

Antecedent Interventions to Reduce Anxiety

Antecedent-based interventions: arranging events that precede the occurrence of an interfering behavior that are designed to lead to the reduction of that interfering behavior.

- **PAIRING/Relationship building:** the process by which we condition ourselves and our environment as reinforces.
- **Increase the predictability** in all environments through visual supports
 - ✓ Provide a daily schedule/routine to reduce stress and anxiety
 - ✓ Advance notice of schedule changes, need to transition to another activity or expectations for the next activity, new event/expectation
 - ✓ Task list/charts with the time for a break included
 - ✓ Transition plan; for each transition during the day (activity to activity, setting to setting, etc.)
- **Give advance notice** to any/all changes, differences, transitions
- **“On the spot” modifications** to activities, such as **“Jump Starts”** (advance notice of what will be addressed in during homework assignments or other activities, what materials will be needed, etc)
 - It is important to be able to shift your own expectations and go with the flow
- **“Behavioral momentum”** (several easy things to do, followed by a more difficult or challenging tasks)
- **Scheduled breaks;** timed to occur before activities/events the child may find difficult
- **Schedule times during the day for children to engage in preferred activities or with preferred items**
- **Alternate between preferred and non-preferred activities**
- **Non-contingent reinforcement (NCR):** a powerful technique that provides rewards/attention/praise whenever a child is NOT engaging in problematic behavior
- **Choice:** provide opportunities for choice (among options that are equally acceptable to teacher) whenever possible

- **Setting up a token economy**
 - ✓ Finding good motivators through a preference assessment
 - ✓ Giving the child the choice of rewards from a list of items/activities of known value to child
 - ✓ Goal is to increase positive, appropriate behaviors and functional communication

- **Teach expected behaviors** to children proactively. Review these behaviors several times a day. Consider written social narratives.

- **Consider environmental accommodations**
 - ✓ Where is the child expected to sit? Are we minimizing distractions?

- **Provide plenty of opportunities to move** (antecedent exercise)
 - ✓ Brain breaks
 - ✓ Whole body learning
 - ✓ Individual breaks (ex. walk to office and back, deliver message)

- **Make sure the child is able to functionally communicate** (ex. needs, questions).
 - ✓ May need Functional Communication Training (FCT)
 - ✓ Consultation with a Speech-Language Pathologist

- **Make sure you are aware of the individual child's skill deficits and are working to improve these deficits**

- **Give clear verbal directions**
 - ✓ KISS: Keep It Short and Simple
 - ✓ Match number of steps (1-part, 2-part, etc.) to age group or individual child's working memory
 - ✓ Avoid repeating when you can refer to written instruction

- **Use visual supports** to supplement verbal instructions
 - ✓ Post-it note
 - ✓ Task list
 - ✓ Schedule posted in visible place; kept in notebook or taped to desk
 - ✓ Expectations for environment visible
 - ✓ Daily routine/schedule written clearly in the home