

Behave Your Best!®



“Pivotal Social Skills to Compete with Unwanted Behavior”

Behave Your Best, LLC

612-224-1051

www.behaveyourbest.com

info@behaveyourbest.com

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There IS a rhyme AND a reason!

- Children are efficient with their behavior
- There is almost always a reason or FUNCTION for a child's unwanted behavior (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007)
 - Attention is the most common reason for unwanted behaviors in early childhood
 - Child receives a lot of attention when being directed to time out
 - Escape from non-preferred activities
- Sometimes there is more than one reason
- A “blanket” approach to unwanted behavior inadvertently strengthens *some* unwanted behaviors
- Resistance to change

ABC's of Unwanted Behaviors

- **A**ntecedent = What happens right before the unwanted behavior?
- **B**ehavior = Unwanted behavior
- **C**onsequence = What happens right after the unwanted behavior?

Example:

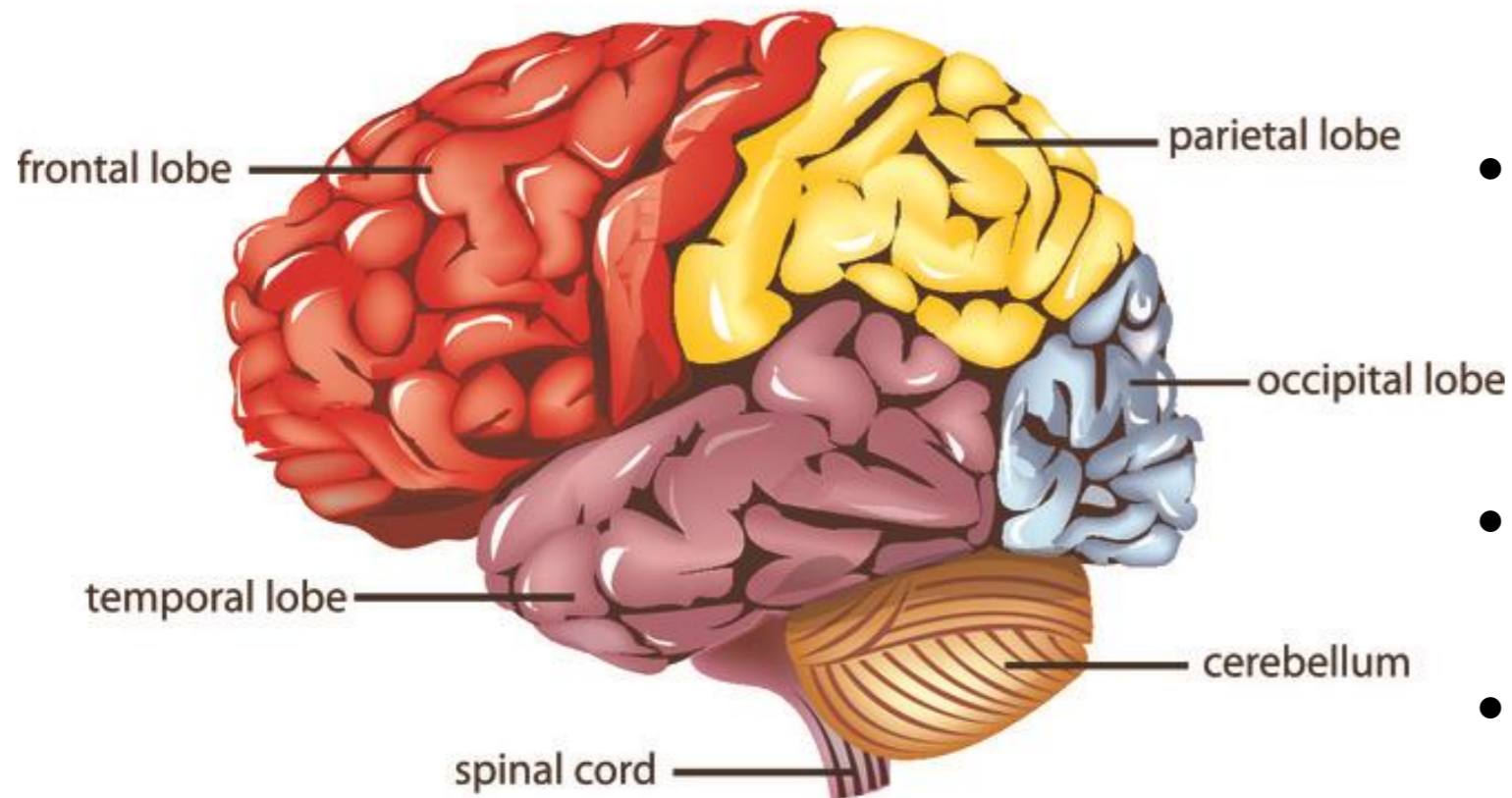
A=Child is sitting in group

B=Child shouts inappropriate words and restlessly bumps his friends

C=Teacher tells child to go take a break in a chair until he can calm his body down

“This is not a teaching moment”

Parts of the Human Brain



- When humans are upset, frontal lobe protectively shuts down (Johnson, Blum, & Giedd, 2009)
- Teaching by talking or explaining isn't going to be an effective strategy for most *in this moment*
- *Instead teach when the child's Light Switch is "on"*
- *Light Switch is half the battle. You need to teach the children the skills to be successful the next time the situations occurs.*

ABC's of Teaching

- **A**ntecedent = What happens right before the behavior/skill?
- **B**ehavior = Skill you want to teach
- **C**onsequence = What happens right after the behavior/skill?

Example:

A=Peer has a toy that child wants

B=Child holds out hand and asks, "Can I have it please?"

C=Peer gives toy to child or says, "No"

General Teaching Strategies

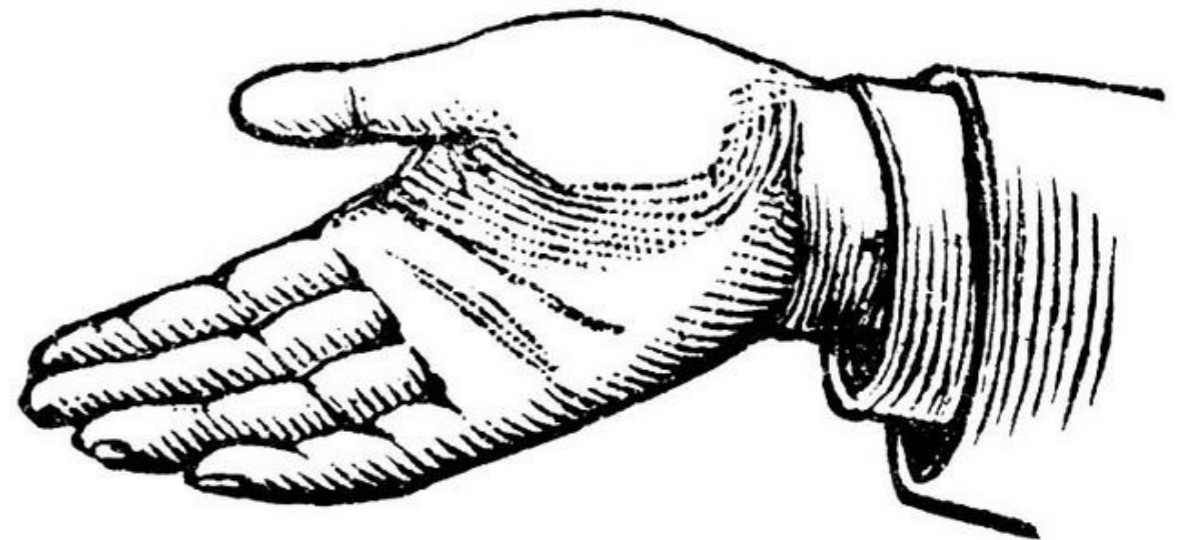
1. Demonstrate the social skill for the child with dolls or peers
2. Practice with adult as the “peer”
3. Practice with a peer who has practiced with an adult
4. Create or watch for opportunities to prompt the social skill in natural situations with peers

Pivotal Social Skills

1. Requesting toys from peers
2. Play independently and/or remained engaged in activities for an age-appropriate amount of time
3. Tolerating divided (adult) attention
4. Tolerating delays to requests being honored, especially with peers
5. Tolerating denials
6. Transition calmly from preferred activities to less preferred activities

1. “Can I have it please?”

- The appropriate way to get a toy from a peer often doesn't work
- Work on during small groups
- Teach peers to say “yes” sometimes
- Teach a verbal and/or gesture
- Honor the appropriate request every time initially to reinforce the appropriate use



“Can I have it please?”



2. Independent Play

- Children learn it is more efficient to get your attention with unwanted, off-task behaviors
- Work on this during times when you need to multi-task
- Rearrange the contingencies
- Natural reinforcer for playing independently is adult interaction
- Start small and use baby steps
 - Determine how long child is able to play independently (baseline)
 - Set first goal just above baseline
- Visual cues or timers

Independent Play



3. Wait please for my attention



- Use requests as reinforcers
- Use a gestural and verbal cue to start
- Fade verbal cue and use gestural cue only as child improves
- Start small and use baby steps – determine baseline
- Gradually increase duration of time child waits for your attention
- Ensure the child is waiting nicely when you give him your undivided attention
- Work on in a variety of situations

Wait for my attention



4. Teach Child to Tolerate Delays

- Start small! – Keep delays short, silly, and fun at first
- Work on delays during play
 - Small group stations
- Work on delays when the child make requests
- Gradually increase the length of the delay to honoring the child's request and fade out the silliness

Tolerate Delays



5. Teach Child to Tolerate Denials

- Tolerating delays = prerequisite to tolerating denials
- Requesting is one of the first parts of language to develop
- As language expands, we have to deny more requests
- Identify an appropriate replacement behavior to teach
 - Child remains calm, accepts an alternative, and/or says, “OK”
- Work on during play first
- Soft denials – honor part of the child’s request
- Offer alternatives - “I’m using the blue marker, but you can have the red, green, or orange marker.”
- “Pretend You Are a Light Switch”® if child is unable to remain calm

Tolerate Denials



6. Transition From Preferred to Less Preferred Activities

- Rule out general listening as a skill to target first
- Identify a motivator before giving the instruction to transition or wait for the child to request something
- Avoid time-based cues such as, “in a minute” and instead say, “in a little bit” or “after X more times”
- “Pretend You Are a Light Switch”® if non-compliance occurs

Transition From Preferred to Less Preferred Activities



To summarize

- Light Switch is only have of the resolve to not make the unwanted behavior in the moment worse.
- Proactively teach the skill the child will need to be successful for the next time.