Changing Behavior

I like school

Can’t get up. Refuses to get up for school.

 Mostly happy

Sad
Poor sleep
Angry
Thoughts of self harm

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The goal of this book is to contribute to the development of behavioral intervention for children. The content was developed for parents, mental health providers, social service agencies, foster parents and teachers. We cover several common behaviors and provide a general approach to behavior management.

A few key concepts:
• Focus on rapid change.
• Begin with skills you want to increase in frequency.
• When possible use positive rewards.
• Try it for a week or two then see if we are making progress.

A Few Tips to Help Us

Keep descriptions of behavior short: (hits).

Keep description of consequence short: (hits = 1 minute time out or five minutes no hitting gets a reward).

Talk less: consequence more.

Too much talking confuses children: He hits - You say don’t do that. If you hit me you will have a time out. I’m not going to warn you again.

Better: He hits = 1 minute time out - no talking.

Less talking is especially important for children with speech/language or learning disorders. For older children talking about an issue after you have said “no” means that you are open to discussion and that it might be possible to change your mind. When you continue talking about an issue frustrated children may become angry. They feel they are SO CLOSE to getting you to change your mind but you just won’t do it. They just can’t get you to listen to reason (their reason).

Often talking less improves communication.
How to use this form

**Rating Problem Behaviors** - *Behaviors we wish to decrease or eliminate*

This form is designed to help you track problem behaviors in your child. The first step is to identify up to five behaviors you would most like to see change. Use the 10-point scale to rank the severity of the problem. Circle “0” if the problem is not present, ‘5’ if it’s a moderate problem, and ‘10’ for very severe problems.

**Frequency** - *Establishing a baseline of behavior*

The next step is to establish a baseline to determine the frequency and severity of the behavior currently. This requires the completion of several behavior ratings. How often does this happen? Does it occur several times hourly, several times daily, or several times weekly? Do these same steps for all each behavior. This establishes an average of occurrence for the behavior.
Name__________________________  Age_____  Date__________

Describe the first behavior
________________________
________________________
________________________

Frequency Score ______

mild    moderate    severe
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

How much of a problem?

How often does this happen?

Frequency Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often does this happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 1x/week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 4x/week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 1x/day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 4x/day)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Up to 7x/day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 10x a day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 1x/hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 2x/hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Up to 4x/hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(More than 4x/hour)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe the second behavior
________________________
________________________
________________________

Frequency Score ______

mild    moderate    severe
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Describe the third behavior
________________________
________________________
________________________

Frequency Score ______

mild    moderate    severe
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Frequency Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Severity Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior 1__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior 2__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior 3__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Severity Score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List up to three behaviors you want to see DECREASED in frequency or severity. Write a brief description of the behavior you will rate. (hits others, runs away, yells at siblings, etc.)
Rating Desirable Behaviors -
*Behaviors we wish to increase in frequency*

This form is designed to help you track desirable behaviors in your child. The first step is to identify up to five behaviors you would like to occur more frequently. Use the 10-point scale to rank the severity of the problem. Circle ‘0’ if the behavior is not present, ‘5’ if it happens some of the time, and ‘10’ if it happens frequently.

**Frequency - Establishing a baseline of behavior**

The next step is to establish a baseline to determine the frequency of the behavior currently. This requires the completion of several behavior ratings. How often does this happen? Does it occur several times hourly, several times daily, or several times weekly? Do these same steps for each behavior. This establishes an average of occurrences for the behavior.

**Trying treatment and tracking change**

Our next step is to try to change these behaviors. This baseline rating allows us to tell when we are making progress.
List up to three behaviors you want to see **INCREASED** in frequency. Write a brief description of the behavior you will rate. (looks at people, follows directions, calms self, etc.).

**How much of a problem?**

Describe the first behavior
________________________
________________________
________________________

Frequency Score ______
absent acceptable excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What percent of the time does this occur?
0-10% 1
11-19% 2
21-30% 3
31-40% 4
41-50% 5
51-60% 6
61-70% 7
71-80% 8
81-90% 9
91-100% 10

Describe the second behavior
________________________
________________________
________________________

Frequency Score ______
absent acceptable excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Describe the third behavior
________________________
________________________
________________________

Frequency Score ______
absent acceptable excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Overall Score
Behavior 1 ___________________
Behavior 2 ___________________
Behavior 3 ___________________
Total Score __________________
Most children have fewer behaviors and more impairments than we first suspect.

This results in day to day performance that is HIGHLY variable.
General Interventions

Use at least equal levels of negative and positive interventions

Pick rewards that make a difference.

Focus on 1 or 2 behaviors at a time. Change if you see no progress.

Emphasize and prioritize skill building.

Think ahead.

What will make a difference for this child?

Once a child earns a reward we will not take it away

5 possibly good rewards
* 
* 
* 
* 
* 

5 probably not so good rewards
* 
* 
* 
* 
*
Rewards

How do we identify a useful reward?

A few key concepts:

- Use what works
- Big behavior change requires a big reward for the child.
- How often should we use a reward?

Can we divide a reward into pieces?

The reward shelf
How often will we apply the consequence for the behavior.

Behaviors that might respond to:

**Rewards**
- Social skill or play deficits
- Getting work finished
- Going to bed on time
- Staying in bed
- Listening
- Getting Organized

**Consequences**
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Throwing
- Yelling
- Interrupting
Using Time Out

Behaviors:

Hits
- 20-30 times a day
- Easily frustrated and has speech delays
- Doesn’t sleep well

Plan
- What: Time out 1-2 minutes
- How often: 20-30 times a day
- Expect change in: 2-4 days (20 to 100 learning trials).

Other Concerns:
- Speech and language therapy will really help
- Routine will decrease demands on child
- More sleep may be helpful
- Avoid the most difficult situations (Wal-Mart on Dec. 24th for 3 hours of shopping)
Hitting

Plan = Hit → Time Out → 1-2 Minutes

- No Warnings
- No Talking
- Only 1-2 minutes

For each time out reward a positive behavior at least once.

Older children require a different strategy.
Temper Tantrums

Plan = Walk away                No talking                2-3 Minutes

Emphasize the need to apply the plan consistently (10 in a row)

Tantrums

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Reward a positive behavior 2 or 3 times for each time out.

Reward:
Plays nice:
5 times in AM
5 times in PM
Won’t go to bed on time

Our Plan
Bedtime 8:15
1) It’s time for bed
2) PJs
3) Brush teeth
4) Story (must be in bed)
5) Show reward for tomorrow morning

Gets up → No Talking
No Hugs
No Drinks
No Food → Put in bed (over & over)

10 in a row
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
For behaviors that are very difficult

Our goals:

- Manage disruptive behavior, temper tantrums, and meltdowns
- Reduce frequency by 25%
- Increase frequency of positive behavior by 25%

- Temper Tantrums Handout
- Calm Down Book
- Card Based Interventions
- Positive behavior management for competing behaviors
# Impairments often persist over the lifespan. Same Problems—Different Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>What it looks like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Irritable, impulsive, difficult, requires lots of attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poorly organized, can’t finish, easily distracted, forgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Loses and forgets, comprehension deficits, social deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Can’t finish, loses stuff, needs help every day, avoidant/aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>School problems, doesn’t get stuff home or back to school, social deficits, extra help-helps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Late, social deficits, school problems, cognitive delays, behavior problems, does best at home, school problems often severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Can’t get things finished, avoidant, anxious, easily overwhelmed, memory is poor, why doesn’t he/she change, poor choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Same thing over and over with no benefit. We should strongly consider this as an impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Late or misses meetings; easily overwhelmed; avoidant; social choices are poor; nods in agreement, but doesn’t understand; can’t finish (ex: substance abuse treatment, anger management, parenting classes). So, after 20+ years who/what needs to change?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thinks About Speech and Language

**Common problem:**
- Starts early in life and persists
- Changes over time
- Therapy really helps
- Often discharged too soon

**Linked to:**
- Irritability
- Temper tantrums
- Poor academic achievement
- Social deficits
- ADHD

**Always think about comprehension:**
- I have to explain
- Short directions
- Extra help
- Poor memory
- Forgets easily

School

Same problems across grades - just looks different
- Attracts negative interactions
- Impairments often confused with behavior - makes change difficult
- Aggression/avoidance/impulsive
- Some teachers can make a huge difference (positive or negative)
- Social deficits
- Memory deficits
- Anxiety is very common (decreases learning and performance) and leads to avoidance
- Homework may dominate family life

**Consider these issues:**
- Same problem since early childhood - just looks different
- Failure to appreciate deficits or impairments lead to increasing conflict
- Positive management is under utilized

*Over reliance* on negative consequences that DO NOT CHANGE BEHAVIOR
Behaviors: Which are severe and require intensive interventions?

Behaviors are most likely to be seen as very difficult if they are either very frequent or very intense or severe. The interventions differ for the two types of behavior. Medications are likely to be very useful for these problems.
Many disorders in children with severe behaviors are impulse control problems.

Reflective
Thoughtful

Cautious
Deliberate
“I want to think this over....”

Relies on experience
Follow rules

“No, I won’t.”

Keeps on going does same thing over and over

“OK!”
Parental Capacity

The Lift

\[
\frac{\text{Child’s Needs}}{\text{Parental Capacity}} = \frac{25 \text{ pounds}}{50 \text{ pounds}} = \frac{75 \text{ pounds}}{50 \text{ pounds}}
\]

How much can a parent do, handle or tolerate. This is the lift. If the demands of parenting, caring for, and keeping a child safe exceeds the parent’s capacity, it cannot continue. This is a common cause of intervention failures.
How can you help?

Wishing and anger are not effective interventions.

These impairments result in long term problems requiring long term interventions.

If the person, child, or parent has limited capacity, how long does it take us to recognize this?

Can our systems of care change to meet the needs of the person?

Can we adapt to meet their needs?
Behavior Plan

Problem: 1) Far too much aggression
2) Difficulty changing behavior
3) Sudden outbursts
4) Long duration of behavior problems
5) Severe impairment of social interactions

Plan: Increase attention to:
1) Positive behavior
2) Low level behavior problems
3) More frequent rewards for interaction

When child has this card he can earn rewards
Remove card as a signal of low level inappropriate behavior
Take away the card for 3 minutes, not longer

This is a signal that behavior is not appropriate. Can be done many times per day.

Get Out card to get out of seclusion

These cards can be used to get out of seclusion.
Child gives card to nurse or requests a referral activity - she asks him to complete some small task to demonstrate that his behavior is improving (write your name, count these). Goal: Get him doing something to de-escalate behavior.
Name __________________  Date________

Behavior: 

Plan: 

Other Concerns: 

• 

•
Behavior: 

Plan:

Other Concerns:

Name __________________   Date________
Name __________________ Date________

Behavior:  Plan:

Other Concerns:

•

•

•