



Understanding and Reducing Negative Behaviors in Children with Autism

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Negative Behaviors and Autism

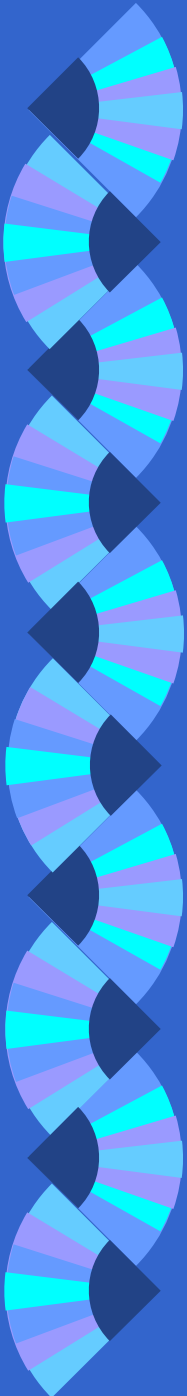
- ◆ Behavior problems are a key feature of the diagnosis of autism
- ◆ Aggressive, self-injurious, repetitive, or self stimulatory behaviors are commonly seen
- ◆ Behaviors result from
 - frustration
 - inability to communicate
 - Inflexibility or insistence on sameness
 - sensory needs
- ◆ Behaviors impact the child's ability to learn, interact socially, and function in a typical environment
- ◆ Reduction in behaviors is related to outcome



Functional Analysis

- ◆ Define Behavior, take baseline data
- ◆ Antecedents
 - When does the behavior occur?
 - Assess location, person, time of day, materials, task, demands, physical factors, etc.
- ◆ Reinforcement
 - Why does the behavior occur?
 - Assess reinforcement that might maintain behavior, the function the behavior serves

Functions of Behaviors

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1. Attention
 2. Task avoidance
 3. Frustration
 4. Self-stimulatory
- ◆ Behavior may have multiple functions
 - ◆ The function may shift over time
 - ◆ Intervention should be based on function



Intervention: *Prevention*

- ◆ Prevent or remove antecedents to behavior
- ◆ Remove child from situation while successful and before behavior starts
- ◆ Provide child with alternative to prevent behavior from starting
- ◆ Examples: longer transitions, relaxation training, reduce demands, warnings and times, visual schedules, choices, break cards, extra prompting,



Intervention: *Build Prerequisite Skills*

- ◆ Reinforce positive, desired behaviors
- ◆ Examples:
 - Tolerance for being told “no”
 - Tolerance to having to wait
 - Tolerance for sensory stimuli
 - Independent play skills
 - Communication skills
 - Gross motor and fine motor skills
- ◆ Teach specific replacement behaviors



Intervention: *Define Consequences*

- ◆ Extinction
 - Sometimes called “planned ignoring”
 - Do not provide reinforcement that has maintained behavior, or attend to behavior in any manner
 - Extinction burst: behavior gets worse before it gets better
 - Extinction should be applied consistently
- ◆ Distraction and Redirection
 - Distract child’s attention away from behavior
 - Direct child to engage in more appropriate activity
- ◆ Differential Reinforcement (DRO/DRA)
 - Ignoring negative behavior while at the same time reinforcing an alternative, positive behavior



Intervention: *Define Consequences*

- ◆ Response Cost
 - Removal of something positive
 - Loss of token or reinforcement child is earning
- ◆ Time Out
 - Time away from positive reinforcement, attention
 - Levels of restriction
 - Not effective for self stimulatory or task avoidant behaviors
- ◆ Overcorrection



Functions of the Behavior

- ◆ Attention
 - Do not attend to behavior, continue with task
 - Do not comment or make eye contact
- ◆ Task avoidance
 - Follow through with instruction, continue with task
- ◆ Frustration
 - Prevent, reduce task difficulty, provide assistance, reassess appropriateness of task
- ◆ Self-stimulatory
 - Prevent, redirect to appropriate activity



Key Points to Remember

- ◆ Intervention should be based on function of behavior
- ◆ Use the least intrusive intervention needed
- ◆ Collect data to determine if intervention is effective (behavior decrease from baseline)
- ◆ Consistency of intervention is crucial
- ◆ Be prepared to pick your battles and follow through with intervention once started!