momentum)
- Noncontingent reinforcement - NCR is the presentation of a reinforcer, independent of the presence of a specific behavior. It involves giving the student a reinforcing activity or item frequently enough so that they are no longer motivated to behave in disruptive ways to get that same reinforcer.

- For example: If a student routinely gets positive attention for routine classroom behaviors, the student will not be motivated to wander around the room, call out or be disruptive in other ways.
- Time delay – allowing an increasing amount of time between an instruction and a prompt. This helps the student to respond correctly from the beginning of instruction and then to respond without the prompt as the delay is increased.
- Visual supports
https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/sites/autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/documents/VisualSupports_Complete.pdf
- Schedules
https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/sites/autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/files/VisualSchedules_Steps.pdf

Resources:

<https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/sites/autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/documents/ABI-complete-2010.pdf>

Luiselli, J.K Ed. (2006) *Antecedent assessment & intervention; Supporting children and adults with developmental disabilities in community settings*. Paul Brookes Publishing, Baltimore, MD