



Evidence Based Improvement Strategies

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) - A structured approach that helps people identify and change problematic thoughts and behaviors by teaching skills they can apply in real-world situations.

Visual Supports - Systematically implementing and evaluating the use of visual aids, such as pictures, written words, objects, arrangement of the environment or visual boundaries, schedules, labels, organizational systems and timelines to enhance learning, communication, and task completion.

Prompting - Verbal, gestural, or physical assistance given to learners to assist in acquiring or engaging in a targeted behavior or skill. Prompts are generally given by an adult or peer before or as a learner attempts to use a skill. Prompts are gradually faded as independence increases.

Modeling - A desired skill or behavior is demonstrated by an instructor, peer, or video for learners to observe and then imitate, leading to improved understanding and performance through observation and practice. This is often combined with other EBIS such as prompting and reinforcement.

Scripting - Providing the learner with specific verbal and/or written sequences, dialogues, or narratives to follow, enabling them to practice and internalize responses or behaviors in various social, academic, or functional situations. Scripts are usually practiced repeatedly before the skill is used in the actual situation.

Self-Management - Instruction focusing on learners discriminating between expected and unexpected behaviors, then taking responsibility for monitoring their own behaviors, setting goals, tracking progress, and making data-driven adjustments to improve outcomes.

Social Narratives - Narratives that describe social situations in some detail by highlighting cues and offering examples of expected responses. Social narratives are individualized, quite short, and often include pictures or other visual aids.

Antecedent Based Intervention - Strategically planning and modifying environmental triggers or conditions that occur before a challenging behavior to prevent or reduce its occurrence.

Differential Reinforcement - Providing positive/desirable consequences (reward) for expected behaviors to reduce unexpected ones. This can involve: (a) rewarding alternative expected behaviors, (b) rewarding behaviors that can't happen at the same time as the unexpected behavior, or (c) rewarding periods when the unexpected behavior doesn't occur.

Discrete Trial Teaching - One-on-one teaching method using repeated practice designed to teach skills. Instruction usually involved massed trials. Each round includes: (a) Teacher instruction, (b) Student response, (c) Planned consequence and (d) Brief pause before next instruction

Explicit Instruction - During instruction the teacher: clearly identifies the expectations for learning and highlights important details of the concept or skill. Explicit instruction is divided into three sequential steps: modeling, guided or directed practice, and independent practice.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)- Systematic collection of information designed to identify the function of an interfering behavior. The FBA consists of: describing the interfering or problem behavior, identifying antecedent and consequent events that control the behavior, developing a hypothesis of the function of the behavior, and testing the hypothesis.

Functional Communication Training - Teaching individuals ways to communicate their needs and wants by replacing challenging behaviors with functional communication responses.

Naturalistic Intervention - Teaching within everyday activities and routines, using the learner's natural interests and environment. Teachers establish the learner's interest in a learning event through arrangement of the setting/activity/routine, provide necessary support for the learner to engage in the targeted behavior, elaborate on the behavior when it occurs, and/or arrange natural consequences for the targeted behavior or skills.

Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention - Training peers to help learners develop new skills through natural social interactions. Peers interact with students with disabilities to acquire new behavior, communication, and social skills by increasing social and learning opportunities within natural environments. Teachers systematically teach peers strategies for engaging students with disabilities in positive and extended social interactions in both teacher-directed and learner-initiated activities.

Picture Exchange Communication System - Teaching communication by exchanging pictures for desired items. PECS consists of six phases which are: (1) “how” to communicate, (2) distance and persistence, (3) picture discrimination, (4) sentence structure, (5) responsive requesting, and (6) commenting.

Pivotal Response Training - Pivotal learning variables (i.e., motivation, responding to multiple cues, self-management, and self-initiations) guide intervention practices that are implemented in settings that build on learner interests and initiative.

Reinforcement - Providing rewards or positive consequences after desired behaviors to increase their frequency.

Response Interruption / Redirection - Using prompts or distractions to shift attention away from unwanted behavior.

Social Skills Training - Teaching ways to interact with others through a systematic approach that combines direct instruction, modeling, role-playing, feedback, and practice to develop interpersonal competencies while continuously measuring outcomes to validate and refine the intervention's effectiveness.

Structured Play Group - Small group activities characterized by organized gatherings in defined spaces with specific activities, carefully selected typically developing peers, clear roles and themes, and adult support through leading, prompting, and scaffolding to help students achieve their goals.

Task Analysis - A process in which an activity or behavior is divided into small, manageable steps in order to assess and teach the skill. Other practices, such as reinforcement, video modeling, or time delay, are often used to facilitate acquisition of the smaller steps.

Technology-Aided Instruction and Intervention - Using devices (computers, tablets) or programs to teach and maintain skills.

Time Delay - Briefly waiting before providing help, allowing the learner a chance to respond independently. The purpose of the time delay is to allow the learner to respond without having to receive a prompt and thus focuses on fading the use of prompts during instructional activities.

Video Modeling - Using video recordings to provide a visual model of the targeted behavior or skill (typically in the behavior, communication, play or social domains).