

Behavioral Feeding Challenges

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What is Behavioral Feeding?

Approach to treating feeding challenges
Based on Principles of Behavior (Applied
Behavior Analysis)
Uses reinforcement to change behavior



Who can use this approach?

Children who do not have complicating medical conditions

A child who is not eating appropriately

A child without a healthy diet

A child who refuses certain foods



Prevalence

Feeding Challenges are common with children

1/3 of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Children with Autism may be as high as 90%

70% Described as “selective eaters”



Functions of Behavior

All behavior is maintained by reinforcement

Reinforcement can be positive or negative

Positive – Something is added

Negative – Something is removed

Behavior is communication

Maladaptive behaviors are inappropriate

communication



Functions of Behavior

Escape
Attention
Tangible
Automatic



Most Common Functions

Mostly maintained by escape (negative reinforcement)

Spoon removal

Meal termination

Attention

Coaxing

“It’s okay,” “I know you’re scared,” “No!”

Facial reactions



Any Behavior Any Function

Crying
Self Injurious Behavior
Aggression
Throwing Items
Pushing spoon away



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Multiple Control

Most behavior has only one function
Behavior can gain additional sources of control
Most likely added function is attention



Interventions

Interventions involve 3 main types of strategies

Antecedent – Motivating operations

Teaching – Differential Reinforcement

Consequence – Escape Extinction

A combination of any/all of these can be used



Antecedent Strategies

Manipulating Motivating Operations

Attempt feeding intervention when child is hungry

Keep a feeding schedule

Eliminate snacking and drinking between meals

Changing foods/types

Moving from a preferred food to a similar food

Keeping similar textures

Changing colors gradually



Teaching Strategies

Differential Reinforcement

Reinforce appropriate behavior (eating)

Chaining

Reinforce closer responses to eating

Shaping

Reinforce bigger bites



Consequence Strategies

Extinction

Escape Extinction – not allowing child to get out of task when problem behavior occurs

Attention Extinction – not providing any attention for problem behaviors during feeding



Sample Scenario

Billy is a 6 year old child who only eats pureed baby foods and rice cereal. Billy has eaten cookies in the past. When novel foods are presented, Billy protests and pushed the food and/or spoon away.



Intervention

Strategy #1: Provide Billy with a choice of scenarios.

First eat bite of aversive food, then receive highly preferred reinforcer (iPad)

First eat bite of neutral food, then receive smaller amount of moderately preferred reinforcer (simple toy).



Intervention Continued

Strategy #2: Escape Extinction and negative reinforcement

Physical prompting to bring food near mouth, and not removing during problem behaviors.

Removing nonpreferred food and spoon contingent upon bite of nonpreferred food.



Intervention Continued

Strategy #3: Systematic Desensitization

Requiring child to make closer and closer response to eating target food

Providing more reinforcement for responses that are closer to eating food without problem behavior



Hierarchical level of acceptance	Description
0	Refuses to try food (with and without disruptive behavior)
1	Touches the food and motions it toward the mouth (does not include touching the food as an act of disruptive behavior such as throwing the food)
2	Puts the food to lips
3	Bites the food
4	Bites and puts in mouth, refuses to swallow
5	Chews the food but refuses to swallow
6	Swallows the food reluctantly
7	Accepts the food without any signs of displeasure or disruptive behavior



Intervention Tips

Stay Consistent

Extinction bursts will occur

2-3 new foods at a time until mastered

Pay attention to motivation

Reinforcement is key



Contact Info

Covenant Center for Autism

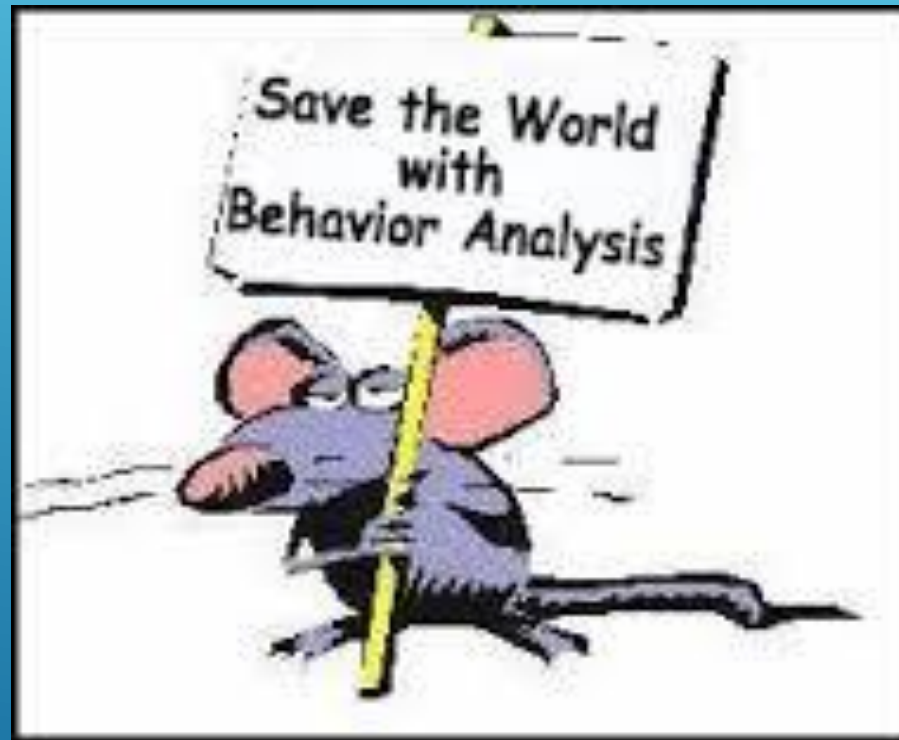
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Questions???

