

**Setting the Stage:
Effective Strategies to Support
Behavior and Learning in
school-aged students**

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Behavior



BEHAVIOR IS NOT
ALL BAD

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ABA

APPLIED - interventions used with individuals in their natural settings and target behaviors significant for the person's social and day to day living

BEHAVIORAL – interventions are based on behavioral principles

ANALYSIS - therapeutic decisions are based on ongoing data collection

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Behaviors

Raise a hand	Slam a door
Read words	Chew on shirt
Answer a question	Talk to self
Ask for assistance	Repeat comments
Follow directions	Destroy materials
Complete work	Refuse to do a task
Help another person	Put too much food in mouth

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ABA


ABA is NOT- just for special education

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AND BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS– have been around for a long time and are familiar to many of us– weight loss programs, smoking cessation, incentives and bonus plans.

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**The Connection
Behavior and Learning**

Content too hard or too easy?
Does the learner know how to learn?
Environmental changes that are necessary for student success?
Is the student motivated and reinforced?
Effective teaching strategies and behavior management techniques?



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Behavior

Behavior is:

- CAUSED (*antecedents/triggers*)
- OBSERVABLE (*recordable*)
- COMMUNICATION
- SERVES A FUNCTION (*why*)

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“What happened?”

Out of blue
Nothing
Upset



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Functions of Behavior

Gain

- Attention
- Access to tangibles e.g., food, objects
- Activity
- Sensory Input

Escape/Avoidance

- Attention or Demand
- Objects
- Activity
- Sensory

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Functional Behavior Assessment – FBA Outcomes

Identify and Define

- Challenging or inappropriate behavior
- Function of the behavior(s)
- Strategies to prevent or antecedent strategies
- Strategies for alternative/replacement behaviors
- Consequences that will not maintain inappropriate behaviors
- Input for IEP
 - Specially designed instruction (SDI)
- Input for Behavior Plans

Ongoing Process

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Challenging Behavior

- Function is not usually the problem
- Same behavior may have several functions
- Interferes with learning new skills
- Socially isolates the learner

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A-B-C's of Behavior

A

Antecedents and Setting events

- What happened immediately before the behavior(s)?
- What triggered the behavior (s)?
 - Person, place, activity, sound, smell, demand/request
- Slow triggers
- Quick triggers
- Hunger, thirst, pain, fatigue

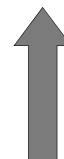
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A-B-C's of Behavior

Behavior or response; observable and recordable

Consequent strategies Reinforcement

Attention (depends on the student- highly individual)
Stickers
Token economy
Rewards
Extra computer time
Escape
Avoidance



A-B-C's of Behavior

Consequences

- What happened after the behavior
- Includes corrective feedback
 - Verbal such as "Good" "No" "Wrong" "It isn't..." "you can do better"
 - Nonverbal such as smile, frown, thumbs up

Consequent Strategies Punishment



Simple correction
Overcorrection
Restitution
Spanking (not recommended)
Time out
Response Cost

Consequences



Consequences are not all bad!!!
Consequences occur after the behavior

Reinforcers

Less you have the more valuable it is
Loss is greater when you have less to lose



Consequent Strategies Disadvantages

REACTIVE
 Behavior-
 – occurred and practiced
 Individual has not learned a replacement
Behavior interferes with all learning in the classroom



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Antecedent Strategies Advantages

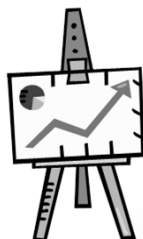


Consider behavioral and learning styles of students with fragile X syndrome
 Parent/staff control the opportunities
 Less disruptive
 Acquire skills
 Interrupt behavior chains

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Consequent Strategies Advantages

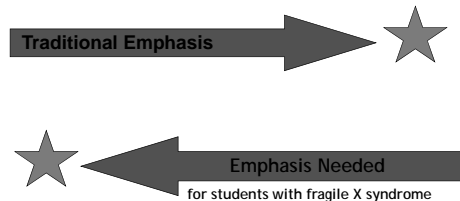
Increase, shape or maintain behaviors
 Group or individual
 Familiar



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THE ABCs OF BEHAVIOR

ANTECEDENTS What happened before?	BEHAVIOR What happened?	CONSEQUENCE What happened afterwards?
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Antecedent Strategies Disadvantages



Initially more time consuming
 Not as readily understood by others
 May need to "sell" these strategies – not just "walking on eggshells"

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Setting the Stage



Prevention vs. Intervention Approach
 Proactive vs. Reactive
 Antecedent vs. consequence emphasis

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Anxiety / Hyperarousal in Fragile X Syndrome

EARLY SIGNS:

self-injury (hand- and wrist- biting)
 mouthing objects, clothes
 hand-flapping

ESCALATE TO:

task refusal
 leaving the area
 verbal aggression (often imitated phrases)

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Anxiety / Hyperarousal in Fragile X Syndrome

OTHER POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS:

auditory processing deficits
 delayed emotional processing
 hypersensitivity to negative correction
 performance anxiety
 poor concept of time
 strong associations (positive & negative)

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Anxiety / Hyperarousal in Fragile X Syndrome

ESCALATE TO:

property destruction (threatened & real)
 breaking personal objects (glasses)
 door slamming
 throwing objects

ESCALATE TO:

physical aggression (threatened & real)
 punching
 slapping

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Antecedents Vs. Consequences

Children with fragile X syndrome often want stickers, praise or rewards **BUT**

Antecedents and setting events are powerful



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Anxiety / Hyperarousal in Fragile X Syndrome

TRIGGERS:

forced eye contact

personal space issues
 tactile defensiveness
 emotional tone of peers and staff
 changes in routine
 auditory stimuli
 changes in environment

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Strategy Selection

Learn a new skill

- appropriate or acceptable replacement behavior

Increase behavior

- on task time

Decrease behavior

- Perseveration on topic

Honor the function

- Request a break

Cannot honor the function

- Remain in room during fire drill



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Antecedent Strategies Social Skills

Target (increase)
Appropriate social
interaction with peers

- Strategies
- Video modeling
 - Favorite character "acts out"
 - Lunch bunch
 - Practice- role play – all roles
 - Real time support and feedback
 - Social Stories www.thegreycenter.org
 - What's popular with peers?
 - Games, shows, language
 - Buddy/mentor
 - www.bestbuddies.org

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Antecedent Strategies Task Completion

Target (increase)
Task completion

- Strategies
- "Which one do you want to do first?"
 - "You will play on the computer after you"
 - Visual schedules/Timers
 - 80% easy/20% hard tasks
 - Adult Attention
 - Proximity
 - Collaboration
 - Preferred adult places demands
- Reinforce task completion

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Antecedent Strategies Following directions

Target (increase)
Following requests and
directions

- Strategies
- Visual supports
 - Practice with "positive" requests
 - Allow for possible delay in response or initial negative response
 - Nonverbal reminders e.g. signal or manual sign
 - Ask "Can you help"?
 - Preferred adult places demands
 - Reinforce following directions
 - Humor e.g. "clean up the palace"
 - High Probability
 - "Feed the class pet and get out your folder"

Antecedent strategies Transition

Target (increase)
Transition

- place to place
- activity to activity
- person to person
- preferred to non-preferred activity, place, person

- Strategies
- Visual Schedule (actual items, pictures, photos along with printed words)
 - Preferred items or fidget toys as distractors (individual basis)
 - Non-verbal cues e.g., manual sign, point to schedule
 - Pre-specified reinforcers
 - Two-minute warning

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Visual timers

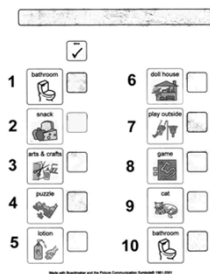


www.timetracker.org



www.timetimer.org

Visual schedules



Antecedent Strategies Move within building

Target (increase)
Moving within the building or down the hallways

Strategies
Preferred items or fidget toys as distractors (individual basis)
Create *jobs* e.g., assistant to bus monitor, mail delivery, attendance
Adult walk beside student, engage in quiet conversation, block inappropriate behavior e.g. ripping bulletin board
Social Story and mantra

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Antecedent Strategies Decrease Property Destruction

Target (decrease)
Decrease property destruction

Strategies
Story or video of appropriate play with materials and friends
Recognize signals that student is escalating
Interrupt behavioral chain
– Distract, redirect BEFORE escalation
Refrain from saying "remember don't....."
Remind student of appropriate behavior or response
Remain calm

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Antecedent Strategies Decrease physical or verbal assault

Target
Decrease physical or verbal assaults

Strategies
Minimize triggers
Recognize signs of hyper-arousal
Interrupt behavioral chains
Neutral, no nonsense manner when correcting
Limit access to highly charged TV shows, video or computer games
Preferred staff
– during demanding tasks
– in *difficult* settings

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Antecedent Strategies Communication

Target
Verbally communicate rather than run away, resort to aggression, or "shut down"

Strategies
Functional Communication Training (FCT)
Parent/staff note signs that child is over aroused and interrupt
Practice/rehearse these skills various times, places and with many adults during the day

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Antecedent Strategies Transportation

Target
Increase safe bus behavior

Strategies
Adult support – aide on bus
Bus ticket program
Job – bus monitor or attendance
Photo/video appropriate bus behavior
Powerful safe activity or object (change @ week or month) – only accessible on bus/car ride
Positive reinforcement for good ride on bus or in car
No nonsense – "like a hot stove" response to unsafe behavior
Arms length distance from others

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Antecedent Strategies Sensory

Target
Decrease inappropriate response to possible "sensory overload" e.g., hand biting, finger biting, hand flapping, property destruction

Strategies
Acceptable way to request a break or escape (teach to request a break)
Personal space/break area (alternate desk/small tent with preferred or sensory activities)
Vary levels of activity with natural breaks – daily basis
Adjust weekly schedule
Minimize triggers: people, places, materials, activities, sensory
Preferred adult support in non preferred settings

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Successful Staff Approaches

- Calm, neutral, no-nonsense approach
- Good sense of humor
- Respect need for personal space
- Clear, consistent communication
- Redirection, breaks

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Successful Classroom Strategies

- Transition warnings
- Adult-like activities
- Activities that show closure
- Mentors, buddies to model behavior
- Alternatives to handwriting
- Practical applications for mathematics
- Audio-visuals, computers
- Sight word approach for reading

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Successful Staff Approaches

- Attention to anxiety symptoms
- Awareness of delayed processing
- Awareness of tantrum triggers
- Avoidance of power struggles

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Behavior change is not just about the student with fragile X syndrome

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Successful Classroom Techniques

- Structure, routine, limits
- Daily activity schedule
- Visual reminders
- Individualized behavior chart
- Preferential seating
- Opportunities to request a break
- Schedule with natural breaks
- "Vicarious learning" dyads – don't single out

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Setting the Stage for Success

- Allow time for processing information
- Distraction and redirection are effective tools
- Schedules and visual supports are useful
- Whenever possible offer choices (limit to two)
- Be aware of signs of anxiety/hyperarousal
- Avoid power struggles
- It's not always what you say but how you say it
- Don't underestimate the value of calm
- Control what you can
- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

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