Learning Objectives

1. Describe the ABCs of behavior.
2. Apply behavioral principles to understand child behavior.
3. Use specific behavioral strategies to change child behavior.
Antecedent

• Occurs **before** the target behavior
• Can make behavior more or less likely to occur

Examples

• Giving instructions to complete a task
• Placing hearing aids in an easily seen position
• Turning on the TV
Behavior
• What the person does
• Includes thoughts, feelings, and actions

Examples
• Putting hearing aids on
• Arguing with parent
• Feeling frustration
Consequence

- Occurs **after** the target behavior
- Can make behavior more or less likely to occur
  - Reinforcers make behaviors **more** likely to occur
  - Punishers make behaviors **less** likely to occur

Examples

- Praising child
- Taking away privileges
- Ignoring child
How to Apply ABCs

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids → Child cries → Parent withdraws request
How to Apply ABCs

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids

Child cries

Parent follows through on request
How to Apply ABCs

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids

Child cries

Parent follows through on request

Parent withdraws request

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids

Child cries

Parent follows through on request
How to Apply ABCs

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids → Child continues playing → Parent withdraws request
How to Apply ABCs

1. Parent asks child to wear hearing aids and presents them at the same time
2. Child wears hearing aids
3. Parent praises child
How to Apply ABCs

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids

Child continues playing

Parent withdraws request

Parent asks child to wear hearing aids and presents them at the same time

Child wears hearing aids

Parent praises child
Using Antecedents and Consequences Effectively
Antecedents

• Provide simple and specific instructions
  • Mean them
  • Make sure child is paying attention
  • Reduce distractions
  • Check comprehension
  • Wait 5 seconds
  • Use statements not questions: “Danny, put your shoes on now.”
Consequences

• Pay attention to the *effect* of the consequence not its *form*

• Deliver the consequence as soon after the behavior occurs as possible

• Focus on the positive
  • Reinforcement tends to be more effective than punishment
  • Provide specific praise: “Thank you for putting your shoes on, Danny.”
Basic Strategies
Shaping

• Goal: Shape desired behavior through approximations

• How: Reinforce steps toward desired behavior
  • Once child learns each step, only reinforce the next step

  Wear hearing aids for 1 minute

  Wear hearing aids for 2 minutes

  Wear hearing aids for 5 minutes
Extinction

• Goal: Reduce frequency of target behavior

• How: Withhold reinforcers that maintain target behavior
  1. Define target behavior
  2. Identify reinforcers that maintain target behavior
  3. Withhold all reinforcers
  4. Monitor results

• Prepare for extinction bursts
  • Increase in severity of target behavior when it is put on extinction
  • Behavior gets worse before it gets better
Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior

• Goal: Increase alternate behavior while decreasing target (undesirable) behavior

• How: Reinforce alternate behavior and ignore target behavior
  1. Define target behavior
  2. Put undesirable behavior on extinction
  3. Reinforce desired behavior
  4. Monitor results
Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior

"Put on your hearing aids now."

Child cries

Child complies

Parent ignores child

"Thank you for wearing your hearing aids."
Resources

• UW Medicine: Handouts and videos (a few handouts are also available in Spanish)

• Center for Effective Parenting: Handouts (also available in Spanish)