



## Functional Behavior Analysis – Parent Handout

*Remember: All behavior makes sense, or “works” for your child in some way. We just need to find out exactly how the problem behavior “works” and then change your child’s environment so that 1) that behavior doesn’t work as well, and 2) your child has a new, appropriate behavior that works even better!*

**STEP ONE:** Learn why the behavior is happening. Fill out the boxes below using the most recent example. **First**, try to capture all the details for a recent example of the “Target Behavior”—include Situation, Antecedents, Behavior and Consequences. **Next**, think of the behavior you would LIKE your child to do instead, and fill in the “Replacement Behavior” boxes to show what typically precedes and follows that behavior (and if the replacement behavior never happens, consider what WOULD happen if it did occur).

	<b>Situation</b>	<b>A(ntecedents)</b>	<b>B(ehavior)</b>	<b>C(onsequences)</b>
<b>Target behavior-&gt;</b>	Date, Time, Activity, People, Place	<b>What happened before?</b> The exact events leading up to the behavior	Specifically describe the problem behavior:	<b>What happened after?</b> The exact events following the behavior, including the back and forth interactions between child and parent
<b>Replacement behavior -&gt;</b>			Identify the “positive opposite” of the behavior—what would you like to see in that situation instead?	What does (or would) happen if your child did the behavior you desire?

**STEP TWO:** Figure out strategies to help replace the problem behavior with something better (in other words, make the replacement behavior “work” better than the problem behavior!). Try to start with “positive” strategies (like clear expectations, role-playing the desired behavior, praise and rewards) and use consequences like punishment only when absolutely needed.

	<b>Situation</b>	<b>A(ntecedents)</b>	<b>B(ehavior)</b>	<b>C(onsequences)</b>
<b>Target behavior</b>	<p>Can you change the situation?</p> <p>Ideas:</p>	<p>Remove, minimize or change what happens right before that might be triggering the problem behavior.</p> <p>Ideas:</p>	<p>Track it! Start counting how often it happens so you'll know if your strategies work!</p> <p>Ideas:</p>	<p>Eliminate or reduce consequences that reward the behavior (is he getting his way? Is she getting out of something?) Move reinforcing events (attention, giving in, etc.) to the box below to promote the replacement behavior.</p> <p>Consider punishments (privilege removal, time out) when other strategies have not worked.</p> <p>Ideas:</p>
<b>Replacement behavior</b>	<p>Can you learn what helps by looking at the times he does what you want?</p> <p>Ideas:</p>	<p>Find ways to set your child up for success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarify expectations</li> <li>- Simple instructions</li> <li>- Remind about rewards/consequences</li> <li>- Model/practice the desired behavior</li> <li>- Anticipate &amp; remove obstacles</li> <li>- Offer choices</li> <li>- Help child identify and cope with strong feelings</li> <li>- Problem-solve together</li> <li>- Build into routine</li> </ul> <p>Ideas:</p>	<p>What is your “positive opposite”?</p> <p>Make sure he has the skills to do what you want—if not, practice with him! (Role play!)</p> <p>AND make sure your expectations are appropriate for his age.</p> <p>Ideas:</p>	<p>Add reinforcing events here! (Praise, attention, earned privileges, rewards, special time together, etc.)</p> <p>Ideas:</p>

After looking at the ideas you came up with in Step Two (above), choose some and write down exactly what you will try to change for the next week. Think about what might get in the way of this and brainstorm solutions.

What I will try this week	What might get in the way	How I can make sure I stick to my plan (or ways I can make my plan work better for me)

**STEP THREE:** Track how often the target behavior is happening (such as the daily tally sheet below) to see if it decreases when you try out your new strategies. If the target behavior has been “working” really well for your child, she may keep trying it or even increase it for the first few days—stick to your guns and try not to do anything that feeds into the behavior (don’t let it “work” for her!). If your plan isn’t solving the problem after a week, use STEP ONE again to try to identify what factors are keeping the behavior around.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Tally							
Did I follow my plan?  Anything I could have done better?							

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR THERAPISTS ON HOW TO USE THIS HANDOUT:**

This is a tool for illustrating the various behavioral tools parents can use in changing behavior. You will want to do at least a couple of FBAs together with the parents to illustrate how this tool works, and you'll want to guide their solutions at first, perhaps by prioritizing the parenting skills you are teaching that week. You probably don't want to let parents loose with Step Two until you know 1) they understand the parenting principles and skills you think they will need, and 2) you are sure they will prioritize positive parenting strategies over punishment (unless you believe punishment, such as time-out, is what is needed at this time, based on your understanding of the function of this behavior).

Also, make sure you prepare parents for the possibility of an "extinction burst," or the possibility that a behavior will get worse before it gets better. Giving in during an extinction burst can actually make the problem behavior stronger and harder to eliminate, so make sure parents have the resolve and skills they need (role play it!) before they have to face this sort of situation.