

Behavior: What are you trying to tell me?

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behavior is
communication

Why are they doing that??

Common reasons for behaviors

There are four functions of behavior

Escape

Attention

Tangible

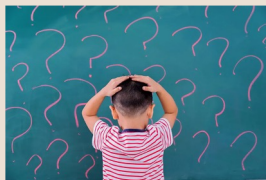
Sensory

Laying the Foundation for Behavior Strategies

Predictable

Children know what to expect from daily schedules and routines.

- Visual schedules
- Organize your child's space as much as possible
- Scaffolding their skills in the home



Consistent

Response to behaviors consistent

- Behavior strategies are consistent and fair
- Expectations are clear
- Everyone is "on board"



Laying the Foundation for Behavior Strategies

Positive

Antecedent strategies are used to create a positive classroom environment

- Positive praise
- Clear expectations
- Peer teaching/modeling



Safe

Children understand the expectations and are given choices and opportunities to engage and grow






Strike while the iron is cold. Setting your child up for success:

Schedules and Planning

- As much as possible, give ample time for activities, etc
- If changes come up, communicate that as quickly as possible
- Be aware of how your child responds to a busy schedule (some love it, some do not)
- Provide specific time estimations



Strike while the iron is cold. Setting your child up for success: Visuals

- Aren't just for school - can help at home with multiple areas
- Schedules - can be simple and basic or very detailed
- Visuals of thing you have to repeat all the time (to reduce verbal fatigue)
- Positive reinforcement
 - Token boards
 - First thens
 - Behavior maps

Strike while the iron is cold. Setting your child up for success:

Set the Tone

- Know what YOU need to self regulate in order to do the same for your child
- Response - response: your reactions emotions affect your child's
- Have a plan to "tag out" if possible when you need time
- Depending on their skill level, shar with your child how you feel to normalize emotions

Boom! **Behavior Happens.**

Despite best laid plans, behaviors will happen.



01

Escape Maintained



Escape Maintained Behavior

Escape behaviors are behaviors that

- delay, avoid, or end an unwanted task or event
- are extreme enough to avoid the unpleasant event

What a child may use to escape a task can depend on the environment they are around.

- **work/task/chore**– it could be certain types of tasks, too difficult work, or some children seem to avoid most “work”
- **social situations**– for children with autism, socializing can be a struggle and something to avoid!
- **sensory experience/environment**– some activities or settings might be too overwhelming; environments with extremely loud noises, flickering fluorescent lights, or too much activity could be quite aversive for some children

Escape Maintained Behavior

- If a challenging behavior occurs for a long time, it's probably because IT WORKS!
 - Ex: Johnny is told it's time to brush his teeth. Johnny falls to the floor, crying, and kicking his legs. He shouts out "milk". He is given a cup of milk and told to go sit down while drinking it. Johnny stops crying, sits down, and drinks his milk.



Escape Maintained Behavior

Examples:

- Running away when a parent call them to get ready for bed
- Pushing vegetables around the plate or throwing them on the floor at mealtime.
- Stall tactics before bedtime.
- Tantrum or Physical aggression when a parent tries to comb a child's hair.
- Substituting words or avoiding phrases in conversations that are difficult or are triggers for stuttering.
- Whining about the difficulty of math problems when a parent helps with homework.



Escape Maintained Behavior

Strategies:

Find functionally equivalent replacement behaviors: What can your child do instead of that behavior that is more safe and appropriate?

- Offer breaks and teach to ask for breaks or help
- Using calming strategies to do difficult tasks
- Make tasks easier
- Shorter work sessions or chunking tasks into smaller steps
- Offer choices for tasks or order tasks are completed

Escape Maintained Behavior

Strategies:

Find functionally equivalent replacement behaviors: What can your child do instead of that behavior that is more safe and appropriate?

- Demand fading-reinforce for small steps toward a bigger goal
- “Easy, easy, easy, hard”- start with easy tasks, then switch to a harder task
- Less work as work gets done
- Use visuals or schedules

02

Attention Maintained



Attention Maintained Behaviors

Attention can come in many forms from **parent reprimands to praise.**

Attention maintained behaviors can look very similar to escape maintained behaviors which is why it's important to know the FUNCTION, so we can teach appropriate replacement behavior.



Attention Maintained Behaviors

Behavior Examples:

- whining
- fighting
- talking back
- swearing
- yelling out can all be attention seeking behaviors
- climbing furniture
- running away from parent (if the purpose is to gain attention for these behaviors)



Attention Maintained Behaviors

Strategies:

- Planned ignoring- along with praising the appropriate behavior, you ignore the inappropriate behavior (unless it is dangerous or disruptive)
- Non-contingent attention- pre-planned or scheduled attention; if your child is engaging in attention seeking behavior, giving them more attention may decrease the likelihood of inappropriate behavior to get it (extra play time together, reading books together, playing outside, watching a movie, cuddling, etc.)
- Token economy- points or token systems



03

Tangible Maintained



Tangible Maintained Behaviors

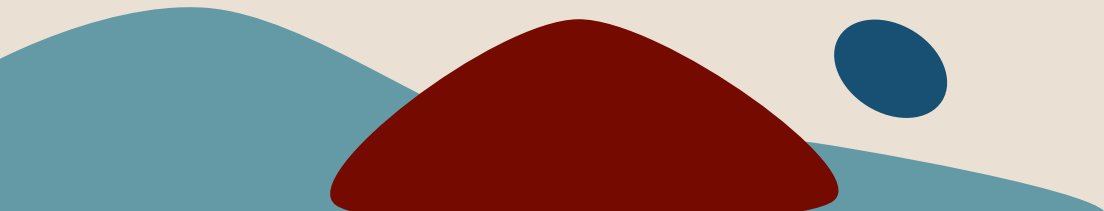
- We want what we want and we want it now!
- As adults, we typically can wait, be patient, or regulate ourselves, but many children still need practice.
- What do we do if what we want is not available?



Tangible Maintained Behaviors

Strategies:

- Teach your child how to get what they want
 - Appropriate ways to get their needs met
- Set up the environment for success
 - Out of sight, out of mind
- Build in opportunities to get that thing/person



Tangible Maintained Behaviors

- Say what you mean, and mean what you say
 - Ex: Lily takes a whole snack size bag of Skittles from the pantry. You see her and direct her to put it back. You say, "It's dinner time. "First, eat your dinner, then you can have 4 Skittles." Even if Lily cries or tantrums for 3 minutes and you give her the Skittles before dinner, she may learn that if she tantrums, she will still get the candy.



04

Sensory Maintained





Sensory Maintained Behaviors

It's part of the diagnostic criteria of autism – stereotyped and repetitive behaviors. Children with other disabilities may also have sensory maintained behaviors. This can look different in every child – stimming, flapping, swaying, clapping, lining up items, scripting...

First off, some things to consider:

- How disruptive is the behavior? Target behaviors that are potentially dangerous, extremely disruptive, or limits the child's opportunities for inclusion/socialization.
- Observe the behavior: think about what exactly is reinforcing about the behavior. Is the visual stimulation (watching his hands flap in front of his face), the auditory stimulation (the sound of the movement), or the physical stimulation (how it feels).



Sensory Maintained Behaviors

- Provide your child access to a range of sensory toys and activities to see what he/she gravitates towards
- Incorporate regular sensory breaks into your day – include them on your schedule
- Create visuals for the commonly used sensory toys so your student can ask for it.
- Create mini ‘sensory activities’ that can be used beyond the home – small fidgets that can be brought into the community and school
- Your child can work for the activity (if it’s not dangerous); since this activity is reinforcing, we can maximize on it (think tearing paper, beads, play doh, “talking time” like scripting, etc.)



Sensory Maintained Behaviors

- Designate a specific spot as the “sensory spot”. It can be a certain chair, room, area of a room, etc.
- Not all of these behaviors are “bad”. We don’t necessarily have to “get rid” of them, but may look at ways to make them more discrete
- Reinforce when your child is WITHOUT the behavior

Sensory Maintained Behaviors

Example:

- Self-Injurious Behavior
 - Biting hands
 - Headbanging
 - Skin picking
- Hand flapping
- Vocal tics
- Rocking
- Jumping
- Hand clapping

Strategies:

Find functionally equivalent replacement behaviors: What can your child do instead of that behavior that is more safe and appropriate?

- Oral chew (they have age appropriate ones)
- Applying pressure to their head with their palm gently
- Chewing gum
- Tapping their foot
- Fidget toys/items
- headphones

