



Positive Behavior Supports for Family Life

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Agenda

- Why children misbehave
- Preventing challenging behavior
- Behavior 101 (i.e., how to intervene)
- Reacting to challenging behavior
- What to expect when you intervene
- Who to call for help



The Goal

- Which two behaviors need the most attention (e.g., are most annoying, take the most time/energy, cause the most stress, put someone in danger)?
- During the presentation, list at least two strategies you will use to address the challenging behaviors



Assumptions

- Behavior that persists – even if it's “bad” behavior – is working for the child
- If you're using punishment (e.g., spanking) all the time, it's not working
- Punishments and reprimands only put the behavior on hold; the child has not been taught new skills (i.e., the child will continue displaying the challenging behavior)
- If we take out a problem behavior without putting another behavior in its place, the problem behavior will occur again



Setting the Stage

- The Power of Attention



Why do you act like that?

- Behavior that persists is working for the child; he or she has learned to display the behavior to
 - Get something
 - Item, preferred activity, attention
 - Get away from something
 - Avoid/escape activity or attention
 - Gain intrinsic pleasure



Functional Analysis

- Involves direct observations with planned manipulation of environmental events to document experimental control
 - Play (control)
 - Contingent attention
 - Contingent escape
 - Alone



Collect ABC Data

- Antecedent – Something that *precedes* the behavior (“triggers” the behavior)
- Behavior – Anything the child does that is *observable* and *measurable*
- Consequence – Something that *follows* the behavior and makes it more or less likely to occur in the future



Determining Function

- Link consequences to the three functions of behavior
 - Remember that attention can be positive or negative; a child gains attention when verbally reprimanded



Prevention

- Think about the function of the behavior and what you can do when you see the antecedent (or before)
 - Intervening before the behavior occurs
 - Redirecting the child



Prevention - Examples

- A child tends to hit her sister when they are in the backseat of the car, her book falls to the floorboards, and neither girl can reach it.
- A child tends to throw toys when his mother rocks or feeds his newborn sibling.
- A child tends to have tantrums when play time is interrupted by a trip to the grocery store or the dry cleaners.



Prompting

- 3-step sequence
 - First, give the instruction
 - If the child does not respond, model what you want him or her to do
 - If the child still does not respond, use physical guidance
- Do not attend to the child's refusal to follow through; follow the procedure without extra verbalizations and frustrated expressions



Effective Behavior Plans

- Challenging behavior will disappear when it is
 - Irrelevant (prevention strategies reduce times when the stage is set for the behavior to occur)
 - Inefficient (the challenging behavior requires more time and effort than the replacement behavior we teach)
 - Ineffective (the old consequence is eliminated; the behavior does not serve its purpose)



Effective Behavior Plans

<i>Antecedents</i>	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
<p>Prevent the behavior by changing the antecedents— who, what, where, when— that predict the behavior.</p>	<p>Teach the child a more acceptable way to gain/avoid items, attention, or activities.</p>	<p>Respond to the challenging behavior in ways that are not reinforcing. Respond to the replacement behavior in ways that ensure it “works” for the child.</p>



Behavior 101

- Reinforcement – increases the likelihood that the behavior will occur in the future
 - Positive reinforcement – add something to the environment to increase the likelihood that the behavior will occur again
 - Negative reinforcement – remove something from the environment to increase the likelihood that the behavior will occur again



Reinforcement Can Backfire!

- At the beginning of the school year, your child cried when you presented his math homework. One night you took it away because you felt sorry for him. Another night you took it away because you didn't want to deal with the struggle. Now your child cries every time you present his math homework.
 - What has the child learned (i.e., what is the function of the behavior)?
 - Is this an example of reinforcement?



Positive Attention (i.e., positive reinforcement)

- Misbehavior can start a cycle of negative talk with the child – constantly correcting behavior with “no” and “stop” and “don’t do that”
- Spend more time using positive talk
 - The meaning of *descriptive praise*
 - The 5-to-1 Rule
 - Praise as a teaching tool



Positive Attention

- Remember “I FEED” in giving positive attention
 - I – Immediate
 - F – Frequent
 - E – Enthusiastic
 - E – Eye contact
 - D – Describe the behavior

(Adapted from Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1992)



Positive Reinforcement

- Social reinforcers
 - Physical, attention, praise
- Activity reinforcers (consider magnitude/frequency)
 - Events, privileges
- Tangible reinforcers (consider deprivation and fading)
 - Toys, stickers, money, food



Chaining

- Linking specific sequences of stimuli and responses to form new performances
 - Forward chaining – begin with the first behavior in the sequence and link others (e.g., making bed)
 - Backward chaining – begin with the last behavior in the sequence and link others (e.g., tying shoe)



Premack Principle

- Letting the child participate in a high-frequency behavior, *contingent on participation in a low-frequency behavior*, reinforces the low-frequency behavior
 - For a child who spends much more time watching TV than doing homework – “When you have finished your homework, you can watch TV”



Shaping

- Systematically and differentially reinforcing successive approximations
- Teaching a child to wear his glasses
 - Touching glasses
 - Picking up glasses
 - Putting glasses on face
- Increasing the time between homework and TV time
 - 2 math problems
 - 4 math problems
 - 6 math problems



Differential Reinforcement

- Incompatible Behavior (DRI) – provide reinforcement for behaviors that (a) you want to see and (b) are incompatible with the challenging behavior
- Other Behavior (DRO) – provide reinforcement whenever the challenging behavior has not occurred during a set time interval



Behavior 101

- Punishment – decreases the likelihood that the behavior will occur in the future
 - Positive punishment – add something to the environment to decrease the likelihood that the behavior will occur again
 - Negative punishment – remove something from the environment to decrease the likelihood that the behavior will occur again



Punishment Can Backfire!

- You asked your son to load the dishwasher after dinner each night. He did a pretty good job, except for breaking a plate on the first night (and getting a spanking) and leaving water all over the counter later that week (and getting a verbal reprimand). For whatever reason, he doesn't want to be responsible for the dishes anymore.
 - What did the child learn?
 - Is there something positive about this example?



Ignoring (i.e., negative punishment)

- Requires you to provide attention for positive behavior instead of misbehavior
 - Let's you focus on the good things your child does
 - Let's child access positive attention
- Extremely difficult to do!



How to Ignore

- Plan ahead – know the exact behaviors you are ignoring and the exact behaviors you are praising
- Practice – learn not to respond (verbally or otherwise) to misbehavior
- Pay attention – acknowledge desired behavior as soon as it occurs
- Have support – teach others in the home to ignore misbehavior



Things to Think About...

- Is a verbal reprimand a punishment?
 - For all functions of behavior?
 - Regardless of the outcome?
- Are all kinds of attention reinforcing?
- Where does the time-out procedure stand in all of this?
 - What is being removed?



Time Out...

- From Reinforcement
 - The child must move from a more reinforcing environment to a less reinforcing environment
 - The child must not receive extra attention (e.g., lengthy discussions about why the child is in trouble, negotiations about when and where time out will occur)



How Not to Use Time Out

- The Power of Attention II



Sit and Watch

- If the presumed reinforcement is adult attention and the continuation of an activity, try Sit and Watch
 - Two warnings
 - Third time – “You did X. You need to sit and watch.”
 - Move child to the edge of activity – “When you’re ready to play nicely, you can come back.”
 - Ignore the child at the edge of the activity
 - When the child returns, welcome him or her (assuming appropriate behavior)



Planned Ignoring, Blocking, and Redirection

- Block aggression using an open hand; do not give the child attention
- Once the child has been calm for 30 seconds, redirect him back to the same task
 - Don't reinforce the behavior by offering preferred activities or escape from demands



Example Behavior Plans

- ABC Family – developmental biting
- 123 Family – tantrums
- XYZ Family – aggression, disruption, noncompliance
- 456 Family – noncompliance, climbing on/moving furniture, leaving the house, spitting



Summing Up

- We talked about praise a lot
 - POSITIVE behavior support
 - Praise is a positive reinforcer for most children, helping you increase desired behavior
 - Decreasing challenging behavior is not about scolding; it's about teaching appropriate replacement behaviors



Consistency is Key!

- Removing attention, preferred items, privileges, and so on is aversive
 - Most children will react by increasing the intensity of the challenging behavior
 - Reacting to the increased intensity by giving in will only teach your child that they can obtain the attention, item, or privilege by yelling loud enough, hitting hard enough, and so on

The 11 Behavior Management Principles



- First, it gets worse.
- Pick your battles.
- Prevention is better than attempting a cure.
- Be consistent but recognize that life isn't consistent.
- Structure can help.
- Ignore what you don't want.
- Attend to the desired behavior.
- Negative attention can still be reinforcing.
- Spend quality, nonconflictual time with your children.
- Have realistic (i.e., developmentally appropriate) expectations.
- Discipline is teaching.



Next Steps

- Try the strategies you listed
- Visit www.siskinresearch.org, Presentations tab, to get the PowerPoint
- For consultation, contact Amy at amy.casey@siskin.org