CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT & DISABILITY

# Integrating Evidence-Based Practices & ABA Principles in the Early Childhood Classroom: Functions of Behavior

AUTISM PROGRAMS
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND DISABILITY

# A Message from NMPED

"*Evidence-based interventions for individuals with ASD are not universal. Although these are evidenced based interventions, they should be individualized for that particular student. In the education setting, the IEP team will develop the plan for that student. The IEP team shall review an IEP at least on an annual basis.*"

# Want More Info?

Visit the CDD Autism Portal

https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/

Visit the Region 9 Education Cooperative

https://www.rec9nm.org/New-Mexico-Autism-Project-Through-PED

# Objectives

Participants will:

1. Become familiar with the 4 functions of behavior.
2. Become familiar with ABC data collection.
3. Become familiar with various function-based strategies to reduce challenging behaviors and increase desired behaviors.

# What is the Goal of School?

- Increase student learning
- Support development in all learning domains
- Increase independence
- Create environments for students to feel safe
- Prepare students for future environments

A common setback in reaching these goals is caused by challenging behavior.

# Challenging vs Not Challenging

When considering what may be a challenging behavior, it can be helpful to ask these questions:

- Is this behavior appropriate for a student this age?
- Does the student understand what they are being asked to do?
- Does the student have the prerequisite skills to participate in the assignment/activity?

# Let’s Talk Behavior…

- Behavior is learned.
- Behavior is a form of communication.
- Behavior has a function.

In order to manage behavior, we first need to understand it.

# Considerations

- Is the student continuously engaging in the behavior?
- How do others respond to the behavior?

If a student engages in the same behavior over time, the behavior is likely being reinforced.

# 4 Functions of Behavior

1. Escape: to get away from a person, place, or thing.
2. Attention: to gain access to meaningful interpersonal interaction.
3. Tangible: to gain access to an object or activity.
4. Automatic (sensory): to gain access to visual, auditory or kinesthetic input using one's own body (not socially mediated).

# Functions of Behavior: Escape

| | |
|---|---|
| Escape | A student may engage in a behavior to get away from a person, place, or thing in the school environment. |

# Functions of Behavior: Attention

| | |
|---|---|
| Attention | A child may engage in a behavior to gain access to a meaningful interpersonal interaction in the school environment. |

# Functions of Behavior: Tangible

| | |
|---|---|
| Tangible | A student may engage in a behavior to gain access to an object or activity in the school environment. |

# Functions of Behavior: Automatic (Sensory)

| | |
|---|---|
| Automatic (Sensory) | A student may engage in a behavior that is not socially-mediated in the school environment. |

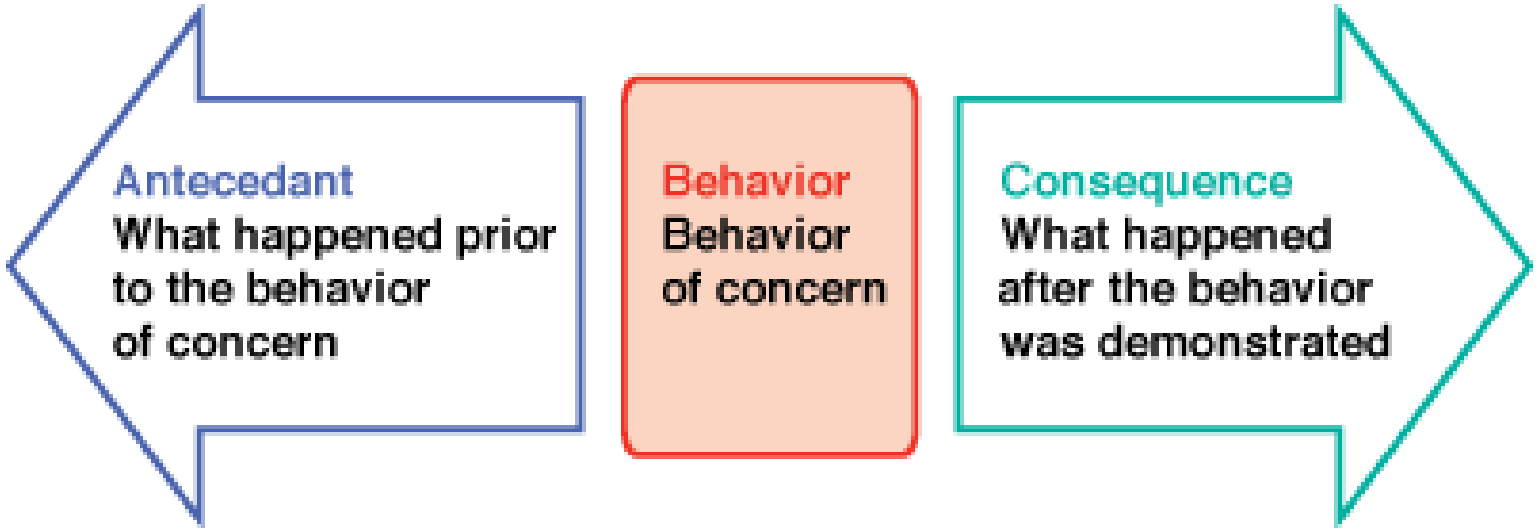
# Defining a Behavior

A behavioral definition should be:

- Clear
- Precise
- Objective
- Measurable

# Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence

- The purpose of ABC data is to establish patterns.
- It is only collected until a hypothesis is formed.



# ABC Data Form Example

| Setting | Antecedents | | Behavior | Consequence | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Date/Time:**<br><br>**Location:** | *Access to tangibles:*<br>___ item removed | *Access to attention:*<br>__verbal attn. removed<br>__phys. attn removed<br>___peer attn removed<br>___eye contact removed | | *Access to tangibles:*<br>___removed item returned<br>___new item presented | *Access to attention:*<br>___verbal attn. given<br>___phys. attn given<br>___peer attn given<br>___eye contact given |
| **Inx/peers involved:** | *Escape:*<br>__task direction given<br>___transition/activ. change<br>___attention given<br>___item presented | *Other/Automatic:*<br>__no items given/ removed<br>__no attention given/ removed<br>__no tasks/activ. given/removed<br>__other_____ | | *Escape:*<br>___task direction removed<br>___transition/activ. no longer required<br>___attention removed<br>___item removed | *Other/Automatic:*<br>__no items given/ removed<br>__no attention given/ removed<br>__no tasks/activ. given/ removed<br>__other_____<br>_____ |

# ABC Data Can Tell Us…

- Where the behavior is occurring
- With whom the behavior is occurring with
- When the behavior is occurring
- Activities during which the behavior is occurring
- What others are doing before, during, and after the behavior

Most importantly, ABC data can provide a hypothesis of behavioral function.

# Effectiveness of Function-Based Strategies

Function-based strategies allow the student to be taught functionally equivalent replacement behaviors.

A replacement behavior:

- Must serve the same function as the challenging behavior
- Requires less physical effort than the challenging behavior
- Allows the student access to desired outcomes
- Socially acceptable
- Can be shaped to eventually contact reinforcement in the natural environment

# Make Challenging Behavior Inefficient

Tips for teaching functionally equivalent replacement behaviors:

- Don’t assume the student already knows how to engage in the replacement behavior
- Model and reinforce approximations of the replacement behavior
- Schedule, review, and practice the replacement behavior regularly
- Use data to ensure the child has learned the replacement behavior and are using it appropriately and independently

# Strategies for Replacement Behavior: Escape

Common strategies for functionally equivalent replacement behaviors include:

- Teaching a student to ask for a break
- Teaching a student to ask for help

# Strategies for Replacement Behavior: Attention

Common strategies for functionally equivalent replacement behaviors include:

- Teaching a student to appropriately seek attention from peers
- Teaching new social skills, such as greetings, waiting, turn taking
- Teaching a student to ask for help

# Strategies for Replacement Behavior: Tangible

Common strategies for functionally equivalent replacement behaviors include:

- Teaching a student to request a preferred item/activity appropriately
- Teaching a student to accept a delay in access to a preferred item/activity

# Strategies for Replacement Behavior: Automatic

Common strategies for shaping the use of automatically reinforced behaviors:

- Response Interrupt and Redirect (RIRD). Interrupting the behavior and redirecting the student to engage in a different activity.

Note: If a student is engaging in stereotypy, we can shape the student's use of stereotypy so that it is least stigmatizing for different environments. Students should be allowed to engage in stereotypy, as it is form of play that is unique to that student. There are typically no functionally equivalent replacement behaviors for behaviors that are automatically reinforced.

# Replacement Behaviors: Key Points

Faster

- The replacement behavior has to provide access to a tangible, escape, or attention more quickly than the challenging behavior.

Easier

- The replacement behavior needs to be easier for the individual to implement than the challenging behavior.

More Reliable

- The replacement behavior has to gain reinforcement more frequently and more consistently than the challenging behavior.

# Resources

- UNM CDD Online Training Resources
  - https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/online-training/
- Tools for Challenging Behavior
  - https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/2021/03/04/tools-for-challenging-behavior/
- Evidence-Based Practices in Classrooms
  - https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/2021/04/14/evidenced-based-practices-in-classrooms/
- PBIS World
  - https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/teach-social-skills/
- Autism Classroom
  - www.autismclassroomresources.com

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