

# Effective Behavior Management Strategies for Caregivers

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# Purpose

- To review the definition of Applied Behavior Analysis.
- To discuss how you can use ABA principles to modify an individual's challenging behaviors.

# Applied Behavior Analysis

- The design, implementation, and evaluation of environmental modifications to produce socially significant improvements in human behavior (Martinez-Diaz, 2007).
- Basically, it is the application of behavioral principles to change behavior in an individual.

# Myths vs. Truths

- If I don't use punishment, my child will never know right from wrong.
  - MYTH
- If I reinforce my child's "good" behaviors all the time, my child will be "spoiled".
  - MYTH
- If I reinforce my child's good behaviors, that is the behavior that I will see increase.
  - TRUTH
- ABA has a few basic, research-based principles which can be broadly applied to effectively manage many behaviors.
  - TRUTH
- ABA is easy to implement.
  - MYTH
- ABA is Discrete Trials Teaching.
  - MYTH
- The Authoritative parenting style most closely resembles ABA interventions.
  - MYTH

# Common Problem Behaviors

- Tantrums
- Self-Injurious Behavior
- Non-Compliance
- Eloping (leaving a safe situation or person)
- Self Stimulatory Behavior (Physical and Verbal)
- Aggression
- Dangerous Climbing
- ETC.

# Basis of Interventions

- In ABA, behavior intervention is determined based upon the function of the behavior.
- Interventions are not based upon diagnosis. Diagnosis has no impact on which interventions will be effective. Rather, one must know the function of behavior to determine an effective intervention.

# Where do we start?

- Formal Assessment:
  - Functional Analysis: Experimentally manipulating environmental variables to determine the function of the problem behavior.
  - Developmental Assessments are used in order to determine which skills to teach.

# 4 Main Functions of Behavior

- Attention
  - Ex. Sandra pulls her hair every time her Mom begins speaking with someone else in the room.
- Attainment of Tangibles
  - Ex. Chris pushes kids over at the park when he wants one of their toys.
- Automatic (Self Stimulatory)
  - Ex. When by herself, Allison sifts sand through her fingers for hours if given the opportunity to do so.
- Escape
  - Ex. Erik runs away each time his grandfather asks him to “come here”.

# Disclaimer

- Every child is different and therefore exhibits behavior for different reasons. 2 children may exhibit the same behavior for different functions.
  - Ex. Screaming
    - Anne screams because she likes to hear herself scream.
    - Roger screams every time he wants someone to open his lunchbox for him.
- Interventions discussed during this presentation are only examples and should not be applied broadly, without proper assessment, or without the aide of a trained professional when necessary.

# 3 Ways to Modify Behavior

- Reactive Strategies: Do something after the behavior occurs.
- Preventative Strategies: Do something before the behavior occurs.
- Replacement Strategies: Teach the child to do something in place of the problem behavior.

# Reactive Strategies

- Escape Based Behavior:
  - Escape Extinction-Follow through with the demand.
  - Ex. Alex's mom asks him to clean up his blocks. Alex pushes the blocks away. Alex's mom prompts him with physical guidance to pick up his blocks.
- Attention Based Behavior:
  - Attention Extinction-Ignore the inappropriate attention based behavior.
  - Ex. George spits on his teacher and laughs when she yells "don't do that!". George's teacher begins ignoring the spitting behavior completely.

# Reactive Strategies Continued:

- Attainment of Tangible Based Behavior:
  - Attention Extinction-Ignore the inappropriate attainment of tangible based behavior. Don't give the child the item.
  - Ex. Carl screams every time he wants a cookie. His dad ignores the screaming behavior and does not give him a cookie.
- Automatically Based Behavior:
  - DRO-Reinforce the child frequently for absence of the problem behavior.
    - Ex. Lucy bites her fingernails for hours when left alone. Every minute that she does not bite her fingernails, she is provided with 5 minutes of her favorite video game.
  - Redirection and DRI/DRA-Reinforce the child for engaging in an alternative or incompatible behavior.
    - Ex. Mark bites his fingernails for hours when left alone. His ABA tutor gives him a ball to squeeze and other activities to do with his hands throughout the session and reinforces him with popcorn each time he engages in these activities.

# Preventative Strategies

- Here are only a couple of examples:
- Behavior Momentum: Place several easy demands and reinforce heavily for following through. Then place the difficult demand and reinforce heavily for following through.
- Task Choice: Provide the child a choice between 2 difficult tasks rather than choosing for the child.

# Replacement Behavior

- Here is an example:
- Teach the child what to do in place of the unwanted behavior (example: teach the child to ask for a cookie rather than screaming to get the cookie).

# Reinforcer Delivery

- Deliver within 0-3 seconds (but no more than 30 seconds)
- Make sure the child is really motivated to receive the reinforcer. This changes often and should be evaluated regularly.

# Bottom Line

- If you reinforce the behaviors you want your child to display and ignore, or quickly and neutrally redirect the behaviors you don't want your child to display, you will get more appropriate behavior and less inappropriate behavior. The research supports this.

# Caregivers: Critical Role

- Caregivers (parents, grandparents, nannies, etc) are on the frontline and have the most contact with and influence over their children. They should be an integral part of any ABA program. They should be trained by their ABA provider so that they have the tools necessary to provide lasting and effective behavioral interventions so they can improve the general quality of life for their children and their families.
- Caregiver (Consult) Training: Should be conducted in the NET (outings, play dates, family events).

# What we (society) tend to do.

- We tend to expect our kids to be “good” and are very neutral when things are going well. But once our children display problem behavior, we point it out, punish them, and tell them never to do it again.

# What we should do:

- Reinforce as much positive behavior as possible throughout the individual's day.
- This is the most powerful tool you will ever have!

# About AIR, Inc.

- Autism Interventions and Resources, Inc. was founded in 2003 by Anahita Renner, MA, BCBA and Ryan Renner, MS, MA, BCBA.
- AIR currently serves over 200 children in California and has served 100's more.
- AIR provides only research based ABA services to reduce problem behavior and increase skills (language, cognitive, academic, adaptive, self-help, motor).
- AIR believes that every child can improve significantly if appropriate interventions are in place.
- Services are provided within the home, community, and school settings.
- AIR headquarters are in Laguna Hills, CA. AIR also has satellite offices in Los Angeles County, Kern County, San Diego County, Riverside County, and the Inland Empire. Please contact AIR for other services areas, as AIR is expanding its services.

# Contact Information

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