

Behavior Basics

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Goals for the Presentation

- ▶ Understand the fundamentals of behavior
- ▶ Understand how environmental variables affect behavior
- ▶ Describe how to use these fundamentals to affect behavior change
- ▶ Answer your questions!

What is Behavior

- ▶ Everything that people do!

Behavior and the Environment

- ▶ Behavior doesn't occur in a vacuum

The Three Term Contingency



Antecedents

- ▶ An antecedent is an event that occurs right before the behavior of interest

Consequences

- ▶ A consequence is the event that immediately follows the behavior of interest

ABC Example

https://youtu.be/OV_XHglcF0s

<https://youtu.be/UfFaKg5kVHs>

How Do We Change Behavior?

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Some Rules About Behavior

1. Behavior is strengthened or weakened by its consequences
2. Behavior responds better to positive consequences (Latham, 2000)

Using Positive Consequences

- ▶ The most important activity in behavior management is teaching/increasing functional, desirable skills
- ▶ Positive consequence strengthen behavior

What is Reinforcement

- ▶ Reinforcement is used to increase a desired behavior or skill by giving a child a reward after the desired behavior or skill is used

Steps for Using Reinforcement

1. Identify the behavior or skill

What	How	When
Complete chores	By selecting a chore from a chore list (putting clothes in a laundry basket, washing dishes, etc.)	1 time a day
Ask for a turn	By saying “may I have a turn”	When sibling has an item they want
Give up the iPad	Turn off the iPad and hand it to parent	When told “all done with the iPad”

TIPS

- ▶ Start by selecting behaviors for reinforcement that your child will likely have some success with
- ▶ This may be a skill they know how to do but do not perform all the time
- ▶ Selecting a skill they can do will help them access the reward more quickly and increase the use of that skill over time

Steps for Using Reinforcement

1. Identify the behavior or skill
2. Select the reinforcer/reinforcers

Selecting Reinforcers

- ▶ Identifying potential reinforcers is a critical component of behavior change programs
 - ▶ Learning doesn't occur without reinforcers!
- ▶ Preferences change frequently
- ▶ Many different methods for assessing preference

Selecting Reinforcers

- ▶ Ask the individual
- ▶ Ask relevant others
- ▶ Observe the individual in free-choice settings
 - ▶ Introduce new and novel items and see how the child responds

Common Reinforcers

- ▶ Toys/activities
- ▶ Edible
- ▶ Social

Edible Reinforcers

- ▶ Mini M&M's
- ▶ Goldfish crackers
- ▶ Teddy grahams
- ▶ Ice cream
- ▶ Chips

Toy/Activity Reinforcers

- ▶ Access to the iPad or tablet
- ▶ Computer games
- ▶ Legos
- ▶ Movie
- ▶ Trip to the park
- ▶ Preferred activities
- ▶ Preferred toys

Social Reinforcers

- ▶ Tickles
- ▶ Praise
- ▶ Hugs
- ▶ High-fives
- ▶ Squeezes
- ▶ Cheering

Tips for Using Reinforcers

- ▶ Choose reinforcers that your child does not have free access to
- ▶ Have multiple rewards available
- ▶ When possible ask your child what they want to work for
- ▶ Try to match the reward to the difficulty of the task
- ▶ Provide reinforcers as soon as possible after completion of the target skill

Steps for Using Reinforcement

1. Identify the behavior or skill
2. Select the reinforcer/reinforcers
3. Explain the reinforcement system to your child

Explain the Reinforcement System to Your Child

- ▶ Be specific about what you want your child to do
- ▶ Be specific about how and when the rewards will be given
- ▶ Remember to use language your child will easily understand
- ▶ State things positively

First, Then

First



Then



Steps for Using Reinforcement

1. Identify the behavior or skill
2. Select the reinforcer/reinforcers
3. Explain the reinforcement system to your child
4. Provide the reinforcer

Provide Reinforcer

- ▶ Each time your child performs the desired behavior or skill, provide the reward

Catch Them Being Good

- ▶ Focus on identifying and reinforcing the desirable things your child does
 - ▶ Look for reasons to deliver praise
- ▶ Praise more often than you correct or reprimand
- ▶ Tell them WHY you are praising them

Catch Good Game

- ▶ For 10 minutes, two times a day, track the allocation of your attention/rewards.
- ▶ Goal is to allocate attention for appropriate behaviors at **LEAST 80%** of the time

Catch Good Game Rules

1. Provide **BETTER** reinforcement for **BETTER** behavior.
2. **Limit your attention** for inappropriate behaviors

You Should

Limit Eye Contact

Speak Quietly/Calmly
(if you have to speak at all)

Model Appropriate Behaviors
("Try it like this")

Reward his Attempts to Mimic You

You Should Not

Explain Why Behavior is
Inappropriate

Discuss Rules/Expectations

Give "The Look"

Negotiate

Reprimand

Catch Good Game Rules

3. Pay attention to the little things
 - ▶ Praise the good things your child does on a regular basis without any problems
4. Check ins: track your attention for 10 minutes twice per day by putting a tally mark for each “catch good” and each “catch bad”
 - ▶ Catch good: any type of attention that you provide to your child for any appropriate behavior
 - ▶ Catch bad: any type of attention that you provide for any inappropriate behavior

Catch Good Game

"Catch Good"	"Catch Bad" / Other
	
Total:	Total:
<p data-bbox="980 692 1337 721" style="text-align: center;">Percent of Catch Goods</p> <p data-bbox="356 728 1770 771"># Catch Goods / (# Catch Goods + # of Catch Bad) = $\frac{9}{11}$ x 100 = <u>81</u> % of Catch Goods</p> <div data-bbox="853 778 1235 942" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"><p data-bbox="930 806 1210 928" style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">81 %</p></div>	
<p data-bbox="356 999 980 1028">Note: Catch Good% should be close to 80%</p>	

Key Points

- ▶ Start small
- ▶ Be patient
- ▶ Be positive
- ▶ Avoid accidental reinforcement
- ▶ Always use social praise
- ▶ Fade reinforcement over time

Troubleshooting Reinforcement

- ▶ Your child is not doing the task the way you expect, so the reward is not being earned

Troubleshooting Reinforcement

- ▶ For the first few days, your child was doing the task to earn the reward, but now they have stopped

Troubleshooting Reinforcement

- ▶ Your child's behavior is not changing when you only use social rewards such as "great job" and "good work"

Troubleshooting Reinforcement

- ▶ Your child is not willing to stop the reinforcement activity when it is time to continue working on task or start a new task

Reinforcement

“Research has shown that the most effective way to reduce problem behavior in children is to strengthen desirable behavior through positive reinforcement rather than trying to weaken undesirable behavior using aversive or negative processes.” – S.W. Bijou

The international encyclopedia of education, 1988

Reducing Problem Behaviors

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Problem Behavior

- ▶ All kids engage in problem behaviors
- ▶ Try to remember that problem behaviors are not personal
- ▶ All behavior is a way of communicating
 - ▶ Behavior is not “good” or “bad” it’s functional or serves a purpose

Some Rules About Behavior

1. Behavior is strengthened or weakened by its consequences
2. Behavior responds better to positive consequences
3. Behavior is largely a product of its immediate environment

(Latham, 2000)

**“A”
Antecedent**

**“B”
Behavior**

**“C”
Consequence**

Reducing Problem Behaviors

- ▶ Increase appropriate behaviors
- ▶ Environmental modifications/antecedent strategies
- ▶ Consequence strategies

Antecedent Strategies

- ▶ Antecedent events can greatly impact the likelihood that a particular behavior may occur

Antecedent Strategies

- ▶ When used alone, will not change the entire problem behavior
- ▶ Use with consequence strategies for best results

Antecedent Strategies

- ▶ Where does the behavior happen?
- ▶ With whom does the behavior occur?
- ▶ When does the behavior happen?
- ▶ What activity is the behavior occurring during?
- ▶ What are other adults or children doing when the behavior occurs?

Antecedent Strategies

- ▶ Altering the physical environment
- ▶ Choices
- ▶ Prompting appropriate behaviors
- ▶ Using visuals
- ▶ Free access to rewards that maintain behavior
- ▶ Model appropriate behaviors

Antecedent Modification for Limited Attention

- ▶ Antecedent changes:
 - ▶ Schedule adult attention for specific times throughout the day
 - ▶ Provide attention on a denser schedule
 - ▶ Use visuals to signal when attention will be available

Antecedent Changes for Denied Access

- ▶ Antecedent changes:
 - ▶ If, Then statements (with visual supports)
 - ▶ Schedule times the preferred item will be available
 - ▶ Offer alternative choices that are available
 - ▶ Prompt appropriate requests before behaviors occur

Antecedent Changes for Demands or Non-Preferred Tasks

- ▶ Antecedent changes:
 - ▶ Assign “easier” tasks before more difficult tasks
 - ▶ Provide choices
 - ▶ Visual schedules showing when rewards/preferred activities will occur
 - ▶ Shorten tasks or provide frequent breaks

Consequence Strategies

- ▶ Avoid reinforcement for challenging or inappropriate behaviors
- ▶ Prompt appropriate alternative behaviors when possible

Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviors

- ▶ Do not reinforce or reward inappropriate behaviors
 - ▶ Limit attention
 - ▶ Withhold access to preferred items
 - ▶ Do not let your child out of a task

Reinforce Appropriate Alternative Behaviors

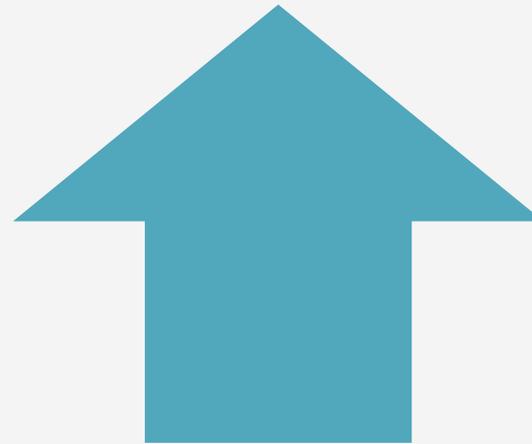
- ▶ Teach and provide reinforcement for appropriate behaviors that access the same reward as previously used inappropriate behaviors



Screaming/crying
to gain access to
parent attention



Saying “play with
me” to gain
access to parent
attention



Choosing Alternative Behaviors

- ▶ Already in the child's repertoire
- ▶ Require equal or less effort than the problem behavior
- ▶ Recognizable by other relevant caregivers

Key Points

- ▶ Behavior goes where reinforcement flows!

Questions!?

References

- ▶ Latham, G. (2000). *The power of positive parenting: A wonderful way to raise children*. P&T ink.
- ▶ Sam, A., Savage, M., Steinbrenner, J., Morgan, W., Chin, J., & AFIRM for Paras Team. (2020). *Reinforcement: Introduction & Practice*. FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina. Retrieved from <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/>

