

DEALING WITH PRESCHOOL BEHAVIOR IN PUBLIC

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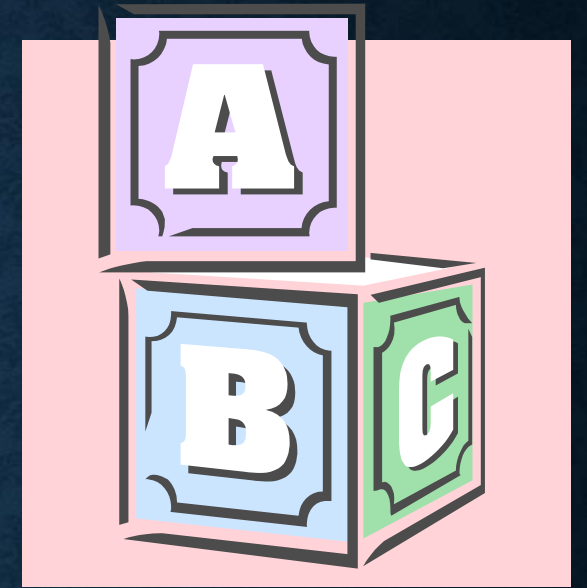
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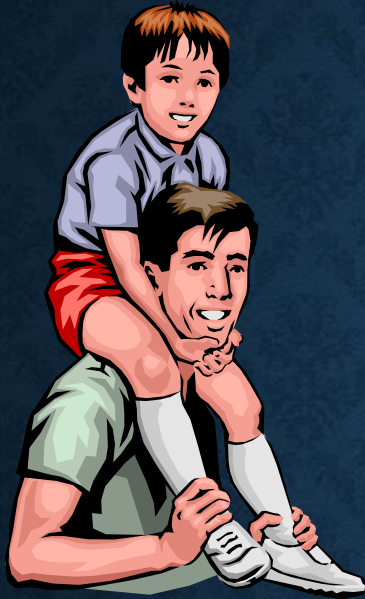
OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the most common problem behaviors in public.
2. Define an “antecedent”, and identify some for each behavior.
3. Identify possible antecedent strategies to use when the problem behavior occurs.
4. Define a “consequence”, and identify some for each behavior.
5. Recognize when a consequence-based approach should be used.

A-B-C

- **A**ntecedents
 - Events that *precede*
- **B**ehavior
- **C**onsequences
 - Events that *follow*
 - Influence whether or not a behavior is likely to occur again under similar circumstances





A-B-C



- Parents help children acquire positive behaviors via
 - Manipulating antecedents
 - Arranging consequences
 - Measuring behavioral change
 - Scientific=>must verify the effect

CONSEQUENCE-BASED PROCEDURES

- Definition: Strategies implemented after occurrence of behavior to modify its consequences
- Goals:
 - If behavior is problematic, minimize reinforcement
 - If behavior is desirable, increase R+
- Examples of consequences:
 1. Positive reinforcement
 2. Extinction (e.g., planned ignoring)
 3. Punishment

- Antecedent strategies for older children:
 - Contract
 - Controlling access to preferred things/activities
 - Electronics, collecting cards, desserts, take-out, trips
 - Start at Zero
 - “You have zero points/dollars/minutes”
 - Only go in positive direction
- Examples:
 - Accruing money towards Season Pass to Cedar Point, then Platinum
 - Accruing money towards trip to SkyZone, Swings N Things, Kalahari
 - Accruing money towards a new big kid bedroom, new game,

- Antecedent strategies for younger children:
 - Primary Needs checklist (“Goldilocks”)
 - Too hungry? Thirsty? Hot? Cold? Tired? Uncomfortable? Sick?
 - Hidden reasons: first symptoms of a cold (headache/sore throat), teething, indigestion, gas, tiredness (can be disguised as hyperactivity), sensory overload
 - Priming
 - “We are going to X. We will keep hands to self.”
 - “Remember, everything in the store is ‘pretty, no touch!’”
 - “Quiet hands, quiet mouths”
 - “First keep hands quiet, then you will get X!”
 - Balloon, sucker, sticker, stamp

- Consequence-based strategies for younger children
 - Countdown “3...2...1...”
 - Positive Reinforcement
 - Increase the ratio of delivery
 - Children have a hard time regulating in new environments
 - Stimulus overload!!
 - Therefore, they need to hear what they are doing well much more often
 - “Good listening”

- Using public restrooms
 - Don't ask
 - “It's time to go potty” or “Bathroom break time!”
 - Calmly and firmly respond to “...but I don't have to”
 - “Sit down and show me”
 - Use a First, Then statement
 - Sing a bathroom song (e.g., Daniel Tiger)

FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

- Every behavior serves some “function”.
- Examples:
 - sucking thumb = comfort
 - Screaming may get me candy or balloon to quiet me down
 - Hitting my playmate will make him go away...I get the slide to myself!
 - Singing loudly draws attention
 - Tantrum may get me out of this store I hate

The four common functions of behavior:

"Everybody E.A.T.S."
Escape, Attention,
Tangible, Sensory



som^{ee}cards
user card

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

- **E**scape: to leave the setting, or avoid having to do undesired tasks
- **A**ttention: from adult(s) or peer(s); either positive (praise) or negative (reprimand)
- **T**angible: to get a desired item/activity
- **S**ensory: to receive a sensory experience that feels good
 - Occurs more often when alone, or when feeling anxious

WHAT'S THE FUNCTION?

- Let's analyze our previous examples:
 1. sucking thumb = comfort
 2. Screaming may get me candy or balloon to quiet me down
 3. Hitting my playmate will make him go away...I get the slide to myself!
 4. Singing loudly in church/synagogue
 5. Tantrum may get me out of this place I hate

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FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

- Parent behavior serves the same functions as child behavior
- How we interact with our kiddos results in either...
 - Positive consequences
 - Observing a happy child
 - Playing independently...so we can get stuff done!
 - Negative consequences
 - Observing sadness
 - Dealing with a problem behavior

WHY TALK ABOUT FUNCTION?

- We need to determine **why** our child is doing what he/she is doing.
- When we stop to think about **WHY** a child is doing what he/she is doing, we will be able to choose a more effective approach.
 - Hypothesize the function
 - Use a proven strategy (a “function-based intervention”) to address the behavior

The four common functions of behavior:

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AGGRESSION

- What to do when my child shows aggression
 1. Assess the situation
 - Age of my child and other children
 - Your relationship with the parents
 2. Determine the reason
 - Access to item/activity
 - Avoiding something (social interaction, instruction from adult/peer)
 - Attention (“play with me” versus “whatcha gonna do if I...”)
 - Sensory (tactile stimulation)

AGGRESSION

- What to do when my child shows aggression

3. Choose response based on function.

- Access = blocking/preventing access to what they want.
 - Toy goes in a time out
 - Innocent peer gets toy, your child needs to pick something different
 - Time out to calm down
- Escape/avoidance: hand-over-hand follow through of the desired task (making sure peers are at safe distance). Then prompt an appropriate request to be “all done”.
- Attention
 - If wants to play, model and ask child to make an appropriate initiation with peer
 - If “watcha gonna do”, avoid eye contact and remove from desired situation. Avoid talking (no verbal tug-of-war)
- Sensory = redirect to appropriate tactile sensory seeking activity; teach that hitting is inapprop,

ADVICE FROM A THERAPIST...WITH KIDS OF HER OWN

- Lower your expectations!
 - Remind yourself that all children are unpredictable
 - Behavior is ever changing
- Assumptions versus confirmed information
 - When our child acts up, our anxiety levels increase
 - Anxious state → assuming thoughts in others
 - E.g., “She must think I am a bad mom”
 - E.g., “We are now known at this restaurant as ‘That Family’”
 - E.g., “She will never want to invite us over for a playdate again”

ADVICE FROM A THERAPIST...WITH KIDS OF HER OWN

- How to deal with racing thoughts
 - Tell yourself “I do not know that for a fact”
 - If you are with an adult you trust/feel comfortable around, consider making a statement that acknowledges your frustration about the situation PLUS identifies that children are unpredictable. Make sure the statement is not self-deflating!
 - E.G., “He has been like this all day! I need a life preserver to stay afloat.”
 - E.G., “Would you believe me if I told you he was a perfect angel an hour ago?? Preschoolers! Gotta love them...”
 - E.G., “It’s one of those days. My therapy today is picturing myself alone on a beach with a good book”
 - Deep breathing
 - Counting
 - When extremely anxious and with another adult, take a parent time out

PARTING THOUGHTS

- “Helicopter Mom” parenting style can increase our stress
 - Also causes us to miss great opportunities to ignore behaviors that are occurring due to the attention function.
- Try to avoid “why can’t my child be more like X” thoughts/statements
- When attempting to increase desired behaviors, try to compare your child’s behavior to his/her own past behavior, in lieu of drawing comparisons to a peer’s behavior
 - Sensitive children can feel defeated/deflated when other peers’ strengths happen to be their areas of needed improvement
 - Can be challenging for your child to figure out how to emulate peer’s behavior
- Using this new “functional approach to treating behaviors” will help you!!