

WAIT PROGRAM

Objective: To eliminate problem behaviors by teaching the student to wait

Candidates for this program: Following a functional assessment, student's whose problem behavior was determined to function as a history of socially mediated positive reinforcement

The problem behaviors have been learned and maintained because although the student was initially told to wait, problem behavior allowed access to reinforcement (items, activities, attention) sooner.

Behavior Reduction Protocol: Wait Program; problem behavior is no longer reinforced (put on extinction) and the student is taught to wait for reinforcement.

PROCEDURE

1. Tell the student "You'll have to wait" or some similar phrase based upon the child's skill level.
2. Begin counting aloud and show the passage of time by using your fingers. Say, "Wait one, two three..." as you hold up your fingers (count will be predetermined based upon the student).
3. If problem behaviors do not occur during the entire counting interval, deliver reinforcement.
4. However, if at any point during the counting the student engages in problem behavior, restart the count.

Ex. "Wait one, two...wait one, two, three" etc.

5. Continue this process until you are able to count the entire interval without the student engaging in problem behavior. At this point you can reinforce the student for waiting appropriately.
6. If you repeat the count for many trials and the student continues to engage in problem behavior, you may walk away and the student loses the opportunity to contact reinforcement.

If the student moves away from you, make sure he/she remains safe, but do not follow. Simply end your count and if at any point the student re-approaches you start the procedure over again.

If time dictates you must move on to another activity, do so, and the opportunity to access this particular reinforcer is lost.

7. Gradually increase the wait interval as the student achieves success.
8. Once the student has had multiple opportunities to practice waiting and has shown success, fade the count and say “wait” while counting for the required time interval silently.
9. Physically block self-injurious (SIB), aggressive, and property destructive behaviors.
10. Provide adequate number of wait trials per day.
11. Record trial by trial data and graph daily.

References

- Carr, E.G., & Durand, V.M. (1985). Reducing behavior problems through functional communication training. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 18*, 111-26.
- Hagopian, L.P., Fisher, W.W., Sullivan, M.T., Acquisto, J., & LeBlanc, L.A., (1998). Effectiveness of functional communication training with and without extinction and punishment: A summary of 21 inpatient cases. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 31*, 211-235.
- Iwata, B.A., Pace, G.M., Cowdery, G.E., & Miltenberger R.G. (1994). What makes extinction work: An analysis of procedural form and function. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 27*, 131-144.