



Behaviour Basics: Understanding Behaviour

Children’s Developmental and Behavioural Support



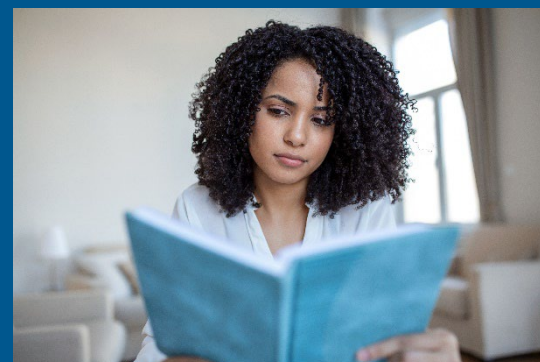
Where do I start?

1. To prevent your child (or yourself) from feeling overwhelmed, choose only one behaviour to work on at a time.
2. Once you have chosen a behaviour, it is important to define it. Write an objective sentence about the behaviour that makes it very clear to all caregivers involved what the behaviour looks like. A good definition of behaviour would include only the behaviour that you see. Refrain from making guesses as to what your child is feeling or thinking. For example, if your child engages in tantrum behaviour, a definition could be: “Johnny drops to the floor, cries, kicks his feet and screams.”
3. The next step is to collect information about the behaviour.
 - a. Identify what triggers the behaviour (antecedents). What environments, people, or times of day is the behaviour most likely to happen?
 - b. Identify what the responses (consequences) are to the behaviour. What do you and others do immediately after the behaviour? How does the behaviour help your child to get what they want?
 - c. Record how long each behaviour episode lasts.
4. Look at the information that you have collected. What are the patterns that you see? Are there situations that trigger the behaviour? Is the behaviour working to get your child what they want or escape from what they do not want?
5. Try something new. Decide what you can do to help prevent the problem behaviour from happening as well as stop responding in a way that allows your child’s behaviour to work for them.
6. Decide what skills your child can learn. Help to teach them the skills they require to be successful.

Behaviour – Non-compliance: Anytime I ask him to do something, and he doesn’t start doing it within 10 seconds of me asking. He may also throw and yell “no!”.



Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence
Told him to clean up his Lego	Throw the Lego all over the room	I told him he could have 5 more minutes, then he needed to clean it all up.
Called him for dinner 3 times	He wasn’t listening, kept playing his game	After the 3 rd time, I told his dad to get him and he came for dinner.
Told him when he puts his Lego away we can go to the park	He put his Lego away, no issue.	We went to the park when he was done tidying up the Lego.



References

Connectability.ca. (2020). *Observing and Understanding Behaviour*.

<https://connectability.ca/2011/06/13/supporting-children-with-asd-module-3/>

Child Mind Institute (2023). *Parents Guide to Problem Behavior*. https://childmind.org/guide/parents-guide-to-problem-behavior/#block_64cbd9b5b5e0c

Dana and Yogeetha. (2021). *The ABC's of Behaviour: Understanding your child's behaviour*. Grandviewkids.ca. <https://grandviewkids.ca/the-abcs-of-behaviour/>

ErinOakKids. (2020). *Behaviour Basics*. <https://www.erinoakkids.ca/getmedia/91cb7327-dc32-4ffe-ab5e-1e251fe808fd/000098-AODA-Behaviour-Basics.pdf>

ErinOakKids. (2020). *Functions of Behaviour*. <https://www.erinoakkids.ca/getmedia/ba6f8f2f-b599-457f-ada5-990d8205ff7a/000099-AODA-Functions-of-Behaviour.pdf>

Kearney, A.J. (2015). *Understanding Applied Behaviour Analysis: An introduction to ABA for parents, teachers, and other professionals*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Information

If you need more information, visit www.durham.ca/cdbs

Disclaimer

Resources shared by Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports – Durham Region is offered for informational and educational purposes only. This information should not be constituted as individualized advice, and does not imply that Durham Region recommends, condones, or supports the implementation of this information. CDBS does not assume any responsibility or risk for your use of the material in this resource. Always speak to a qualified health service provider if you have concerns about your child's development, treatment and/or medical condition.

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2829