Behavior Management & the SLP: Maximizing Participation & Progress in Speech Therapy

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Overview
- Back to the Basics
- Operant Conditioning
- Token Economy
- Schedules of Reinforcement
- Functions of Behavior
- The ABCs of ABA
- Prompt Hierarchy/Types of Prompting
- Modifications that Manage & Minimalize Behaviors
- Visual Supports
- Guided Access & the iPad
- Self-Regulation

Back to the Basics

Reinforcement
- REINFORCEMENT is the process
- The REINFORCER is the thing you deliver (e.g. high five, token, sticker)

Reinforcement should be contingent on behaviors and appropriate for each child. Choose a reinforce based on a preference assessment, reinforcement inventory, observations, and trial/error.

Token Economy
- Effective for all students, especially those with autism, Down syndrome, or cognitive impairments due to visual representation of token boards
- Three components:
  - Target behavior
  - Tokens
  - Preferred items or activities
- Can be administered immediately following the target behavior
- Does not interrupt the flow of a activity or lesson
- Can be used with multiple students simultaneously
- Maintains behavior over short or extended periods of time
Schedules of Reinforcement

Refers to the frequency and manner in which the desired response is reinforced

- Continuous reinforcement: reinforce every correct response
- Partial Reinforcement: reinforce some, but not all, correct responses (4 subtypes)
  - Fixed-Ratio: reinforcement after a certain number of responses
  - Variable-Ratio: reinforcement after a varying number of responses
  - Fixed-Interval: reinforcement after a certain amount of time
  - Variable-Interval: reinforcement after a varying time interval

EVERY behavior has a function

Before you try to extinguish or reinforce a behavior, try to think about the behavior's function first - WHY is the child engaging in this behavior? What function does it serve?

The ABCs of ABA

(A) Antecedent: cues behavior
(B) Behavior: the child’s response
(C) Consequence: maintain the behavior

Antecedent (ABC Model)

- Antecedent: cues behavior
- Immediate: easier to identify (occurs right before behavior)
- Removed: harder to identify (occurs at some point before the behavior)
- Examples:
  - Prompting
  - Modeling
  - Feedback
  - Goals

Behavior (ABC Model)

- Behavior: the child’s response
- Focus on what you can see AND measure
- Behaviors are either desired or undesired
Consequence (ABC Model)

- Consequence: maintain the behavior
- Things we achieve: attention, materials, stimulation, control
- Things we avoid: demands, people, sensory input
- Examples of consequence:
  - Positive reinforcement
  - Negative reinforcement
  - Punishment
  - Extinction
  - Avoidance/Escape

Why do we avoid these things?

Behavior Modification (ABC Model)

- Increase antecedents that lead to positive (desired) behavior
- Decrease antecedents that lead to inappropriate (undesired) behavior
- Minimize reinforcement that results from inappropriate (undesired) behavior
- Increase the consequences for positive (desired) behavior

Reinforcement vs. Bribery

REINFORCEMENT
Instruction → Behavior → Reinforcement

BRIBERY
Reinforcement → Instruction → Behavior → Reinforcement

Prompt Hierarchy

- Most-to-Least
  - Use when the student has minimum influence over behavior (i.e. adult maintains maximum control over behavior)
  - Minimizes errors (i.e. errorless learning)
  - High risk of prompt dependency

- Least-to-Most
  - Allows the child maximum influence over behavior
  - The student may experience more errors
  - May need to increase the level of prompting if errors continue
  - Lower risk of prompt dependency

- Prompt Fading
  - Systematically fade prompts as soon as possible to avoid prompt dependency
  - Plan for prompt fading as part of the therapy plan

Physical Prompts

The most intrusive/restrictive type of prompt; ranges from full physical guidance to a partial physical prompt such as light touch to encourage a response

- Full Physical: the teacher uses hand-over-hand to make sure the student demonstrates the correct response
  - Example: hand-over-hand to select target word on AAC device
- Partial Physical: The teacher uses only partial physical assistance so that the student demonstrates the correct response
  - Example: tapping a child’s elbow so that he raises his hand

Verbal Prompts

Verbal instruction to perform the required action

- Full Verbal: the teacher clearly communicates what he desired response is step-by-step
  - Example: explaining how to complete ADLs
- Partial Verbal: the teacher communicates only part of the desired response
  - Example: summarizing directions to the front office
**Visual Prompts**

- **Object Prompts**: the object acts as a stimulus for the response
  - Example: a pencil on the desk indicates that his/her start work needs to be done right away
- **Gestural Prompts**: a point or other gesture to prompt the expected response
  - Example: the teacher nods her head toward the box of markers
- **Pictorial Prompts**: a picture or other 2D representation (e.g. words, symbols) acts as a stimulus for the response
  - Example: a picture of a hand on his desk reminds the student to raise his hand to ask a question
- **Positional Prompts**: positioning the correct response in a way that the student is more likely to choose it
  - Example: putting the correct choice closer to the student or on a preferred side
- **Model Prompts**: demonstration of the behavior to be performed
  - Example: demonstrating every item that gets packed up in the backpack at the end of the day

**Modifications that Manage & Minimalize Behaviors**

**Modify the Physical Space**

- Eliminate visual or auditory distractions
- Modify seating arrangements
  - Pullout vs. push-in?
  - Individual session vs. group session?
  - Side-by-side vs. across the table?
- Make seating modifications
  - Therapy ball
  - Disco seat
  - Wedge cushion
  - Zuma rocker
  - Standing desk

**Modify the Session Structure**

- Use visuals
- Choice making
- Visual schedules (e.g. first/then, sequence)
- Build a routine with clear expectations
- Build in sensory breaks or reward breaks

**Modify the Session Materials**

- Consider the child’s developmental level and/or diagnosis regarding task complexity
  - Cognitive: intellectual disability, deficits in attention and/or memory, deficits in comprehension of abstract concepts, or problem solving
  - Sensorimotor: auditory processing difficulties, tactile defensiveness, gross/fine motor difficulties/delays
  - Psychosocial: deficits in the areas of adaptive behavior, pragmatics, and social cognition; children often diagnosed with emotional/behavioral disturbances (e.g. mood disorder, anxiety)
  - Linguistic: the extent of the child’s linguistic deficits and their impact on his/her overall function (e.g. vocabulary, sentence length, word retrieval)

**Modify the Child’s Behavior**

- Remember the basics
  - Operant conditioning: reinforcement vs. punishment
  - ABCs of ABA - antecedent, behavior, consequence
  - Prompt hierarchy/Types of prompting
  - Token economy
  - Offer pre-determined choices
  - Try errorless learning for severely impaired children
Behavior Management Strategies

- Modulate your voice
- Change your expectations for work
- Change the timing of the structured work
- Establish the format of choice making
- Use a concrete learning system
- Take a break
- Vary prompting depending on the child’s response/performance
- Consider the best types of praise for each individual child

Visual Supports

- Visual supports can be used for many purposes
  - Increase structure
  - Manage behavior
  - Build a routine and set clear expectations
  - Increase comprehension
  - Promote utterance expansion
  - Increase task independence

First/Then Board

- Simple schedule: first [task a], then [task b]
- Presentation can vary based on the child’s level (e.g., pictures/symbols with Velcro, using iPad apps, written on whiteboard)
- Ease transitions
- Remove the power struggle
- Provide predictability
- If the behavior is to gain an item or attention, the schedule shows when they will have access to it

Daily Schedule

- Reduce anxiety
- Give information to add predictability
- Make transitions easier
- Transitions are a common antecedent to challenging behavior, and frequently the consequence is escape from the transition to the next task
- Teach the student to be more independent in his/her daily routine
- Reduce power struggles by keeping the teacher/therapist/aide from always having to direct the student

Mini Schedule/Activity Schedule

- Some students benefit from having tasks broken down into smaller steps or events
- Use mini/activity schedules to:
  - Increase comprehension
  - Encourage independence
  - Reduce power struggles by keeping the teacher/therapist/aide from always having to direct the student
  - Clearly identify expectations (example: when ALL steps are complete, earn token)
Calendar
- Reduce anxiety
- Give information to add predictability
- Help students prepare for upcoming events, especially if they rely on their typical, predictable schedule

Choice Board
- Reduce power struggles by keeping the teacher/therapist/aide from always having to tell the student what is/is not available - don’t put that choice out if it’s not available at that time
- Provide structure while still giving the student the feeling of independence and power to choose

Single Symbols/Redirection Cards
- Helps children to process and understand language
  - When a child is upset, he/she will have even more difficulty processing and using language
  - Try to keep the language positive (e.g. “walk” vs. “no running”) in order to redirect someone to what you want them to do, instead of telling them what not to do
  - Telling a child what not to do might stop them, but the behavior is likely to continue if they don’t have something more appropriate to do
  - Often when a child is described as non-compliant, it may be because they do not understand or were not paying attention fully

Contingency Board
- Present clear information about the expectations and about the natural consequences of behavior
- Use prior to giving a direction or starting an activity to help the student process the potential consequences of his/her actions
- If there’s a commonly occurring challenging behavior, use a contingency board to help the child see that following the direction will lead to something they prefer in the long term

Visual Timer
- Reduce power struggles by keeping the teacher/therapist/aide from always telling the student when his/her preferred activity is
- Ease transitions
- Provide predictability
- Considerations:
  - Auditory feedback needed?
  - No-tech vs. low-tech vs. high-tech?
  - Can use hourglass (no tech; no noise), Timed Timer (low tech; noise optional), or Visual timer apps on the iPad (high tech; noise optional)
  - For students with difficulty transitioning away from iPad use Guided Access timer

Sentence Strip
- Encourage utterance expansion
- Clearly establish activity expectations
- Can be specific for a targeted skill or activity, or frequently used phrases such as “I want [ ]” to encourage the child to request using a full sentence instead of just the one-word item desired
**Expectations/Rules**
- Can be used for a whole class/group or be student or situation specific.
- Try to keep the language positive (e.g., “play in your seat” vs. “no wandering”).
- Telling a child what not to do might stop them, but the behavior is likely to continue in other situations.
- Visual supports such as stop signs can be useful when identifying rules when students are not following them.
- When giving clear expectations, children are more likely to follow them.
- Include pictures for those that have difficulty with receptive language.
- If a known antecedent is receiving a verbal direction, or when challenging behaviors go against expectations, visuals clarify this.
- Include a reinforcement system to encourage students to follow appropriate behavior.

**Social Skills Visuals**
- Clearly establish expectations for different situations.
- When giving clear expectations, children are more likely to follow them.

**Conversation Map**
- Use these for students who have difficulty keeping the conversation going – explain that a conversation is like playing catch, if one person forgets to throw the ball back the game is over.

**Wh- Map**
- Start receptively for children who have significant difficulties with answering wh- questions.
- With repetition and bombardment using the sorting activity with sentence strips/carrier phrases, children learn what types of answers are appropriate for each wh- question.

**Guided Access & the iPad**
- Use guided access to:
  - Temporarily restrict your iOS device to a single app.
  - Disable areas of the screen that aren’t relevant to a task, or areas where an accidental gesture might cause a distraction or unwanted action (e.g., four finger swipe changes to last app used).
  - Disable the hardware buttons (child cannot exit out of the app).
- For children who use iPads for AAC purposes, it’s very tempting to exit out of their communication app to play games – you can prevent this by locking them into their communication app either permanently, or until they have an approved break.
- Dedicated device vs. all-around device: what’s better?
Set Up Guided Access

Settings →
General →
Accessibility →
Guided Access (on/off)

Passcode Settings

- PASSCODE SETTINGS: set a passcode that controls the use of Guided Access and prevents someone from leaving an active session
- TIME LIMITS: can set an alarm and have the remaining Guided Access time spoken before time ends
- ACCESSIBILITY SHORTCUT: triple-click the Home button to activate Guided Access, or while it's activated to disable by entering the passcode

- Triple click the Home Button to initiate Guided Access
- Change options using the Hardware Buttons
  - Sleep/Wake Button
  - Volume Button
  - Motion
  - Keyboards

- Select a portion of the screen to prevent a child from accessing a specific feature of the app or part of the screen
- Or, turn off Touch at the bottom to prevent the child from accessing/activating any of the screen
- What situations would you not want the child to be able to activate ANY of the screen?
- Set a time limit within Guided Access
  - Good for power struggles or for those that need highly structured breaks
  - Screen shows a "times up!" message when the time limit is reached - requires the Guided Access password to exit

**Self-Regulation**

"Self-regulation is the ability to attain, change, or maintain an appropriate level of alertness for a task or situation." (Williams & Shellenberger, 1996)

**Low State of Alertness**
- When we are in a low state of alertness - lethargic, bored, tired - we are not ready to learn, play, or interact with others

**Optimal State**
- When we are in our optimal state - alert, focused, attentive - it is easy to learn, play, or interact with others

**High State of Alertness**
- When we are in a high state of alertness - hyper, overactive - it is more difficult to learn, play, or interact with others

**Alert Program**

- The Alert Program uses an engine analogy because so many children find it easy to learn about their "engine" going into high, low, or just the right level by relating it to cars/trains and their speed

- Alternatives:
  - COLORS (red for high, yellow for low, and green for just right)
  - ANIMALS (cheetah for high, bear for just right, sloth for low)
  - Use a child's special interests to guide your system (especially if on the autism spectrum and significantly more motivated by one analogy than another)
  - Can use engine system combined with color system for optimal results

**What if the student is non-verbal?**
- The student MUST understand the basic concept of an engine, and how it relates to his/her own body's alertness

**What if the student has autism?**
- The student may exhibit more "buy in" if you choose a representation that he/she is motivated by (consider alternatives like colors, animals, TV show characters)

**STAGE ONE:** identify engine speeds
**STAGE TWO:** explore methods to change engine speeds
**STAGE THREE:** learn to regulate engine speeds

*Choices to regulate engine may vary between settings (make sure this is addressed to avoid any confusion)*
Volume Visual

- Provide a concrete way to represent an abstract concept

Thermometer

- Can range in complexity
- More basic thermometers used to teach range of emotions
- More complex thermometers used to teach how we can turn it around when we’re feeling any type of overwhelming or negative emotion
- Encourages self-regulation/monitoring and independence
- Provides concrete way to interpret often difficult to explain feelings and emotions (e.g., “I’m feeling red”)
- [I need to] options should be personalized for each child based on appropriate and available strategies

Zones of Regulation

- The Zones is a systematic behavior approach used to teach self-regulation
- The ways we feel and states of alertness are categorized into four concrete zones
- This curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem solve conflicts
- The Zones of Regulation incorporates Social Thinking concepts to teach students to identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behavior impacts those around them, and identify tools that can be used to self-regulate

Zones of Regulation

The Four Zones:
- The Red Zone is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.
- The Yellow Zone is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.
- The Green Zone is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.
- The Blue Zone is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

Resources

- LessonPix
  - https://lessonpix.com
- Alert Program
  - http://www.alertprogram.com
- Zones of Regulation
  - https://zonesofregulation.com/index.html
- YappGuru (app reviews by SLPs, OTs, and special education teachers)
  - http://yappguru.com
- Social Thinking
  - www.socialthinking.com

Contact Information

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