

Positive Behavior Strategies

Anne Tofte, BCBA
Behavior Intervention Specialist
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atofte@fusdk12.net

Today we will talk about...

- A 3-step process to improving behavior
 1. Why is he doing that (maladaptive behavior)?
 2. What should he do instead, *to meet the need*?
 3. How does he know that?

(Note: I use he/him/his pronouns for continuity)

1. Why is he doing that?

In other words, what need (or want) is the behavior meeting?

Expressed as what the child *gets* by doing this behavior:

- Attention
- Automatic (fun, sensory)
- Tangibles



1. Why is he doing that?

or what they *get out of* by doing this behavior

- Escape
- Avoid

Often you can figure this out by noting what happens before and after the behavior. How does the behavior change the child's environment?



- No one is talking to me → I scream/tantrum → Mom and Dad come and talk to me
- I don't have a toy → I push my brother and take his toy → now I have a toy
- I want to play and don't know how to initiate → I sit too closely to a peer and stare at him → the peer is now interacting with me
- Mom tells me to do something → I throw all the materials → Mom sends me to my room; now I'm avoiding the initial thing she asked me to do
- Mom approaches → I hit her → She swaps out with Dad

Resources for figuring out the Why

“Functional Assessment Parent Interview”

https://ppsfba.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/0/7/25071730/fait_-_parent_version_a.pdf

<https://www.marshall.edu/atc/files/2013/07/Functional-Assessment-Interview-FAI-93-103.pdf>

<https://www.abainternational.org/media/46721/HanleyFAInterview.pdf>

2. What should he do instead?

What's a better way to meet his need for _____?

Is it more efficient than the original behavior?

(Faster, easier, and more reliable)

Often comes down to communication!



Resources for figuring out the What

“Selecting a replacement behavior”

<https://www.thoughtco.com/replacement-behavior-definition-3110874>

(except “extinction” does NOT mean “ignoring a behavior”)

<https://helpfulprofessor.com/replacement-behavior/>

<https://attachments.convertkitcdn.com/27800/d171b6e0-87a1-4d94-9c53-9b3de6c5a2a4/Replacement%20Behaviors.pdf>

(except nose-picking should involve a tissue)

3. How does he know that?

Has this skill been taught to your child?

Behavior is a skill like reading, or tying shoelaces; it must be taught!

Tell him, show him, break it into steps, praise him when he makes an attempt at it, model for him, physically prompt the behavior, use visual supports, use social narratives, provide lots of practice opportunities, etc.

Don't hesitate to ask your teacher and/or SLP for suggestions. They are experts!

3. How does he know that?

If it has been taught and your child knows how to do it, your job becomes making sure it works for him...

Meanwhile...

Ensuring the maladaptive behavior no longer works for him.

Baseline

Push → Toy

Intervention

Push → No toy

Request → Toy

(Arranging contingencies)

Resources for figuring out the How

“Functional communication training for parents”

<https://www.iloveaba.com/2013/08/fct-functional-communication-training.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7216867/> (Problem and Potential Solution examples)

You don't need to wait for the unwanted behavior and then punish. You just need to teach the replacement behavior/ communication (and make sure it works for him!).

Example: Luis is hitting his mother

1. Why is he doing that?

ABC data shows a pattern:

Mom plays with sister → Luis hits Mom → Mom stops playing with sister to address Luis

Mom talks to a friend she runs into in Target → Luis hits Mom → Mom ends the conversation with her friend to address Luis

Likely answer to question 1 is: Attention from Mom

Example: Luis is hitting his mother

2. What should he do instead, to get attention from his mother?

Luis' parents and SLP decide they will accept the following behaviors as bids for attention:

Holding eye contact with Mom

Raising his arms to be lifted by Mom

Gently pulling on Mom's sleeve

Saying "Muh" (as he's not yet saying "Mom")

Example: Luis is hitting his mother

3. How does Luis know he's supposed to do those other things?

Those behaviors are already happening, so no new teaching is needed.

Everyone in the family begins paying A LOT of attention to Luis whenever he engages in any of the replacement behaviors.

When he hits Mom, another adult (if someone is there with them) prompts him to do one of the replacement behaviors. If Mom and Luis are alone, Mom prompts him while giving minimal attention.

Example: Marcus is throwing things

1. Why is he doing that?

ABC data shows a pattern:

ABA therapist calls Marcus to the table to begin a session → Marcus throws the materials off the table → The ABA therapist prompts Marcus to pick up all the items. She waits him out, so this takes several minutes.

Dad tells Marcus it's time to get ready for bed → Marcus throws his toys all over the room → Dad prompts him to clean up, delaying bedtime routine several minutes

Likely answer to question 1 is: Escape from demands

Example: Marcus is throwing things

2. What should he do instead, to get out of doing things he does not want to do?

Marcus' father and ABA therapist decide they will accept the following behaviors as asking for escape:

Using a break card

Signing "break"

Sitting in the beanbag chair (break area, Time Away area)

Example: Marcus is throwing things

3. How does Marcus know he's supposed to do those other things?

Marcus' family and ABA therapist develop a behavior plan to teach Marcus to engage in the agreed upon communication strategies.

They ensure that EVERY time Marcus uses a break icon, signs "break", or sits in the beanbag chair, they remove demands and tell him he can take a break. They set a timer and re-present the instruction a minute later. They use a visual to show him he can have 3 breaks. After the third break, they follow through with the instruction.

When he throws things, they do not mention the throwing but instead re-present the original instruction.

Example: Joshua is pushing his sister

1. Why is he doing that?

Sister has iPad → Joshua pushes sister → she drops iPad, Joshua picks it up

Likely answer to question 1 is: access to iPad (tangibles)

Example: Joshua is pushing his sister

2. What should he do instead, to get the iPad?

Joshua can ask for a turn using a gesture.

Example: Joshua is pushing his sister

3. How does Joshua know that the gesture = iPad access?

Joshua's parents teach him to ask for a turn using a gesture.

They teach his sister to give him a turn if he asks using a gesture.

They teach both children to get help from an adult. (Sister when he pushes, Joshua when she doesn't give him a turn.)

They use a visual timer to indicate when the turn is over and it's the sibling's turn.

Example: Ali is climbing on furniture

1. Why is he doing that?

ABC data show no pattern, so it's possibly automatically reinforcing.

The behavior *is also* the reinforcer.

Likely answer to question 1: It's fun (automatic/sensory/self-stim)

Example: Ali is climbing on furniture

2. What should he do instead, to have fun? How can he climb appropriately?

Joshua's family teach him Time And Place.

You can climb at the park

You can climb on the play structure at school

You can climb the tree in the backyard

You cannot climb on the furniture in the house

Example: Ali is climbing on furniture

3. How does Ali know that?

His parents make a social narrative with pictures of all the places he can climb.

They explain it to him, and check for his understanding.

They post visual reminders on the furniture at home.

They make a visual menu of how he can play appropriately at home.

They block his access to climbing the furniture. Or, when he climbs, they help him down and review the social narrative with him again, then redirect him to an appropriate game or toy.



Please contact me if I can help.

atofte@fusdk12.net