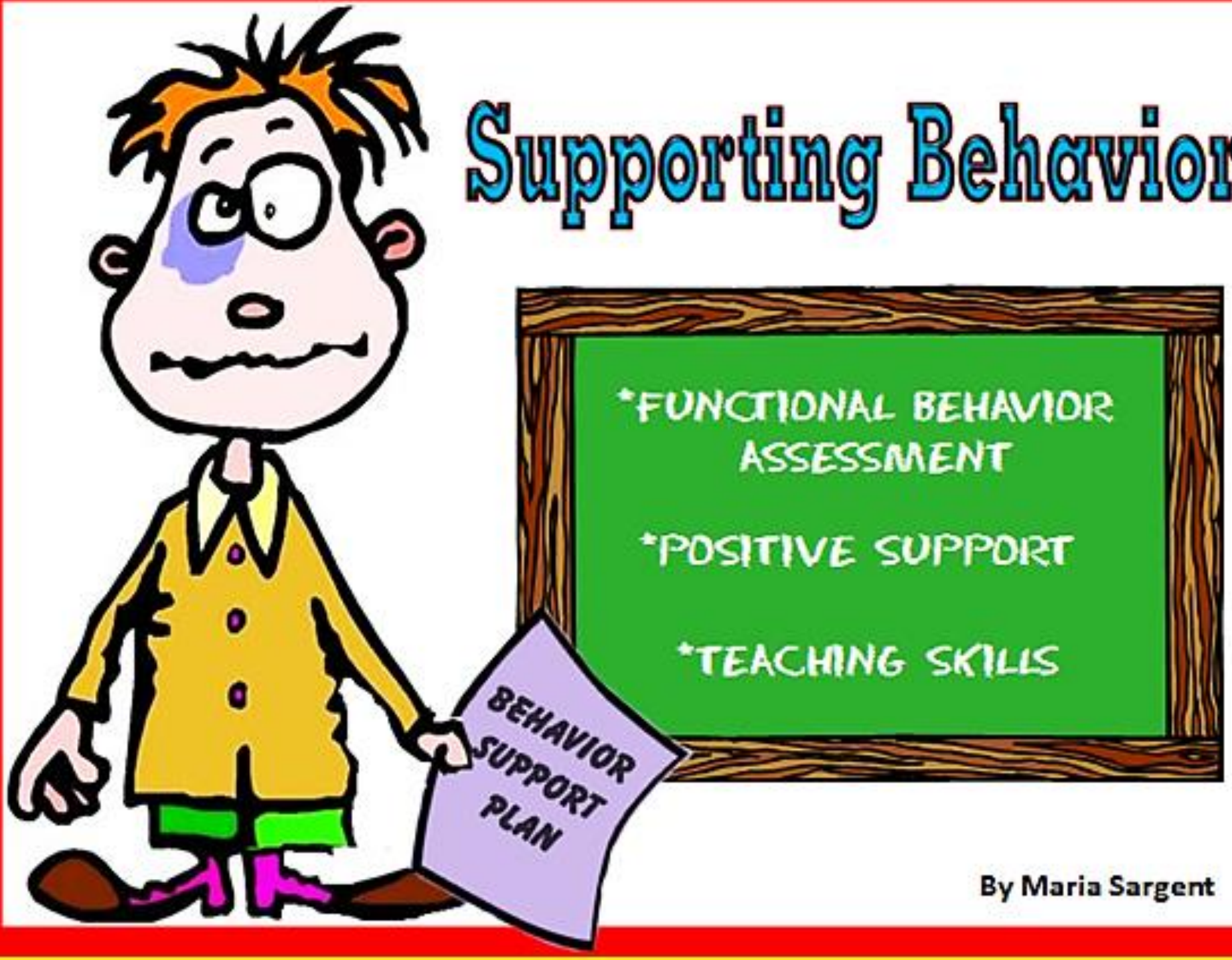
Supporting Behavior



By Maria Sargent

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INTRODUCTION

Determining the Need for Formal Plans

At some point, most of us have experienced that nagging feeling about the behavior of a student in our care. You know….that worry that you are NEVER going to be able to get this student to settle and do what they should be doing in the classroom.

This unit is designed to help you construct and implement a plan to improve this student's behavior. The steps are fairly simple, but unfortunately, many of us made it through our preparation programs without receiving a good grounding in the techniques. This unit will help you fill in the gaps.

But, how do you know whether you have reached the point where you need to go through something this formal? Should you maybe just wait for the student to mature a bit? I also ask myself these questions on every case, even after 30+ years of doing this work! This is how I usually figure out whether it is time for me to develop a plan for a student:

1. Has the behavior increased in frequency (number), intensity. or duration (how long)?
2. Has the behavior kept the student or others in the class from learning on many occasions?
3. Has the behavior begun to draw attention and/or approval from peers in the classroom?
4. Has the behavior become so automatic that it is becoming a habit?
5. Does the behavior involve aggression to people, objects, or self?
6. Has the behavior been present for more than three months?
7. Has the behavior continued despite a long school break (i.e. illness, holiday, spring, etc.)?
8. Has the behavior earned the student a "school reputation"?
9. Is the behavior a family pattern seen in siblings?
10. Is the behavior disrupting your ability to interact with this student?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then, YES, it is time to begin…

Personalizing the Plan for the Student

The first technique I will briefly mention is Value Code Shifting. **This is probably one of the most effective techniques I can give you** and is fully detailed in the manual "*Value Code Shifting*". If I can get the child to care about the behavior, my work is half done…

How do you Value Code Shift? This document will not address the total Value Code Continuum since it deals with more than just behavior. For our purposes, all you need to know is the student will be more likely to work on a behavior if you tie it to something they value and/or wish to pursue in their life.

So, if I have a student needing to learn to follow "adult directions", and I know they really would like to be a football player, explaining to them how football players must be able to listen well can motivate them. I just need to *explain that football plays are sent in from the sideline, often in noisy conditions, so they must develop wonderful listening skills, if a high level college or professional team is going to want them someday.* Works like a charm ☺ Yes, it is true that that children should follow rules because of many other reasons (i.e. rules, parent desire, grades, etc.) but at this age and in this world, these old fashioned reasons often carry very little weight (not wonderful, just reality). So, you "shift" to the code that does matter---the personal code of the child.

Common Themes that Work: Any personal goal will work. Some very popular items I have used are: police, firemen, football, basketball, modeling, dance, cheerleading, computer work, etc. I even tied the concept into race car driving once--LOL. Even older students will respond much better if they understand how the behavior may impact their place on teams, in organizations, or a chosen career. As we move through the unit, look for these "Value Code Themes" I have embedded in the cues…

Family Support

Family Support---we all want it but often must struggle to get it. Here are some tricks I have found that work to increase family support and assistance:

Value Code Shift: Yes, you really can use this technique here as well. If I want a parent to assist me in dealing with a behavior, especially one they may not see as important (i.e. a child refusing to follow directions in an early childhood classroom), shifting to the parent's code can help. Sometimes, I just have to point out that the student's wonderful sports potential and their ability to get scholarships is going to be impacted by the behavior. Other times, I tie it into the imposition on the parent themselves (i.e. it is taking their time, wages, or effort to keep coming into school for the problem). Regardless of what you use, just realize that the behavior of issue may only be a problem to YOU and the school. Until it is a problem in the eyes of the family as well, you may get little support. Find the "personal value" reason that makes it their problem too!

Move from Behaviors to Patterns: Another way I manage to get support from families is to talk about behavior patterns rather than specific actions. If a teacher expresses concern about a child issue (i.e. student is not completing homework, coming in from recess, showing aggressive play, etc.) a family may not understand how this behavior is such a "big deal". If I can bring the behavior down to an actual pattern like defiance and show how this will harm the student in some manner as they get older (especially for non-academics like sports, leadership, jobs, etc.) I can often help them see the bigger picture.

For example, a student is refusing to comply with any adult direction. They will not clean up after play, come in for snack, etc. Now, the world will not end when they refuse these requests, but the pattern of "defiance" is another matter. As they get older, *the actions/behaviors change, but the pattern does not*---so, they will continue to defy adult requests, but now it is over more serious things like completing homework, coming in for curfew, avoiding drugs, following the directions of a coach, etc. Helping a family see these patterns encourages them to see past the simple problems occurring now to the future, more serious problems that can emerge later if the pattern is not stopped.

Pragmatics of Behavior: Most people are familiar with the concept of "pragmatics" in terms of language. We speak differently to our friends than we do our employers, etc. We have the ability to switch our language registers. In Pragmatics of Behavior, we are assisting children to do the same thing. We are teaching them a different code of behavior in locations outside the home.

So, if a family makes it clear to you that they have taught their child to behave differently at home (i.e. if someone "disrespects them, they are supposed to get the first hit in), you are in a difficult situation, one that is increasing in frequency! One way to get some family support is to make it clear that you are not imposing anything on the home or questioning their parenting. You are just teaching the child the "rules that must be followed at school" so they don't get into trouble. If the parents understand that you are not "taking over their house", you often can get their assistance, at least partially. If you have a student in this situation, **it will be important for you to use the words, "In school we_____," as part of your plan.** This will help them to construct the different school behavior register they will need to follow.

No Support?: What do you do if you just can't get support? Well, it definitely will make the plan more difficult to follow... Regardless, continue on as best you can. Follow your school's restrictions on behavior plans that do not have parental permission. You can often use simplified techniques as part of daily

classroom procedure and just operate on your own. Is it as good as running a full-blown program with parental input and assistance? Of course not, but it is actually becoming the norm in my work, and I have managed just fine. The student's progress is slower and less consistent, especially over long breaks from school, but I still can get improvement and that is all that matters to me!

Issues to Consider

There are many issues that impact behavior, and we will discuss most of them at one point or other in this unit. There is one set of issues, though, that is too involved for this document, so I will mention it and leave you to keep it in the back of your mind. Additional information on these conditions can be found in my other units and on the internet.

So, what is this issue? **Processing problems**! I see SO many children, who are referred to me for a behavior issue when *the foundation of the original problem is a processing issue*.

For example, a kindergarten student was referred to me for a mix of silly behaviors that included running into walls, falling off chairs, etc. ---all to the thrilled audience of the other children in the room. It was clear that this little one was on his way to becoming a comedienne!

As I was watching him over the course of the morning, though, I detected an unusual set of behaviors. When he reached for items, it was with hesitation; he glanced off the corner of the wall when walking to the restroom; and when he went to sit in his chair for snack, something he wanted to do, he almost missed the chair and had to quickly adjust his position. This told me that he probably had a sensory processing issue associated with body position in space (a proprioceptive problem). We looked into it, and yes, this was definitely an issue for this little boy!

How do these processing problems become actual behavior problems? Well, it mostly happens just like it did for this child. The first time this boy had an "accident" it probably WAS due to his inability to judge his position in space. He probably went to sit in a chair, missed, and ended up on the floor. I am sure he was irritated or embarrassed until he heard and saw the laughter of his friends. Being a bright child, he began to do it often for their amusement, and there we are, a behavior problem is born ☺

What is important for us to realize is that a behavior that has its foundation in a processing problem will either never go away or will be removed only to be replaced by another similar problem. In other words, until we deal with the root of the issue, we will not get the permanent improvement we want. That does not mean that we should ignore the "behavioral" side of these. In our example, this little boy was also showing purposeful behavior for the benefit of his audience in addition to his processing problem. Because of this, I HAD to run a behavioral program to remove that inappropriate reinforcer. But, to really get rid of the whole behavior, *I had to run an intervention for the processing issue as well*.

What are some processing problems you should look for?

Common Behavior Seen	**Processing Issue Possible**
Child is hyperactive	Vestibular (world spins, skin prickles, or loses balance when body is quiet/laying down)
Child destroys objects	Tactile (cannot feel object in hands so squeezes or touches them hard to get sensory info)
Child touches everything	Proprioceptive (must check position so touches walls, people in line, etc. to get info.)
Child ignores teacher	Central Auditory Processing (environmental noise is processed quicker and will cause **speech** to drop out or become too muffled to hear when any noise is present---sniffling, radiator fan, overhead sound, children whispering, etc.)

There are many more, but this should get you started exploring this road!

THE BASICS

Using Cues and Sequences to Teach Behavior

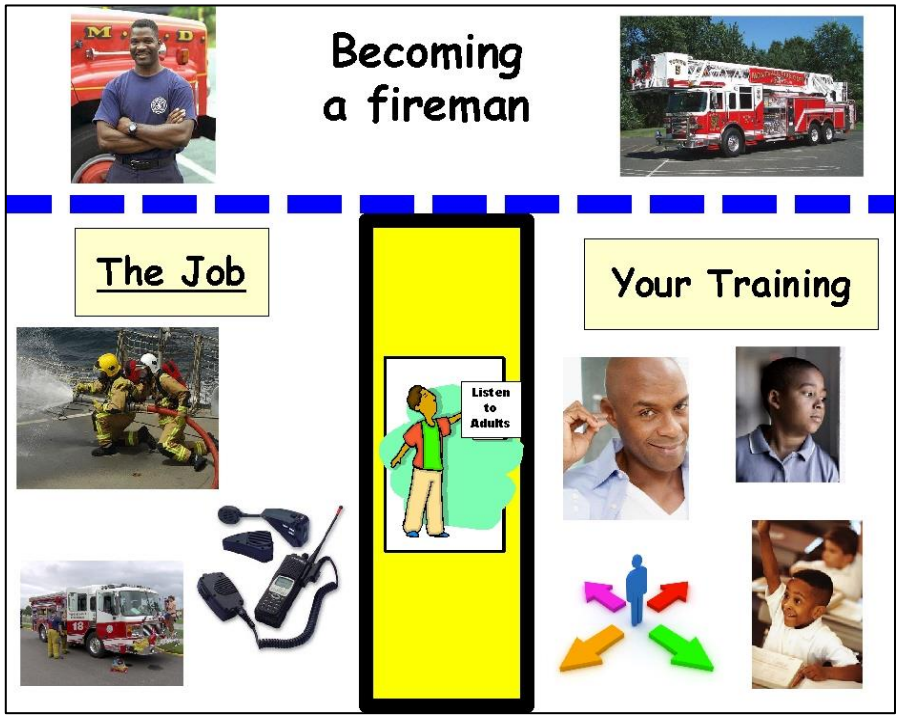
When we teach, we know that we must teach a skill in sequence and make it accessible to the student. This means we need to use visuals and hands-on materials in audition to speech in order for most students to understand. For some reason, though, when it comes to behavior, all this often flies out the window. We need to begin to provide the teaching supports for these skills as well. The difference this makes will amaze you.

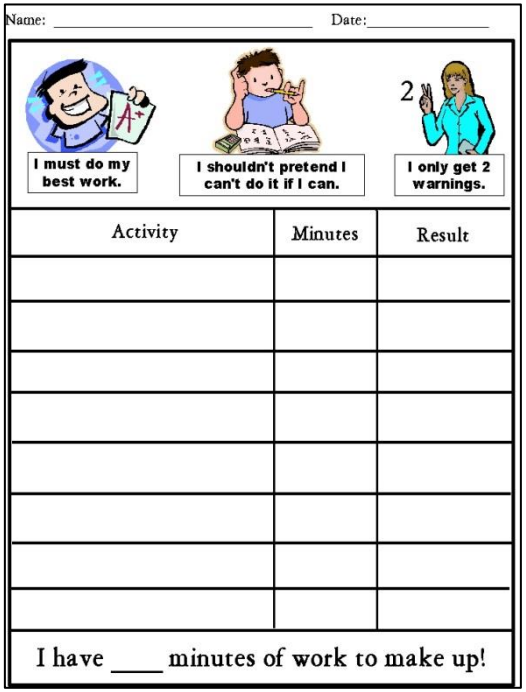
How to Use Visual Cues: Adding visual cues to a behavior program is fairly easy. Just think about what skill the student must learn, and provide the picture or object support needed for the child to understand. For some students, the cues are simple reminders of the behavior goals, reinforcers, and consequences associated with the program. In other cases, you will need to actually teach the behavior, so the pictures will need to be more detailed and abundant. In either case, the use of cues increases the chance the skill will get into memory.

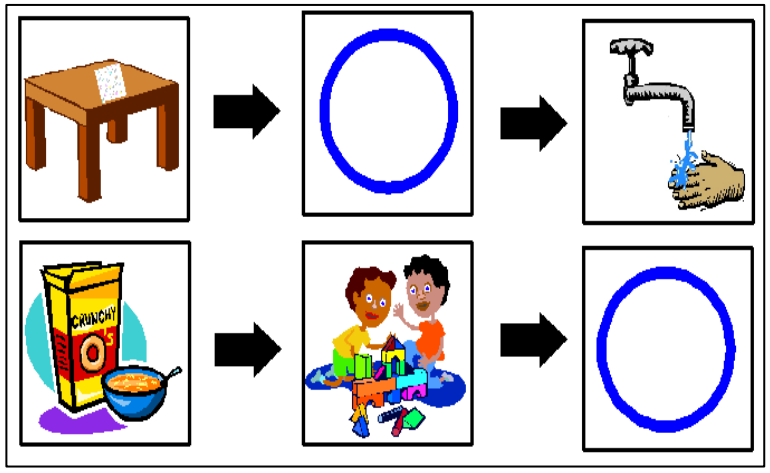
For example, if a student is having difficulty remembering to sit down, if I am the one to remind him, he does little processing on his own. However, if I have taught the child the meaning of a "sit down" picture and have it stuck to his desk to remind him, then it is a much better situation. Then, all I have to do is just point to the picture (without speaking) and look at him meaningfully. This set of actions will cause him to ***say to himself*** "sit down". This type of self-cueing is the way to get a behavior into a child's memory. What a difference this one little change will make! Make sure to use these visual cues often.

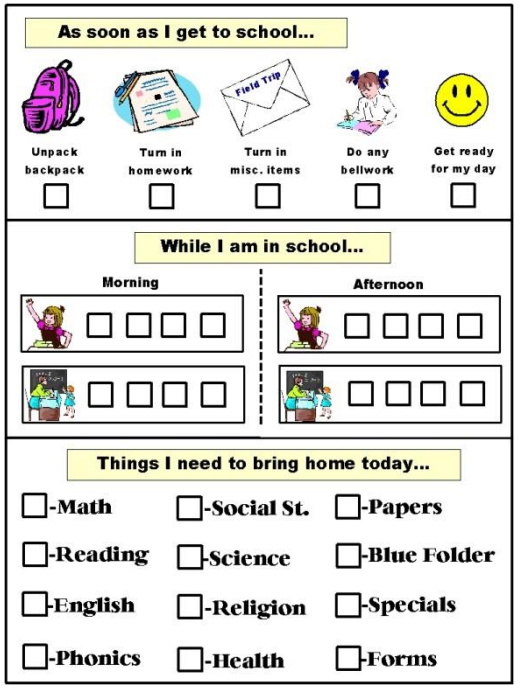
Beyond that, the only ending point for visual cues will be YOUR creativity.

Here are some examples, but the best ones will be the items you make for that particular child.









Also, do not feel that visual cues have to be perfectly drawn or created on a computer. Some of the best cues I have used were hand-drawn with the student. This homemade approach also encourages families to make cues. In short, not everyone is great at computer work or even has a computer, so hand-drawn may actually be preferable for some populations…and yes, these are my own examples and fully illustrate the level (limits) of my drawing ability! LOL

In addition, be creative about how the cues are used in the room or with the child. Some cues really need to be ON the child rather than away from them across the room or with you.

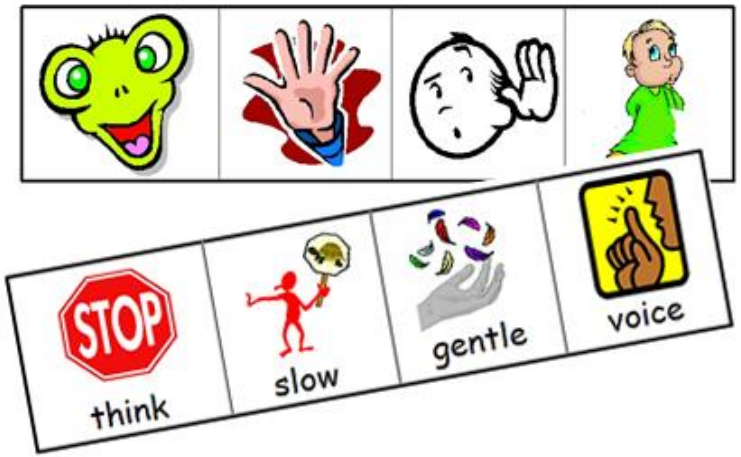
*One way to get around this problem is to drop down to visual (pictures or objects) or physical cues (actions). When these are used and taught, the student is forced to "speak" to themselves in their own minds. It is such a small change, but light-years ahead in terms of producing memory and internal impulse control.

*For example, a preschool teacher can put masking tape "X's" on their own pants and matching ones on the child's clothes. They then show the child how to "put down their hands/keep them to their own body" by placing their hands down on the "X's" for a moment.

Then all the teacher has to do when the child is showing an impulse control problem is to call the child's name, dramatically hold up their own hands, and put them down on the "X's" on their pants. This will cause the child to think "hands down" in their own mind and copy the teacher's action----a wonderful way to begin to get impulse control into memory.

This cue teaches the child to think about what they should be doing with their eyes, hands, ears, and body. Adjust the cue to make it work for you. You can hang this cue on the wall, place it on a table, etc., just remember to try to use it with as little auditory cues (talking) as possible.

There are many ways you can have a child “wear their cue” when they are younger. Slap bracelets work wonderfully for this age group. Just picture the behavior(s) the child needs to learn, tape it to the bracelet and then just point to the picture on the child’s bracelet and/or a copy of the bracelet on your own body to remind the child. Again, *this forces the child to cue themselves*. A much better way to go than using auditory…



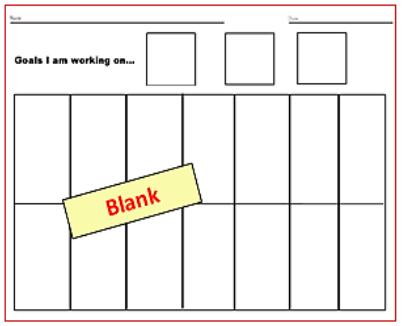
This type of “wearable” cues can take any form you wish. Slightly older students often do well with visual cues that are more hidden. Like this key-ring version for an elementary student having difficulty bothering adults with many tales about other children.

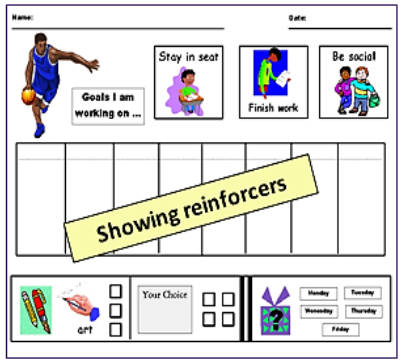
To help her distinguish when something was important enough to tell an adult, she had these four questions on a ring in her pocket. When she would run up with a gleam in her eye, the playground supervisor just said, “Read your questions!” If the answer to her four questions was “no”, then, no, she did not need to tell anyone this information ☺

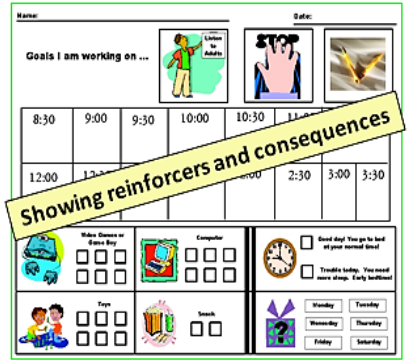
Using **"Body Cues"** can also be a nice, quiet cue that is suitable for any age. I can write little symbols like smiles on a younger child's hand, but it can also be stars, dots, or lines for someone older. I have even just used a drumming of my fingers at times. The high school student and I know that the drumming means "*settle down*". While walking around the room, stopping here and there at different students' desks, I can easily just drum my fingers once at THAT student's desk as a signal, and only that student and I know what it means. I have had students actually mention body cues like a smile face on their knuckle long after we have worked together. I recently had a student I had not seen in five years mention her knuckle smiles that we used together back when she was in the 7th grade. The memory does last!

The last form of cue/data collection is quite common and involves pre-designed paper sheets that provide spaces for data collection as well as information on the child's behavior support program.

These **"Program Sheet Data"** are *used to teach the behavior as well as take data*. Because of this, they take many forms. Sometimes teachers use a "universal" blank sheet and fill in the needed information. Other times, the sheet contains information on reinforcers for the day and/or week and even consequences. Think about what YOUR student needs to have on their sheet and make sure to individualize it to their goals, value code, and program design. We will explore additional data methods on page 32.

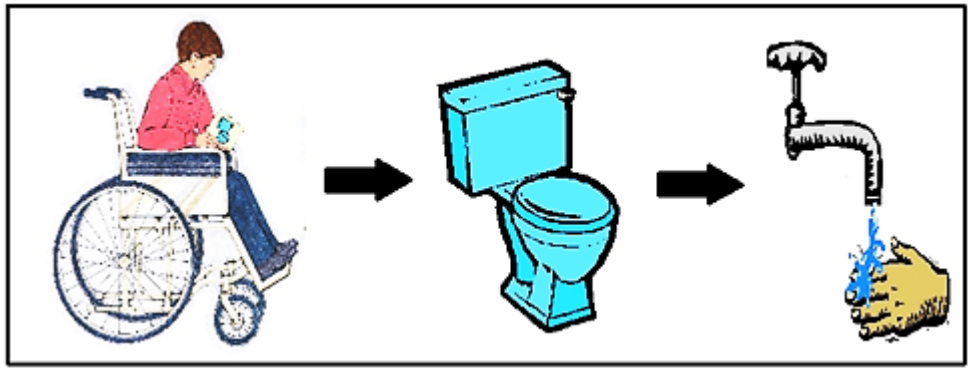






How to Use Developmental Sequences: Developmental sequences are another teaching strategy that we know so well and use on a daily basis for virtually every other skill. When it comes to behavior, though, again, it all seems to go out the window. What is the developmental sequence for standing in line? The sequence for sharing, taking turns, sitting in circle, cleaning up, etc., etc., etc.? Rarely do people know, let alone use, developmental sequences for behavior.

When we wish to teach a behavioral skill, it will be important to break the skill down into steps to assist the student. Sometimes it is more of a task analysis where we think through the steps of completing a skill like this picture sequence for a special education student who was having difficulty going to the bathroom independently.



In other cases, you will really need to think through the developmental sequence of the behavior itself. What does the skill look like for a toddler, a three-year-old, a kindergartner, elementary student, etc.? That will allow you to know which level you should be expecting and teaching at this point in the child's life.

For example, if a young student does not have the ability to clean up their toys to the right spot in the right classroom area, we can teach that skill, but *only if the student understands and can complete the four levels prior to this last level in the developmental sequence*! If we try to jump to that last of the five levels, it won't work, or at least will not work well. It makes no more sense to make this fifth step your behavior program target than it does trying to teach a child who can only speak one word a five-word sentence. You simply will not reach your goal rapidly.

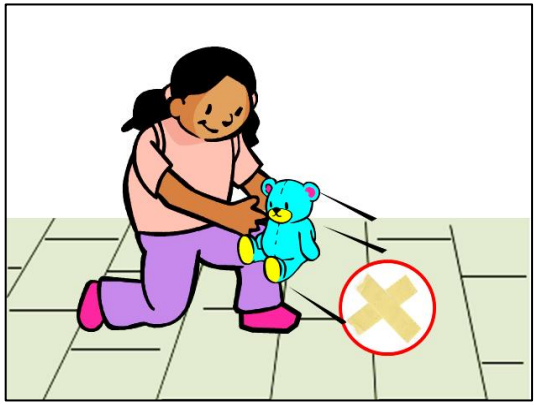
This means if the child is operating at a very low level for this skill, we may be teaching the child the first step of cleanup, and that is it. We will need to teach them to stop on an auditory command or cue (i.e. hearing the clean-up song). If the child is starting out this low on the sequence, I might not only have to use a picture cue, but I might also have to go over to them, gently take their hands, and teach them to clap whenever they hear the song. This will automatically help them stop their play ☺

In other words, we will have to help them learn the first developmental level of cleaning up. Over time, we will eventually work our way up to that fifth level of cleaning up (i.e. right spot in right location), but it may take a while….it may not even be possible until next year. The main thing is we MUST pay attention to developmental sequences for behavior if we are to assist the student in the best manner possible.

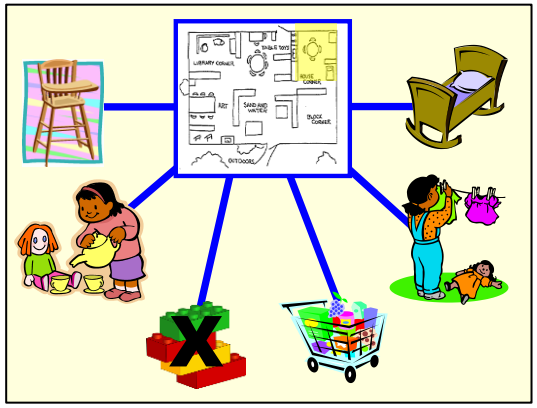
So, let's walk through the total developmental sequence for cleaning up so you can begin to conceptualize how "developmental teaching" of behavior may differ from your current practice. First, take a look at the total sequence, and then we will walk through the process step-by-step:

Children at the first step may be working on "stopping on a command or cue". I often use clapping since I can prompt this behavior (i.e. I can't force them to sing or listen, but I CAN gently take their hands and prompt clapping, which by default, makes them "stop" ☺)

During the next step, I want them to "stay stopped" and to put the toy "some place". This "place" is usually a masking tape "X" that I can quickly position right next to them, regardless of where they are playing. I teach them to put their toy on the X and then go to their next play activity. Note that this transition may require additional visual cues.



The next step is easily set up by having the child move the X to a shelf with their picture on it. That location will now be "their shelf" where they will always put their toy. You may have to use a transitional step and put a tray or basket in place (i.e. put the X in the basket) if the child tends to play with small toys with many pieces. Once that is in place, THEN you can introduce the shelf concept.

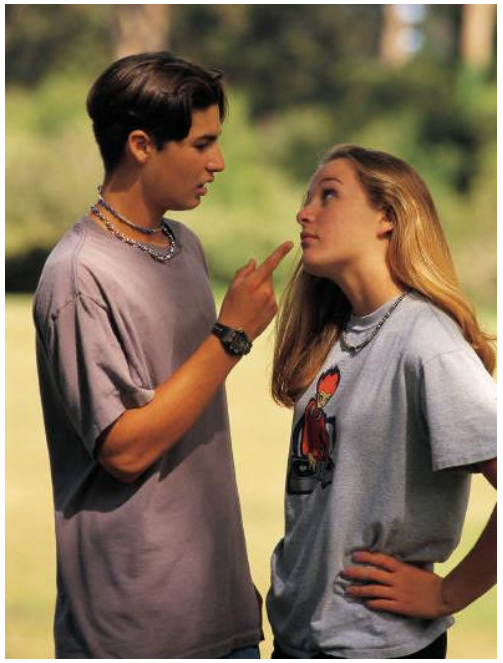


This next step may be delayed for many children since it requires the understanding of "category". You can tell if a child is ready for this level by their overall language and play. If they understand that "the block area" is a category (area of the room) that contains many different types of toys, then you can begin, but only target this step if the child is well on their way to understanding your room structure/play categories. Some children may need to transition to this step by using "their shelf" <u>and then</u> moving the toy with your guidance to the correct classroom area after "cleaning up".

Only after the child understands where toys should be placed by category (i.e. areas of the room) can they really determine where in that area the toy should be placed. Children in kindergarten are still dealing with this skill (i.e. the doll IS in the dramatic play area…but in the dishwasher, not the doll bed). Let's face it; we know loved ones and colleagues that are still struggling with the "get it back to the right spot" level of this skill LOL. The main thing is to understand that this "last step in the sequence" is often the skill we are trying to use with ALL children, hence the failure we may be experiencing… As long as we begin to reflect on developmental sequences and try to apply them to behavior, we will be fine.

So, begin to construct the sequences for skills like taking turns, listening in circle (some of this is done for you in the *Teaching Groupness* manual online), etc. You, of course, do not have to construct the sequence for every skill or every child, but it will definitely help a bit when a child is not making progress.

One last note…



At first glance, this skill seems to be targeted for the very young, but I assure you, some of the most problematic sequences emerge as students get older.

For example, a student in middle school may be able to manage peer pressure, but only at the middle developmental levels of the sequence. They are definitely beyond the stage of needing a parent to help them distinguish right or wrong, but *they may not have the intrinsic strength to voice that decision without having the "backup" of that parental authority*.

These are the students that we should teach to say, "I can't because my parents won't allow me, and they WILL find out." This age group is usually not ready for the more advanced level, the level where THEY say they do not see it as right and refuse to do it. Developmentally, it is the rare student who can take that type of stand at a young age. You can explore how to prepare your students for this higher level of behavioral control and resiliency in the *Gang-Proofing* manual…

To close this topic, just begin to think about developmental sequences for behavior. It is a bit of a hard road because few have broached this topic, so there are few public materials supporting this concept (yes, I am working on them ☺), but with some thought, you usually can create the sequences on your own easily enough. Just <u>thinking</u> in this way will improve your program design!

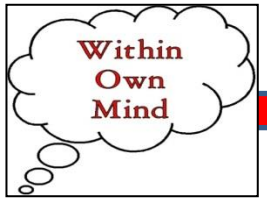
Using Reinforcers Appropriately

Reinforcement is one of those topics that sometimes make people uncomfortable. So, let's deal with some of the misconceptions right off the bat. Then we will go on to the specific techniques.

Misconception	**Reality**
It is a bribe	No, reinforcement is a reward. A bribe is given to encourage wrong or illegal behavior.
Intrinsic is best	True, but rarely are behaviors held here. Even our own job is not at the intrinsic level of reinforcement---we are at the symbol-delayed level (i.e. our paycheck)
What about the "good" students?	Again, true---what about them? If you are only providing reinforcement to children with behavior problems, you ARE doing it wrong. All children should be rewarded for learning a new skill. Johnny might be rewarded for learning his name in cursive and Amy for learning to avoid fights on the playground.
The money!	Yes, if you always go for toys and stickers, it can get pricey. Consider reinforcers that do not have a cost…free time, etc. can be very powerful.
There is no reinforcer	At times it might be difficult to find one, but even for the most severe special education cases, I can make it work. Just look for what they like to do, even if it is unusual. I actually ran a program using the timer on the microwave as the reinforcer! The student loved to hear the bell…
Too much time and bother	If you are considering running a program, you are already putting in the time. Even if it is a bit of a burden at first, at least this approach will eventually get rid of the situation. Well worth the effort for both you and the student!

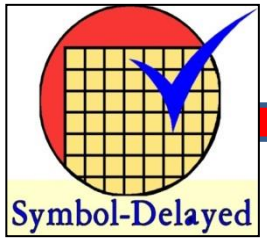
So how do you run a reinforcement program? Well, the first thing you need to understand is the developmental sequence of reinforcers.

Reinforcement Continuum



The person provides motivation to self. They do not need approval from others. This level will be able to hold behaviors on their own with no recognition or pay (i.e. volunteer, etc.). Encourage this level but realize it is difficult even for adults to attain…

The person needs mild reinforcement in the form of praise or recognition. They will respond to applause, praise, or other symbols of achievement (i.e. certificate, award, carnation on their coat, mention in a meeting/newsletter, etc.)



The person needs to have some form of tangible reward, but the actual object can be delayed for a period of time. To maintain motivation during the delay, the person uses simple symbols to verify progress. These can be stars, checkmarks on a chart, or in the case of most of us, little numbers on our paycheck ☺ Eventually the "symbols" are turned in for something tangible (i.e. toys, free time, money, etc.)

The person responds to reinforcers, but they must be immediate and concrete. Often the same object can be used, but the form of delivery changes. For example, an older child can use a sticker chart that they eventually turn in at the end of the week for a small prize. A younger child, though, gives meaning to the sticker/symbol itself. They don't want that sticker on a chart…they want it on their shirt!

The person responds to reinforcers that are "body-related". Often this is food, but for some students, especially those with disabilities, it can include body sensations such as swinging, deep pressure, feeling textures, etc. Make sure to avoid providing this level in large amounts because the student will get full or may become irritated by too much sensation.

Here are some actions to take in order to use the reinforcement continuum well in your classroom:

1. **Have all children work towards one goal that they choose and one that you choose.**

   Rationale: This will allow you to run behavior programs without it becoming a big issue in the classroom. ALL children need to be rewarded, just like we are rewarded with our paycheck. You should encourage the self-assessment that is required when they choose a goal. You should also choose a goal so you can deal with behaviors or issues the student will not think to target. Pay special attention to the gifted child. Some of their behaviors (i.e. not willing to allow others to lead, not willing to make mistakes or take risks, bossy, etc.) can become a problem if not dealt with while young.

2. **Provide reinforcement at a level that will lead to success.**

   Rationale: This can be a difficult one. This means if the baseline shows the child can only behave for 30 min., you must run at least part of the program, if even only giving praise, **every 20 minutes or so**! *You must obtain the behavior before you can make it stronger or bigger*. Some teachers rebel at this one, but there is a reality to this. If the student is misbehaving every 30 minutes, you already ARE dealing with it at that often. Make is a couple of minutes less, obtain the appropriate behavior, and reward it so you can get rid of the problem!

3. **If you must run the program for a long time or the reinforcement level is low, use a MENU.**

   Rationale: A menu of reinforcers means that the student chooses from a group or list of items. This will allow you to keep a program running for a long period of time without the student getting tired of it. It also can help you move a student to a higher level of reinforcement just by beginning to provide those new (higher) choices.

4. **Using pairing to move students out of lower level of reinforcers.**

   Rationale: When you pair, you are providing a reinforcer that has mixed levels. We always should pair lower levels of reinforcement with praise…that is a natural thing to do. So, if I have a student who has a primary reinforcer, I can eventually move them out of it by adding in something social. For example, I had a rather immature middle school student who only responded to french fries. When he earned them, I had him eat them with his favorite teacher, the physical education coach. After a while, when I knew the behavior was in place, I "forgot" my purse and couldn't buy the fries. I suggested he go play basketball with the coach instead (all set up with the coach earlier). He agreed. After that, I made sure to include that as a choice and most weeks he began to choose that instead of fries ☺ This moved him out of the primary level all the way up to social reinforcement.

Using Consequences Appropriately

Consequences are a bit easier to understand. Here are the basics you need to know.

1. **Consequences are difficult to run in school, so if possible, run them through the home.**

   Rationale: Many teachers just do not have the ability to run significant consequences at school. The ones they are left with include items like withholding recess, which is not appropriate in most cases (can make behavior worse), keeping a child after school (which teaches little), or withholding activities (that a student may really need). In other words, the strong consequences of having "your life shut down for the evening" can really only come through the home. So, if at all possible, use the home to implement this part of the program.

2. **If the home commitment is not there, use simple consequences and a very strong reinforcer.**

   Rationale: The reality is the home may not be committed to helping you or may not follow through though commitment is voiced. If that is the case, you must use what you can. Put in place a small consequence and a *strong reinforcer* that you CAN control. It will make the program more positive, a better way to go anyway!

3. **Set consequences so YOU can control them----"artificial" ones can really help!**

   Rationale: So, you want to make it clear that a certain behavior will not be permitted and feel a true consequence will do the trick. How do you manage that without disrupting the world? One of the best ways I have found is to artificially set up a "learning episode" and let nature take its course! So, if your class moves through the halls and

people slam their doors in fear, artificially set up some type of "exciting event" in school, attempt to go to it, and then "turn back and cancel it". You can do this without any hesitation BECAUSE IT NEVER EXISTED TO BEGIN WITH. If by some stroke of fate they actually make it there, well, by all means have a backup plan of something to do, but if the problem is really as bad as you think, they will probably only get 30 feet down the hall before you have to return to the classroom ☺ It is much better to deal with behavior consequences in this controlled way so you actually *teach* behaviors on your own schedule than having to deal with them during events or activities that you really can't miss or cancel… (This, by the way, is a wonderful trick to use as a parent. It is much easier to leave the grocery store with a misbehaving child when you went there *expressly to teach the lesson of appropriate store behavior* and knew you would probably have to leave. It is much more difficult to "leave the store" as a consequence when you really NEED to shop.)

Appropriately using Timeout as a Consequence

Timeout can be very effective, but only if used well. Here are some things to know about this common technique:

1. Timeout does not work for all children. If your student seems to **want** timeout, it might mean that they are overwhelmed or avoiding work. In either case, you should use another technique and/or control the situation so the student does not try to avoid less preferred tasks.

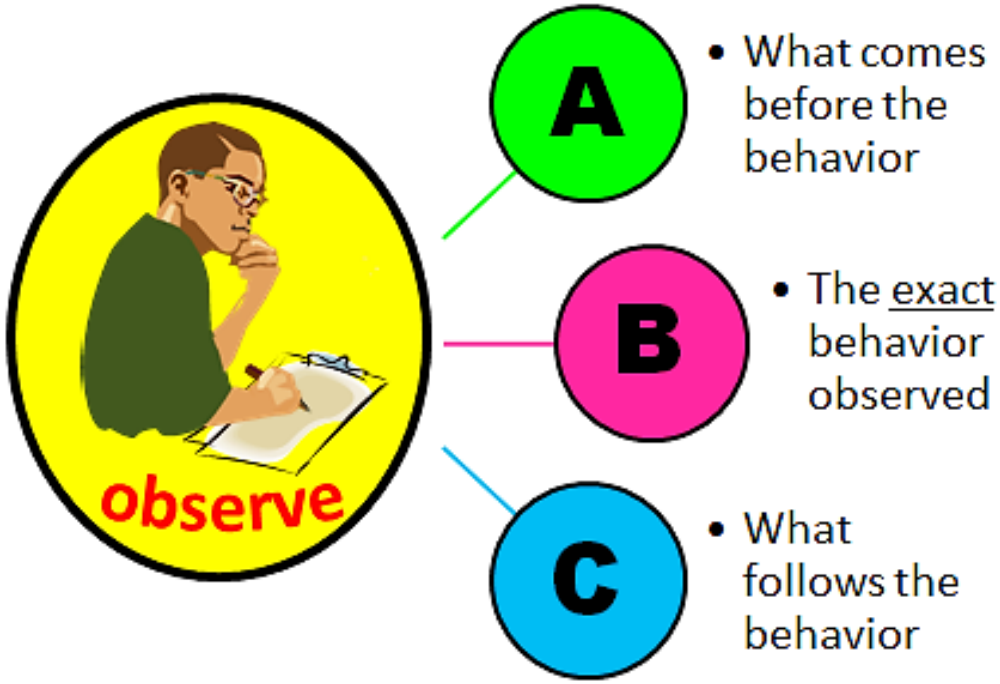
2. Timeout is a consequence, but its main function is to teach a new skill. In order for this to happen, you have to make sure to follow up with the child and ask (and get answers) to the following questions:
   a) Why are you in timeout? (you will be shocked at how many have no clue ☺)
   b) What did you do that put you in timeout?
   c) What should you have done instead? (critical piece of information!)
   d) What will you do next time this situation happens? (can they make a better choice next time)

   THIS is what will make timeout and effective technique for you and your student. If you see the child really cannot answer some of these questions, you have some teaching to do! Get out your visual cues, teach the skill, and then you will begin to see some progress…

3. If you have a very young student that needs and uses timeout well, it can be a good idea to construct the timeout area with a cue that can be moved. For example, have the child sit on a small piece of red cloth when in timeout. It can be placed on a chair, carpet square, etc. You can then take that red cloth with you anywhere. This allows you to "move" the timeout to another location---on a fieldtrip, outside, etc. A nice way to keep the process consistent for the child!

Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) Charts

An Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence Chart or **ABC chart** is a very common way of charting behaviors in hopes of determining the reason or FUNCTION behind them. In the ABC chart, you determine the following:



An ABC chart is rather simple to run. The only caution is to make sure that you write down exactly what you see. Do not draw any conclusions or insert opinions. You want a pure, objective observation at this point.

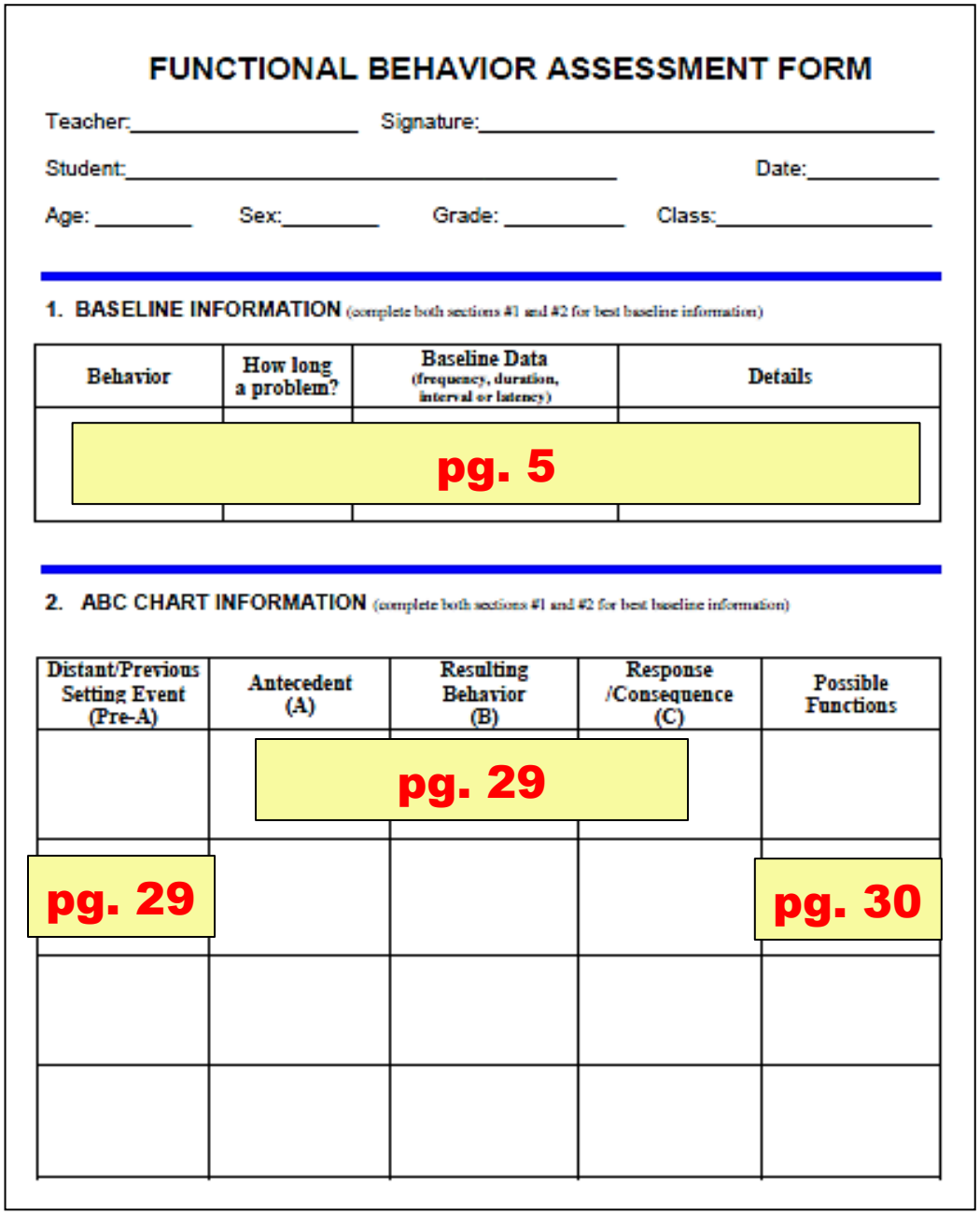
Most people use one of these two forms to chart their information. The first one is a simple homemade chart that you can draw yourself. You just create three columns (A, B and C) and fill them in as you go.

The second way to run an ABC chart is to use a formal table that contains the antecedent (A), behavior (B) and consequence (C) information. These tables and forms often also provide columns for other information. For example, the one shown below has a column for the "Distant Setting Event" and the "Function".

Distant/Previous Setting Event (Pre-A)	Antecedent (A)	Resulting Behavior (B)	Response /Consequence (C)	Possible Functions

The "**Distant Setting Event"** is something that has occurred recently that may be impacting the behavior (i.e. parent leaving for deployment overseas). The "**Function"** is what is driving the behavior. Some common functions include attention, communication deficit, stress, sensory integration problems, and fear, to name a few. Knowing the function can help you determine what needs must be met and which skills must be taught. Both of these ABC forms can be found in the Appendix.

Using a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)



FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT FORM

Teacher:_____ Signature:_____

Student:_____ Date:_____

Age: _____ Sex:_____ Grade: _____ Class:_____

1. BASELINE INFORMATION (complete both sections #1 and #2 for best baseline information)

Behavior	How long a problem?	Baseline Data (frequency, duration, interval or latency)	Details
pg. 5			

2. ABC CHART INFORMATION (complete both sections #1 and #2 for best baseline information)

Distant/Previous Setting Event (Pre-A)	Antecedent (A)	Resulting Behavior (B)	Response /Consequence (C)	Possible Functions
	pg. 29			
pg. 29				pg. 30

Many teachers need more detailed information than an ABC chart can provide. That is where the FBA comes in!

You may be fairly familiar with a **Functional Behavior Assessment** (FBA). It really is just a form that includes information about the student, details about the behavior, some form of an ABC chart that includes information about the "function" of the behavior, and then finally, the actual behavior plan itself.

Here is a FBA Form that you can use. The page numbers will remind you where you can find information in THIS unit to fill that section out. A blank and full-size copy of this FBA form can be found in the Appendix.

The goal of the FBA chart is to determine what needs or skills must be taught in order for the function of the misbehavior to be met.

3. FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

Functions Noted from Baseline	Skill Missing	Replacement Behavior to be taught—— who, when, where and how (NOTE: If no skill needs to be taught, please use this section to explain why you believe the behavior is totally purposeful.)
1.		pg. 19 & 29
2.		

Comments:

4. FORMAL PLAN SUMMARY

Behavior (please give specific description)		
Data Type (frequency, duration, interval or latency)	pg. 33	
Collection Method (chart, object, tally, recording, etc.)	pg. 33	
Skill Teaching (summary of section #3)		
Cues Used (please attach photo or sample)	pg. 13	
Reinforcers (please give details and schedule)	pg. 24	
Consequences (please give details and triggers)	pg. 27	
Additional Info.		

So, for example, if the student is using tantrums to get attention, we will need to help the student get attention in a more positive manner. Another purpose of the plan will be to determine whether there are any "**Replacement Behaviors**" that should be taught.

For example, if the student we just described is using tantrums for attention, and we hope to give them another way to get that attention, we may need to teach a skill the child does not currently have. This *replacement behavior* could possibly include learning to ask for attention, coming up with another way to express anger, etc.

Once you have the FBA totally filled out, you have a perfect record of what you have observed and what you plan to do about the behavior. This type of record-keeping is very important.

Embedding Data Collection into the Classroom

In most cases, if you are running a formal program, you will need to maintain data records. Even if you do not have this demand, it will enhance your work. The four main forms of data can be seen to the right.

There are many ways to take data while you are interacting with the children. Here are some easy methods to consider:

FREQUENCY

- Records *how often* the behavior occurs

DURATION

- Records *how long* the behavior lasts

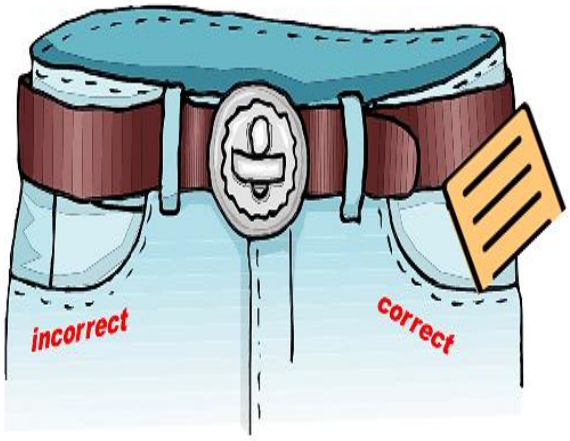
LATENCY

- Records length of time *until behavior begins*

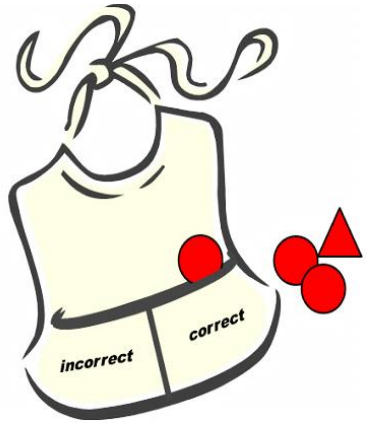
INTERVAL

- Records whether behavior occurred *during a time period* (i.e. activity, half-hour, class period, etc.)

Hidden Data (clothing version):

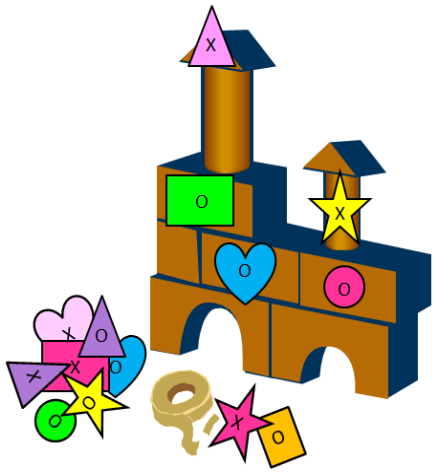


Data collection does not have to be obvious, and if you are working with older students, this is the wisest way to go. Many people just use paper and pen. Other hidden forms include symbols or marks that only have meaning to you. "**Pocket Data**" (where items in one pocket signal correct and the other, incorrect) are easy to manage. Just slip pieces of paper, etc. into a pocket and count later.



Hidden Data (placement version):

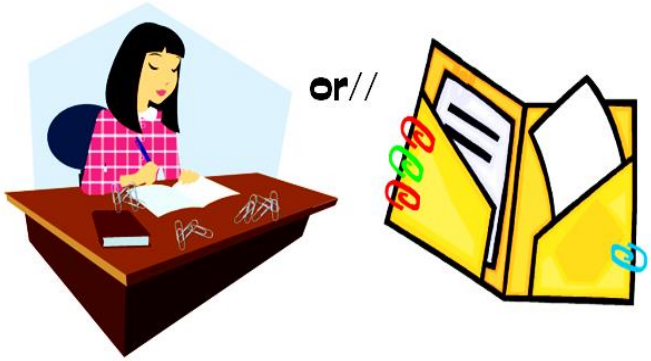
At times you will want to take hidden data but do not have the ability to use your clothing as the container to keep your information. In these cases, just come up with a "placement of objects" that you can return to for later counting. Beyond that, anything will do. Just come up with the system that works for you! Here are a few I have used in the past:



Symbol-based systems: I often use these when I am actively playing with children. I just have an open-ended set of objects, in this case paper shapes that align with the child's IEP goal of learning basic shapes. I make sure the child has all of the shapes, and as we play, I ask for them to add to my own work, noting the child's correct or incorrect response. When I tape them to my tower, I place the "x" showing if the shape they gave me was incorrect and the "o" if correct. When play is done, a quick count of the items and corresponding shapes can be written down. These types of techniques are more fully detailed in the manual titled, *Play Intervention.*

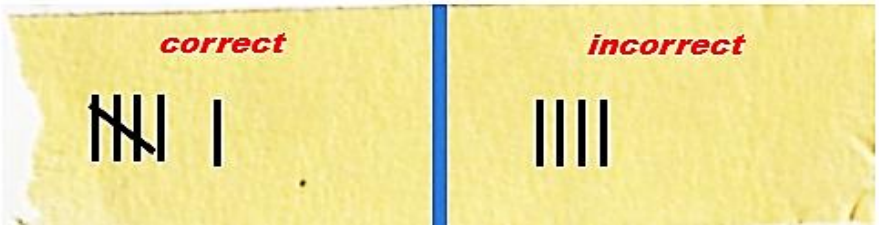
The usage of this technique remains the same for behavior. I know what I am targeting so each time the child shows the behavior in a specific time period (keep this consistent so the behavior comparisons have meaning) I simply turn the object a certain way (i.e. X is up). A quick count at the end gives me my frequency and none is the wiser nor is our play interaction interrupted. The key is to come up with something that does not intrude into your work with the student…beyond that, you will know best what to use!

The same approach can be used in classrooms with older students where secrecy is even more of an issue. Moving paperclips from one side of a folder or desk is just one example. If done quietly, it will not even be noticed…

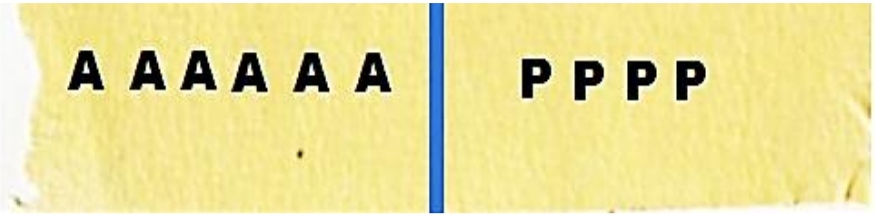


Masking Tape Data

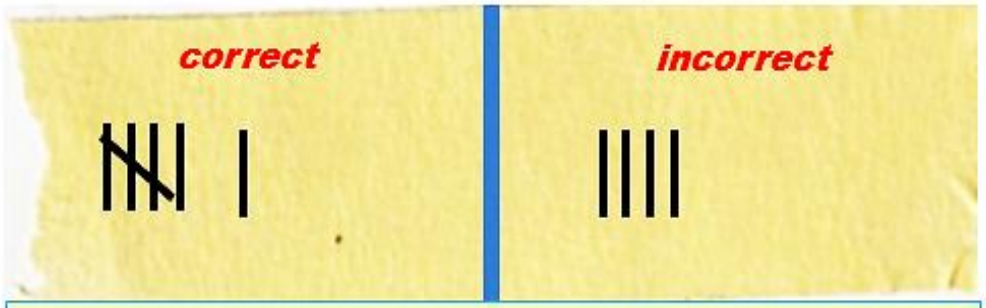
This same type of data can be taken in a more "open" format by using masking tape. Whether it is a simple frequency like this example to the right:



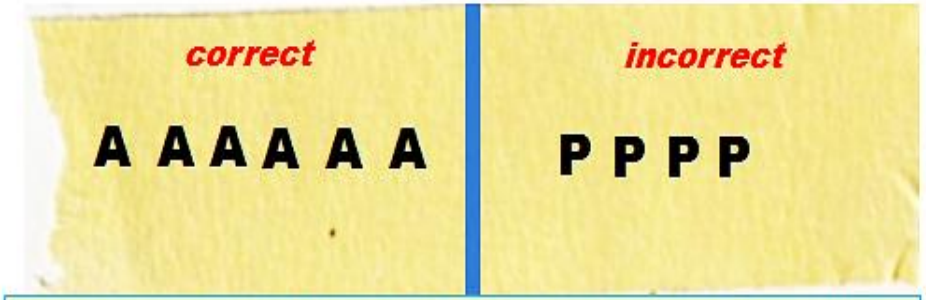
A symbol can replace the tally marks (in this case with "A" for adult" and "P" for peer) to gain another layer of information. In short, masking tape can be a wonderful method. It cannot be lost and is very flexible.



The use of the right symbols can also greatly change how the data is viewed. For example, take these two pieces of tape containing data for a child struggling with social communication and see how a slight change in symbols used (tally changed to letters) improved the data. Definitely the second example is much more useful for intervention/program purposes!



This data measures a student's ability to communicate with people. Tally mark data is easy to take and compute. 60% correct and 40% incorrect. Perfect for any situation where pure frequency will do.



Same example but with detail. "P" is for peers, and "A" for adults. Notice how this data changes with added information... Still 60% correct, but only for adults. If you need detail, use a symbol!

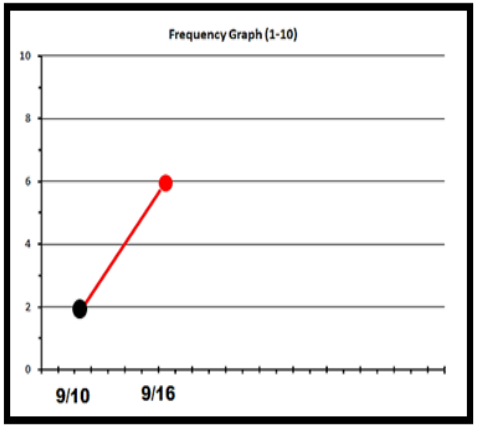
So play with the symbols you are using. Simply anything will work on that little piece of tape…

Then, the transfer of the data becomes so easy. Just set up a notebook with pre-printed pages for the tape strips, spaces for the needed information you must write in (it will be limited), and a pre-printed graph for tracking. Then all you will need to do is to take the tape off your sleeve and put it in the notebook. A few minutes at the end of the day to complete the graph and details will then be a simple job…well worth the effort to set up the system. Again, adjust to fit your needs!

Name: _____

Behavior: _____

Date	Behavior	Raw Data	%Cor	%Incor
1/12	Request Help	correct || incorrect |||||	20%	80%
1/14	Request Help	correct |||| | incorrect ||||	60%	40%



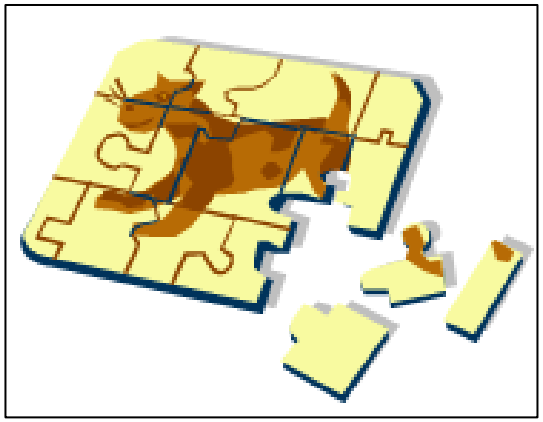
Date	Notes
____	_____
____	_____
____	_____

Additional "Open" Methods:

Data collection that does not have to be hidden can be very easy to construct. This is especially easy in an early childhood or younger elementary classroom where toys and objects are around. Of course any of the "hidden" methods can be used but also consider using some of these methods. The littler ones respond very well to them!

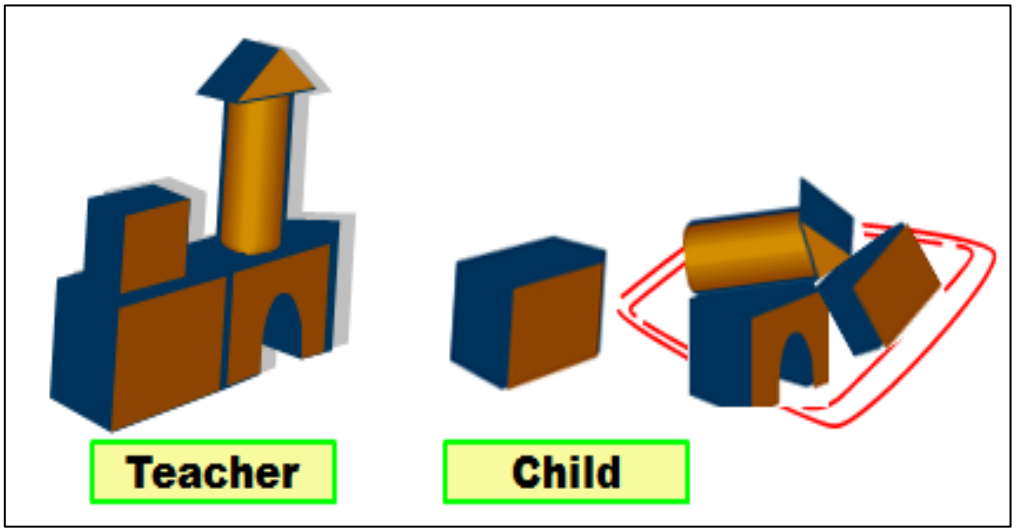
For example, just find a sticker sheet that has the number of intervals or time periods the child has in their day or cut it so it has the correct number of stickers. The ones that have the decorated backs work very well. Just peel off the whole back, stick it on a piece of paper and have the children earn the stickers to put back in the blank holes. It is almost like a sticky puzzle. This is a nice way to use their favorite characters, and the sticker sheets are fairly cheap!

Many children also love to create sticker scenes, too. It works the same way, have the child earn the stickers to make the scene over time. There are so many variations that you can find something to suit any child, even using things like holidays to keep interest over time. Very complex scenes can be used over a period of days or a week. This is a lovely way to move a "concrete" motivated child to a more "symbol-delayed" level of reinforcement.



The same approach can be implemented using concrete items in your room, like puzzles. Just choose a puzzle with the correct number of intervals, and have the child put in one piece for every correct period of behavior.

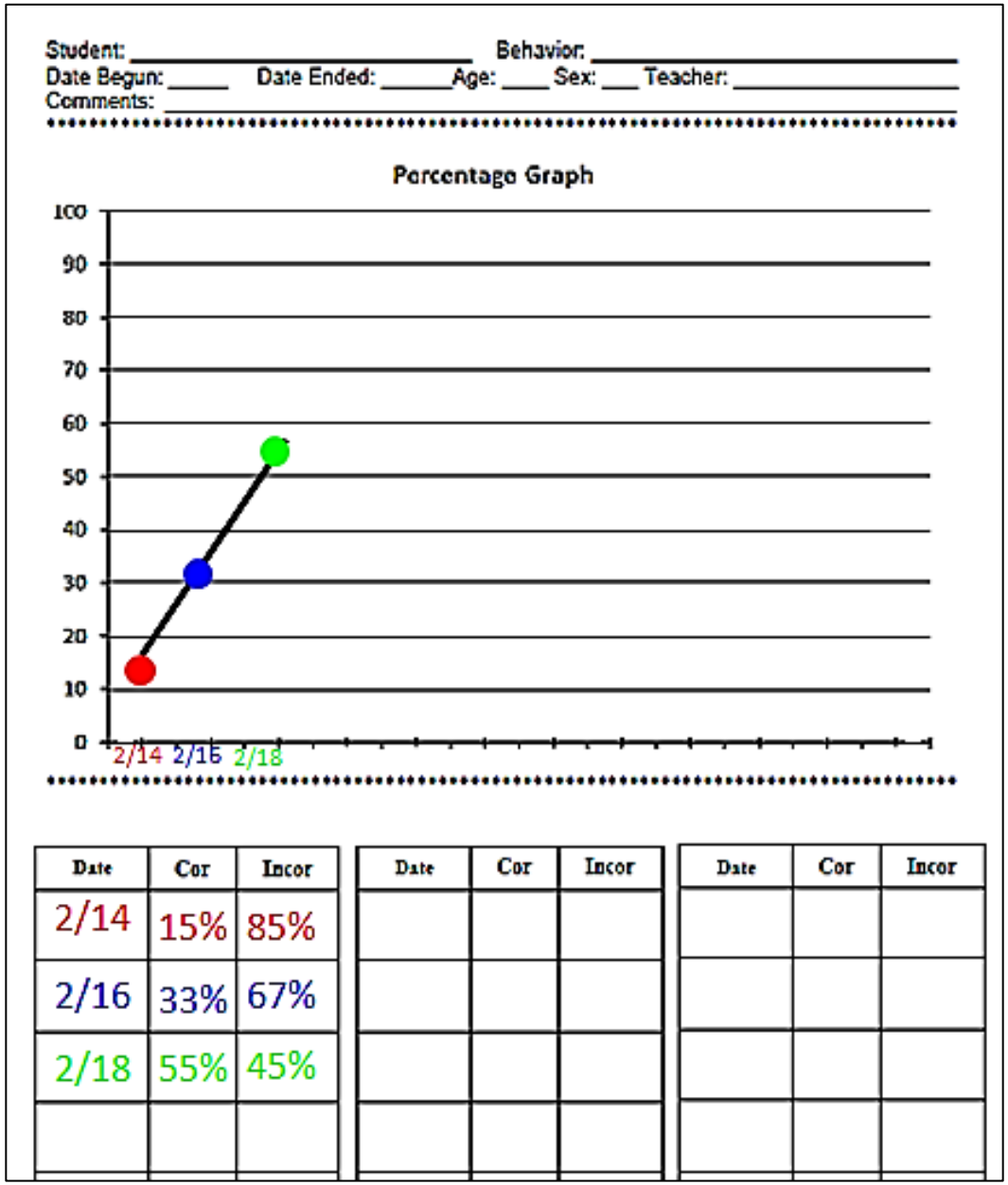
Another nice way is to build a tower of blocks with the number of blocks that equals the intervals of the child's whole day. Then, for every segment where you see positive behavior, you give the student a block so they can begin to construct the same tower. The goal is to duplicate your tower by the end of the day.



Even flannel boards or magnet boards (child puts on a piece for every correct segment of behavior) can be used. In all these cases, all you have to do at the end of the day is count the pieces and record the total.

Use your imagination to construct these **"Environmentally Embedded Data"** options and find the option that will motivate the student involved. Definitely a simple method!

Simple Ways to Graph Progress



Student: _____ Behavior: _____
Date Begun: _____ Date Ended: _____ Age: ____ Sex: ___ Teacher: _____
Comments: _____

Percentage Graph

Date	Cor	Incor
2/14	15%	85%
2/16	33%	67%
2/18	55%	45%

Date	Cor	Incor

Date	Cor	Incor

There are also many ways to graph progress, but I suggest going with predesigned graphing sheets. This allows you to quickly transfer Information (raw data) and place a data point on a graph without a lot of time or fuss.

Here is an example of a graphing sheet to be used for frequency data. As you can see, the time required to record a day's data is mere seconds per students.

Whether you use a system associated with masking tape data or a more formal sheet like the one shown here, do take the time to graph the information. The insight into trends is invaluable, and if you are meeting the requirements of an IFSP or IEP, legally required to support documentation of your intervention and the child's progress.

RUNNING THE PROGRAM

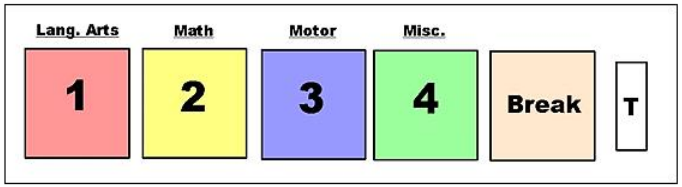
Running the Program

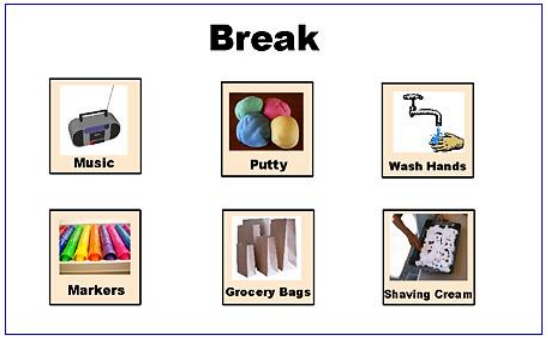
So what are the steps you should take to get a program running? The general steps are as follows:

1. Baseline for three days (choose method: ABC, frequency, duration, latency or interval) if possible.
2. Determine behavior function, replacement behavior needed, reinforcers, and consequence.
3. Determine data collection method (paper, sheet, objects, environmental, etc.
4. Create any visual cues or program sheets.
5. Complete some form of paperwork to serve as a record of the program.
6. Run program and adjust as needed.
7. Fade program if and when possible.

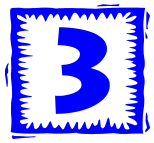
So, let's begin with the baseline. A baseline provides your starting point and helps you determine what your goals should be. It also shows you how often you must check in with the student (i.e. if the student is misbehaving every 30 minutes, you need to check in around every 20-25 minutes.) Typically the baseline is run for three days, *but only if the behavior is not hurtful to the child, objects, or another person*. **If there is some form of harm, DO NOT BASELINE**. Just begin the program and let the first couple of days serve as your baseline measure.

Once you have an objective baseline, you can begin to construct your program with confidence. Think about the **function** of the behavior and fill that need. This may mean that a program will need to include therapies, like sensory diets, if you are dealing with students who have special needs, or you many need to actually teach a new skill like impulse control, etc. as part of your program. Remember to developmentally sequence what you teach!





Then, think about the **replacement behaviors** you will need to teach and the **reinforcers** and **consequences** you are going to use to get that change.



Once you have this design in your mind, you will have to come up with a way to make sure your plan is really working. This is where **data collection** comes in. You now know a great many ways to take this data, so just pick the approach that will work best for you and the student.

So, now you have a plan. You know what you want to teach and how. Will you need to make a **cue** to accomplish this goal or will a body-level cue be needed? If in doubt whether a cue is needed, use a lower level cue (visual or concrete). You can always fade them if not needed.

Since you have all the pieces of a program now, this would be a good time to fill in the **FBA** sheet, if you are going to use one.

Now you are all ready to start the program!

So, you are now running your behavior program….now what? Well, this is where YOUR judgment comes in. How is the student doing? Is the reinforcer strong enough? Is there a need for reinforcer variety (menu)?

Here are some common problems and solutions that you may see during your program implementation:

What you might see	**What you should try**
*Does not understand program	*Use or improve visual cues; break down behavior
*Program works first days and then stops	*Wait for one week to see if this is just the

	"testing" phase many students go through. If it continues, strengthen reinforcers and consequences and see what happens
*Understands program but does not respond to it	*Try strengthening reinforcers or consequences
-Program still doesn't work	-Try teaching the behavior even if you think they know it
-Program STILL doesn't work	-Make sure that you are value code shifting
-Ready to give up now….	-Make goal slightly different and easier
-Nothing is working!	-Is there a disability or sensory need you have missed?
-Nope---have met all needs and function and still no success	-Switch to different and easier program with another behavior, establish some level of authority, and try again ASAP

The Emotion Connection

Sometimes as you run the program, you may get indications that there are emotional reasons complicating the behavior goal. Make sure the student feels safe, secure, supported, and cared for. If the emotional needs are minor, usually your interest, value code shifting, and assistance will help them. Just having someone validate their feelings and showing them a new way to respond can be pretty powerful and life-changing.

If you begin to sense there is way more going on than meets the eye, that is when you need to access counseling and other mental health supports to assist you. In these situations, the student needs more help than just a behavioral program in a classroom. You will probably be asked to continue your efforts while emotional assistance is being provided, so do not stop your program prematurely. Wait to meet as a team to determine next steps so the student receives the care that they need.

Making Adjustments

As you run the program, you may need to make some of the adjustments we discussed. Often it is because something wasn't quite right with the first design you produced. **Do not worry if you need to adjust your program!** Supporting behavior is not an exact science, you are just guessing about what to do based on a set of observations and experience. Many people ask me how "I always know what to do". Well, to be honest, I don't! I have just done this for over 30 years and have become a darn good guesser, that's all. I have a ton of experience and an arsenal of tools that I can rapidly pull out of my pocket to try when things aren't going as planned. As you get this experience and accrue techniques, you too will become a better guesser. Until then, give it your best shot, and if not good enough, try again. Do NOT give up. You will figure out how to get improvement, if you stay with it.

When and How to Fade

So, you have finally managed to remove the behavior and all is going well. You would now like to consider fading the program. How should you do this? Follow one of these approaches, but first make sure that fading is the right thing to do at this point. Sometimes you do not really want to remove the program totally but reduce its presence a bit. So, consider whether the student still needs support, and if they do, just make the program less intrusive. I will give techniques for both **Program Reduction** and **Program Fading** in this next section.

Program Reduction

When you reduce a program, you are fading the supports that helped you obtain the behavior. Simple reductions usually involve removing the need for the visual cue. You will definitely know it is time for this when they just ignore it ☺

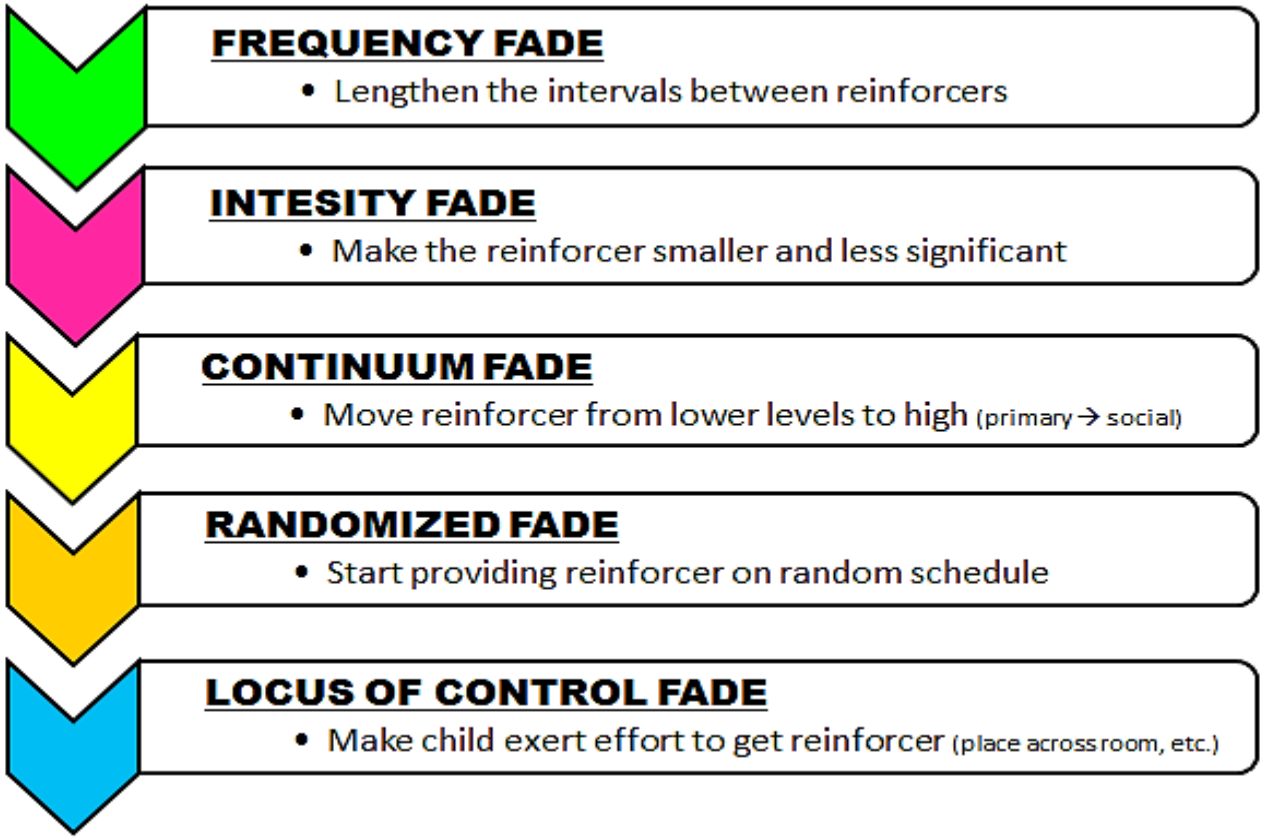
But what about the program itself? Well, here are some signs indicating that you can begin this process:

Signs that you can reduce the program

1. Student still wants the reinforcer but quickly goes on with own activity after it is received
2. Student realizes they have obtained reinforcer and says "they will get it later"
3. Student doesn't even ask for the reinforcer and is just happy with knowing they "got" it
4. Student has extremely high levels of positive behavior for three weeks or more and no long school breaks are pending
5. Student is uncomfortable with the program and asks for it to be removed

So, let's explore the easiest way to reduce a program.

The easiest way to reduce the program is to manipulate the reinforcer. Here are some methods to try. Any method will work; you just need to pick the right one for the situation. Then, all you have to do is keep fading until the program is gone.



Keep an eye out for a return of the behavior as you fade. If you see the behavior coming back, go back to either the beginning of the program or at least two fade levels back. Obtain the behavior for a longer period before you begin to fade again, and move the fade process slower this time.

NOTE: Please know that some students cannot have their programs faded totally. Find the level that works for the student and maintain it. It is not unusual, especially for students with special needs, to have behavior programs remain in place for years…

Reality…

Now for the last and most difficult concept….reality. If you do not have full locus of control due to parental or school lack of support, age of the student, disability, or an emotional health issue, *you may get improvement but not eradication of the behavior*. This can be hard because we desperately want to make changes in our students' lives. But, if I am working with an eighteen year old who has a parole officer, gang affiliation, and a rap sheet a mile long, my chances of getting a permanent and complete change obviously go down.

So, what do you do in these cases? Well, you try to the best of your ability to get that total change. Then, if that is not possible, I go for an improvement. If I can't even get that, then I go for being a memory that the student may have that will provide a catalyst for improvement down the road. You never know what influence you may have in the future.

An inspiring story---I think we need it here to lighten the mood ☺ I once had a mother and **all of her three sons** in a full-blown behavior treatment program. The type of program where the child, or in this case, children, have been pulled from the school, and the parent is required, often on court order, to attend the program for counseling as well. Well, this mother had three sons with outrageous behavior. I tried everything and did get improvement, but didn't get anywhere close to the goals that I wanted to achieve. She finished the program and went on her way, and I seriously wondered if I had done any good at all. If someone had asked me at the time, I would have said "absolutely not".

It just so happened that five years later I saw this woman in a store, and we chatted. She told me she had a fourth boy at that point, and I think my expression must have been a bit startled because she laughed and said, "Oh, but it is different now! I got my GED and training to be an aide in a special education unit for behavior disorders, so I work there now. You know, I wasn't ready to listen back when I knew you, but I did HEAR you and remembered. Now everything is wonderful!"

In short, you never know what impact you may have in someone's life. In short, **NEVER give up!**

APPENDIX

ABC SHEETS

Antecedent (A)	Resulting Behavior (B)	Response /Consequence (C)

Distant/Previous Setting Event (Pre-A)	Antecedent (A)	Resulting Behavior (B)	Response /Consequence (C)	Possible Functions

FBA

FORM

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT FORM

Teacher:_____ Signature:_____

Student:_____ Date:_____

Age: _____ Sex:_____ Grade: _____ Class:_____

1. BASELINE INFORMATION (complete both sections #1 and #2 for best baseline information)

Behavior	How long a problem?	Baseline Data (frequency, duration, interval or latency)	Details

2. ABC CHART INFORMATION (complete both sections #1 and #2 for best baseline information)

Distant/Previous Setting Event (Pre-A)	Antecedent (A)	Resulting Behavior (B)	Response /Consequence (C)	Possible Functions

3. FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

Functions Noted from Baseline	Skill Missing	Replacement Behavior to be taught—— who, when, where and how (NOTE: If no skill needs to be taught, please use this section to explain why you believe the behavior is totally purposeful.)
1.		
2.		

Comments:

4. FORMAL PLAN SUMMARY

Behavior (please give specific description)	
Data Type (frequency, duration, interval or latency)	
Collection Method (chart, object, tally, recording, etc.)	
Skill Teaching (summary of section #3)	
Cues Used (please attach photo or sample)	
Reinforcers (please give details and schedule)	
Consequences (please give details and triggers)	
Additional Info.	

Student: _____ Behavior: _____

Date Begun: _____ Date Ended: _____ Age: ____ Sex: ___ Teacher: _____

Comments: _____

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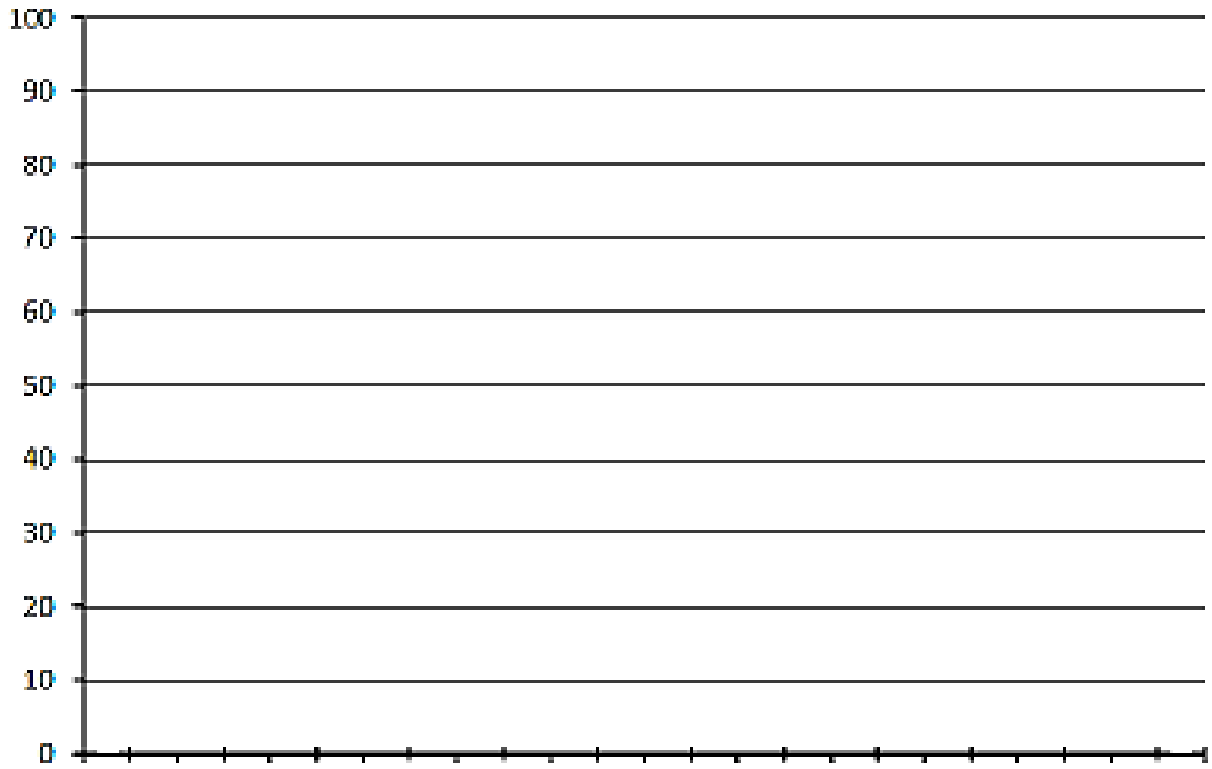
Percentage Graph



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