



Setting the Stage: Effective Strategies to Support Behavior and Learning in School-Aged students

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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

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.

Behavior



BEHAVIOR IS NOT
ALL BAD

Behaviors

Raise a hand

Read words

Answer a question

Ask for assistance

Follow directions

Complete work

Help another person

Slam a door

Chew on shirt

Talk to self

Repeat comments

Destroy materials

Refuse to do a task

Put too much food in
mouth

The Connection Behavior and Learning

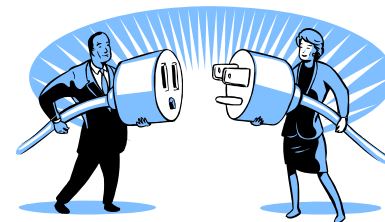
Content too hard or too easy?

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?



Behavior

Behavior is:

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

Functions of Behavior

Gain

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

Escape/Avoidance

- Attention or Demand
- Objects
- Activity
- Sensory

Challenging Behavior

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

“What happened?”

Out of blue
Nothing
Upset



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

A-B-C'S of Behavior

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

A-B-C'S of Behavior

Behavior or response; observable and recordable

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

Consequences



Consequences are not all bad!!!

Consequences occur after the behavior

Consequent strategies Reinforcement

Attention (depends on the student- highly individual)

Stickers

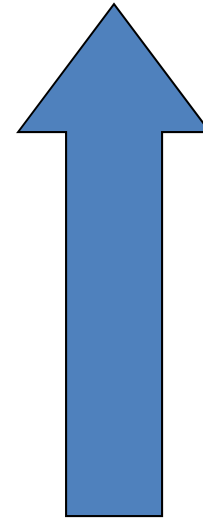
Token economy

Rewards

Extra computer time

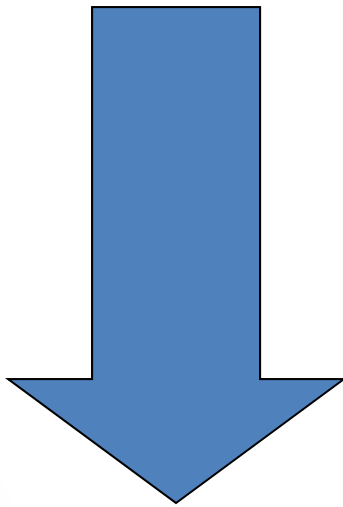
Escape

Avoidance



Consequent Strategies

Punishment



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

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

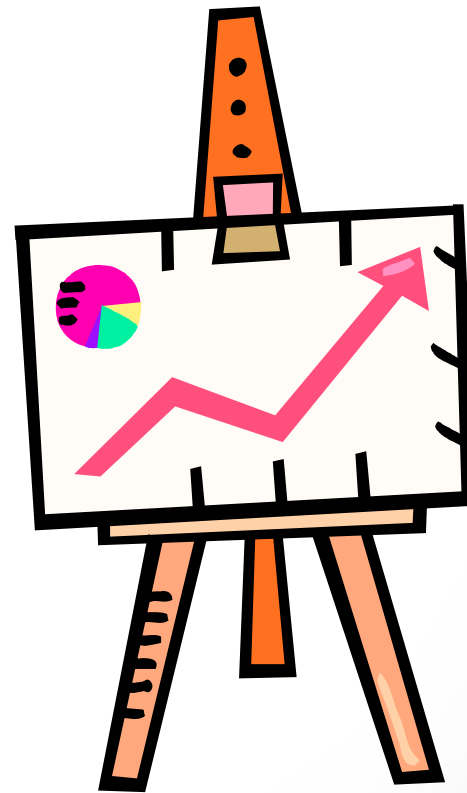
Individual has not learned a replacement

Behavior interferes with all learning in the classroom

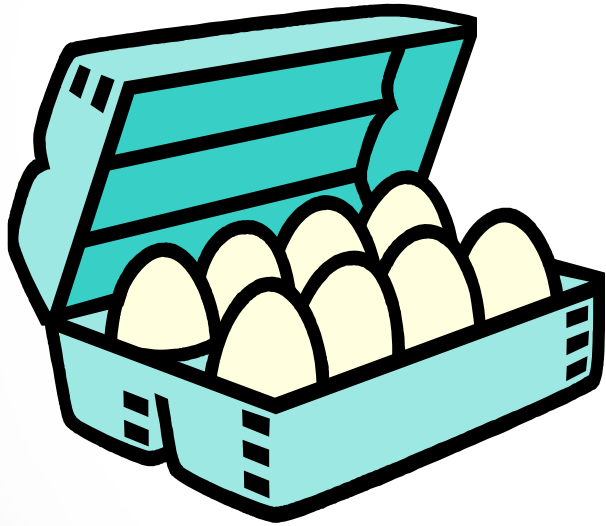


Consequent Strategies Advantages

Increase, shape or
maintain behaviors
Group or individual
Familiar



Antecedent Strategies Disadvantages



Initially more time consuming
Not as readily understood by others

May need to “sell” these strategies – not just “walking on eggshells”

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

THE ABCs OF BEHAVIOR

ANTECEDENTS

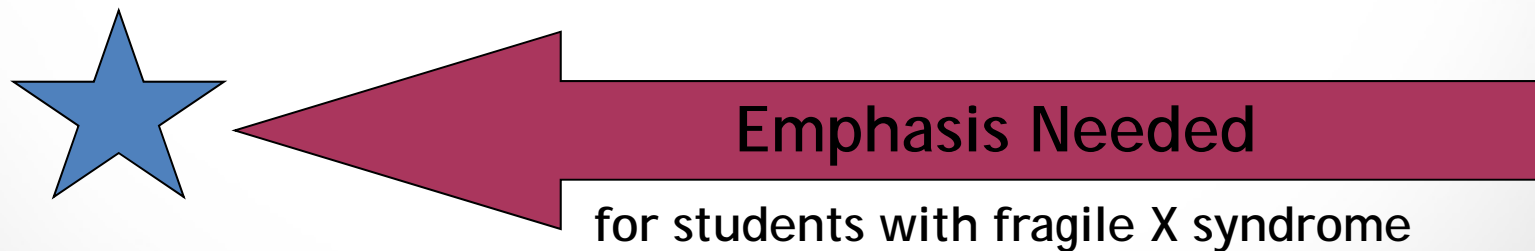
What happened before?

BEHAVIOR

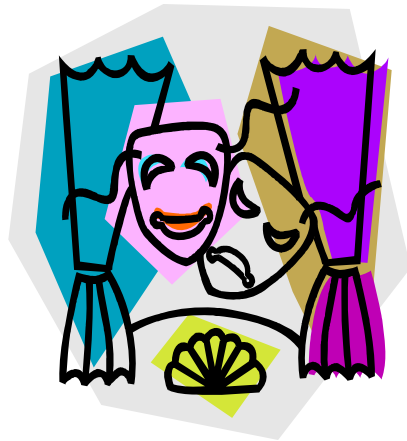
What happened?

CONSEQUENCE

What happened afterwards?



Setting the Stage



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

ANXIETY HYPERAROUSAL



Anxiety / Hyperarousal in Fragile X Syndrome

EARLY SIGNS:

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

ESCALATE TO:

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

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

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

Anxiety / Hyperarousal in Fragile X Syndrome

OTHER POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS:

auditory processing deficits

delayed emotional processing

hypersensitivity to negative correction

performance anxiety

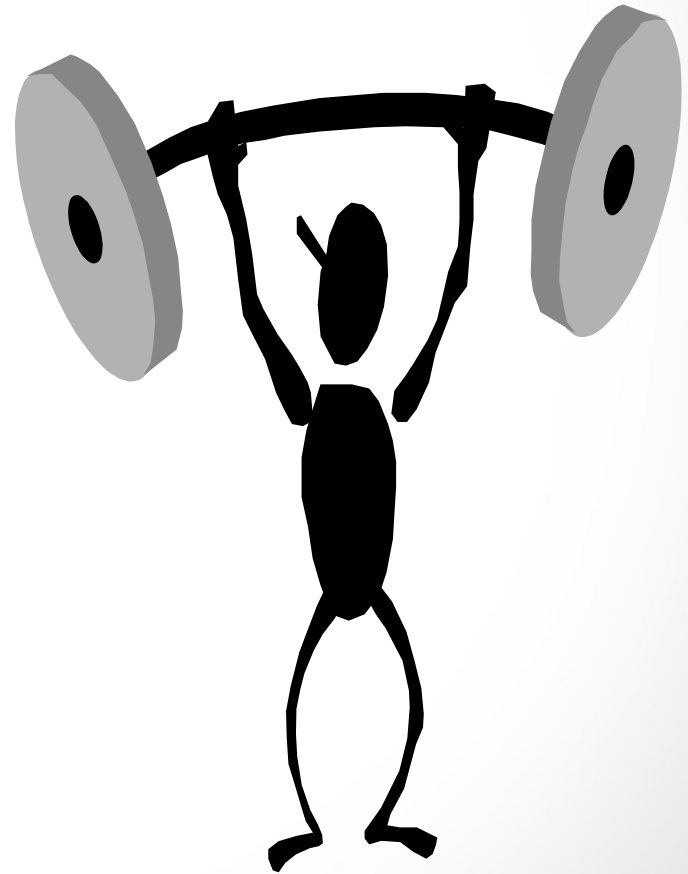
poor concept of time

strong associations (positive & negative)

Antecedents Vs. Consequences

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

Antecedents and setting events are powerful



Strategy Selection

Learn a new skill

- appropriate or acceptable replacement behavior

Increase behavior

- on task time

Decrease behavior

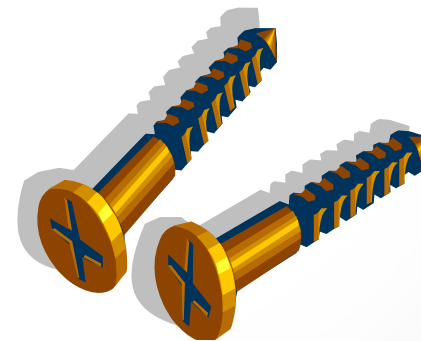
- Perseveration on topic

Honor the function

- Request a break

Cannot honor the function

- Remain in room during fire drill



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

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”

Visual timers



www.timetracker.org



www.timetimer.org

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

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

Visual schedules



done ✓

1	bathroom 	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	doll house 	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	snack 	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	play outside 	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	arts & crafts 	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	game 	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	puzzle 	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	cat 	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	lotion 	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	bathroom 	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

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

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

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

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

Successful Staff Approaches

Calm, neutral, no-nonsense approach

Good sense of humor

Respect need for personal space

Clear, consistent communication

Redirection, breaks

Successful Staff Approaches

Attention to anxiety symptoms

Awareness of delayed processing

Awareness of tantrum triggers

Avoidance of power struggles

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

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



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

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