

THE ABCs OF BEHAVIOR

Understanding the pattern of behaviors can help you know how to best address problem behaviors.

A = antecedent—what is happening before a behavior occurs

B = behavior—the actual behavior that occurs

C = consequence—what happens after the behavior occurs. If the consequence is good, the behavior is more likely to happen again; if the consequence is bad the behavior is less likely to happen again.

Let's look at the ABCs using a couple examples.

Example 1:

Antecedent ("A") = a child in a store sees candy in the checkout aisle

Behavior ("B") = the child asks / pesters his mother to buy the candy

Consequence ("C") = the mother buys the child candy

Long-term consequence = the child will be more likely to pester his mother in the future when he wants something since it "worked" for him before.

Example 2:

Antecedent ("A") = a child in a store sees candy in the checkout aisle

Behavior ("B") = the child asks / pesters his mother to buy the candy

Consequence ("C") = the mother ignores the pestering and does not buy the child the candy

Long-term consequence = the child will be less likely to pester his mother in the future since this behavior did not "work" for him.