

# Increasing Positive Behaviors

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## Functional Behavioral Assessment

Antecedent (Before)	Behavior	Consequence (After)

### Antecedent

**Time of Day:** Clock time  
**Setting:** Where? What area of the classroom, home  
**Activity:** What was child doing prior? What were others doing?

### Behavior

What did child do? What did child say?

### Consequence

**Reward/Punishment:** If there was one, what was the punishment/reward?  
**What was gained?:** What did child "get" from the behavior?  
**What was avoided?:** What did child get out of?

## Antecedent

How to set up the environment to help the child succeed?

- Spirit of Cooperation
- Environment
- Good Directions
- Positive Facial Expression/Tone

## Behavior

What behavior do you want?

- Developmentally Appropriate Expectations
- Teaching Prerequisite Skills
- Teach Incompatible Behaviors

## Consequences that Encourage Behavior

- Directing Positive Attention
- Rewarding

## Consequences that Discourage Behavior

- Removing Attention
  - ⓪ Ignoring
  - ⓪ Time-Out
- Natural & Logical Consequences
- Response Cost

## References

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## Functional Behavior Assessment

Antecedent		Behavior	Consequence	
Time of day	Setting	Activity	Punishment Reward	What was gained?  What was avoided?

**Antecedent**

**Time of Day:** Clock time

**Setting:** Where? What area of the classroom/home?

**Activity:** What was/will child doing prior? What was/will child supposed to be doing? What were/will others doing/saying?  
**Behavior**

What did child do? What do you want the child to do? What did/do you want child say? Are there prerequisite skills?

**Consequence**

**Punishment/Reward:** If there was one, what was/will be the reward/punishment?

**What was/will be gained?:** What did/will child "get" from the behavior

**What was/will be avoided?:** What did/will child get out of?

## **ATTENDING TO DESIRABLE BEHAVIOR (Developing an alliance)**

One of the most powerful tools that we have as adults is our attention – it is the most meaningful and least expensive tool that you have! A child will work very hard to get attention from an adult (that includes both positive and negative attention). If any type of attention follows a behavior, that behavior is more likely to occur again, so use your attention wisely!

### **Special Time:**

To increase your child's good and okay behavior, it is important to pay attention to that behavior when it is happening. This takes practice, which we call "special time". Special time involves setting aside approximately 15 minutes (though any amount of time is good) a day with the child and letting the child decide what he or she wants to do with this time (e.g., play a game with you, play alone with toys, etc. – we discourage watching t.v. and playing video games during this time). Your job is to focus on ACTIVELY paying attention to what the child is doing. All of your attention should be on the child and his or her activity. Show the child you are attending by being on his or her level (sit on the floor), watching intently, and commenting aloud about his or her actions. Try to be an enthusiastic commentator! Pretend you are describing the child's actions to someone who can't see what is happening (e.g., "Wow, you're stacking the blocks. Now you are putting the red block on the blue block. I like watching you play!). During special time, DON'T 1) Ask questions, 2) give instructions, or 3) guide the child's behavior.

Throughout the day, watch the child and comment about what the child is doing well. Catch the child being good. Find things that are good or okay about what he or she is doing and comment on those things (covered in more detail under rewarding).

Attending not only increases good behavior, it also shows the child that you are interested in what he or she does and it builds a better relationship between you. You want to be on the same "team" working together.

### **Rules of Thumb:**

- ❖ Pay attention to the child when he or she is behaving appropriately. This increases the chances of good behavior in the future.
- ❖ Catch the child being good – don't save attention for perfect behavior.
- ❖ Follow the child's lead during special time. Be an attentive and appreciative audience.
- ❖ Use descriptive comments during special time rather than asking questions or giving instructions.
- ❖ If you pay attention to "bad" behaviors such as whining or screaming, they will occur more often in the future.

## GIVING EFFECTIVE DIRECTIONS

When you ask a child to do something, your direction needs to be clear.

### Tips for giving GOOD directions

- 1.) Ensure you have your child's attention and eye contact before giving the direction.
- 2.) Use a firm (not loud) voice.
- 3.) Use a direction that is specific and simple to understand.
- 4.) Use physical gestures such as pointing along with your verbal directions.
- 5.) Use positive directions (e.g., "do this") rather than negative directions (e.g., "don't do this").  
For example, say "Stay by my side" rather than "Don't run down the aisle". Positive directions give a child a good understanding of what he or she is supposed to do and give you an opportunity to reward the child for following your directions.
- 6.) Pay attention to and reward your child if they follow your direction.
- 7.) Only give directions that you are prepared to enforce.

### Directions you should avoid

- 1.) **Chain Directions** – giving several directions at one time (e.g., "Get dressed, brush your teeth, comb your hair, and go to the car.") A child's brain cannot process that much information. It is better to break directions down into small, individual steps and then to praise for completion of each one.
- 2.) **Vague Directions** – directions that are not clear or specific. (e.g., "Be good" may mean different things to you and the child.) It is much better to be clear about what you want (e.g., "Keep your hands in your lap.")
- 3.) **Question Directions** - directions given in the form of a questions (e.g., "Are you ready to clean your room?"). Asking question directions opens the door for the child to say "no". If you are not offering a true choice, don't ask a question.
- 4.) **Directions followed by a reason** – giving a direction and following it with an explanation (e.g., "Wash your hands because it is time for dinner and you have been playing in the dirt.") This type of direction offers too much information for a child to process and the child may not remember the actual instruction. If you choose to give an explanation, give it before the direction (e.g., "It's time for dinner and your hands are dirty, so go wash your hands.") The direction should be the last thing you say.

### Rules of Thumb:

- ❖ Use simple and clear positive directions
- ❖ Praise the child when he/she follows a direction
- ❖ Only give directions you are prepared to enforce.

## REWARDING

Rewards, like attention, will increase behavior. Any behavior (good or bad) that is followed by a reward is more likely to occur again.

### Types of Rewards:

#### 1.) **Social Rewards**

- **Physical rewards** – hugs, kisses, pat on the back, high five, etc.
- **Verbal rewards** – praise (e.g., “I like it when you...” “Thank you for...”)
- **Activity rewards** – things you do with the child that the child likes (e.g., playing a game, reading a story, making something together, etc.)

2.) **Nonsocial Rewards** – include things such as money, toys, food, stickers, etc. These must be things that the child likes. ALWAYS combine nonsocial rewards with social rewards such as praise.

### Rules of thumb:

- ❖ Rewards that occur immediately after a behavior are most effective.
- ❖ Always tell the child what he/she did that you liked (e.g., “I like it when you pick up your toys the first time I ask you to.”).
- ❖ Use eye contact, smiles, and enthusiasm when you give praise.
- ❖ Social rewards can be used anytime. Nonsocial rewards are helpful when you want to change a behavior and then can be faded out.

## **IGNORING**

Ignoring is the opposite of paying attention. It is actually the removal of all of your attention from the child. Ignoring is best used for mild behavior problems such as whining, crying, begging, demanding attention, and tantrums.

When you are ignoring, DO NOT...

- 1.) Make physical contact with the child (subtly put some distance between you)
- 2.) Talk or comment to the child
- 3.) Make eye contact with the child

Remember, paying attention to “bad” behavior will only make it worse. Once you begin ignoring a certain behavior, you **MUST** keep ignoring until the behavior stops. When it stops, lavish attention on the child for appropriate behavior. It is **VERY** important not to give in after you have begun ignoring because that teaches the child that he/she just needs to outlast you. It is important to know that when you begin ignoring negative behavior, you may initially see an increase in this behavior as the child tries to figure out how much it will take from him/her to get a reaction from you. If you hold on and continue to consistently ignore, the behavior will eventually disappear.

### **Rules of Thumb:**

- ❖ Ignoring the behavior will help it go away, but you must be consistent and must “outlast” the child.
- ❖ When you first begin ignoring a behavior, it may initially increase in frequency and intensity. If you continue to ignore it, the behavior should go away.
- ❖ It can be helpful to give the child a “heads up” before you start an ignoring program (e.g., “I will not listen to you when you are having a tantrum.”).

## **TIME-OUT**

Time-out means time-out from ANYTHING reinforcing (attention, rewards, etc.). It is used for behaviors that cannot be ignored such as aggression, destruction of property, dangerous behavior, and non-compliance (not following a direction after one warning).

There are many approaches to time-out. This handout presents one that has been researched for many years. Before you implement any time-out program, it is important that you and your child both understand: 1.) what specific behavior time-outs are used for, 2.) where time-out will occur, 3.) what the rules and steps are for time-out, and 4.) that time-out will occur every time the behavior occurs.

### **Choosing a time-out place**

- 1.) Choose a place away from toys, people, windows, TV, radio, and all that the child likes.
- 2.) Child's bedroom is typically not good. If it is the only option, all toys should be removed.
- 3.) Do NOT use a dark or scary room (e.g., a closet). Time-outs should be boring, not scary.
- 4.) The end of a hallway is often a good option.
- 5.) It may be helpful to put a small chair in the time-out place.

### **Steps for an effective time-out**

- 1.) Tell the child "Because you did \_\_\_\_\_, you have to have a time out." Say this only once in a calm, firm voice. (Do not lecture, scold or argue, accept any excuses, or talk to the child while walking him/her to the chair.)
- 2.) If the child refuses to go, lead him/her by the hand.
- 3.) Tell the child to stay in the chair until you say he/she can get up. It can be very helpful to set a timer that can be kept within the child's view. You do not have to start the timer until the child is sitting relatively calmly in the chair.
- 4.) Do not let anyone talk to him/her while in the chair and do not let the child play with anything while in the chair. Ignore whining, etc. while the child is in the chair. Do not let the child leave the chair (e.g., to use the bathroom, get a tissue, etc.) during time-out.
- 5.) After time has elapsed (one minute for every year of age up to five minutes), tell the child he/she can get up. People have different standards for the completion of time-out. One good rule of thumb is that the child cannot be screaming or aggressive for at least the last 30 seconds of time-out before being let out. Alternately, you can start the timer over when the child becomes disruptive in time-out.
- 6.) If the child was sent to time-out for not following a direction, re-give the initial direction following the time-out. The child **MUST** follow the direction with no more than one warning or should go back to time-out. If the child follows the direction, praise for following the direction (in a relatively neutral voice) and praise the next positive thing the child does.

### **Rules of thumb:**

- ❖ Use time-out for dangerous behaviors and not following directions after one warning.
- ❖ Let the child know what types of behaviors result in time-out.
- ❖ Use time-out immediately after the behavior.
- ❖ Do not give any attention to the child while he or she is in time-out.
- ❖ Only "threaten" time-out if you are willing to follow through with it and use it.

## OTHER EFFECTIVE PUNISHMENTS

**Natural Consequences** occur when you allow the child to experience the consequence that normally/naturally follows their actions. Examples of this include: Handling the cat roughly and the cat scratching the child; Not bringing toys inside, having them ruined by the rain and not replaced; Teasing other children and being avoided by them; Refusing to wear a coat and being cold. Obviously, there are times when it is not safe to allow the natural consequence to occur; for example, you **cannot** allow your child to suffer the natural consequence of riding a bike into a busy street.

**Logical Consequences** occur when you make a child's punishment logically/sensibly follow from the nature of the bad behavior. Examples of this include: Riding bike into street and not being allowed to ride bike for a week because he/she could not ride it responsibly; Refusing repeatedly to care for a pet and having the pet placed in another home; Carelessly spilling a drink on the sofa and having to drink only in the dining room or kitchen.

**Response Cost** is also known as Behavior Penalty. This is where there is a penalty for doing a particular bad behavior. The penalty is not logically related to the behavior, but is rather adding or taking away something that will effect the child. Chose a penalty that will be a punishment for that particular child. Penalties might include losing privileges (TV time, play-time, special events, any other activity enjoyed), adding extra chores, or fining the child monetarily. Examples of this include: Swearing and being fined 25 cents; Fighting with sibling and loosing bike for two days; Lying to parents and having to clean the bathrooms.

### **Rules of thumb:**

- ❖ Look for the mildest punishment that stops the behavior.
- ❖ Allow the natural consequence to occur if it is not dangerous and there is one available.
- ❖ If it is not possible to allow a natural consequence or the consequence does not stop the behavior, try a logical consequence. Make sure that there is a clear logical connection between the behavior and the consequence. Highlight the logic to the child.
- ❖ If neither natural nor logical consequences are feasible, try a response cost. Make sure that you have assigned a specific penalty ahead of time for a specific behavior. Tell the child about it.