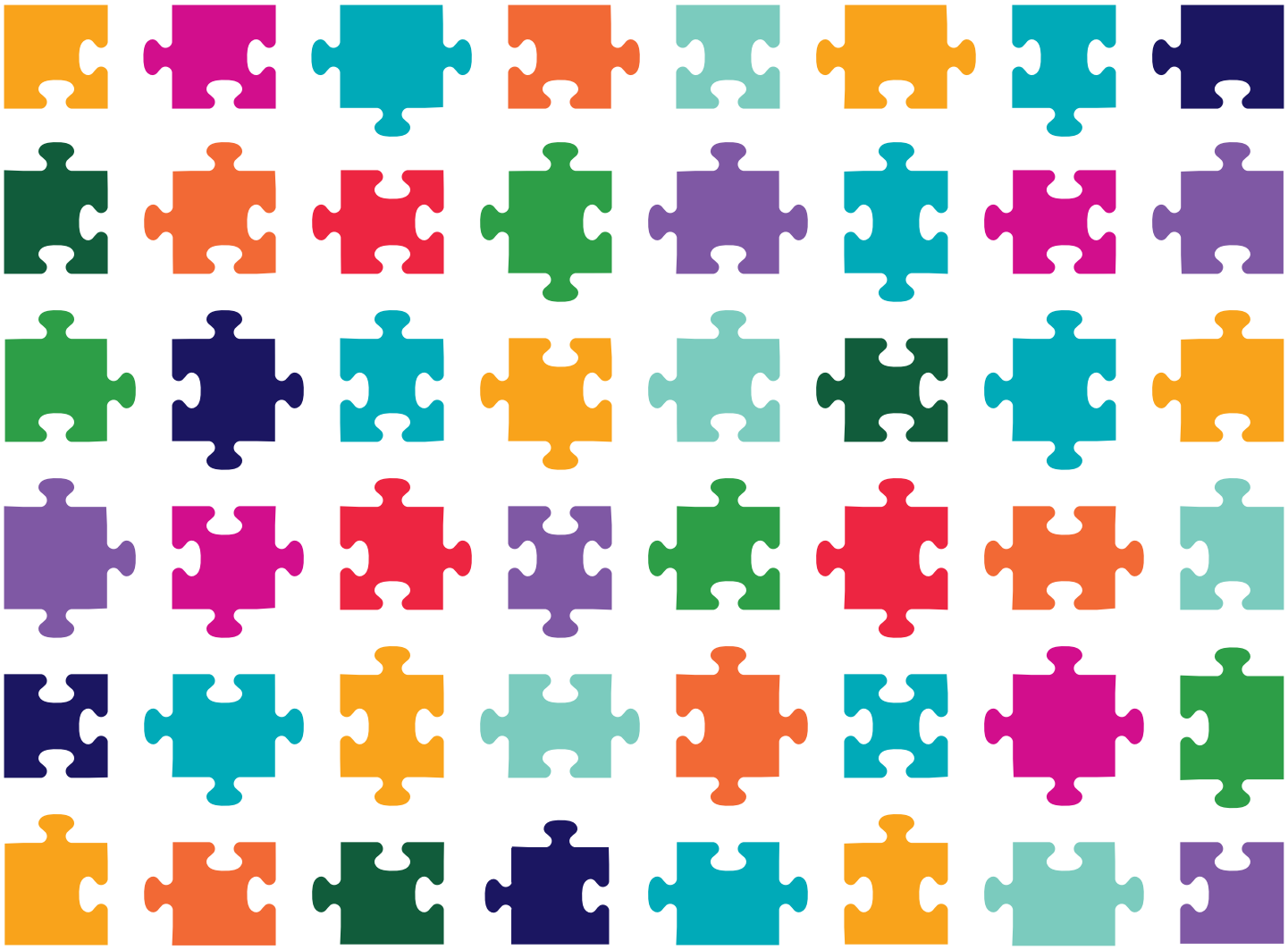
AUTISM SPEAKS™

ATN Autism Treatment Network

An Early Childcare Provider's Guide

to Managing Challenging Behaviors

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS WITH INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS



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AUTHORS

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The Purpose of the Toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to present ways for early childcare providers to better manage challenging behaviors in a childcare setting. It describes intervention strategies and positive behavioral supports to help class time go more smoothly. This toolkit also briefly describes Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), basic developmental milestones, and potential developmental red flags to monitor. Although the behavior techniques discussed in this toolkit are suggested to be used for children with ASD, they can be used for ANY child. Children with behavior problems that are similar to ASD in some ways can benefit from these interventions — for example children with attention concerns, anxiety, intellectual disability, and social skills deficits can benefit from many of the strategies in this toolkit.

Part 1: Learn the Basics

Overview of Autism

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have difficulty in social interaction, language and communication, and often show repetitive interests or behaviors. In addition, ASD is often associated with extreme need for or dislike of certain types of sensory stimulation (e.g., certain sounds). ASD is a broad term for a range of features, so every child with autism has their own, unique set of strengths and struggles. For example, while some children with autism have other developmental concerns, such as below average intellectual functioning, others have normal or even high IQ. The grid below shows some main qualities of children with ASD:

SOCIAL		- Limited eye contact - Doesn't like to/ has difficulty playing with other children (turn taking, sharing etc.) - Has problems making and keeping friends - Has problems understanding the feelings of others - Doesn't share activities and enjoyments with others - Limited imitation and/or pretend play
LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION		- Limited communicative gestures (e.g., pointing) - Has no speech, or less than is normal for the age - Speech sounds unusual or strange - Repeats or echoes words/ phrases in place of typical language - Has problems making conversation (e.g., interrupts, or changes topic without warning) - Talks about the same topic over and over again
REPETITIVE INTERESTS/BEHAVIORS & PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS		- Shows an uncommonly strong interest in a toy/ object - Plays with parts of a toy rather than the toy as a whole - Repeats certain movements (e.g., spinning, flapping hands, banging objects) - Has a hard time with changes in routines - Noticeable physical over- or under-activity

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT	RED FLAGS FOR CONCERNS
- Smiles by 2 months - Begins to babble at 4 months - Responds to own name by 6 months - Copies/mimics sounds/gestures of others by 9 months - Uses gestures and plays “peek-a-boo” by 1 year - Simple pretend play and single words by 18 months - Points to items by 2 years - Shows concern for others by 3 years - Tells simple stories by 4 years	- May not know how to play or pretend with toys - May not point at objects or look at an object when someone else points - May not have interest in others, or may have interest but not be sure how to interact - May not be aware of others and their feelings - May repeat or echo words in place of typical language - May do things over and over again and have a hard time with changes in routine - May have different reactions to sensory experiences (ex: the way they respond to the smells, tastes, feeling, sights, or sounds of their environment)

Content provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Program (www.cdc.gov/ActEarly).

Understanding typical development and milestones is very important in figuring out when behavior concerns are not typical. For example, temper tantrums and defiance with adults are typical for children around 18 months to 2 years. To learn more about developmental milestones, check out the FREE resources available through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s “**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**” campaign at **www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/.** (You can also just Google the words “**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**”)

Understanding Behavior

- **Behavior:** any action that a person does that can be observed or measured
- Behavior does not refer to some quality, characteristic, or state of a person (or his/her personality).

Examples: Donnie is stubborn.
Laurie is happy.
Joey is mean.

IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR DEFINITIONS

“Tantrum” can mean different things to different people. To some, a tantrum is crying and flopping on the floor. For others, a tantrum could include hitting others and throwing toys. It is very important that when working to change an undesirable behavior that everyone working with the child has a very clear understanding of what the behavior looks like exactly. For example, a tantrum may be defined more clearly as “any instance of crying, whining, yelling, falling on the ground and/or kicking feet in the air on the ground.” Physical aggression may be defined as “hitting others with an open (or closed) hand/fist, kicking, biting, scratching or pinching others.” No matter the behavior, a clear definition is the place to start. Everyone on the child’s team should be able to know exactly what a behavior looks like based on how it is described in words.

Principles of Learning

Learning

	Decreases likelihood of behavior in future	Increases likelihood of behavior in future
Add something to environment	**Positive Punishment** (e.g., spanking; reprimands)	**Positive Reinforcement** (e.g., special treat; screen time)
Remove something from the environment	**Negative Punishment** (e.g., take away video game)	**Negative Reinforcement** (e.g., removal from noisy classroom)

Consequences for behaviors

Negative = Take Something Away

Positive = Adding Something

Punishment = Decreases Behavior

Reinforcement = Increases Behavior

Any behavior that is reinforced is more likely to occur again in the future.

Any behavior that is punished is less likely to occur again in the future.

Consequences can only affect future behavior

Immediate consequences have the greatest effect

Responding in less than 1 second is best

Understanding Reinforcement

Catch the Child Being Good

Children enjoy attention. If they do not receive enough positive attention for good behavior, they might start doing things do get "negative" attention (e.g., reprimands). Giving positive attention for good behavior is a great way teach children and motivate them to continue being good.

Giving Positive Attention Effectively:

1. **Make eye contact and speak enthusiastically.**
2. **Be specific about the behavior you liked and want to see more of. For example, "I like how you are sitting quietly" or "You did a great job picking up your toys".**
3. **Give attention IMMEDIATELY after the behavior you liked.**
4. **Do not give attention immediately following a behavior you did not like. The child should be exhibiting good behavior for at least 30 seconds before you give attention.**
5. **Give the type of attention your child enjoys. For example, if he/she does not like physical contact, do not give hugs or pats on back.**
6. **At first, try to catch the child being good at least one time every 5-minutes.**
7. **Give positive attention for even small improvements. For example, "thanks for throwing your trash away" or "I really like the way you are sitting in your chair".**
8. **Praise behaviors that cannot happen at the same time the child is misbehaving.**

Example:

If crying is a problem, praise the child for remaining calm/quiet.

If yelling is a problem, praise talking in a normal tone of voice.

If cursing is a problem, praise use of nice, appropriate language.

If hitting is a problem, praise appropriate engagement in play activities (or activities where he/she is appropriately using hands).

Planned Ignoring

Children often seek attention from others, and an easy way to get attention is to misbehave. One of the best ways to reduce attention getting misbehavior is to ignore it. Ignoring means NOT LOOKING, NOT SCOLDING/REPRIMANDING, NOT NOTICING AT ALL!

You want to teach the child that the best way to get attention is to show good behavior.

It is especially important to reinforce behavior that you do like when you are using planned ignoring to reduce problem behaviors.

Be sure the child gets more attention for good behavior than misbehavior.

How to Ignore Problem Behavior:

1. **Ignore only the misbehavior that is not harmful to child or family. For example, it is not safe to ignore running out in/to the street, significant aggression towards others, etc.**
2. **Ignoring means NOT looking at the child (LOOK AWAY!). Keep a neutral facial expression. DO NOT SPEAK TO HIM/HER. DO NOT HAVE PHYSICAL CONTACT. DO NOT MAKE EYE CONTACT.**
3. **If misbehavior occurs while you are asking the child to do something, continue with the request and use minimal physical guidance if necessary to help him/her comply with the request, or wait him/her out until he completes the request. You do not want the child to get out doing something by misbehaving. Once a request is made and you feel the child heard and understood the request, do not repeat the request.**

Remember to give lots of attention for positive/good behavior when ignoring misbehavior.

Again, planned ignoring does NOT mean simply ignoring. Safety is of utmost priority when using planned ignoring. Instead of simply ignoring and walking away from the misbehavior, it means the caregiver AVOIDS any comments about the misbehavior and AVOIDS giving the child "the look." The caregiver may be intervening to block the child from hitting, removing items from the child's reach so he cannot throw them, or removing other children from the area. As soon as the child shows appropriate behavior, the caregiver gives praise (or the child's preferred reinforcement! See Preference Assessment on page 8.)

Differential Reinforcement

Reinforcing only desired behaviors & simultaneously ignoring undesired behaviors

Sheldon Reinforces Penny

In this video from the TV show, *The Big Bang Theory*, the character of Sheldon reinforces Penny's "desired" behaviors with chocolate. He catches her being good and pays less attention to what he does not like.

Reinforcement Schedules

When first making attempts to change behavior, providing continuous (or at least very frequent) reinforcement is necessary for the child to build an understanding that his/her behaviors are being rewarded. This means that the amount of time between the child receiving reward is the same every time. For example, the child will be given a pat on the back and told, "Nice sitting," or another praise statement every three seconds during circle time. The child may learn to expect that the teacher will praise him/her every three seconds. So, once the child is beginning to sit in circle time, the teacher can fade the pats on the back and praise statements to every 5 seconds...then, every 10 seconds and so on. Once the child has demonstrated more success with sitting in circle time, intermittent reinforcement can be used. This means the child does not know when the reward is coming. The teacher may pat on the back and praise after 10 seconds, then not again until 25 seconds, then not again for one minute.

Myths and Misconceptions about Behavior

True or False:

True or False: Reinforcement is bribery

Answer: FALSE! We all work for reinforcement every day. Just think of the paycheck you receive each pay period.

True or False: Praise and rewards are always reinforcement

Answer: FALSE! If the praise or reward does not increase behavior, than it does not serve as a reinforcer. Remember, reinforcement ALWAYS increases a behavior.

True or False: Time-out is always punishment

Answer: FALSE! Time-outs can be an effective form of punishment when used appropriately; however, time-outs are only punishment if the behavior decreases. Remember, punishment ALWAYS decreases a behavior

True or False: Principles of ABA only work with children with developmental delays

Answer: FALSE! We use principles of ABA every day to shape behavior with people at all developmental levels. These behavior principles with be effective with children with and without developmental delays

Multiple Choice:

Principles of ABA should be used for:

A) Teaching new skills
B) Decreasing negative behavior
C) Removing problematic children from the classroom
D) Both A and B

Answer: (D) ABA principles can be used both to decrease negative behavior and to teach new skills!

Behavior management should be:

A) Addressed only in the classroom
B) The responsibility of the child's behavior therapist
C) The responsibility of the child's family
D) A team effort that involves the child, the family, the educational team, and other professionals

Answer: (D) Behavior management with children includes the child, the family, and a range of professionals in order to be successful. A solid team that is on the same page will have the best results. This is why it is SO important to work with the family and other professionals when dealing with difficult behavior and teaching new skills.

Fill in the blank:

Removing a child from an activity due to disruptive behavior is often referred to as _____; however, this may be positively or negatively _____ the child's behavior
Answer: Punishment, Reinforcing

Part 2: Putting It Into Practice

Preference Assessment

Motivation is an essential part of working with all people. As mentioned before, we all work to earn some sort of outcome. For some, the outcome is a paycheck after putting in hours at work. For children, the outcome could be a wide variety of things following appropriate behavior, doing chores, sharing, (the list goes on and on…). It is very important to recognize that all children are different and may enjoy different outcomes. Not all children want a sticker or candy! Some children with autism may have very specific interests and can learn to show appropriate behavior to get access to their favorite items. This can be trains, superheroes, or even household items like chapstick, cooking utensils, or a fan!

When working with any child, it is very important to know exactly what the child enjoys. There are some quick ways of getting this information even if the child is nonverbal and cannot tell you what he/she likes. The list below gives some ideas when working with young children.

1) Ask the Parents. It is always great to get a list of 6-10 items from the parents. You can start by asking questions such as "When your child is at home, what does he/she like to do?" or "In free time, what does your child play with at home?" or "What people/places/things does your child seem to enjoy most?"

2) Collect those items (or pictures of those items). Based on what you learn from parents, gather the items. You can consider having some items that are edible (food) items, tangible (objects/toys/videos) or pictures of places (sensory area, water table, slide, etc.).

3) Complete a preference assessment with the child. One of the easiest ways to find things the child enjoys is to ask him/her! Even if he/she cannot tell you in words, the child can show you with actions what he/she prefers. In Appendix X, you can find a two-page preference assessment that can be extremely helpful in figuring out what the child enjoys. You choose 6 items and write them in the list under where it says, "Potential Reinforcers List" (these can be anything the parents have described or that you have observed the child to enjoy!). It may be helpful to put these items (or pictures of items) in a small bin or container so you have more control over moving it out of the child's reach. The assessment lists out the order in which to show the child the items. You then pick up items #3 and #6 and hold out in front of the child. You can say something like, "Take it," "Take one," "Go ahead," and see what they take from you. If item #3 was a piece of chocolate and #6 was a crayon and the child takes the crayon, you would then circle #6 in the list. Once a child chooses an item, allow him/her to play with that item for no longer than 1 minute. If the child chose a food item, he/she can consume a very small piece of it. If the child chose an activity or place (e.g., the slide), the child can go down the slide once before you move to the next item. Then, you hold up items #2 and #4. You continue down the list until you reach the last one in the first column (items #2 and #6). *If the child is not interested in either item and does not reach for anything, you can circle "No choice." *If the child takes both items, you can either prompt them to only take one of the items or circle "No choice," and move to the next item. You may consider going through the second column of choices with different items or on a different day.

4) Score the preference assessment. In the box that says "Reinforcer Assessment Results," you want to count up the times you circled each number and write into the first open line (the numerator side of math equation). If you completed the whole first column, you write in 5 for each of the items in the second open line (the denominator of the math equation). You then divide the numbers. For example, if item #1 was cookies and the child chose #1 three times, you would do 3 ÷ 5 = 0.6. You then would multiply that number by 100 (0.6 x 100 = 60). You know that the child chose cookies 60% of the time.

It may be helpful to keep the following information handy:

0/5 = 0%	3/5 = 60%
1/5 = 20%	4/5 = 80%
2/5 = 40%	5/5 = 100%

5) Compare the scores. Look to see which items had the highest percent. It will be important to keep these items on hand when working with the child. This will help when offering reinforcement to the child for sitting in her chair, checking a visual schedule, or walking nicely in the line. Remember – children often need to be taught how to behave… it may not come naturally to some! Reinforcing their behavior with their preferred items can be incredibly helpful!


Reinforcer Assessment Grid

(Wright, 2003)

To see this in action, check out the video clip:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXY4VFMi0KI

Functional Behavior Assessment

Positive Behavior Supports

Start with the ABCs!

A = Antecedent(s) B = Behavior C = Consequence(s)

Before you can make any long-standing changes to a child's behavior, it is important to get a better understanding of why the behavior is happening. Getting the ABCs is the starting point for understanding the why. Since you have thought about exactly what the behavior looks like, it may be helpful to write that down in the "B" column first. Then, think about what happened in the child's environment just BEFORE the behavior happened. Write that in the "A" column. Finally, write how anyone responded to the child (this could be a caregiver or another child) in the "C" column.

Getting an understanding of the why AND making changes to the child's environment (or to our own adult behaviors) is called Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). Doing an FBA is a way to problem-solve the child's problematic behavior and identifying what strategies may be most effective to address these concerns.

Behavior is influenced or controlled by Antecedents and Consequences:

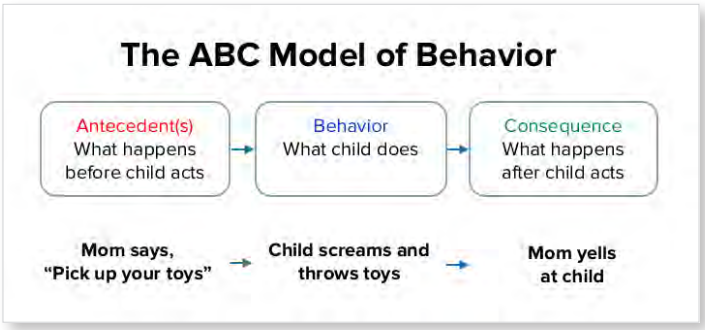
- Antecedents are events that occur immediately before the behavior
- Consequences are anything that occurs immediately after the behavior

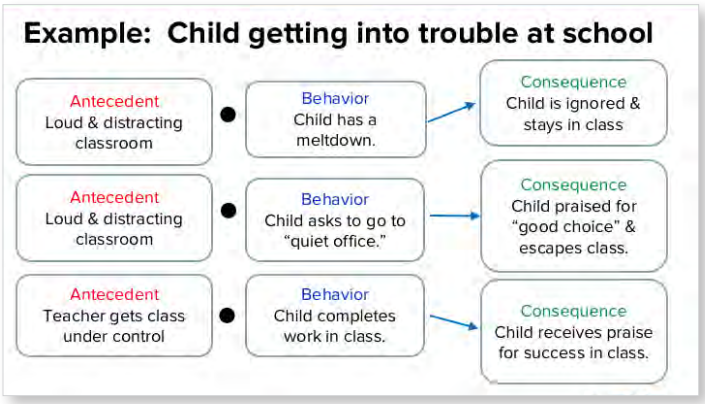
ABC Data Sheet

Date/Time	*A*ntecedent (What happened before)	*B*ehavior (What target behavior occurred)	*C*onsequence (What happened afterwards)	*Comments*

Target Behavior:_____

STBT – ABC Data Sheet 3.2008





Q: What can a functional behavior assessment show?

A: A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) can show the reason or reasons for the child's behavior.

Q: What is the difference between functional behavior assessment and functional analysis?

A: A FBA is done in a natural environment like a classroom or household. It looks at the behaviors that the child would naturally show in a day in his/her environment. A functional analysis is often done is a specialized clinic or hospital. This is when trained professionals set up the environment in specific ways to see how the child responds to different expectations.

Q: How many "functions" of behavior are there?

A: There are four "functions" of behavior: Escape, Attention, Tangible, and Sensory. But you can never forget that there may be a medical reason for a behavior!

Functions of Behavior — Think MEATS!

MEDICAL	The child may have a medical issue. He/she may have a toothache or a headache and may hit him/herself to soothe the pain. The child may have a stomachache which leads to refusal to sit on the potty. There is a wide variety of medical concerns that may affect a child's behavior. It is VERY IMPORTANT to start by figuring out if there could be a medical reason by talking to the caregivers. Additionally, talking to a pediatrician could be very helpful if the caregivers suspect this may be a reason. If you and the caregivers (and the medical provider) have figured out that there is NOT a medical reason, consider one of the reasons below:
ESCAPE	A child may be acting out to "escape" a distressing situation or avoid a task or chore. When a child swipes food off his/her plate, he/she may be trying to escape eating that food item. When a boy flops to the ground when it is time to do table work, he may be communicating that the work is too hard or that he does not want to do it. A girl may run out of the classroom when others are singing because she wants to get away from the noise.
ATTENTION	All children, including those with autism, may show disruptive behaviors as a way to get another person's attention. Children grow up using cause-and-effect toys, because they are predictable and entertaining. Children with autism may learn that engaging in certain disruptive behaviors will lead caregivers to behave in predictable ways as well. For example, a child may yell out during circle time, because he has learned that if he yells, one teacher pulls him aside to "talk" to him. Another child may flip chairs because he/she gets the attention of peers.
TANGIBLE	An individual may use a disruptive behavior to get something he or she wants – be it a food, toy or other item. The child hits a peer to get access to the swing on the playground. That swing is the tangible item the child is seeking out. A child may hit, kick, bite, grab, scratch, yell, or demonstrate a combination of behaviors to communicate he/she wants something.
SENSORY	A disruptive behavior may be related to the sensory systems such as self-stimulating or self-calming. Rocking is a classic example of a self-soothing, repetitive behavior common among children and adults who have autism. Other potentially disruptive self-stimulating behaviors may be repetitive vocal sounds, hand flapping, toe walking, crashing into walls or furniture, etc. (These behaviors are not always disruptive in nature). As mentioned before, a child who does not want to hear singing, may leave the classroom. The reason for the behavior of leaving the classroom may be BOTH escape and sensory. The child wants to escape the distressing situation, because she is sensitive to the sensory input of the singing.

Functional Behavior Assessment Resources

1) Autism Focused Intervention Resources and Modules:
afirm.fpg.unc.edu/functional-behavior-assessment

2) The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice:
cecp.air.org/fba/

3) *Functional Behavior Assessment for People with Autism: Making Sense of Seemingly Senseless Behavior (Topics in Autism)* by Beth A. Glasberg and Robert LaRue

4) *Stop that Seemingly Senseless Behavior: FBA-Based Interventions for People with Autism (Topics in Autism)* by Beth A. Glasberg.

Strategies to Use

When using any strategies to change a child's behavior, it is important to remember to catch the child being good (p. 5), use planned ignoring of misbehavior (p. 5-6). It will also be important to keep in mind the child's preferences you learned from the preference assessment (p. 8).

Before using any one strategy, think about what the child's behavior is trying to communicate. Look at your ABC data to figure out the function/reason for the behavior. ***Important to note, there may be more than one reason for any given challenging behavior! Caregivers must take all these reasons into consideration when coming up with a strategy to use. The following strategies are meant to help a child learn new skills, get his/her needs met, and decrease overall frustration or miscommunication.

Prompting and Fading (MacDuff, Krantz, & McClannahan, 2001)

Prompting and fading is an effective way to teach new skills and promote independence.

What is a prompt?

- A prompt is anything that helps the child respond to a command or demand given to the child

There are several levels of prompting including:

(1) Full Physical: full manipulation so the child completes the command/demand completely (i.e., hand over hand prompting)

(2) Partial Physical: less intrusive than the full physical prompting, this involves a light touch or nudge toward a correct response

(3) Touch: only a specific body part is touched without an indication to move a specific way

(4) Imitative: demonstrating a task for the child so they can imitate

(5) Gestural: pointing to, looking at, moving toward, and/or touching an object

(6) Positional: placing the correct item in an advantageous position in relation to the child

(7) Verbal (both direct and indirect): verbally giving the correct response before presenting the command/demand

a. Echoic: providing the entire modeled response
b. Phonetic: providing the first sound or syllable
c. Direct Verbal: verbal instructions that tell the child exactly what to say/do
d. Indirect Verbal: a verbal "hint" without saying exactly what to say/do

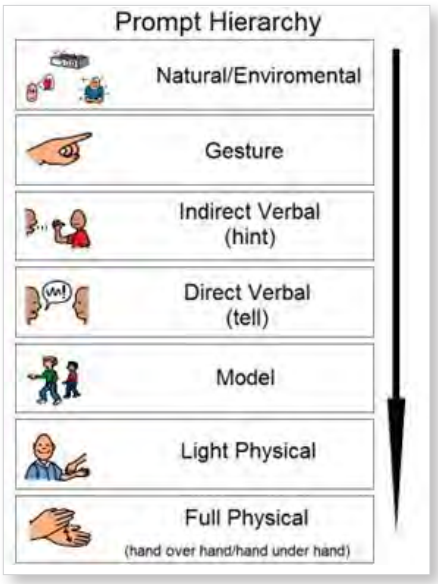
(8) Visual: providing the command/demand while holding up a picture of a possible correct response

(9) Demonstration: demonstrating a process and having the child try after the demonstration

Keys To Prompting:

- When using prompting, physical prompts are much easier to fade than verbal prompts.
- When TEACHING a new skills, use most-to-least and fade your prompting as the child learns the new skills
- Use least-to-most prompting when attempting to promote independence for mastered skills

What does it mean do use most-to-least and least-to-most prompting? Here is a hierarchy of prompting that will help you make these choices:



(BoardmakerShare.com)

Now that you have successfully taught a new skill using prompting, it is time to start fading your prompts. It will be important to always have a plan to fade your prompts. Only use as much prompting as necessary and use the child's resistance to the command/demand as a measure of the need for prompting. When over-prompting occurs, the child may begin to rely too heavily on prompts to complete commands/demands, resulting in prompt dependency. So remember, always have a plan to fade your prompts.

Task Analysis (Leaf & McEachin, 1999)

- A task analysis is the breaking down of a task into small, manageable steps.
- All skills, when taught, should be broken down into small, manageable steps. This will make it easier for the child to learn the skill, reduce frustration, and increase success. It will also help ensure the child understands each step of the process, and will promote consistency across teachers. It is CRITICAL that all staff use the steps EXACTLY as outlined in the task analysis, in the same order. It is very confusing for a child if one teacher is teaching the child to do something one way and another teacher is teaching the child to do the same thing but in a different way, or in a different order of steps. It is therefore essential that all the steps are clearly written down so everyone can follow the exact same procedure.
- The easiest way to do a task analysis is to do the skill yourself and write down all the steps along the way. For example, if you want to teach a child to wash their hands, you would wash your hands and record every step of the process in the order that you do it. Then, have someone else complete the same task and note all the steps. Then compare the steps you each wrote down and agree on the steps.
- The number of steps will vary per child, depending on the child's age and level of functioning. It is always better to have too many steps than not enough. That is to say, it is better to break the task down into more steps than necessary, rather than having too big of steps that aren't broken down far enough and therefore are overwhelming or frustrating for the child. Once you start teaching the skill, you will get a better idea of whether the steps need to be broken down further or whether any of the steps can safely be combined. Just be sure that all teachers are on the same page and teaching the skill in exactly the same way.
- Here is an example of two slightly different hand-washing procedures. Notice how one includes turning the water off and the other does not. It is important for everyone to know exactly what steps are to be taught, and the exact order to teach them in. Consistency creates success.

Chaining—teaching one step at a time (Leaf & McEachin, 1999)

- When you are teaching a skill, it is important to teach only one step at a time. People often want to rush through the teaching process, but if you move too quickly, the child will not completely learn the skill. Each step is typically dependent on mastery of the previous step. If you move to the next step before the previous step is mastered, the child will have a harder time.
- You must teach one step at a time and not move on to the next step until the previous step is mastered. A step can be considered mastered when it is completed independently (with no prompts at all of any kind) at least three times in a row and with three different teachers.
- You can teach each step one at a time by using forward or backward chaining.

Forward chaining:

- Forward chaining starts with the first step in the process and once the first step is mastered, the child completes the first step and then is prompted through the second step. Once the second step is mastered, the child completes the first and second steps, and then is prompted through the third step.
- Prompt only to ensure success and be sure to always deliver reinforcement for each new step being learned.

Backward chaining:

- Backward chaining starts with the last step and once that is mastered you proceed to the next-to-last step and so forth.
- Prompt only to ensure success and be sure to always deliver reinforcement for each new step being learned.
- Monitor results: As with anything, it is important to monitor results.
- Here is a great video clip with examples of chaining: **www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMVZQICUhAk**

Incidental Teaching (Tarbox & Najdowski, 2008)

Incidental refers to learning opportunities that arise in the natural environment during unstructured time such as free play. Incidental teaching uses toys and activities that the child likes. The child sees a fun item or activity and wants it, but cannot reach it without the teacher's help. In incidental teaching, the child is the one initiating the interaction with the teacher, in order to get access to an item or activity. Once the child initiates, the teacher prompts the child to expand on what they said. Once the child elaborates on the response, the teacher should praise the child and give the child immediate access to the item.

Incidental teaching is a great first step in changing behavior. It can be used to teach new skills. It can also be used to practice skills the child has already learned.

How to set it up:

- Identify toys and activities the child really likes.
- Place those toys and activities around the room where the child can see them but cannot reach them.

- When the child shows interest in one of the toys or activities, ask the child questions or prompt the child to expand.
- Give the child the toy or activity as soon as the child responds appropriately.

Example: Child says to teacher, "Chalk".

Teacher tells child to say, "I want chalk".

Child says, "I want chalk".

Teacher says, "Great job telling me you want chalk!" and gives the child the chalk.

Example: Child points to item.

Teacher waits a couple seconds to see if child makes a verbal request.

Child says nothing.

Teacher asks, "What is that?"

Child says nothing.

Teacher tells the child to say, "puzzle".

Child says, "puzzle".

Teacher says, "You're right, it's a puzzle!" and immediately gives the child the puzzle.

Example: Child says, "Ball".

Teacher says, "What color is the ball?"

Child says, "blue".

Teacher says, "It IS a blue ball!" and gives the child the ball.

Discrete Learning Opportunities

Discrete Learning Opportunities, also known as Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT), offers the child short periods of time with the teacher/caregiver to work on one specific skill. They are called discrete because they have a specific beginning and end. Each short period of time that a caregiver works with a child on a skill is called a trial. These trials are used to teach a child how to complete a skill by practicing smaller parts of the skill over and over.

The following video clips show examples of DTT with two year olds, Stephon and Wells. These videos have been made available by the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign.

Stephon, 2 years 6 months

Wells, 2 years 8 months

Common Early Childhood Behavior Targets

Children in daycare and preschool settings learn through play and experiences in their everyday environments. Many children with developmental concerns, including autism spectrum disorders, may need to have specific instruction to build play skills and other early learning skills. The following is a list of some common learning activities that can be taught in a variety of ways. Examples of teaching strategies are provided with each skill area. As with any teaching approaches, the child's individual, unique needs should be considered. This would include the child's developmental level, not just the child's chronological age.

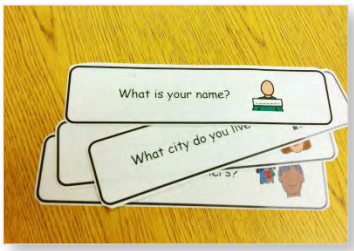
Developmental Level refers to the developmental milestones the child has reached in childhood at a given time. Developmental milestones refer to a child's skills in the way he/she plays, learns, speaks, behaves, and moves (CDC, 2016).

Imitation of others' actions: A child can be taught how to touch his nose, raise her hand or stomp her feet by seeing someone else do it first. This type of skill can be taught in a DTT with the use of prompting and offering the child reinforcement (Remember the preference assessment?!) when he/she completes the action (or even gets close to completing the action!). Kids need to get praise and some reinforcement even when they are trying! (See differential attention for more information).

Responding to name and making eye contact: Again, DTT is a great way to have the child practice looking to the person who has said his name in short periods of time. Prompting will be useful for children who need extra help moving their eyes to the target person. Caregivers can gently guide a child's face/head toward the desired direction (Remember to be gentle!).

Answering a greeting: With verbal prompting, a child can be taught what to say to someone in response to a greeting. For example, a teacher says, "Hello, Joey!" and another teacher may prompt Joey to say, "Hello, teacher!" A picture card (otherwise known as a visual support) can be shown to Joey to give him a visual prompt that he should respond to a person. It could look something like this:

Good morning, Mrs. Smith. How are you today?



It would be important to know the child's reading skills prior to using a written card.

Identification/labeling of objects, pictures, body parts, and action words: Using toys and pictures can be greatly helpful with this type of skill. These skills can be taught in DTT, naturalistic ways (such as play time or circle time), or with use of prompting and reinforcement.

Identification/labeling of what objects may be used for (e.g., comb is used on hair): Similar to identification and labeling, another more advanced skill to teach children is to know how we use objects. This can be taught in naturalistic ways such as through play or in DTT with prompting and reinforcement. Following simple instructions (e.g., "Come here" & "sit down"): Matching of objects and pictures and identifying and naming colors, shapes, letters, numbers: **Filefolderfun.com** is a great resource for FREE visual activities to help children match, label, or categorize items. Using DTT, prompting and reinforcement,

as well as video modeling can be really helpful to help children build these skills.

Appropriate toy play (e.g., Putting shapes in shape sorter rather than tapping shapes on chin or floor): Using prompting and reinforcement can be really helpful to show children feel how to play with toys correctly. The reinforcement helps to make playing with toys as they were intended more motivating for children who may not be naturally motivated to play. Video modeling can be really helpful in teaching children how to play with a toy, play a game, or show a play routine. The Hasbro© toy company, in cooperation with The Autism Project (**www.theautismproject.org**), has created FREE visual supports that go along with basic board games, baby dolls, and Mr. Potato Head© to help kids learn to play!

Sharing and turn-taking: Video modeling and teaching the child to wait can be especially helpful when teaching a child how to share and take turns.

Following a schedule (e,g., picture & independent activity schedules): These schedules can help children predict what will happen in their day. Many children have trouble moving from one activity to the next. Some children also have great difficulty moving from a preferred activity (play-doh) to a non-preferred activity (washing hands/cleaning up). A picture schedule can help them know what will come next. Caregivers can use prompting and reinforcement to show children how to use a schedule. This may include hand-over-hand prompting to move the pictures or to use a pencil to cross off the completed activities.

Sitting in a chair and attending for 5-10 minutes in group interaction time: Knowing a child's preferences for reinforcement can be really helpful in getting a child to sit in his/her chair for a group activity. You can use what you found to be highly motivating in the preference assessment by offering the child a small amount of the reinforcement when they are sitting appropriately. If they love suckers, you can offer the child a couple licks on the sucker when they are sitting nicely. After more time of sitting nicely, the child can get a couple more licks (and so on...)

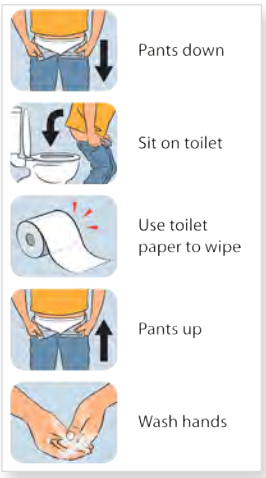
Self-help skills (e.g., hand-washing, toileting, eating, brushing teeth, getting dressed): Using a task analysis, or breaking down large tasks into smaller activities, can be really helpful here. Using prompting and reinforcement is essential when having a child work through a task analysis!

Visual Schedules

Visual schedules are pictures of steps in a routine that are displayed sequentially. They allow the child to see and follow the order of steps in a routine. This is often helpful for transitions, teaching daily living skills, and increasing on-task behavior. The Autism Speaks' Toolkit called *Visual Supports and Autism Spectrum Disorder* is another place to get information on visual schedules.

How to develop a visual schedule:

1) Identify a routine you would like for the child to be able to follow.
2) Find pictures that resemble each activity you have identified.
3) If you are having difficulty finding pictures, or you want to make your schedule more personalized, you can take pictures of the child completing each task.
4) Print out each picture and attach them in order on the visual schedule template (see EXTRAS 4).



Example: Steps for Using the Restroom Independently

How to implement a visual schedule:

1) Place the schedule in a location where the child can see it when completing the identified routine.
2) Direct the child to the visual schedule.
3) Gently guide the child's hand to touch or point to the first step.
4) Assist the child in completing the step if needed.
5) Once the first step is completed, use a similar process to complete all of the remaining steps on the visual schedule.
6) After given several opportunities to practice using a visual schedule, gradually reduce the amount of physical prompts (e.g., guiding the child's hand and/or directing the child to complete the activities) to help promote independence. If the child continues to have difficulty, then additional assistance can be provided to help the child be successful.
7) Reward the child's attempts to follow the visual schedule and complete the routine.

For more information about visual schedules, please visit **milestones.org/personal-planning/visual-supports/**

Independent Activity Schedules

Independent Activity Schedules are a series of pictures that direct a child to complete a sequence of activities. This can take many forms, but often includes a binder with pictures on each page to prompt a child to complete specific tasks (McClannahan & Krantz, 2010). The goal is for a child to be able to stay-on task and complete activities independently. This is often helpful for adding structure to free-time, preventing disruptive behavior, and encouraging independence.

How to develop an independent activity schedule:

1) Select three activities (e.g., worksheets, puzzles, matching and sorting activities, etc.) that the child is able to complete independently.

2) Find or take pictures of each of the activities.

3) Put these pictures into a binder with one picture on each page.

4) Organize three boxes (e.g., drawers, empty containers, shoe boxes, etc.) that the work activities can be placed in.

How to implement an independent activity schedule:

1) Structure the work area so that the three activities selected and materials needed are in their designated containers.

2) Place the binder in front of the child (or teach the child where to get the binder).

3) Gently guide the child's hand to open the book and select the first activity. Then encourage the child to match the picture to the corresponding activity (which should be the first container).

4) Prompt the child to take the items from the container and complete the task.

5) Once the child has completed the task, then the items should be returned back to the container.

6) Follow a similar procedure for all three containers.

7) Prompt the child to let you know he/she is finished.

8) Check the child's work and prompt the child to correct any mistakes.

9) Provide praise and positive reinforcement for completion of the tasks.

Once the child knows the process, you can gradually step back and allow the child to complete each step independently. Also, it is essential to vary the activities being completed each day to ensure the child does not become disinterested.

If the child cannot start with three tasks, it is okay to start with one and work up to three (or more).

Social Narratives

Social narratives are short, individualized stories that help children understand social situations. They can be visual and/or written and provide support in new and sometimes confusing social situations (Ozdemir, 2008).

How to write a social narrative:

1) Identify an area where the child is experiencing difficulty or anxiety.

2) Find a title for your social narrative.

3) Your story should have three parts: an introduction to establish the topic, a body for more details, and a conclusion to summarize and reinforce the information.

4) Use mostly descriptive sentences. These sentences give detailed information about a social situation, e.g. who is involved, what the child sees, and what happens.

5) Use a few perspective sentences, which describe other people's thoughts or feelings.

6) Include one or more directive sentences, which tell the child how to act in the situation.

7) Write in the present tense and take the child's perspective, i.e. the story should be written in the first person and should describe what the child would see and experience.

Example: Social narrative about playing

How to apply a social narrative:

1) Either read the story to the child or have the child read the story to you.

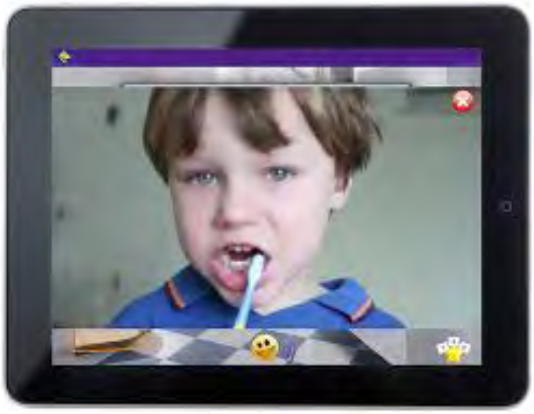
2) Make a time schedule to repeat reading the story.

3) When the child has learned the narrative, keep it in a place where the child can still see it.

For more information about social narratives, please visit **www.educateautism.com/social-stories.html**

Video Modeling

Video modeling is an observational learning technique in which children learn by watching a video demonstration and then imitate the targeted behavior. This method can improve social skills, empathy, and taking another person's point of view. In video modeling, repetition and practice is vital to generalize the skill to other situations.



How to use video modeling:

1) Identify a skill that the child needs to learn

2) Plan the video, e.g. by making a script. The video should include all the steps necessary to complete the target behavior.

3) Record the video on a camera or phone, and edit it if necessary.

4) Choose an environment with minimal distractions and let the child watch the video.

5) The child repeats watching the video regularly.

6) Practice the target behavior in a context similar to that in the video.

7) Practice the skill in other real world situations.

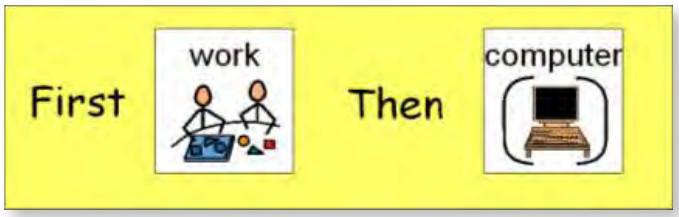
For more information about video modeling, please visit **www.watchmelearn.com/video-modeling/video-modeling-in-practice**

First-Then Boards (Loring & Hamilton, 2011)

- A first-then board is a small visual schedule that shows two activities. The first activity is a less-preferred activity and the second is an activity that the child likes. It lets the child know, "first we are going to do this, and then you get to do that". For example, "First put shoes on, then play outside". A child is more likely to do the first activity, knowing they get to do a fun activity right after.
- A first-then board is helpful in teaching a child to follow directions and learn new skills. First-then boards are also helpful for children who are not yet ready for a more complex visual schedule (**www.OCALI.org**).

How to use a First-Then board:

- Decide what task you want the child to complete (what goes in the "first" box).
- Put a picture, drawing, or written word of that activity in the first box. Whether you use a picture, drawing, or written word will depend on the child's skill level.
- Decide what the preferred activity will be (what goes in the "then" box) immediately following the end of the "first" activity. This must be something the child wants bad enough that they will work through the first activity in order to get to this activity.
- Put a picture, drawing, or written word of this activity in the second box (the "then" box).



- Show the first-then board to the child using as few words as possible.
- For example, show the child the board and say, "First puzzle, then outside". Point to the picture of the puzzle as you say, "First puzzle" and then point to the picture of outside as you say, "then outside".
- To keep the child on task, you can refer to the board while the child is doing the" first" activity. For example, you can say, "Two more puzzle pieces, then outside". Be sure to point to the picture of the puzzle while you say "Two more puzzle pieces" and point to the picture of outside as you say "then outside". This helps the child better understand what to expect.
- When the "first" task is complete, point to the pictures on the board while you say "All done puzzle, time for outside!"
- It is important to then provide immediate access to the "then" item or activity.

autism-center.ucsd.edu/autism-information/Documents/A_S_visual_supports.pdf

For more examples and downloadable templates, visit: **www.ocali.org/project/resource_gallery_of_interventions/page/first_then_board**

Token Economy

Token economy is based on the principle that a child earns tokens (e.g. stickers) on a chart for good behaviors, and receives a reward after 'x' amount of tokens.

Tokens make learning situations more predictable, as the child can see how much is left before getting the reinforcer. The aim of a token economy is to increase or strengthen certain behaviors.

How to set up a token economy:

1) Decide which behavior(s) you would like to strengthen.

2) Give the child a choice of reinforcers and let them decide what they want to work for (e.g. candy, TV time, a toy, etc.).

3) Decide what you want to use as tokens (e.g. stickers, poker chips etc.).

4) Set up a reinforcement schedule, which shows when tokens are given (e.g. for every correct response, sitting still for x amount of minutes, etc.).

5) Decide how many tokens the child needs until getting the reinforcer. These are presented to the child in the form of a picture or chart.

6) Choose a time and a place where the child can exchange the tokens for the reinforcer.

Sometimes a response cost is added, which is a 'fine' where tokens are taken away for undesired behaviors (Miltenberger, 2008).****It is important to start with having the child only earn reinforcement before ever considering taking away any tokens*.

For more information on token economy, please visit **www.educateautism.com/token-economy.html**

Functional Communication Training

Functional Communication Training (FCT) is a procedure for teaching an alternative, more appropriate and functional responses that result in the same outcome that the problem behavior previously resulted in. We can use FCT to teach children more functional, effective, and appropriate ways to communicate what they want or what they need. For example, instead of engaging in difficult behavior because a task is too hard, we can teach the child how to ask for help.

There are 9 critical communication skills that can be targeted by FCT (Frost & Bondy, 2002).

- Asking for a desired item
- Asking for assistance (e.g., "help")
- Asking for a break
- Rejecting (e.g., "no thanks!")
- Affirming (e.g., "yes please")
- Responding to "Wait"
- Responding to functional directions
- Responding to transitional cues
- Following a schedule

We can use a variety of techniques to teach these skills. For children with developmental disabilities, many will respond best to visual communication strategies. In fact, adults use visual communication strategies every day! Just think of our to-do lists, recipe cards, calendars, and icons on restrooms. In this toolkit, we have included protocols for introducing how to ask for help, how to ask for a break, and how to teach a child to wait (See EXTRAS 1–3). We have also include visual aids to assist in this process (See EXTRAS 4).

When and How to Talk to Parents

As a childcare provider, you are in a great place to be able to share with caregivers how their children are developing. You see many children and have a good understanding of child development. It is really important to help families know what is going well for a child. You can do this by having ongoing conversations with families about what the child is doing well. This can include verbally telling parents at pick up, writing in a notebook to send back and forth between home and the childcare center, or in regularly scheduled parent-teacher meetings. Parents trust you with the care of their children and also to celebrate successes and share concerns. Remember, parents also want to hear about communication/language successes, social/emotional gains, and cognitive developmental milestones just as much as how well the child is physically moving and growing.

As mentioned earlier in this toolkit, using the FREE information from the CDC called "Learn the Signs. Act Early." can be very helpful to follow along in the different areas of development for each child. This information can also be helpful if parents/caregivers ask you questions about a child's behavior or milestones for his/her age.

Using the checklists and booklets available can help guide your conversation with families around the milestones their child has met and ones they have not yet met. It is very important to be an active listener, be prepared, and keep the conversation focused on the specific behaviors or developmental milestones you see in the classroom, playground, etc. The "Learn the Signs. Act Early." website offers FREE training in this area. The training specific to Early Childhood Care Providers is called Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns. Specifically, Module 4 talks about how to talk with parents about their child's development. See the link here: **www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/watchmetraining/module4.html**

**Note – in many states, this training can provide you with professional development credits!*

EXTRA #1

HELP Plan: Teaching children to ask for help

The goal is for the child to ask for help with his/her words or to independently give an adult caregiver the help card before the child gets upset and shows difficult behavior.

Frost & Bondy (2002) provide several step-by-step instructions to teach functional communication skills. When a child is completing a difficult task, sometimes the child can become frustrated and engage in some difficult behavior. This is when we want to teach the child how to ask for help. Asking for help can be taught in multiple ways. For example, you can teach a child to ask for help during snack time if they need assistance with opening a water bottle or putting a straw in a juice box. The following example shows how to teach asking for help as a new skill. Remember, it can be very helpful to teach these skills on purpose, rather than to wait for a time when the child is already frustrated or showing difficult behavior.

1. For this strategy, all you need is a "help" card (see Extras p. 26).
2. Set up a situation in which the child may need help. Examples may be placing a preferred item in a container that is clear, but the child cannot open or giving the child a difficult puzzle to complete.
3. When child begins to show any difficulty at all, use physical prompting (see p. 11) to show the child the help card or to have the child point to the help card or to have the child hand the help card to an adult.
4. LABEL the help. When the child uses the help card, make a statement to the child such as, "I will help you with this."
5. Use the help card in a variety of situations to teach the child to use it to increase his/her skills for using it in any and all settings and with all caregivers (This is called generalizing or generalizability).

Once again, teaching a new skill is hard and it may not go well when introducing it. Here is what to do if something does not go as planned:

Example:
Child gets assignment or task from teacher
Child has tantrum or engages in negative behavior
Caregiver uses physical prompting to engage child in using a help card

IF THE CHILD HITS YOU

Block the swing and move the child's arm to the help card using physical prompting. State "You need help," and begin to help the child complete the task. Tell the child, "I will help you."

IF THE CHILD THROWS ITEMS/MOVES AWAY FROM THE TASK

Continue to provide the expectation for the child to complete the task. Put back thrown items in front of the child or bring items closer to the child. Use prompting to direct the child to use the help card and provide help.

EXTRA #2

BREAK Plan: Teaching children to ask for a break

The goal is for the child to ask for a break with his/her words or to independently give an adult caregiver the break card before the child gets upset and shows difficult behavior.

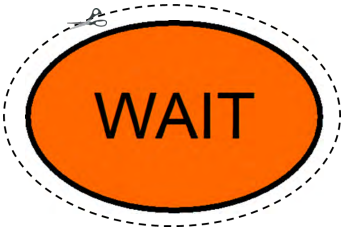
Teaching a child the skill of asking for a break can be exceptionally helpful in managing escape behavior. Similar to the help card, the break card is meant to be used BEFORE the difficult behavior rather than in response to difficult behavior. This requires you to know a little about the child you are working with and what tasks may lead the child to become frustrated. Let's learn how to implement a "break" card (Frost & Bondy, 2002).

1. Place the child in a situation that may lead him/her to become somewhat frustrated.
2. When the child appears to start escalating his behavior (but BEFORE full tantrum behavior, aggression or self-injury), use physical prompting (for more information on prompting see p. 11) to help the child use the break card.
3. When the child points to, picks up the break card, or hands it to an adult, LABEL IT by saying, "Yes, (Child's Name), you can take a break."
4. Activate a timer so the child learns that he/she is expected to return to the task at the end of the break. It may be helpful to keep the break short (you can set the timer for 1 or 2 minutes).
5. During the break time, the child can do something he/she enjoys, but NOT the thing he/she wanted following the completion of the task. For example, if the child's First-Then board says, "First, work; Then, candy," the child would be able to do something else during break time and NOT get the candy during that time. Candy would be set aside only when the child completes the task. The goal is for the child to learn that every time he uses a break card, he gets out of an activity, even for a LITTLE bit of time. Not only does he get a break from an activity which may be frustrating, but he gets to do an activity of his choice.
6. When the timer goes off, lead the child back to the table to finish the task.

It is important to first teach the child how to use the break card before placing limitations on it. Initially, when teaching the child to use the break card, he/she should be allowed to have unlimited use of the break card. Over time, limits on breaks will be needed. On p. 24, there is a visual support with up to 5 break options. Depending on the child, the caregiver can teach the child he/she may have up to 5 one-minute breaks throughout a task, time period or school day. Once one break is over, one break card is taken off the board and so on until all the breaks are gone. Once breaks are all gone, the child becomes frustrated and looks for break card, the caregiver can say, "Breaks are gone. You need help," and prompt the child to use the help card.

EXTRA #3

WAIT Plan: Teaching children to wait



This plan serves as a strategy to address the tangible function of behavior. To teach a child to wait, we use a visual support (e.g., wait card, caution sign) and a timer. The timer used depends on how the child responds/learns best. The timer can be auditory or visual, or it can just be a timer on your iPhone. Some children respond well to following the timer visually, so consider using a visual timer. Typically, a five-year old child can wait for 3-5 minutes; however, be sure to consider the child's developmental level when determining each child's "wait" time. Some children need to learn to wait for one second. Never start too high and try to start under one minute. Identify a realistic time period to wait.

In order to teach a child to wait, the caregiver must be in control of (1) the reinforcement (or what the child wants at the time) and (2) the duration the child must wait. Let's learn how to teach a child to respond to "wait" (Frost & Bondy, 2002).

1. Set up a situation in which the child must request a preferred item. After the child asks for the item, hand the child the wait card, and say, "You can have it, but you have to wait" or "wait for it."
2. It can be extremely helpful to use a timer to show the child exactly how long he must wait.
3. For young children (under 36 months), you may start the timer at 5 or even 10 seconds. When the timer beeps, give the child with the item while LABELING the child's action, "Great job waiting!"
4. Continue to use the wait card throughout the child's day and gradually increase the time the child must wait by a few seconds each time he/she is able to wait without any problems.

The child may have trouble learning to wait. That's okay! Keep using the wait card and DO NOT provide the child with the desired item unless he completes the wait time without problems. It is especially important to NOT give the child the item if he/she is having a tantrum. Remember, those ABCs? If you give a child an item they want after they have a tantrum, they have possibly learned the tantrum got them what they wanted. Instead, redirect the child and perhaps decrease the wait time the next time around.

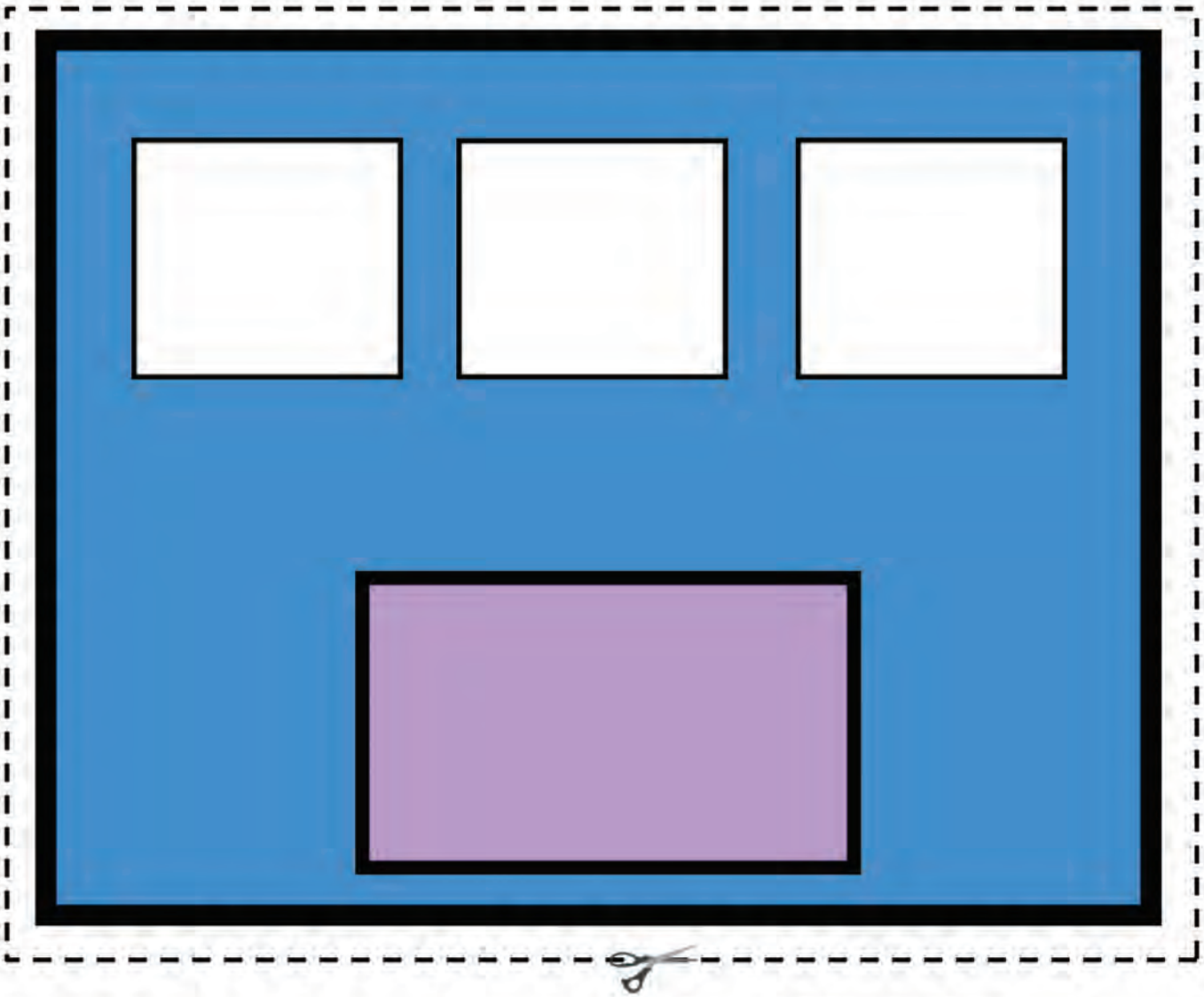
Another example:
We will use 10 seconds as a start point.
Give the child the desired item, let them play with it and increase their interest in the desired item.
Take the item, state "Oh, it's my turn."
When the child grabs for the item or asks for it back, hand them the "wait" card and say, "You need to wait."
Then, start the timer for 10 seconds.
When time runs out, provide desired item and say, "Good job waiting!"
Repeat taking turns with the child two more times before increasing the wait time.
In this example, the next wait time may be 15 seconds. Be careful of increasing the time by too much time too quickly.

IF THE CHILD SHOWS DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR

Stop and restart the timer. Give the child the "wait" card, and say, "You have to wait." If the behavior continues again, re-set the timer for less time. For example, if the child was waiting for 10 seconds, but he showed difficult behavior, it may be helpful to decrease the time to 5 seconds to get the child to be successful.

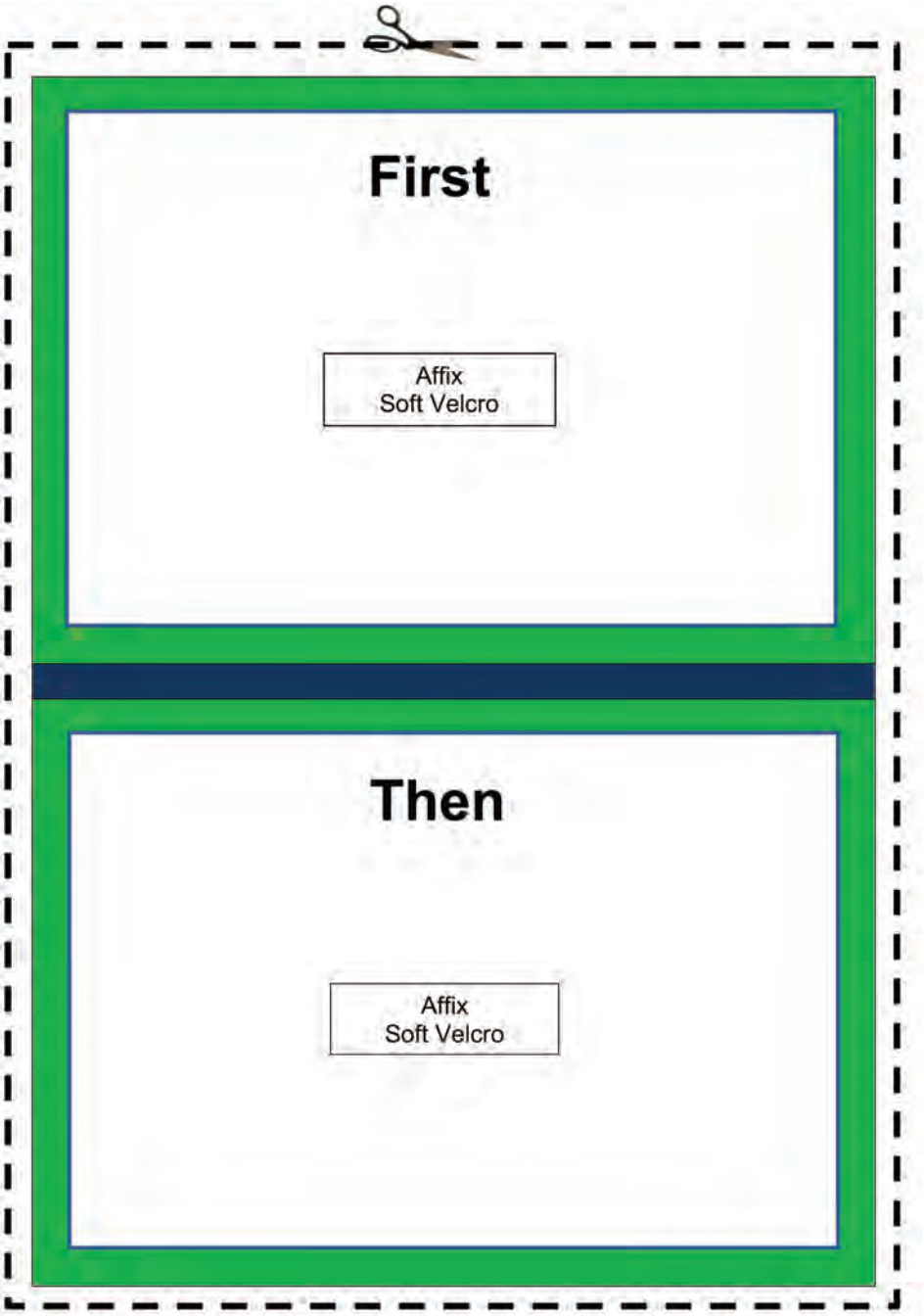
EXTRA #4: Visual Supports

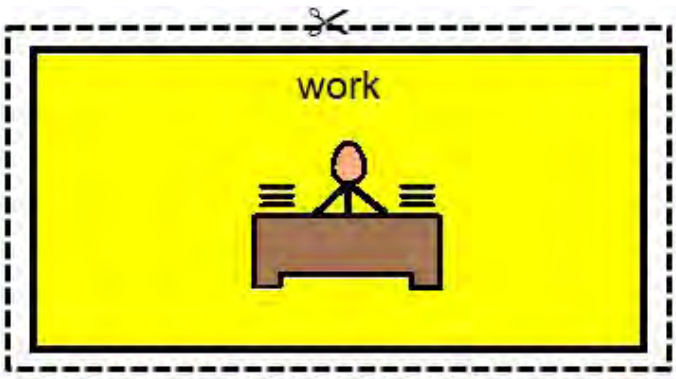
"1,2,3, All Done" is a visual support the uses pictures to set clear expectations. Using this board, the child learns that they must complete three work activities before their break or play time. This can help increase on-task behavior. Caregivers can start with only one activity and the #1 icon and increase up to three activities as the child can tolerate more tasks.

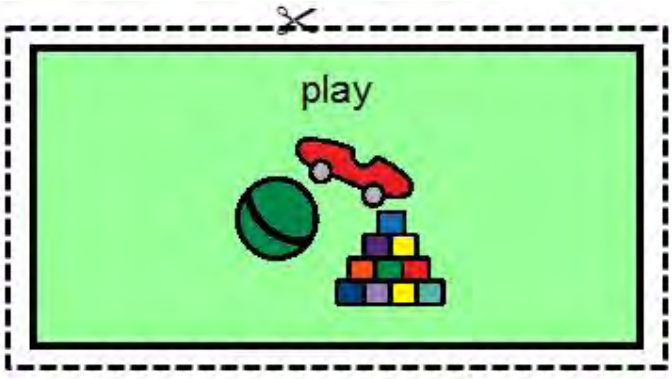


Create "All Done" pocket manually

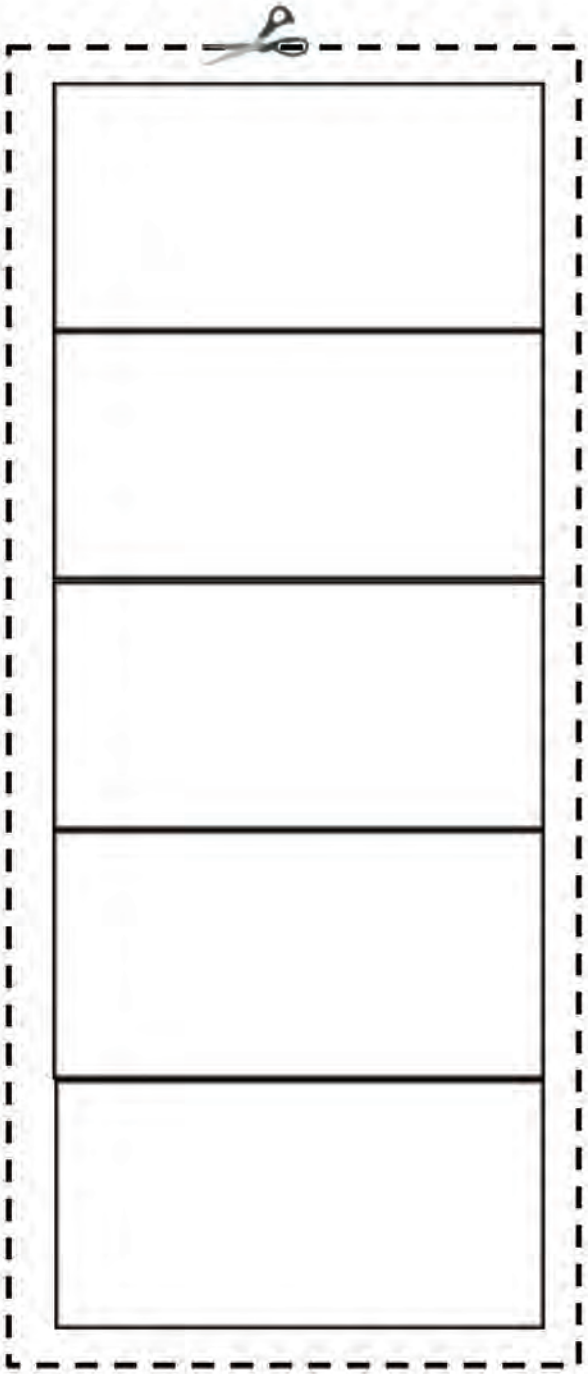
"First-Then" is another strategy that uses pictures to create expectations and encourages 'work' before 'play. Remember, always put the 'lesser desired' activity in the First box and a more highly preferred activity in the Then box. This should increase motivation for on-task behavior.

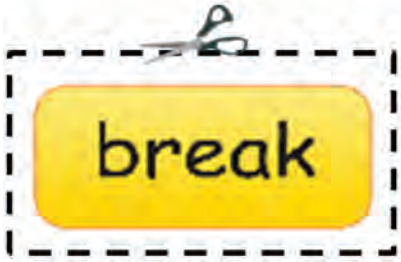




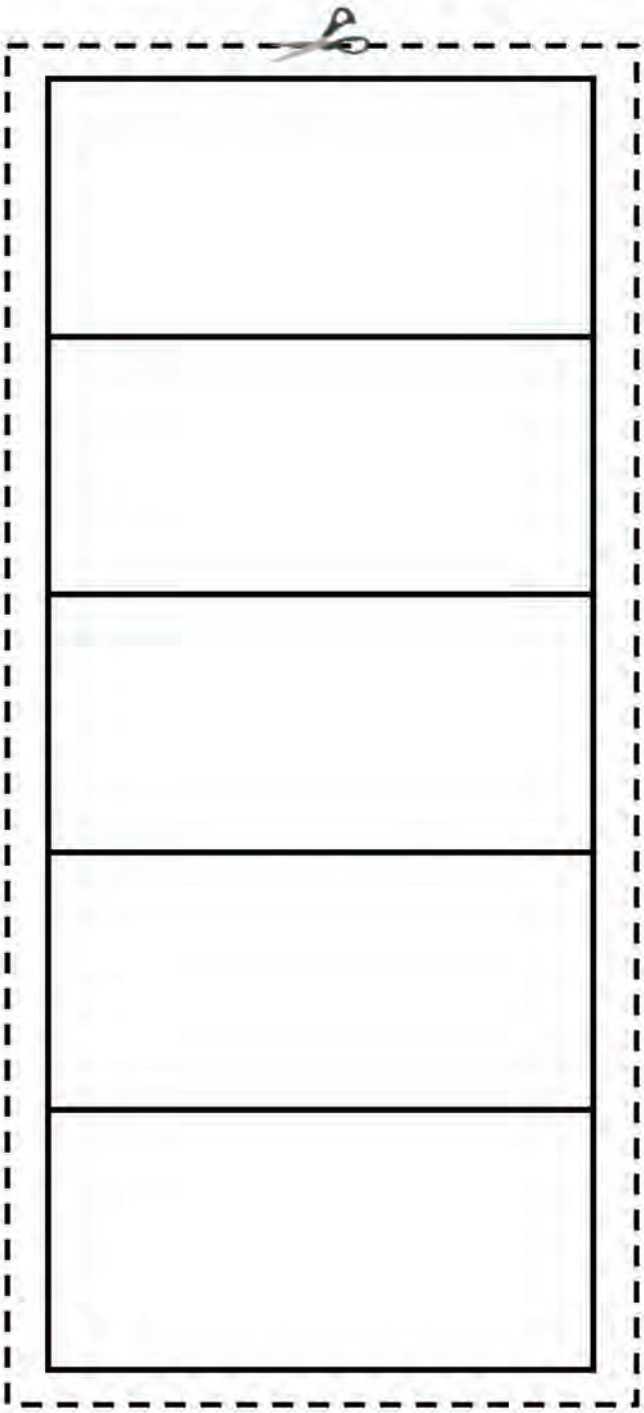


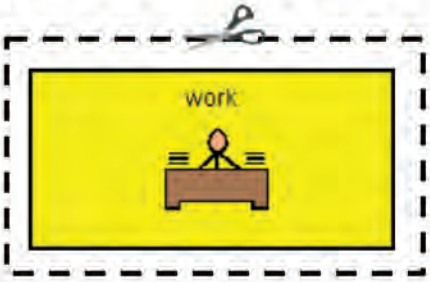
"Break Board" can be used to encourage engagement in 'work' tasks by providing the child opportunities to ask for a 'break' rather than engage in disruptive behavior to avoid a task.

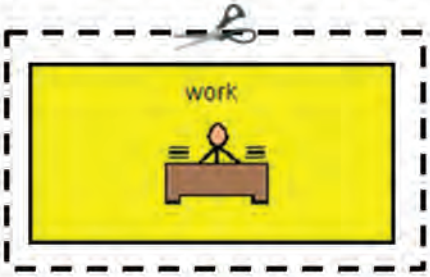


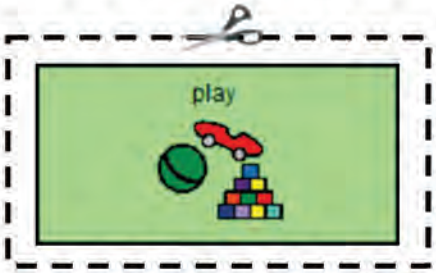


"Visual Schedule" sets up clear expectations and encourages the child to transition from one activity to another, using their schedule. Visual schedules can assist with transitions, increasing on-task behavior, and teaching daily living skills. Here are some examples, but the limits of pictures that can be used on a schedule are endless!

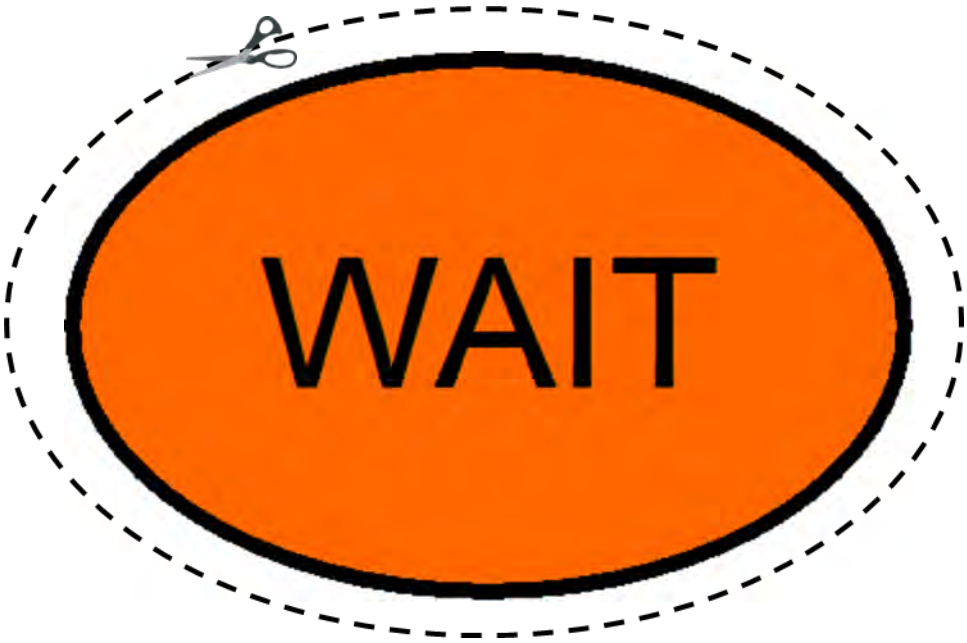








"Wait Card" is a tool to teach a child how to 'wait.' This is an important skill that translates across environments. Teaching a child to 'wait' can be an effective way to manage difficult behavior with a tangible reason or function.



"Help Card" is a tool to let the child know help is available.

Reinforcer Assessment Grid (Wright, 2002) Student: _____

Directions: Here are directions for using this grid to conduct a reinforcer assessment with developmentally delayed students (adapted from Berg, Wacker, & Steege, 1995):

- In the section *Potential Reinforcers List*, list items 1-6 that you selected as possible reinforcers for the student.
- Offer successive pairs of items to the student—following the presentation order that appears in section II, *Pairing of Reinforcer Choices*. Allow the child 5-10 seconds to select one of the two. If the student selects an item within the time limit, record the child's choice. If the child *fails to choose* before the time expires, remove the two reinforcer choices and mark 'No Choice'.
- Continue to present sets of two reinforcer choices to the child until all choices have been paired with one another (Section II: *Pairing of Reinforcer Choices*: left column).
- OPTIONAL: To increase your confidence in your assessment, readminister the items in the order listed in the right column of Section II: *Pairing of Reinforcers*.
- Summarize the student's preferences in Section III, *Reinforcer Assessment Results*.

I. Potential Reinforcers List

Item 1:

Item 2:

Item 3:

Item 4:

Item 5:

Item 6:

II. Pairing of Reinforcer Choices

Trial Set 1: First item presented on student's *right*

Paring of items	Student Choice
Item 3 & Item 6	3.....6.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 4	2.....4.....No Choice
Item 4 & Item 6	4.....6.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 3	1.....3.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 5	2.....5.....No Choice
Item 3 & Item 4	3.....4.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 5	1.....5.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 3	2.....3.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 2	1.....2.....No Choice
Item 5 & Item 6	5.....6.....No Choice
Item 3 & Item 5	3.....5.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 6	1.....6.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 4	1.....4.....No Choice
Item 4 & Item 5	4.....5.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 6	2.....6.....No Choice

(Optional)

Trial Set 2 : First item presented on student's *left*

Paring of items	Student Choice
Item 2 & Item 6	2.....6.....No Choice
Item 4 & Item 5	4.....5.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 4	1.....4.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 6	1.....6.....No Choice
Item 3 & Item 5	3.....5.....No Choice
Item 5 & Item 6	5.....6.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 2	1.....2.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 3	2.....3.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 5	1.....5.....No Choice
Item 3 & Item 4	3.....4.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 5	2.....5.....No Choice
Item 1 & Item 3	1.....3.....No Choice
Item 4 & Item 6	4.....6.....No Choice
Item 2 & Item 4	2.....4.....No Choice
Item 3 & Item 6	3.....6.....No Choice

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III. Reinforcer Assessment Results

Number of times **item 1** selected / total number of choices including **item 1** =(____/____)*100=____%

Number of times **item 2** selected / total number of choices including **item 2** =(____/____)*100=____%

Number of times **item 3** selected / total number of choices including **item 3** = (____/____)*100=____%

Number of times **item 4** selected / total number of choices including **item 4** =(____/____)*100=____%

Number of times **item 5** selected / total number of choices including **item 5** =(____/____)*100=____%

Number of times **item 6** selected / total number of choices including **item 6** =(____/____)*100=____%

Reference:

Berg, W.K., Wacker, D.P., & Steege, M.W. (1995). Best practices in assessment with persons who have severe or profound handicaps. In A. Thomas & J.Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology-III* (3rd ed., pp.805-816). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

NOTE: For a more complete description of how to conduct a forced-choice reinforcer assessment, see: Wright, J. (2003). *Forced-choice reinforcer assessment: Guidelines*. Available on-line: http://www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/interventions/specialneeds/rftassessment.shtml

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ABC Data Sheet

Date/Time	**A**ntecedent (What happened right before the behavior)	**B**ehavior (What target behavior occurred)	**C**onsequence (What happened afterwards/ how did caregivers or others respond to the behavior)	**Comments** (anything else that could have a potential impact on the child's behaviors such as poor sleep, no medication, etc.)

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