

# Shaping New Behaviors



**Wendy Zeballos, Ed.D., BCBA-D**

# Common Problems Parents Face



- ❖ My child does not have the skills to perform a specific task.
- ❖ My child has the skill, but he does not perform the task.
- ❖ My child cannot tolerate certain elements of the task (e.g. visit to the dentist).
- ❖ My child will not follow directions.



# Key Concept Of Shaping Behavior

## Reinforcement

- ❖ What is it?
- ❖ What exactly does it do?
- ❖ How often does it occur?
- ❖ How do we present it?
- ❖ Why is it so IMPORTANT?



# Why We Should Use Positive Reinforcement



- ❖ Simple to learn and use
- ❖ Helps your child feel good about him or herself
- ❖ Builds a positive relationship between you and your child
- ❖ Creates a positive environment



# Behavioral Teaching Strategies



## Cycle of Instruction

Instruction → Response → Consequence

Reinforce as quickly as possible to strengthen the desired behavior

### Example

Instruction: Stand Up → Response: Child Stands Up → Consequence: Take a break

# Behavioral Approach To Teaching New Skills



- ❖ Decide on a target.
- ❖ Reduce a complex skill (behavior) into smaller elements.
- ❖ Use prompts and prompt fading to teach individual elements.
- ❖ Use reinforcement to strengthen the new skill.



# Teaching Procedures



- ❖ Imitation Training
- ❖ Shaping
- ❖ Differential Reinforcement
- ❖ Prompts

# Teaching Using Imitation Training



- ❖ Assessing prerequisite skills is necessary prior to using any procedure.
- ❖ The goal of imitation training is to teach children to do what the person providing the model does.
- ❖ To use this technique, the child must have an imitative repertoire.

## **Example:**

- Can my child remain seated?
- Can my child look at me?
- Can my child look at objects?
- Can my child keep his hands in his lap?



# Guidelines For Imitation Training



- ❖ Keep the teaching active and brief.
- ❖ Reward both prompted and imitative responses.
- ❖ Pair verbal praise and attention with a tangible reward.
- ❖ If your child's progress breaks down, back up, and move ahead slowly.
- ❖ Remember to fade out verbal and physical prompts.
- ❖ Stop imitation training when your child consistently imitates others.

# Imitation Training Example

Parent says, “do this.”



Child imitates.



Parent says, “awesome” and gives a tangible reward.



# Definition of Shaping



- ❖ Shaping is the reinforcement of successive approximations of a target behavior.
- ❖ Shaping is a way of adding a new behavior to a child's repertoire.
- ❖ Shaping is used when the target behavior does not exist.
- ❖ In shaping, you are rewarding any behavior that is a closer approximation of the target behavior than the behavior you rewarded last.

# Shaping



## ❖ Shaping shares certain features of the game “hot & cold.”

In playing “hot & cold,” you reward any movement that takes the child closer to the prize. Each of those successive movements is a closer approximation of the desired behavior. If the prize is under the couch, and the child is moving toward the couch, every time the child takes a step toward the couch you are yelling, “hotter,” and you are rewarding the behavior. If the child moves away from the couch, you would yell, “colder” (non-rewarding).

Morgan, 1974

# Shaping Behaviors



- ❖ Differential reinforcement rewards only the appropriate responses and discontinues rewards for all other responses.
- ❖ The basic principle of differential reinforcement is discrimination.

Example:

Reward your child for cleaning his or her room before bedtime, and withhold the reward when your child does not clean his or her room.

# Successive Approximations



- ❖ Shaping begins with rewarding responses that will lead to the target behavior.
- ❖ If a new approximation to the target behavior does not occur, you reward the last approximation again.
- ❖ If an approximation is repeated and rewarded three times, you can withhold the reward the next time that behavior appears.
- ❖ If no new approximation to the target behavior appears, you have to go back to a previously rewarded behavior.

# The Shaping Process



- ❖ Shaping can be similar to helping your child up a staircase.
- ❖ Every so often, progress is effortless and goes quickly; other times it is slow and difficult.
- ❖ At times, your child may leap over the next step; then, he may turn and go down the stairs a few steps, and you have to help him up those same steps again.

# Steps Of A Shaping Process



Step  
1

- Select the target behavior.

Step  
2

- Select the initial behavior that your child currently performs and that resembles the target behavior in some way.

Step  
3

- Select powerful rewards with which to reinforce the initial behavior, the successive approximations of the target behavior, and the target behavior.

Step  
4

- Reward the initial behavior until it occurs frequently.

Step  
5

- Reward successive approximations of the target behavior each time they occur.

Step  
6

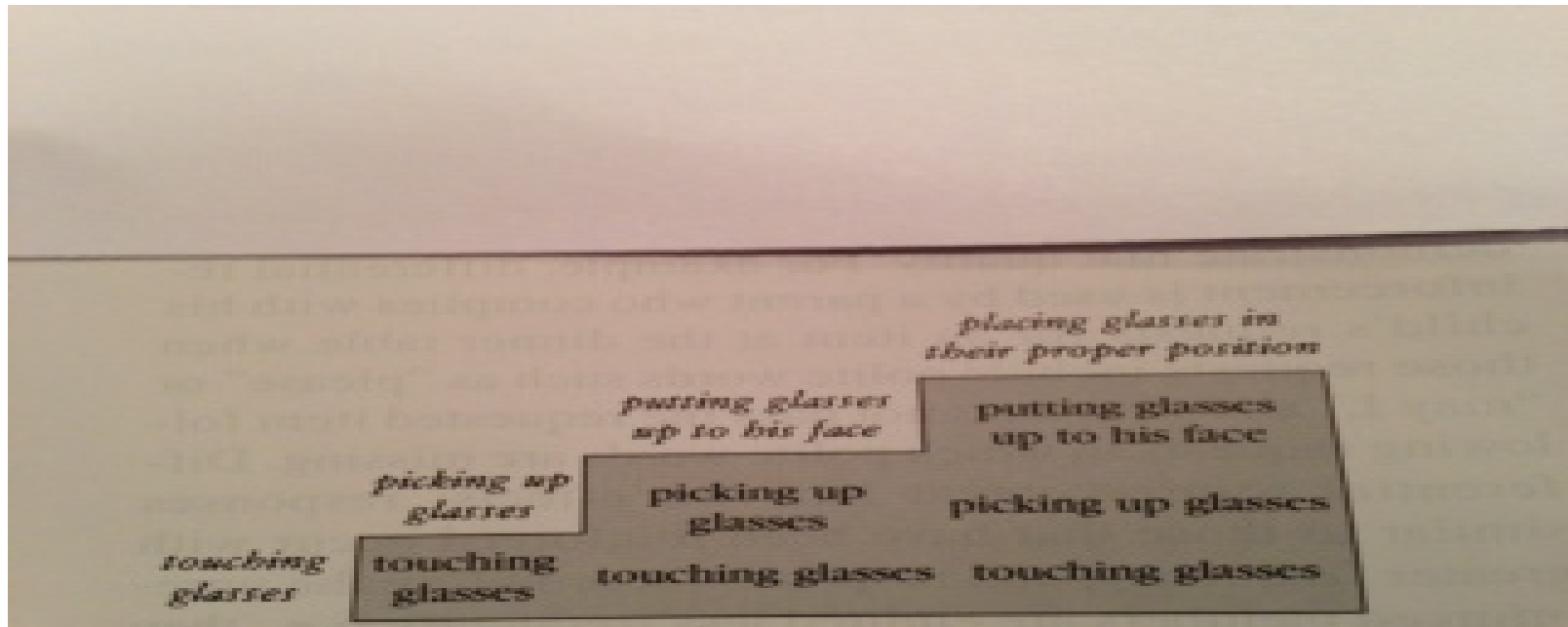
- Reward the target behavior each time it occurs.

Step  
7

- Reinforce the target behavior on an intermittent schedule of reinforcement.



# Shaping To Teach Wearing Glasses



# Shaping To Increase Academics



**Kai tantrums every time he is asked to write his spelling words.**

Step 1: Kai will write his name at the top of the spelling worksheet.

Step 2: Kai will write one spelling word of his choice.

Step 3: Kai will write three spelling words of his choice.

Step 4: Kai will write either all of the odd numbered words or all even numbered words.

Step 5: Kai will write all spelling words except one.

Step 6: Kai will write all spelling words.

# Guidelines For Using Shaping



- ❖ Identify the first behavior to reward.
- ❖ Proceed in small steps.
- ❖ Set a limit of approximations that will be rewarded at each level.
- ❖ Continue to reward until you reach the target behavior.

# Teaching New Skills Using Prompts



## **Why prompts are an important part of teaching new skills.**

- ❖ The function of a prompt is to produce the occurrence of a behavior, so it may be reinforced.
- ❖ They help children perform a correct response, so that the behavior can be reinforced and strengthened.
- ❖ Prompts make teaching more efficient.
- ❖ Prompts increase the chances that a correct response will occur.

# The Three Common Response Prompts

## Verbal Instruction

- Vocal verbal instruction
- Non verbal instruction

## Modeling

- Demonstrate the desired behavior
- Easy and practical to use

## Physical Guidance

- Is effective but intrusive
- Requires direct physical involvement between parent and child

Least to  
Most

Most to  
Least

# Verbal Prompt



Target behavior : Saying thank you

Verbal instruction: And what do you say?



# Modeling Prompt



Target Behavior: Raise arms

Model: Parent raises arms to show the child



# Physical Prompt



Target Behavior: Tying shoe

Physical: Guide them using hand-over-hand





# Effective Prompting



- ❖ Effective prompts focus the child's attention to the instruction.
- ❖ They should be as weak as possible.
- ❖ Remove as quickly as possible.

# Helping Your Child Achieve His Or Her Potential



- ❖ Create opportunities in the environment for the behavior you want to occur.
- ❖ Do not set expectations too high.
- ❖ Use things your child enjoys as rewards.
- ❖ Allow choices when possible.
- ❖ Be consistent.

# References



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