

Parent Café  
January 19, 2012  
Behavior

# What is Behavior

- The actions and mannerisms made by an **individual** in relation to its environment.
- **Observable** activity in an individual human or animal.
- **Measurable** movement of some part of the body through space and time.

# Why Do People Behave?

Modeling? Accident? Instinct? Condition?

Why do People Continue to Behave?

**IT WORKS!**

# Understanding Chronic Misbehavior

- ▣ If an individual repeatedly engages in a problem behavior, he/she is most likely doing it for a reason, because it is paying off for them.
- ▣ The behavior is Functional or serves a purpose
- ▣ Behavior is a form of **communication** unfortunately some individuals learn that Problem Behavior is the best way for them to get their needs met

# Understanding Chronic Misbehavior

- ▣ Recognize that **recurring misbehavior** occurs for a reason, and take this into account when determining how to respond to misbehavior.
- ▣ We can understand how to intervene most effectively by identifying the **function (or purpose)** the behavior serves

# What is Behavior Modification

- Behavior modification is a treatment approach, based on the principles of operant conditioning, that replaces undesirable behaviors with more desirable ones through **positive** or **negative reinforcement**.

# Behavior Change Methods

- ▣ **Punishment** is defined as a consequence that follows a response that **decreases** the likelihood of that response occurring in the future.
- ▣ **Reinforcement** is defined as a consequence that follows a response that **increases** the likelihood of that response occurring in the future.

# Positive Punishment

- ▣ **Positive Punishment** - an attempt to decrease the likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future, a response is followed by the presentation of an aversive stimulus.
  - You wear your favorite baseball cap to class, but are reprimanded by your instructor for violating your school's dress code. Therefore, the reprimand will act as a **positive punisher** and decrease the likelihood that you will wear the baseball hat to class in the future.
  - Because you're late to work one morning, you drive over the speed limit through a school zone. As a result, you get pulled over by a police officer and receive a ticket.

# Positive Punishment cont.

- ▣ Spanking
  - Best-known examples of **positive punishment**
  - Reportedly used by approximately 75 percent of parents in the United States.
- ▣ While **positive punishment** can be effective in some situations its use must be weighed against any potential negative effects.
  - associated poor parent-child relationships
  - increases in antisocial behavior
  - delinquency
  - aggressiveness.

# Negative Punishment

- ▣ **Negative Punishment** - an attempt to decrease the likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future, a response is followed by the removal of an appetitive stimulus.
  - When a child "talks back" to his/her mother, the child may lose the privilege of watching her favorite television program. Therefore, the loss of viewing privileges will act as a negative punisher and decrease the likelihood of the child talking back in the future.
  - After getting in a fight with his sister over who gets to play with a new toy, the mother simply takes the toy away. Therefore, the removal of the toy will act as a negative punisher and decrease the likelihood of the child fighting with his sister in the future.

# Positive Reinforcement

- ▣ **Positive Reinforcement** - an attempt to increase the likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future, a response is followed by the presentation of an appetitive stimulus.
  - After completing a math problem correctly on the board, the teacher shouts out, "Great job!" The teacher's praise may act as a **positive reinforcer**, causing the child to continue to study in the same manner in the future.
  - At work, you exceed this month's sales quota so your boss gives you a bonus.

# Positive Reinforcement cont.

- ▣ Not always a good thing.
  - Some children quickly learn that when acting out they will receive extra attention.
- ▣ Most effective when time between positive behavior and reinforcer are **minimal**

# Negative Reinforcement

- ▣ A **Negative Reinforcer** In an attempt to increase the likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future, a response is followed by the removal of an aversive stimulus.
  - When a child says "please" and "thank you" to his/her mother, the child may not have to engage in his/her dreaded chore of setting the table. Therefore, not having to set the table will act as a **negative reinforcer** and increase the likelihood of the child saying "please" and "thank you" in the future.

# ERASE

## problem behavior

- **E**xplain – What is the problem?
- **R**eason – What is he/se getting out of it or avoiding? (What is the Function/Pay off of the Behavior?)
- **A**ppropriate – What do you want him/her to do instead?
- **S**upport – How can you help this happen more often?
- **E**valuate – How will you know if it works?

Questions???



# DISCIPLINE

The purpose of discipline is to teach your child how to behave, so that your child will have mostly "good" behavior - behavior that is kind and cooperative with others, and not very much "bad" behavior - behavior that is hurtful or uncooperative or "not the way she's suppose to act." The bad behavior, or misbehavior, is a normal part of childhood and a normal part of learning how to behave. Your child learns the difference between good and bad behaviors by the ways that you react to them - by the ways you discipline your child.

## Discipline is NOT just punishment

Discipline includes

- ★ rewarding good behavior
- ★ ignoring or punishing bad behavior
- ★ explaining to children the reasons for the good behavior

In fact, some children rarely require punishment, because rewards and reasoning are so powerful for them. If you try rewards and reasoning and they do not seem to work for a certain problem, mild punishment can be added to rewards and reasoning. Punishment alone doesn't work to change a problem behavior.

## All children require discipline

Of course, children are born with different personalities, and some children are just naturally easier to manage than others. For some children, ignoring is a huge punishment, whereas other children may require being placed in a corner for major problems. For some children, a smile is an effective reward, whereas other children require rewards that give them a lot of attention.

## How discipline works

- (1) To increase a certain behavior, you reward it
- (2) To decrease a behavior, you ignore it or punish it
- (3) When changing a problem behavior, you explain the reason that the opposite good behavior is important

To stop many problems, you can simply reward the opposite behavior. For example, to stop running in the house, you can reward your child for remembering to walk in the house. For some problems, both rewards and punishment are needed - you may need to ignore or punish the problem behavior, reward opposite behaviors, and explain why the opposite behavior is good. For example, if you want your child to whine less often, you could (1) reward your child with praise for "big boy talk" whenever you hear it, (2) ignore your child's whining every time you hear it, and (3) when you praise your child for "big boy talk," tell him why it is good to talk like other children his same age.

## Types of Rewards

Social Rewards: Praising your child with words and gestures

*Giving a hug or a high-five, ruffling your child's hair, smiling at your child, telling your child what you liked and why*

Material Rewards: Giving your child small toys or special treats that he likes

*Stickers, food treats, favorite dessert, balloons*

Activity Rewards: Doing activities with your child that she likes

*Reading to your child, playing a game together, going to the park*

## Types of Punishment

Active ignoring: Removing all your attention from your child

*Not looking at or saying anything at all to your child as long as your child continues a negative behavior - such as whining, using baby-talk, or banging toys*

Using natural consequences: Allowing your child to understand and experience the natural outcome of their misbehavior

*"Because you threw your toy and broke it, you will not have that toy to play with anymore."*

Using the "quiet chair": Placing your child in a chair in a corner of a room and letting your child know (1) why she is being placed there and (2) what you expect of her behavior while in the chair.

*"You threw the toy so you have to sit in the quiet chair. (Take child to the chair). Sit here quietly until I say you can get off." (Time can vary from 1-3 minutes)*

## Tips for rewarding good behaviors

*Remember, behaviors that are rewarded happen more often.*



Pay attention!!! It is easy for parents to sometimes "miss" their child's good behavior. Often, parents use the time their children are behaving nicely to pay attention to other things ("Joey has been so good today, I've been able to get all my chores done."). So, sometimes children misbehave because misbehaving gets them your attention. When your child is behaving well, "catch him" being good, and let him know that you notice it and like it!

Reward good behaviors that are the opposite of your child's misbehaviors - (called positive opposites). For example, if your child does not like to share her toys, be on the lookout for times when she does share, and reward it!!

Tell your child why she is being rewarded and why the behavior is good.

Make sure that the reward you are offering your child really is a reward to him. That is, if your child is not interested in watching TV, giving him an extra 30 minutes of TV time is not a good reward -- it will not change his behavior.

## Tips for punishing bad behaviors

Punishment should be mild - never hit your child for misbehavior.

Punish only when you feel in control of yourself -- that is, only when you are not very angry.

Except when you are using active ignoring as the punishment, tell your child briefly what behavior is being punished (For example, "You didn't finish your dinner, so you can't have dessert.") - and then say no more about it - children learn reasons for good behavior best after doing good behaviors.