



# Keep The Peace Simple De-escalation Tools for Parents

Desert Mountain SELPA CAC Training  
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# Facilitator

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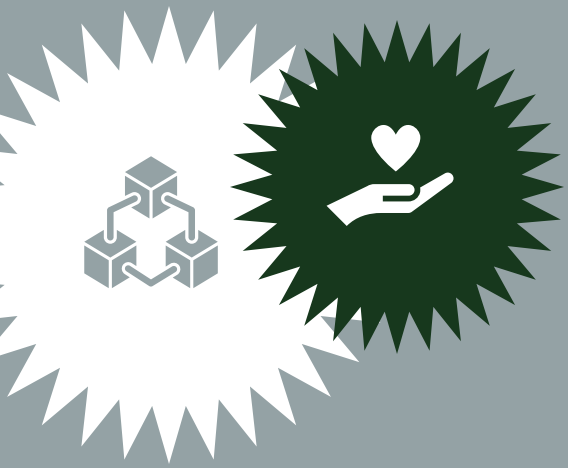
## Session Norms

- Please turn camera on, this is a judgment-free zone. Participate how you're comfortable.
- Use Chat for answers, Reactions/Emoji
  - Chat-storm prompts (waterfall-type then press Enter together)
  - Emoji/Reactions ( 👍 , 🙌 , ❤️ , ? ) for instant checks
- If you lose audio/video: rejoin with the same link.
- All activities are optional—observe or participate as you like.



# Session Goals

- ⇒ Understand the ABCs of behavior (Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence) and common behavior functions.
- ⇒ Learn simple prevention and de-escalation strategies you can use right away.
- ⇒ Build a 1-page Home Plan (Calming focus → problem behavior → trigger → purpose/function → replacement skill → reinforcement → recovery).



# The ABC Lens

Behavior is Communication



# ABC



A

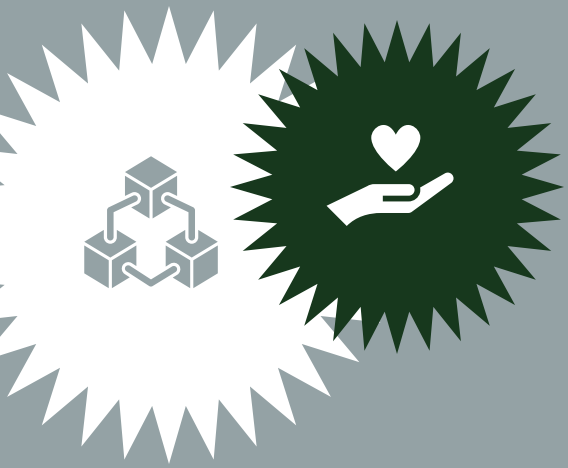
Antecedent: what happened right before the behavior? What was the trigger?

B

Behavior: what you see/hear. What did your child do?

C

Consequence: what happened immediately after the behavior?



# Functions of Behavior





# S.E.A.T

S

Sensory

E

Escape

A

Attention

T

Tangible



# Sensory

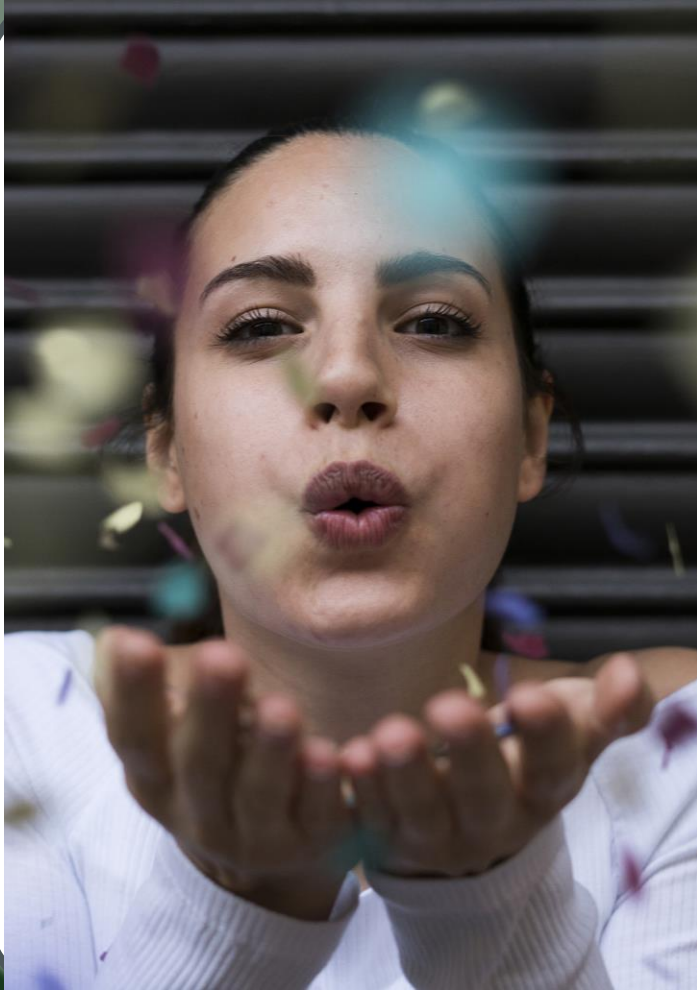
- ⇒ How something feels in the body
- ⇒ The body may need to feel certain feelings like movement, pressure, sound or touch.
- ⇒ This is often a body regulation need and not misbehavior
- ⇒ Automatic sensory reinforcement- the behavior feels good or is relieving on its own.





# Escape

- ⇒ Is your child trying to get away from something hard, confusing , boring, overwhelming, or stressful?
- ⇒ Behavior is communication and this escaping behavior most likely indicates that.....



# Attention

- ⇒ Sometimes children use behavior to get attention or connection from others
- ⇒ Attention is not bad
- ⇒ Children are wired for connection
- ⇒ Negative attention still counts as attention



# Tangible

- ⇒ Sometimes the child misbehaves due to an item they may want like...
  - Toy, snack, a preferred activity
  - The behavior continues because it results in getting something that is wanted.

# Replacement Behavior



## WHAT IS A REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR?

**INSTEAD OF**

Yelling “NO!”



**TRY TEACHING**

Saying  
“Can I have brek?”



A replacement behavior is a new, positive behavior that meets the same need as a challenging behavior.

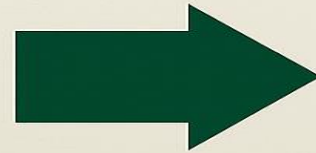


# Replacement Scenario

## WHAT IS A REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR?

**INSTEAD OF**

**“This is stupid!”**



**TRY TEACHING**

**I’m frustrated –  
can I get help?”**



A replacement behavior is a new, positive behavior that meets the same need as a challenging behavior.



# How to Teach a Replacement Behavior

- ⇒ **Teach When Calm-NEVER teach in the moment of escalation.**  
Use practice routines when the child is regulated.

## Steps:

- ⇒ **Model:** “Watch how I say ‘break please.’”
- ⇒ **Practice:** 1–2 quick pretend run-throughs.
- ⇒ **Prompt:** “I have been helping you with your homework for 10 minutes now—do you want to use your break card?”
- ⇒ **Reward:** Immediate praise paired with simple reinforcement.



# Identify The ABC of Behavior and The Possible Function

A-What is triggering the student's behavior?

B-What is the challenging behavior?

C-What do you think you child is gaining or avoiding through his/her behavior?

What skill can we teach him/her to meet the same need?



## Real Life Scenario-Elementary

After dinner, Mom says, “Liam, it’s time to do your reading homework before you can play your game.” Liam was previously playing with his Legos and laughing with his younger sister. The transition from playtime to homework time is abrupt, and Mom provides no warning or visual schedule. Liam crosses his arms, says “I hate reading!” and throws his pencil across the table. He then yells, “You never let me do what I want!” and refuses to open his book. Mom sighs, raises her voice, and says, “Fine, but you’re not playing your game tonight!” She then leaves the room frustrated. Liam stays at the table for a moment, then sneaks back to his Legos once Mom walks away.





# Identify The ABC of Behavior and The Possible Function

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B-What is the challenging behavior?

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What skill can we teach him/her to meet the same need?

# Case Study-Secondary



Image Source: Education illustrations  
by Storyset

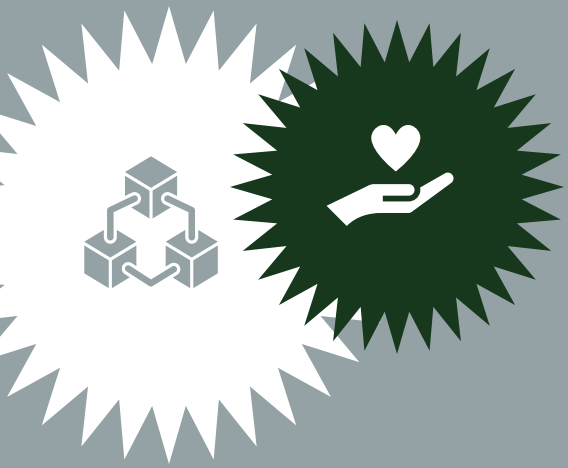
At 6:30 a.m., Mom calls up the stairs, “Sofia, it’s time to get up for school!”

Sofia was up until midnight watching TikTok and is exhausted. Mom calls again at 6:40, then enters the room, opens the blinds, and repeats, “You’re going to be late!” Sofia groans, pulls the blanket over her head, and mutters, “Leave me alone.”

When Mom insists, Sofia yells, “I’m tired! Just stop!” and stays in bed for another 10 minutes. She eventually rushes through getting ready and forgets her homework. Mom argues with her on the way to school, lecturing her about responsibility. Sofia says nothing, puts in her earbuds, and avoids eye contact. At school, the teacher marks her tardy again.

Later that night, she repeats the same bedtime routine — phone in hand until midnight.



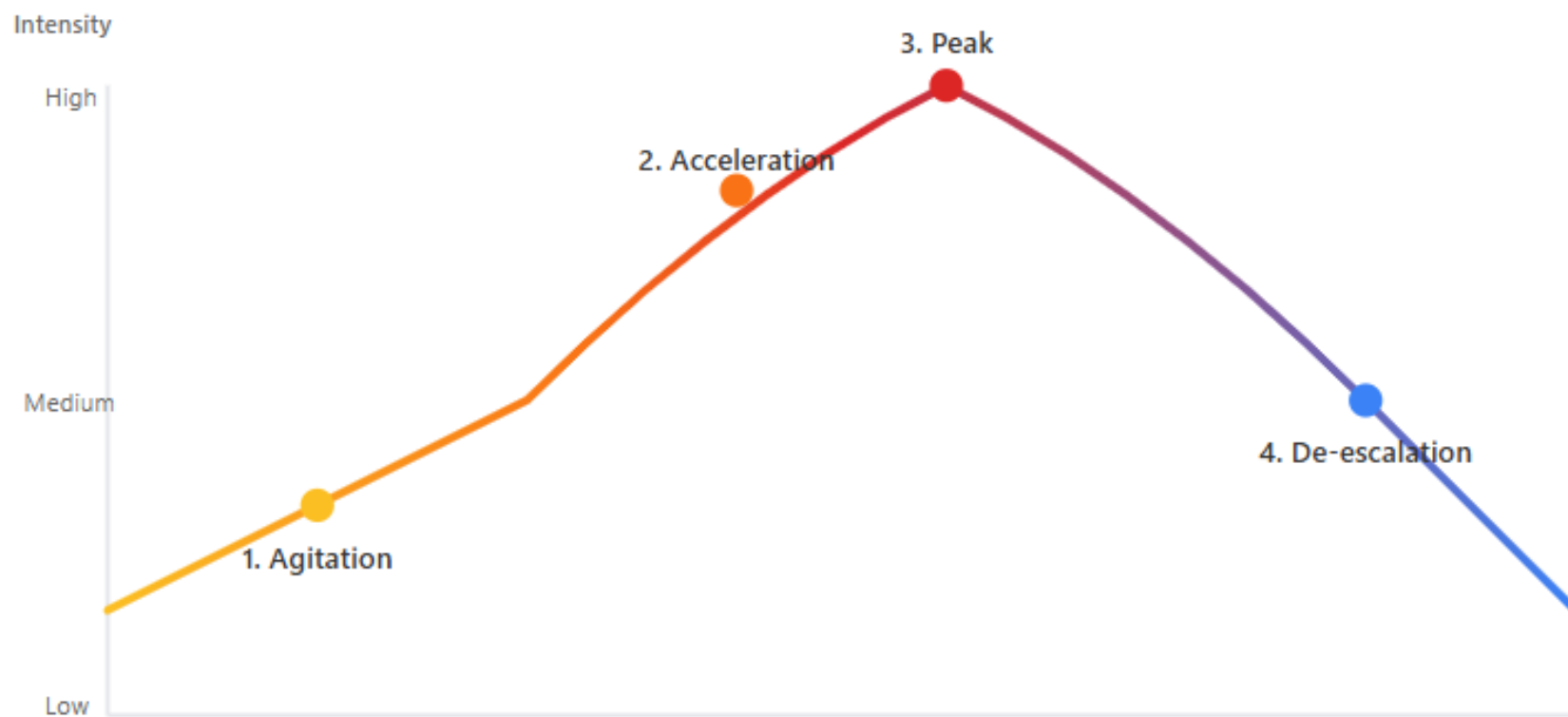


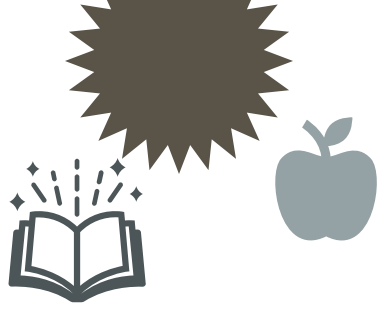
# The Escalation Cycle





# Escalation Cycle





# Strategies to help with Escalation





# Agitation

- Use a calm, gentle tone of voice
- Get down to the child's eye level and make gentle eye contact
- Validate their feelings ("I can see you're feeling frustrated")
- Offer simple choices to restore a sense of control ("Would you like some help with that?")



# Acceleration

- Keep your own voice low, slow, and steady even as the child's volume increases
- Model the calm behavior you want to see
- Take deep breaths yourself to maintain composure
- Maintain a safe distance
- Keep phrases short and clear while calmly stating limits (It's okay to be angry. It's not okay to hit.)
- Avoid lecturing, arguing, or asking complex questions

**First**



wash hands



**Then**



eat at table

First/Then  
Card



# Peak

- Continue to maintain safe distance
- Stop talking—verbal communication is largely ineffective at this stage
- Focus entirely on keeping the child and others physically safe
- Remove audience and any dangerous objects from the environment if possible
- Wait it out (Remember - What comes up must come down)



# De-Escalation

- Wait for clear signs the child is calming before re-engaging
- Use a soft, warm tone—avoid sounding relieved, frustrated, or upset
- Don't rush into explanations, lectures, or consequences
- Ask simple questions about their needs ("Do you need water?" "Would a hug help?")
- Acknowledge how difficult the experience was ("That felt really big, didn't it?")
- Wait until the child is fully calm and regulated (sometimes hours later or the next day) to debrief the situation.

# Home Behavior Support Plan



## Home Behavior Support Plan

### Parent Tips:

- Stay consistent and follow through
- Praise efforts
- Focus on progress, not perfection

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How will you stay calm and focused if a problem arises?
2. What problem behavior will you focus on?
3. What is the possible trigger/antecedent for that behavior?
4. What is the purpose/function of the behavior (what are they trying to get or to avoid?)
5. What is the replacement behavior? (What do you want your child to do instead of challenging behavior to meet their needs)?
6. How will you reward their efforts?
7. How will you reconnect with your child after the incident?
8. What went well, what do I need to change?



# Fridge Cards

- I see it's hard. Let's breathe. Break or help.
- You are upset. I am here. Water or quiet corner?
- We will talk later. For now, sit or couch?
- Thanks for showing break, The timer is starting



## Questions and Next Steps

- Pick one routine this week (bedtime or homework).
- Teach one replacement skill and reinforce it consistently.
- Revisit your Home Plan and adjust based on what worked.



## A Supportive Mindset

- Calm is contagious; fewer words as emotions rise.
- Teach skills when calm; reinforce progress, not perfection.
- Reach out for help when you need it—community supports exist.



# Resources and Help, Continued

[Center on PBIS | Resource: Family Resources](#)

[Positive Behavior Supports | A Resource Collection - Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[Behavioral Intervention Strategies and Supports - School Environment \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)

[Resources for Districts | U.S. Department of Education](#)



## Resources and Help

- CDC – Treatment & ABA Overview:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/autism/treatment/index.html>
- Center on PBIS – Strategies for De-escalation:  
<https://www.pbis.org/resource/strategies-for-de-escalating-student-behavior-in-the-classroom>
- IRIS Center – Acting-Out Cycle & De-escalation:  
<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bi1-lem/cresource/q2/p08/>
- PENT (California) – Escalation Cycle:  
<https://www.pent.ca.gov/pbis/tier3/escalationcycle.aspx>



## Resources and Help 2

SAMHSA – 988 Lifeline overview: <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988> | Immediate help: <https://988lifeline.org/>

NCII – Communicating with Families (PDF):  
[https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Intensive Intervention  
n Practicioners Guide-508.pdf](https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Intensive%20Intervention%20Practitioners%20Guide-508.pdf)

PBIS – Practice Briefs Library: [https://www.pbis.org/resource-  
type/practice-briefs](https://www.pbis.org/resource-type/practice-briefs)

Wisconsin DPI – Prevention & De-escalation:  
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/educators/behavior-supports/response-cycle>



“Sometimes even the greatest joys bring challenge, and children with special needs inspire a very, very special love.”  
– Sarah Palin



# Thank you for your participation!



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