ABC'S OF BEHAVIOR

Understanding what happens right before and after a behavior can help us determine why the behavior is occurring.

THE ABC'S OF BEHAVIOR

A stands for Antecedent

An Antecedent is anything that happens BEFORE a behavior occurs. Look at the environment, the people around the student (staff and peers), the activity, and the demand or request. Try to be specific when identifying what occurs right before the behavior.

Some Examples:
- Student was asked to complete 10 math problems on a worksheet independently
- Student was prompted to stay in their assigned area x3
- Student transitioned back in from recess
- Peer told student to "move"

B stands for Behavior

A Behavior is what the student does in measurable and observable terms.

Some Examples:
- Student shouting expletives in the classroom
- Student completing a math worksheet
- Student laying down, crying in the hallway

Non-examples:
- Student is lazy
- Student is disrespectful
- Student is non-compliant

C stands for Consequence

A Consequence is anything that happens AFTER a behavior occurs AND influences whether the behavior happens again or not.

Some Examples:
- Student received coloring time after completing the math worksheet
- Student was sent to the office after laying in the hallway and crying
- Student was quietly redirected by staff for yelling expletives in the room

OK, so now what? What do I do with this information?

Now that you know what happened before and after the behavior, we can try to figure out what's the function or purpose of the behavior. What is the student getting from the behavior that makes them continue it?

Example #1

Student is given direction to independently complete a math worksheet with 15 problems on it. Student completes the worksheet. Student shows the work to the teacher Teacher says the student can use the rest of the period to read their favorite book.

- A= student asked to complete 15 math problem worksheet independently
- B= student completes work
- C=student can read their favorite book

Since the student got something they liked after math, we can infer that the student completed their work to access their favorite book.

Example #2

Student is given direction to independently complete a math worksheet with 15 problems on it. Student yells expletives in class. Teacher sends student to the office.

- A= student asked to complete 15 math problem worksheet independently
- B= student yells expletives
- C=student is sent to the office

If this is a pattern that happens repeatedly, one may infer that the student yells expletives during math to be sent to the office to avoid math class.

So now we can figure out the function. Then what?

Knowing the function can help us determine ways to PREVENT undesired behavior from happening. We look at changing the antecedent conditions in order to decrease the likelihood of the undesired behavior and increase the likelihood of desired behaviors.

Example #1 (continued)

This student has shown an interest in reading chosen books. In order to keep them focused on completing their work, even their most non-preferred work, they will be offered time to read their chosen book once they have completed their assignment and the teacher has checked it over for accuracy and completion.

Example #2 (continued)

This student has shown that they want to get away from math. In order to help them complete the math, we may provide direct instruction, 1:1 support fading to independence for the last few problems, a peer helper, decrease the number of problems, give example problems, have the student choose odds or evens to complete, and/or choose to complete the assignment in pen, pencil, or some other writing tool. We can also use a high value reinforcer that they can access after they complete the work.