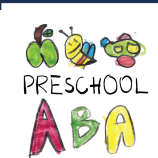


Functions of behavior

The WHY? behind every behavior

For Primary and Preschool Teachers



By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Identify and define the primary functions of behavior, often categorized using the acronym TEAMS:
 - Tangible
 - Escape
 - Attention
 - Medical
 - Sensory
- Understand how to analyze challenging behaviors to determine their potential functions.
- Recognize that behaviors can serve multiple functions and the context can influence function.

Introduction



Consider a recent behavior you've noticed in one of your students. **What do you think might have triggered it?**

Introduction

All behaviors happen for a reason.

Introduction

The two main categories of reasons behind every behavior:



Medical Function



Behavioral Function

Tangible Function



The individual engages in the behavior to access a desired object, activity, or thing.

Tangible Function

Examples

A child yells and cries to get a specific toy that another child is playing with.

A student throws a tantrum to get candy at the grocery store.

An adult engages in self-injurious behavior to receive a preferred snack or drink.

Escape Function



The individual engages in the behavior to escape or avoid an unpleasant task, demand, situation, or interaction.

Escape Function

Examples

A student tears up a worksheet when asked to complete math problems.

A child runs away when asked to take a bath or go to bed.

An adult leaves the room or refuses to participate in a group activity.

Attention Function



The individual engages in the behavior to gain attention from others, either positive or negative.

Attention Function

Examples

A child shouts out inappropriate comments in class.

A student gets out of their seat and walks around the room without permission.

An adult makes loud noises or disrupts others in a public setting.

Medical function



The individual engages in the behavior due to an underlying physical or medical condition.

Medical Function

Examples

A child frequently bangs their head when they have a toothache.

A student scratches excessively when they have a skin rash.

An adult engages in vocal outbursts related to an underlying health condition.

Sensory Function



The individual engages in the behavior to obtain sensory stimulation or to avoid sensory input.

Sensory Function

Examples

A child flaps their hands or spins in circles.

A student chews on their clothing or pencils.

An adult covers their ears or becomes agitated in noisy environments.

Practical Example (1):

Student Yelling During Reading Group

- **Behavior:** A student consistently yells and disrupts the group during reading time.
- **Possible Functions to Explore:**
 - **Escape:** Is the student trying to avoid a difficult reading task?
 - **Attention:** Is the student seeking attention from the teacher or peers?
 - **Sensory:** Is the environment too noisy or overstimulating for the student?

Practical Example (2):

Child's Tantrums in the Grocery Store

- **Behavior:** A child throws tantrums whenever their parent says "no" to buying candy at the checkout.
- **Possible Functions to Explore**
 - **Tangible:** Does the child want to obtain the candy?
 - **Attention:** Is the child seeking attention, even if it's negative?

Remember:

Behaviors Can Have Multiple Functions

- Behaviors can serve more than one function simultaneously.
- The function of a behavior can change depending on the context.
- Thorough assessment is essential to identify all potential functions.

Conclusion

- Understanding the functions of behavior is the key to effective behavior management.
- The TEAMS approach provides a helpful framework for identifying potential motivations.
- Remember, behaviors can be complex and serve multiple functions.
- Collaboration between professionals, parents, and caregivers is crucial for successful interventions.

Conclusion and Q&A

Questions?





THANK YOU