

Behavior Management
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**ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis): Changing the Environment to
Help Children Manage Their Own Behavior**

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA) DEFINED

Applied

- using learning principles to work with people in their normal environments such as homes, schools, neighborhoods, churches, stores, transportation vehicles.

Behavior

- focusing on people's behavior as opposed to labels such as "bad attitude," "happy-go-lucky," "lazy," "determined," "sullen," "hard working," or "angry"

Analysis

- observing and recording behavior in an orderly fashion to learn what is happening, to devise strategies to work with the behavior, and to evaluate whether the strategies are effective

CAVEAT:

- Whenever possible, try to think of increasing or teaching a desirable behavior
- When trying to decrease an undesirable behavior, try to think of teaching an incompatible desirable behavior

KEY COMPONENTS OF ABA

1) Behavioral goals and definitions

Goal – what do I want to do and in what situation.

§ Fuzzy goal – "I want to exercise more."

§ Better goal – "I want to swim at least 20 minutes a day for at least three days per week."

Definition – describe specific behaviors in a way that someone else could watch the behavior and count it.

§ Example: Swimming is using any combination of arm and leg motions to move through water without any part of the body touching the bottom of the pool, lake, or other body of water.

2) Observing and recording the behavior

Frequency - Counting how many times

Mark on a 3X5 card

Use a golf counter, pedometer, heart rate monitor

Duration - Timing how long the behavior occurs

Using a stopwatch function on a wristwatch

Using a regular watch or clock

Tool: STRUCTURED DIARY – keeping track of antecedents, behaviors, and consequences

<u>Antecedent</u>	<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
What happens before the behavior occurs	Describe the actual behavior that occurred or what happened instead of the goal behavior	What happened after the behavior occurred or after the behavior that you did not want to have happen occurred
Example 1		
August 14, 2001 7:00am – We need to leave the house at 7:15am to take Sam to daycare and for me to go to work. I am packing lunch for Sam and me and still need to get coats. I told Sam to put shoes on	Sam turned on the TV and sat on the floor facing the screen	I stomped over to the TV and turned it off. I yelled, “Sam, we don’t have time to watch TV. You need to get your shoes on right now.” I picked him up and sat him on the chair and shoved his feet into his shoes. Sam started crying.
Example 2		
August 15, 2001 7:00am – I put Sam’s shoes in front of the TV and said, “Sam, please put your shoes on and then you can watch the TV for 10 minutes before we have to go.”	Sam pulled on his shoes and then turned on the TV. He played with the Velcro straps while he sat on the floor watching the program.	I said, “Thank you for putting on your shoes, Sam. That really helps us get ready. I will set the timer for 10 minutes so you know when it is time to leave.”

Tool: CREATE A PLAN WITH ANTECEDENTS, BEHAVIORS, AND CONSEQUENCES TO TEACH A DESIRED BEHAVIOR

ANTECEDENTS

What I can do to set the occasion for a behavior to occur:

- § get shoes that slip on or have Velcro fasteners to make it easier to put on shoes
- § set shoes by the bed so child can find them easily and won't have to look for them

BEHAVIORS

Shaping – using successive approximations to get to a complex behavior

- § Example - If I want child to dress without help:

Step 1 Start with just one item and help with others

Step 2 Then add second item and expect child to do both items, but help with others

Step 3 Continue to add additional items until child puts on all items without help

Imagined Rehearsal – imagining the behavior before actually doing it.

- § Example: As child is getting into bed, rehearse with child the sequence of dressing the next morning.

CONSEQUENCES

What I will do or say after the behavior occurs?

- § Do, say, or give something positive
- § Need to know what the individual likes: for example a Hug?, a “Thank you.” or an opportunity to watch special video

DATA

Chart or **Graph** the Behavior in order to evaluate success or to determine the need to modify your plan or strategies.

REFERENCES

Christophersen, Edward R. (1997, revised edition). Little People: Guidelines for Common Sense Child Rearing. Paperback - 198 pages Overland Press Inc; ISBN: 0930851056 Price: \$13.95 - new; \$7.95 – used. Source: www.Amazon.com

- Dr. Christophersen wrote this book for parents. Using many real life examples, he presents the applied behavior analysis as you might see it in real life.

Watson, David L. & Tharp, Roland G. (1997). Self-directed Behavior: Self-modification for Personal Adjustment, 7th edition. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company

- Watson and Tharp write in their preface: “This book is designed to acquaint you with a general theory of behavior, to guide you through exercises for developing skills in self-analysis, and to provide you with concrete information on how to achieve the goals you hold for yourself. The most important goal of this volume is to help you achieve more self-determination, ... more control over your own life.

The book can serve as a textbook in psychology courses but does not depend on a formal course structure. Any reader can use it for self-instruction; no “prerequisites” are necessary. Clients of therapists or counselors can use it as an adjunct in planning their own self-change.” (p. xi)