




**Putting the Function into
Functional Communication
Training!**


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**Objectives**


- After the training, participants will be able to identify the definition of Functional Communication Training.
- After the training, participants will be able to identify the definition of a replacement behavior.
- Given a scenario, participants will be able to identify the most appropriate method of communication to train.
- After the training, participants will be able to identify multiple aspects of generalizing communication.
- After the training, participants will be able to identify some components of an FCT program.






What is FCT?

- **Functional Communication Training** is a strategy for use with individuals who require a more **individualized** intervention approach because they continue to exhibit challenging behaviors even when classroom-wide prevention strategies are in place.
- FCT involves **identifying the function** or purpose of the individual's challenging behavior and then teaching an appropriate behavior that will serve the same purpose for that individual. This behavior is referred to as a replacement behavior. The **replacement behavior** may involve speech, sign language, gestures, pictures, directed eye gaze, or an augmentative communication device.



Pre-Requisites to FCT


- ◆ Teach the Social Nature of Conversation from the Start!
- ◆ Joint attention (JA) ability is associated with language development - showing or sharing with another person or following another's gaze
- ◆ Capture times the person:
 - ◆ Orients toward you
 - ◆ Looks at you
 - ◆ Gazes at an object or action



Kasari et. al., 2008



Active Responding

- Students must have which of the following skills before introducing an FCT program
 - a) Joint attention
 - b) Directed eye gaze toward objects/actions
 - c) Orients towards and looks at another person(s)
 - d) All of the above




Key Features

- ◆ The first step in using FCT is to always assess why the behavior is happening
- ◆ It is important to never reinforce the challenging behavior!
- ◆ FCT should compete with or replace challenging behaviors
- ◆ FCT is a way for a student to execute getting what they want
- ◆ FCT capitalizes on the student's needs and wants **in the moment**

COMMUNICATE  

Step 1: Define Target Behavior

- Refer only to observable characteristics
 - Avoid referencing intentions or feelings
- Behavior definitions are statements that specify what to observe
- Use clear and simple language
- Specify what is and what is not an instance of the behavior

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Example:

Individual Profile

Stephen is a 13 year-old who is nonverbal and does not exhibit echoic responses (not repeating sounds heard or movements observed). He does have fine and gross motor skills. He displays joint attention by his leading teacher to or pointing at the things he wants or is interested in. He is also able to match pictures to objects during one on one instruction time.

When angry Stephen will smack and punch his teacher and parents. He has never been observed hitting another child.

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4 Functions of Behaviour

		What It Does For Me	When Does it Happen
S Sensory		Provides preferred sensory experiences; behaviour feels good to do	Anytime, even when alone. Especially if I'm anxious
E Escape		Removes undesired activities or interactions	When task is too: hard, easy, boring, or scary
A Attention		Provides access to people or interactions	When I want social interaction
T Tangibles		Provides preferred items or activities	When I want a preferred item or activity

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Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Teacher assisted peer with lunch	Smacked teacher on her arm	Verbal prompt "calm down" then assisted with lunch
Teacher handing out iPads to class for leisure time	Hit teacher on back 2x	Teacher redirected to seat and gave iPad once sitting
Peers retrieved snacks and began eating	Approached assistant and began smacking her on left shoulder	Redirected to desk, then offered fruit
Told he could not have food from PTO luncheon as he passed in hallway	Began hitting adults who tried to block his access; he took 2 cookies from table	Stuffed the cookies in his mouth and ate them; sent to office

Developing Interventions Worksheet
Based on the A-B-C data what is the most likely function for Stephen's hitting?


Hypothesis of Behavior Function

- a) Tangible
- b) Attention
- c) Sensory
- d) Escape

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 **Step 3: Choose the Replacement Behavior**
AKA Choosing Communication Modality

- Consider what will/can be honored
- Consider prerequisite skills
 - Vocal – sounds/babbling
 - Sign Language – fine motor/imitation
 - PECs – picture discrimination/scanning
 - Eye gaze- picture discrimination/scanning
 - Communication Device (AAC) – fine motor, scanning
- Consider willingness/ability of others to honor communication




eat **finish**

I want	book	help
eat	eat	sleep
OK	more	all
		no


ABC DEF GHI JKL
MNO PQR
STU VWX YZ


SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT
I DON'T HAVE TO CRY AND YELL TO GET MY COOKIE?
ingilip.com CA



Example:

Pre-requisite Skills
<p>Stephen is nonverbal and does not exhibit echoic responses (not repeating sounds heard) or movement. He does have fine and gross motor skills. He displays joint attention by leading teacher to or pointing at the things he wants or is interested in. He is also able to match pictures to objects during one on one instruction time.</p>




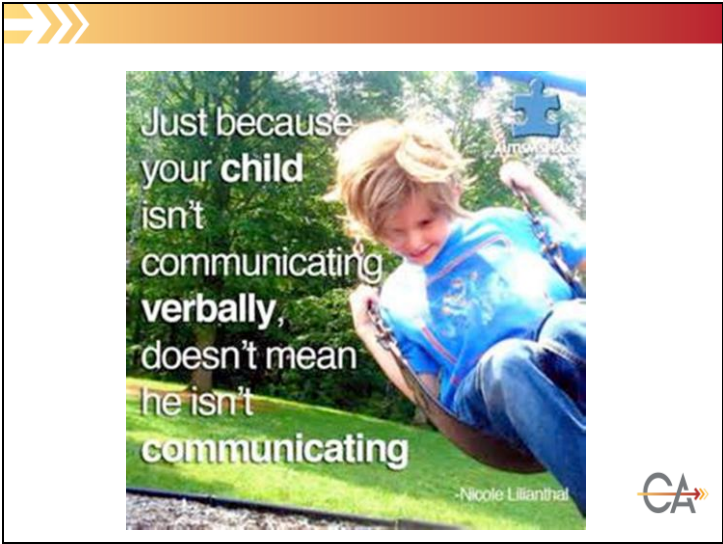


Based on the Pre-requisite skills which is the best mode of communication to teach?

Mode of Communication


- a) Sign Language
- b) Voice Out-put device
- c) PECS
- d) Speech






Step 4: Teach the Replacement Behavior

- ◆ Plan for a replacement behavior that serves the same function and will be reinforced instead of the challenging behavior.
- ◆ Encourage replacement behavior
 - ◆ Prompt as needed then fade
- ◆ Reinforce every time the new behavior is displayed
- ◆ Provide a lot of opportunities for the individual to use new replacement behavior
- ◆ Arrange situations for the behavior to occur in different environments and with different people







Reinforcing Replacement Behavior

Teaching functionally equivalent behavior that can take place of problem behavior

4 Keys Factors to Replacement Behavior

1. Must be Functionally Equivalent!
2. Must be just as Easy to perform
3. Must be just as Efficient (quick)
4. Must be just as Effective







Which strategy is the best way to teach the replacement behavior?

Antecedent Interventions

- a) Show him a list of food pictures and tell him to make a choice
- b) Show him a picture of 2-3 foods options and instruct him to point to the one he wants, use prompts if needed, then give him the item.
- c) Show him a piece of pizza and model the sign for pizza. Only give him the pizza if he correctly imitates the sign.







Active Responding

Why would we stop rewarding the targeted problem behavior?

- a) Implementing a FCT
- b) Behavior decreases in the future
- c) Behavior decreases in the moment
- d) Control the reinforcer





Which is the best way to respond to the problem behavior?

Consequence Interventions

- a) Do not give the desired item unless the behavior becomes severe and you need to avoid getting hurt.
- b) Tell him that if he hit anyone he will be sent to the office and won't get pizza for a week.
- c) If he engages in problem behavior when he sees pizza, prompt to use picture card to request pizza. Only give him the pizza if he appropriately uses the picture card.

