

# Preventative Strategies at Home and in the Community

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# Objectives

- Learn what behavior is
- Know the ABCs of behavior and why they are important
- Understand the "whys" of behavior
- Learn how and why to use reinforcement over punishment
- Learn tips to help change behavior and how to manage behavior during the holidays



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# What is behavior?

Behavior is everything and anything a person does!

- Think about what is observable and measurable

Behavior can be good, bad, or neither

Why is this important?

- To decrease one behavior, you must increase another



# ABCs of Behavior

The process of identifying what is causing the behavior

**Antecedent:** what happens just before a behavior occurs?

**Behavior:** what the person does

**Consequence:** what is the response to the behavior  
(*NOTE: not good or bad, but what happens directly after*)



# Functions of Behavior



Antecedent



Behavior



Consequence

- **What is a behavior function?**
  - **Function = Why is a behavior occurring**
- **Why is knowing the function important?**
  - **To decide how to react**
  - **To get the desired effect**
  - **To avoid making the problem worse**



# The 4 Functions of Behavior



Sensory



Escape



Attention



Tangible



# SENSORY MAINTAINED BEHAVIORS



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

These behaviors provide access to sensory stimulation. It "feels good" to engage in the behavior.

Examples include: twirling hair, flapping hands, and/or making repetitive noises.

## WHEN DO THEY OCCUR?

These behaviors occur at any time; in the presence OR absence of another person.

The child will engage in the behavior when there are NO demands and regardless of who is around.

## HOW TO RESPOND?

These behaviors serve as their own form of reinforcement. Which can make them difficult to decrease.

If possible, block the behavior from occurring and teach a functional replacement strategy. For example: teach child to play with fidget toy instead of flapping their hands.



# ESCAPE MAINTAINED BEHAVIORS



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

These behaviors remove an undesired situation, person or demand.

Examples include: running away, crying, whining, procrastinating, stalling, and/or turning something off.

## WHEN DO THEY OCCUR?

These behaviors occur at a time in which something is viewed as being too hard, too boring, or too loud.

The child will engage in the behavior as a way to escape from a non-preferred activity or task demand.

## HOW TO RESPOND?

These behaviors serve a way to remove an unpleasant stimuli. Ensure that it is not reinforced through its permanent removal.

If possible divide the task into smaller parts, or give within activity choices. Teach the child to request a break when needed.





# ATTENTION MAINTAINED BEHAVIORS



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

These behaviors provide a reaction from others. They are often described as "acting-out" behaviors.

Examples include: aggression, screaming, swearing, and/or other loud or unsafe actions.

## WHEN DO THEY OCCUR?

These behaviors occur at a time in which the child wants to engage in a social interaction with another person.

The child will engage in the behavior as a way to elicit attention, even if that attention is delivered in the form of a reprimand.

## HOW TO RESPOND?

These behaviors serve a way to engage with another individual. Ensure that the behavior is not reinforced through giving into the behavioral demand.

If possible ignore the behavior (not the child.) Teach the child to request attention in a constructive way. Give frequent positive attention, at times of appropriate behavior.



# TANGIBLE MAINTAINED BEHAVIORS



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

These behaviors provide a access to highly preferred items or activities.

Examples include: not taking "no" for an answer, crying, whining, screaming or demanding that something be given to them.

## WHEN DO THEY OCCUR?

These behaviors occur at a time in which the child wants access to something or something has been taken away.

The child will engage in the behavior as an attempt to receive access to a specific item or activity.

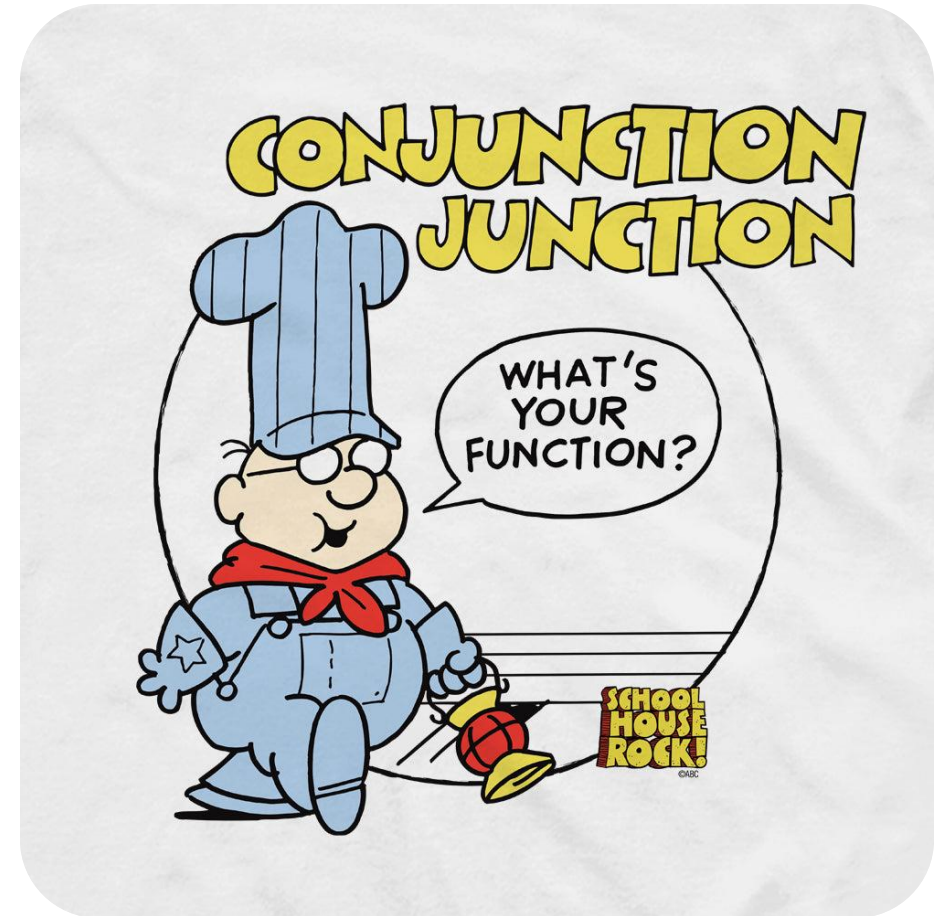
## HOW TO RESPOND?

These behaviors serve a way to gain access to a desired item or activity. Ensure that it is not reinforced through your reaction and/or response.

If possible do not give the child unlimited contact with the desired item. Instead teach them to ask appropriately, wait for a period of time, and/or exhibit a specific behavior, prior to granting access.

# Functions of Behavior

- **Once I know the function of the behavior, what should I do?**
- **In order to decrease interfering behaviors, you need to:**
  - **Choose a response to the behavior**
  - **Make the response immediately and consistently**
  - **Teach a NEW behavior that gets the same thing as the interfering behavior**
  - **Reinforce every chance you get**



# Reinforcement

- **Positive Reinforcement**
- **The presentation of something preferred immediately after a behavior**
- **It makes it more likely that the behavior will occur again in the future**
  - **Your paycheck**
  - **A compliment**
  - **Positive words**



# Reinforcement

- Reinforcement should be:
  - Earned
  - Immediate
  - Personalized
  - Frequent



Desired Behavior



Reward




More Desired Behavior



# Behavior Change

- **Consistency:**
  - **Once you have a plan, everyone involved should help carry it out**
  - **Easier said than done, but control what you can control**
  - **Inconsistent use of strategies will make behaviors resistant to change**
  - ***Example: if mom follows through but dad gives in, the child will learn that sometimes the behavior gets them what they want (but may be parent specific)***

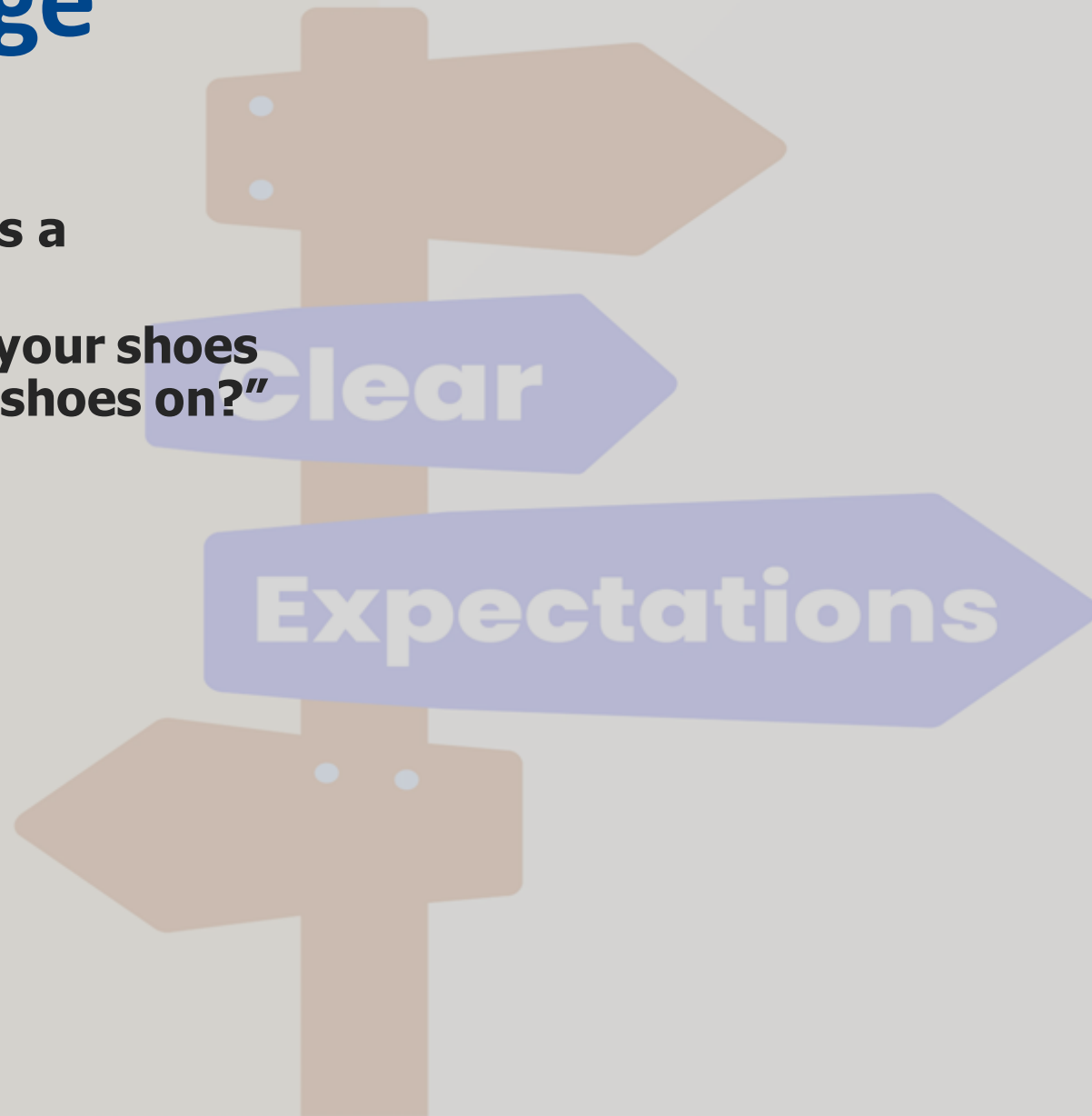


consistency  
is key



# Behavior Change

- **Clear expectations**
  - **Deliver instructions phrased as a statement, not questions**
    - **Example: "it's time to put your shoes on." vs. "can you put your shoes on?"**
  - **Gain your child's attention**
  - **Give instructions one time**
  - **Use clear, short phrases**



# Behavior Change

- **But also...have realistic expectations!**
  - **Pick your battles**
  - **Avoid empty threats**
  - **Pick one behavior at a time to change**
  - **Look at small changes as success**





# Behavior Change



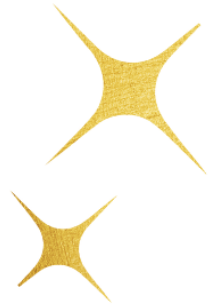
- **Catch them being good!**
  - **Find things to praise throughout the day**
  - **When positive behaviors are reinforced, they are more likely to be repeated in the future**
  - **Doesn't always need to be large, grandiose gestures, but affirmation to let them know this is the behavior that you want to see**



# Behavior Change

- **Use a Schedule**
  - **Predictability = Gold**
  - **Often children do best when they have a structured schedule or routine**
  - **Use a weekly schedule calendar to display upcoming events or routine change**
  - **Ensure that children are given preparation before big change**





# Holiday Related Tips

## **Make time for fun**

- Holidays can be stressful for everyone.
- Ensure that you're not only meeting your child's needs, but also giving them some extra positive attention.

## **Anticipate triggers**

- Holidays are a time of disrupted routines.
- Anticipation of things to come can be anxiety-inducing.
- Ensure that changes (decorations, new toys, etc.) are made gradually.
- Respond to behaviors in a calm, neutral, and specific manner.





## Holiday Related Tips

### **Make a schedule**

- Ensure that your child is prepared for the plans at the beginning of each day.
- Maintain some typical routines and normalcy wherever possible.

### **Be flexible**

- Sometimes even the best planned situations go awry.
- Practice “being flexible” in times of calm rather than during a difficult situation.





# Holiday Related Tips

## Prepare for transitions

- Give extra time for transitions.
- Give transitional warnings.

## Prepare for travel

- Practice and role-play social scenarios.
- Arrive to destinations early and allow time for breaks if traveling long distances.
- Bring preferred items with you (e.g., iPad , headphones, etc.)





# Questions?



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Presentation adapted from, "Managing Difficult Behavior at Home," by Behavioral Interventions and Solutions, LLC



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THANK YOU