

Behavior Strategies at Home

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Agenda

- ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence)
- Define consequences (reinforcement & punishment)
- Examples of Effective Consequences
- Time-Out
- Giving effective instructions
- Tips for responding in the moment
- Resources

ABC

Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

- **Antecedent:** what happens right before the behavior occurs
 - May include environmental information, triggers, events
- **Behavior**
 - What behavior did the child engage in?
- **Consequence**
 - What happened immediately following the behavior?
 - Might be a reinforcer or punisher

Antecedent

What happens right before the behavior occurs

- Consider environmental factors: noise level, distractions, difficulty level of task, preferred or non-preferred, transitions
- Consider motivating factors: hunger, fatigue, illness, anxiety, etc.

Examples of antecedent based interventions:

- If your child struggles with starting homework, remove distractions (electronics and toys) from the area.
- Provide a snack before homework time.
- Use a timer to let the child know how much time is left for a preferred task before switching to a non-preferred.
- Ensure your child stops using electronics at least one hour before bed time and goes to sleep at a reasonable time.
- If your child is anxious about a situation (such as going to the doctor), talk them through what to expect, read stories about it, answer questions the child may have about the situation.

Behavior

What does the behavior look like?

- Description, frequency, duration, intensity

Sally hits her sister about 4 times per day. It does not leave a mark.

Mark screams loudly 3-6 times per day for 1-2 minutes.

Chris ignores parents' directions 5 times per day.

Intensity Scale

0= Calm, Appropriate Behavior

1= Mild- did not cause harm, was not disruptive to anyone

2= Disruptive, Not harmful- yelling, refusing, etc.

3= Moderate- could have caused mild harm, disrupted entire class

4= Disruptive, Harmful- could cause moderate harm to self or others

5=Severe- likely to cause harm to self or others

Consequences

Reinforcement

Increases the likelihood of future behavior.

Examples:

The child asks politely for more time on the tablet and is given 5 more minutes.

The parent says, “Thank you for putting the tablet away the first time I asked. I will take out the trash today, so you don’t have to.”

Punishment

Decreases the likelihood of future behavior.

Examples:

The child throws the tablet and is not allowed to play on the tablet the rest of the day.

The child ignores the parents direction to put the tablet away, and is told that they will have to do one additional chore for every minute they stay on the tablet.

Reinforcer vs. Bribe:

- A bribe gives the child something to immediately stop the behavior.
 - A parent tells the child, “I’ll get you the candy if you stop crying right now.”
- A reinforcer increases the likelihood of future behavior.
 - A parent tells the child, “If you behave when we are in the store today, I will get you a candy.”

Examples of Effective Consequences

- **Positive attention for positive behaviors.**
 - “Catch them being good.” Use specific praise.
- **Ignoring Actively.**
 - Deliberately withdraw your attention when they misbehave
 - Observe child during this time, and give immediate attention when they are exhibiting the behavior you want to see
 - Not appropriate for aggressive or dangerous behaviors
- **Reward Menus**
 - Provide rewards for positive behavior. Allow children to choose rewards.
 - Examples: extra tablet time, a special treat, choose a game to play together, etc.
- **Time-Outs**
 - One of the most effective consequences, but the hardest to do effectively

How to do a Time-Out Effectively

- **Use advanced warning:** kids need to understand which behavior is linked to which consequence
- **Predetermined place with no rewarding stimuli:** a designated spot (chair, spot on stairs, etc.). You can label it “time out spot,” but “naughty chair” and other negative labels are not appropriate. No access to tv, electronics, toys or games.
- **Immediate response:** enforce the time out immediately following the behavior. State the reason (be brief, specific, and unemotional): “No hitting. Go to time out.”
- **Keep It Brief:** general rule is one minute per year of age. Use a timer that the child can see where time is being measured.
- **Keep It Calm:** the goal is for the child to sit quietly.
 - Don’t start timer until child is sitting quietly
 - Ensure child is sitting quietly for 5 seconds before ending time-out
- **Pay no attention:** use planned ignoring during this time
- **Consistency is key:** do not use time out randomly or emotionally, use for specific target behaviors where the child know that behavior leads to that consequence

How to do a Time-Out Effectively

- If a child won't stay in time-out:
 - Put them in a backup area where they cannot escape (bedroom). Explain they must stay there for one minute and be calm and quiet before they are allowed to leave. Once they do that, they should return to the time out chair and the time there is restarted. If they leave the chair again, the cycle repeats. They will learn quickly that it's in their best interest to stay in the chair until time is up.
- After the time-out:
 - Child should be asked to complete whatever task they were put into time-out for not complying with to teach that a time out is not used to escape the demand.
 - Once time-out is over, resume giving attention, paying close attention to what they are doing and trying to “catch them being good,” using specific praise for positive behavior.

How to Give Effective Instructions

- **Be direct**
 - Make statements instead of asking questions
 - “Please sit down” instead of “Are you ready to do your homework?”
- **Be close**
 - Give instructions when you are near your child instead of calling out from across the room
- **Give age appropriate instructions**
 - Give instructions they will understand on their level
- **Give instructions one at a time**
 - Especially for children who struggle with attention challenges
- **Keep explanations simple**
 - Give a rationale, but not so detailed that the command gets lost in it
- **Give kids time to process**
 - After you give the instruction, wait a few seconds without repeating what you said. This helps them listen to calm directions once instead of learning it will be repeated so they don’t need to listen the first time

Tips for responding in the moment:

- **Don't give in**

- Resist the temptation to end your child's tantrum by giving them what they want. Giving in teaches them that tantrums work.

- **Remain Calm**

- Model the calm behavior (tone and volume) you want the child to engage in. Harsh or emotional responses can escalate a child's aggression.

- **Ignore negative behavior and praise positive behavior**

- Even negative attention can reinforce behavior. Provide specific praise for behaviors you want to encourage and ignore minor misbehavior.

- **Use consistent consequences**

- Your child needs to know what consequences for negative behavior are, as well as what the rewards are for positive behavior. Use consistent consequences every time.

- **Debrief**

- Wait until the meltdown is over. Do not try to reason with a child who is upset or while you are upset. Discuss what happened, and what the child can do next time. Teach replacement behavior (Ex. Instead of throwing the tablet because their time is up, they can ask for more time).



Be Safe.

Be Respectful.

Be Responsible.



**Palo Verde Unified
School District**

Professional Learning Communities at Work