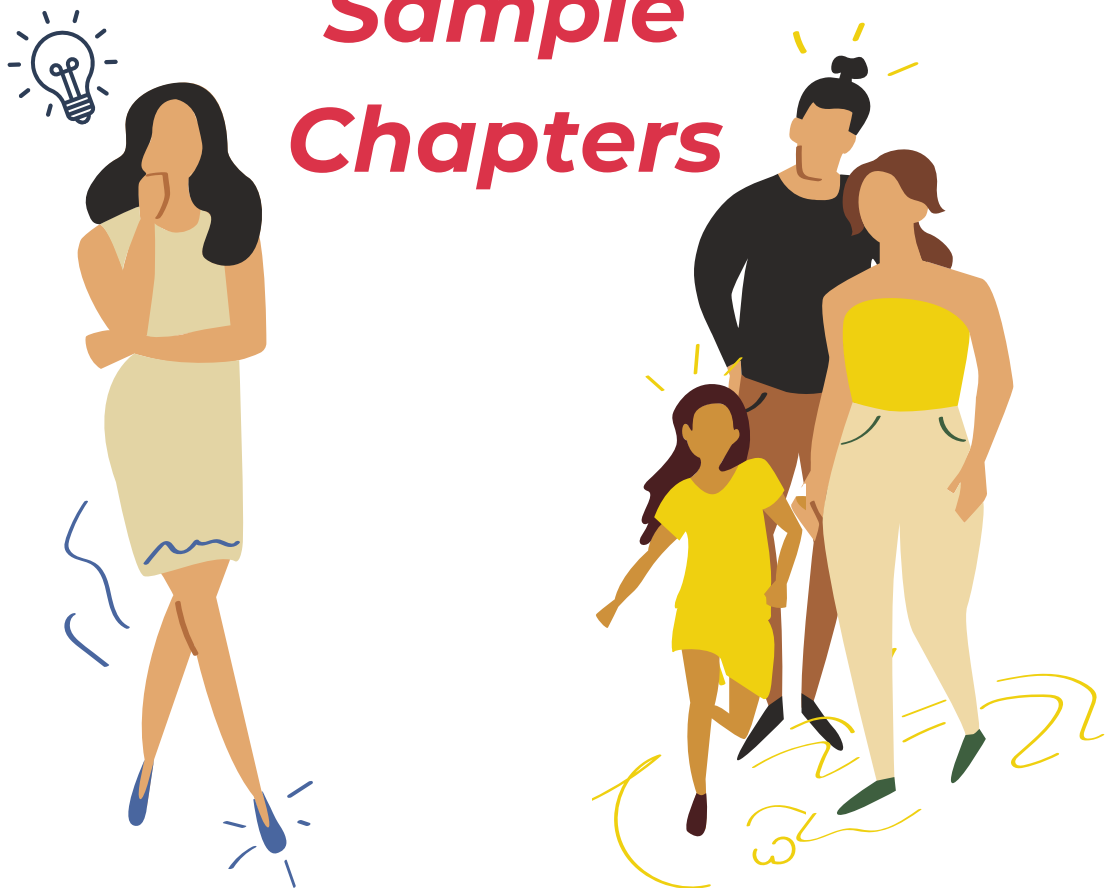


ACHIEVE PARENT TRAINING CURRICULUM

Effective ABA Training
through Partnership

*Sample
Chapters*



Amelia Dalphonse, MA, BCBA

ACHIEVE PARENT TRAINING CURRICULUM: EFFECTIVE ABA TRAINING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Sample Chapters

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- 59** Introduction to Teaching New Skills
- 69** Importance of Motivation when Teaching New Skills
- 75** Building a Collaborative Relationship with your child



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INTRODUCTION TO SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

GOAL

Discover basic teaching techniques to effectively teach a child with autism new skills.

BACKGROUND

Many children with autism exhibit deficits in a variety of skill areas. This may be due to cognitive delays or even a different learning style than their peers. Many children with autism learn best when instruction is more intentional and structured.

YOUR CHILD CAN ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS!

As a parent, you probably aren't accustomed to teaching your child in a structured way. You naturally parent either the way you were parented or in a way that is the complete opposite of the way you were raised, depending on your personal childhood experiences. Either way, it's unlikely that you spontaneously learned to teach skills the way children with autism learn best.

This lesson provides the tools you need to teach your child valuable life skills that will lead to greater independence so your child can **ACHIEVE** his full potential!

YOU'RE NOT A FAILURE!

Many parents feel as though they failed their child by not teaching them the things they should know.

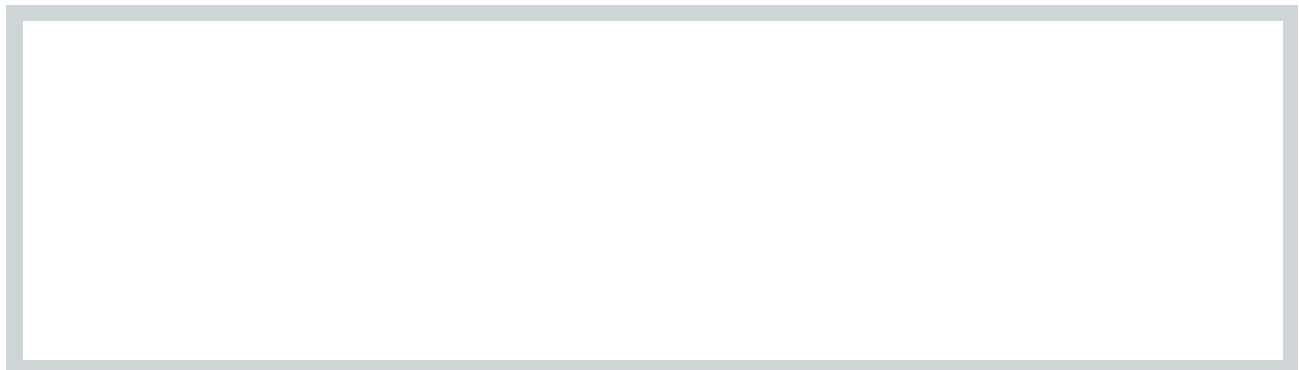
You are not responsible for the skills your child hasn't learned yet. There is no reason you should have known how to teach your child in the way that he learns best. This training will take you on a journey to help your child learn new skills. It's a process that takes time, patience and perseverance.

You and your child will become partners on this journey, working together to overcome obstacles and accomplish new milestones. Simply take one step at a time and watch your child learn, grow and ACHIEVE.

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOU FELT LIKE A FAILURE?

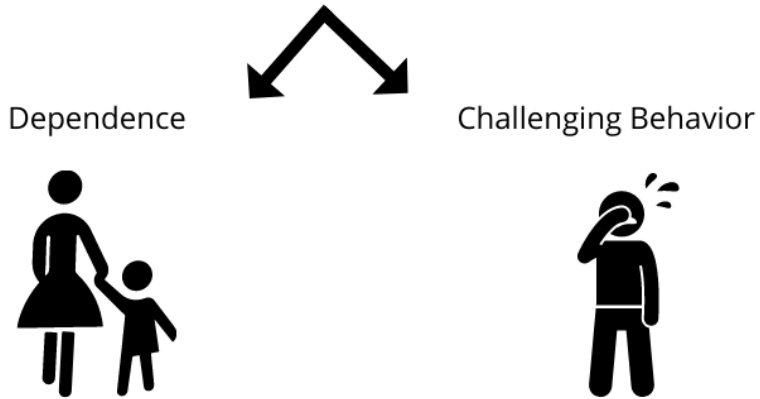
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HOW CAN YOU REFRAME THIS THINKING?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray border, intended for the user to write their responses to the question above.

IDENTIFYING SKILL DEFICITS

Skill Deficits



Children with autism often struggle with a variety of different skills. These deficits lead to increased dependence on adults and even challenging behavior.

When deciding which skills your child needs to learn, it's important to consider your child's skills in these areas:

- ✓ Expressive communication
- ✓ Imitation skills
- ✓ Social Skills
- ✓ Academics
- ✓ Listener skills
- ✓ Play
- ✓ Life skills

WHAT SKILL DEFICITS DO YOU RECOGNIZE IN YOUR CHILD?

TYPES OF SKILLS

One of the strategies that makes ABA so effective for teaching new skills is the focus on breaking up complex skills like communication into smaller pieces. These pieces are easier to teach and easier for your child to learn. Here you'll learn the types of skills you'll be teaching. We'll dig deeper into each skill in future lessons.

Expressive Communication

Expressive communication refers to the way your child interacts with those around him to fulfill his needs, share his thoughts and engage socially with others. Although speech is the most common form of expressive communication, many children who have difficulty with speech can learn to use alternative methods of expressive communication such as sign language, PECS, and communication apps.

Expressive communication is made up of many pieces including:

- Requesting. In ABA, we call this manding
- Spontaneous vocal behavior which refers to speech sounds or words your child says on his own
- Labeling. In ABA, we call this tacting
- And responding to your communication or that of someone else. In ABA, we call this intraverbals

Social Skills

Social skills are a highly complex group of skills that involve communication, imitation, and play skills. All of these pieces include initiating interactions, responding to peers and sustaining interactions.

Listener Skills

Listener skills involve your child responding physically to something you say. These skills include following explicit, simple directions such as "give me the stick" and responding to complex directions such as "give me something that is brown and fell from a tree."

Imitation Skills

Imitation skills are critical because they help your child learn new skills simply by watching those around him and doing what they do. These skills include motor imitation where your child physically imitates your movements and vocal imitation where your child imitates the speech sounds and words you make.

Life Skills

Life skills incorporate a broad range of skills needed for independent living as an adult. These include self-care tasks, shopping and money, and household chores among many others.

TYPES OF SKILLS CONT.

Play Skills

Play is an important part of your child's life. Children learn through play. Play also gives your child a constructive way to occupy her time and interact with her peers. Play consists of both independent and social play skills. Each of these categories include concrete play such as completing a shape sorter and abstract play such as pretend play.

Academic Skills

Academic skills help your child encounter success at school and prepare him for employment as an adult. These skills include reading, writing, math, and group skills such as sitting at a table, walking in line, or learning from group instruction.

WHICH SKILLS SEEMS EASIEST FOR YOU? WHICH SEEM THE HARDEST?

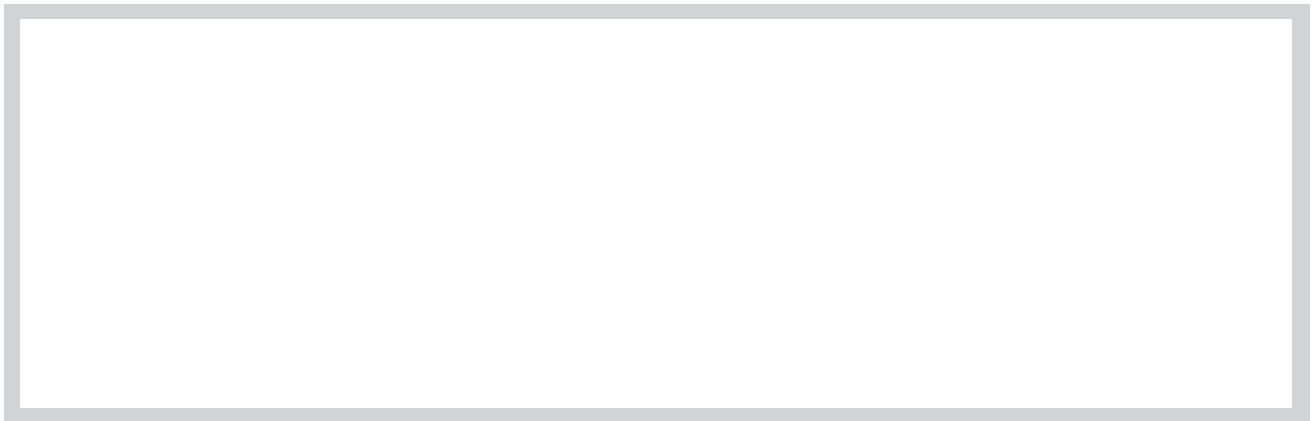


YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT OR CAREGIVER

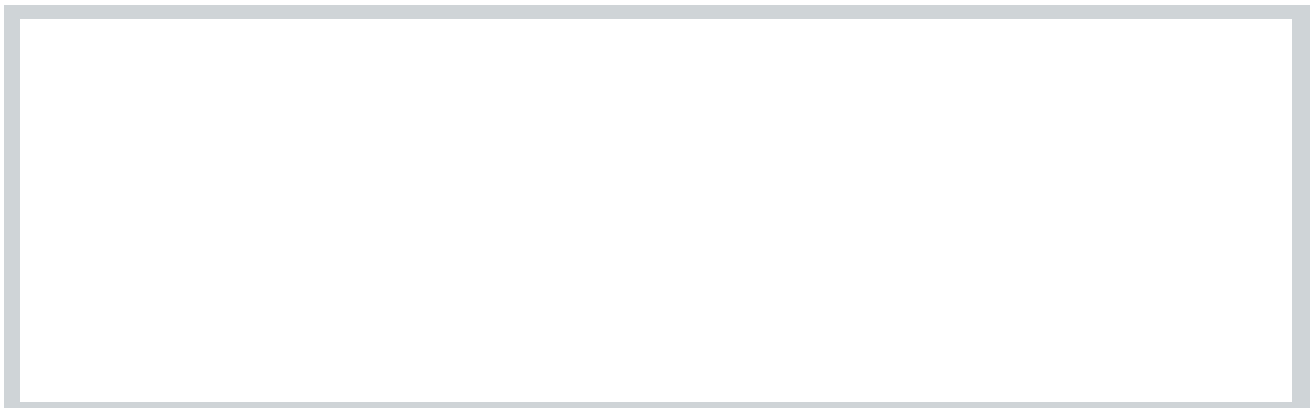
As a parent or caregiver of a child with autism, your role is critical. By participating in this training, you are opening doors for your child and helping him reach his full potential. You don't need to become a BCBA or an RBT. Simply walk through each step of the training and you will guide your child on the path to success. You can do this!

Often it's easy to get caught up in your child's challenges and struggles. Take a minute here to really think about his strengths. Often traits that might be considered "challenging" can be reframed as a strength. For example, a strong-willed child might be considered difficult, or he may be viewed as true to himself. Once you've listed your child's strengths, take a minute to also consider his greatest needs.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHILD'S GREATEST STRENGTHS?



WHAT ARE YOUR CHILD'S GREATEST NEEDS?



INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING NEW SKILLS

Ben is a hardworking, single father. He's worried about his son Travis who was diagnosed with autism 2 years ago when he was 4. Travis has 2 older brothers who were playing sports and doing homework and chores by the time they were Travis' age, but Travis spends most of his day watching videos on his tablet or pacing the floor. Ben does a lot of things for Travis like pouring his drink and helping him get dressed because he isn't sure what Travis is actually able to do for himself.

Without planning to, Ben has encouraged Travis to become dependent on him for nearly everything.

Ben learned from a BCBA about different assessments available to help him figure out what Travis could do and what skills he needed to learn. The BCBA recommended using the VB-MAPP to get started. Ben learned that the VB-MAPP broke complicated skills such as communication and play into smaller skills to make them easier for Ben to teach and easier for Travis to learn. The assessment used terminology that Ben didn't understand, but the BCBA helped him learn what those words meant. Then she showed him how to test to see if Travis had a skill or not.

Ben started with the areas of play, listener and social skills because he understood those areas best. He took some time to figure out the language the other areas used and eventually completed the whole assessment. Through the assessment, Ben was able to see that Travis had strong matching and manding skills, but he needed more help in the areas of play and social skills.

Ben now feels confident about which skills to teach Travis to help him become more independent. He still feels a little lost in how to teach these skills, but he has begun to expect Travis to do some chores around the house including sorting the silverware from the dishwasher and matching socks from the laundry since Ben knows that Travis has strong matching skills.

Although it might sound complicated, it's a simple process when you take it one step at a time. Learning what your child can do helps you encourage independence which in turn allows your child to have confidence and a feeling of accomplishment.

Identifying Skill Deficits Assignment

What are your child's greatest areas of need? Think about what you want your child to learn in each of the areas of skill development. Write your answers below.

Expressive Communication

1 _____

2 _____

Listener Skills

1 _____

2 _____

Imitation Skills

1 _____

2 _____

Play Skills

1 _____

2 _____

Social Skills

1 _____

2 _____

Life Skills

1 _____

2 _____

Academics

1 _____

2 _____

Other

1 _____

2 _____

Introduction to Teaching New Skills Quiz

1. Asking your child to “give me something brown that fell from a tree” is an example of what type of skill?
 - A. Listener skills
 - B. Expressive communication
 - C. Imitation
 - D. Play
2. When assessing skill deficits, teaching your child to ask for the things he wants fits into which category?
 - A. Listener skills
 - B. Expressive communication
 - C. Imitation
 - D. Play
3. Skill deficits lead to (select all that apply):
 - A. Dependence on adults
 - B. Laziness
 - C. Challenging behavior
 - D. Lack of motivation
4. Teaching your child to put a pot on his head and pretend it’s a drum is an example of which type of skill?
 - A. Listener skills
 - B. Expressive communication
 - C. Imitation
 - D. Play
5. Assessments help you determine which skills you should teach your child.
 - A. True
 - B. False

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION WHEN TEACHING NEW SKILLS

GOAL

Understand how motivation and reinforcement impact the acquisition of new skills. Learn what a reinforcer is and why it's important to your child's success.

BACKGROUND

Think about why you do some of the things you do. Why do you go to work each day? Is it for the love of your job? Even if you do love aspects of your job, it's a rare individual who loves his job so much that he would do it without receiving a paycheck.

Your child also needs a paycheck when you want him to do something he wouldn't choose to do on his own. He won't go to the bank to cash it, you have to use a currency that's valuable to him. It's unlikely that money holds the same value for your child as it does for you. She probably prefers something a bit more tangible such as a video, toy, game or a favorite snack.

YOUR CHILD NEEDS A PAYCHECK THAT'S MEANINGFUL TO HIM

What would you do if you showed up to work one day and your boss told you he decided that this week, instead of your usual pay, he would give you apples. Apples are a healthy snack and as they say "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." And besides, if you stay healthy, you can work more. How long would you continue to show up at work? If you're honest, you probably wouldn't let him finish the last sentence before you walked out the door.

Your child feels the same way when you try to encourage him to learn a new skill, offering him praise or a sticker in return. Those things, although great for some, are not his currency. You have to find the items, activities, and interactions that drive him to want to do what you're teaching him to do. In ABA we call these reinforcers.

GIVING YOUR CHILD WHAT HE WANTS

Parents commonly give their children the things they know they want. This happens for a variety of reasons:

- ✓ They want their kids to be happy and even see it as their job to make them happy. This starts in infancy. When the baby cries, parents feed, change and comfort their child. As the baby grows into a toddler then a preschooler, there's no point where the parent receives some sort of sign saying it's time to put their child to work.
- ✓ When the kids have what they want, everyone is happy.
- ✓ Parents work hard and need a break. If the kids have what they want, they are usually occupied and the parents can catch their breath.

All this becomes even more true and profound when their child has a disability such as autism.

- ✓ Many parents don't know for sure what their child is capable of so they hesitate to place demands and give free access to what their child enjoys.
- ✓ Their child's responses become even more dramatic if they don't have what they want.
- ✓ They feel guilty that their child is struggling and want to do whatever they can to make life easier for them.

All of these things perpetuate parents doing more for their child than is necessary and allowing their child to have what he wants. This does not make them bad parents, just unsupported.

To teach a child to complete a task, engage in an activity or even communicate, what's the one thing that child needs more than anything else?

Motivation!

IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION

REINFORCERS

What motivates your child?

Without motivation, your child has no reason to do anything other than what he already does. This makes him no different than you or I.

Once you find those reinforcers, you have to guard them carefully. Think of it this way: If you had a money tree in your back yard that produced a million dollars a day, would you go to work tomorrow? What if your boss offered to pay you a million dollars a day? What if he added praise on top of that? You might choose to do parts of your job you enjoy and find fulfilling, but you're not going to do everything he wants you to do.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR CHILD?



FREE ACCESS

Does your child have free access to reinforcers?

When your child has free access to the reinforcers he values the most, he has that money tree in his back yard. There is no reason for him to go to work. He will get what he wants whether he completes his "job" or not.

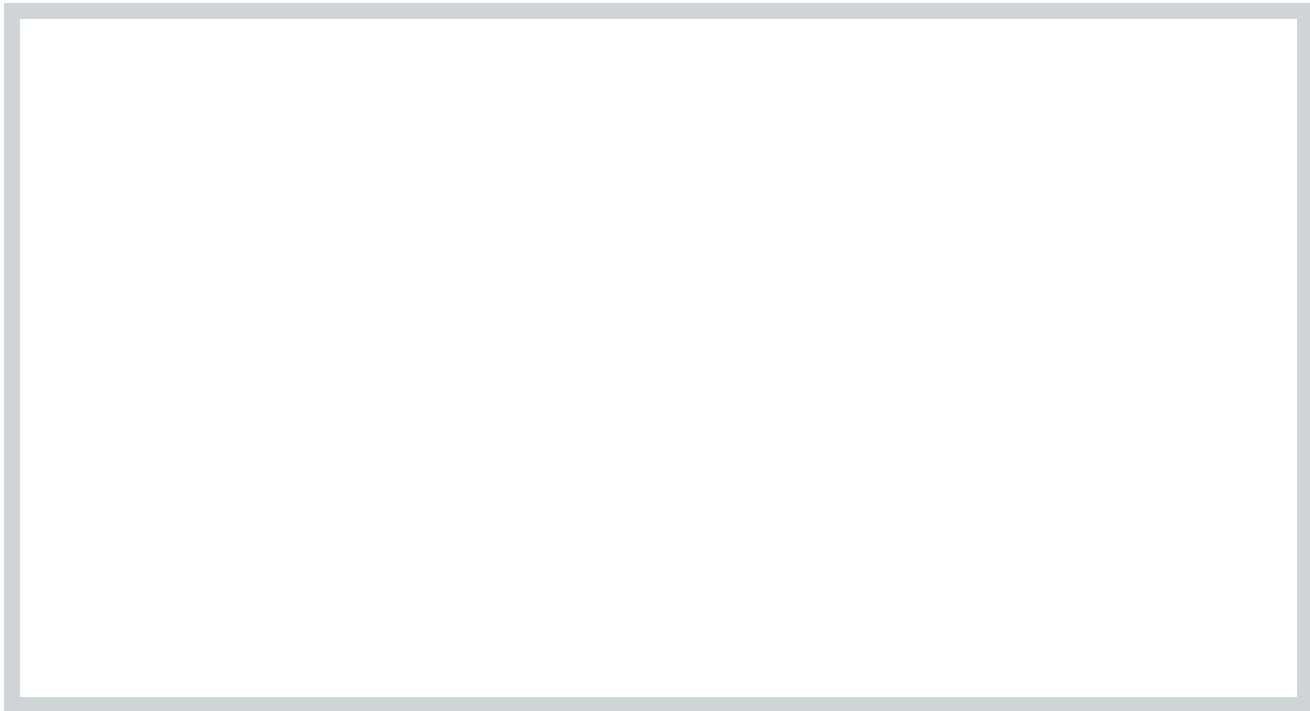
FINDING EFFECTIVE REINFORCERS

Choice has been identified as an successful way to find effective reinforcers. Watch your child and see how she reacts to different reinforcers you offer her. Reinforcers are likely to change in their effectiveness over time. Their effectiveness can also be influenced by:

- ✓ Other activities going on around them (i.e. siblings watching TV, a dog running around the yard, etc.)
- ✓ Time of day (i.e. before or after a meal, just before bedtime, etc.)
- ✓ Amount of effort already expended in the day (i.e. just getting home from school or therapy)

Keep these factors in mind when deciding what to offer your child as a reinforcer. Offer her a choice between 2 different items (i.e. strawberries and a video). If she can speak, she might tell you what she wants. If she can't speak, watch for her to reach for the item she wants.

WHAT MIGHT IMPACT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR REINFORCERS?



Understanding Motivation Assignment

Make a list of your child's favorite things. Remember, you will need to limit access to these things. If you can't limit access, don't include it on the list.

Foods

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Toys

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Activities

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Electronics

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

The Importance of Motivation When Teaching New Skills Quiz

1. The money tree refers to:
 - A. Free access to potential reinforcers
 - B. Plentiful rewards for learning new skills
 - C. High motivation to complete tasks
 - D. Powerful reinforcers
2. When a child has unlimited access to everything they want, what happens to motivation?
 - A. It increases
 - B. It decreases
 - C. It stays the same
3. What's the one thing a child needs more than anything else when teaching new skills?
 - A. Listener skills
 - B. Expressive communication
 - C. Motivation
 - D. Prerequisite skills
4. Everyone is motivated by the same things.
 - A. True
 - B. False
5. Objects, activities and interactions that motivate someone to do something are called:
 - A. Prizes
 - B. Tokens
 - C. Motivators
 - D. Reinforcers

BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD

GOAL

You might already feel like you have a strong relationship with your child, but in this lesson you'll take this a step further.

Learn how to create a collaborative relationship with your child.

BACKGROUND

As a parent you have many roles when interacting with your child. At any given point you may be a nurse, a chef, a taxi driver, or even a teacher. This lesson primarily focuses on this role of a teacher, but you won't necessarily learn strategies that classroom teachers use. You will learn to identify what motivates your child and how he learns best.

BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP

As you begin your journey to learn how to teach your child, the first step is to help your child view your teaching as something positive. Even if your child doesn't speak or know how to interact with those around him yet, you can build a collaborative relationship with him.

This empowers your child and puts him in the driver's seat of his own learning.

CREATING A PLAN

CREATE A NEW RELATIONSHIP

When starting out with a plan to teach your child, the first step is to shift your relationship with him.

Even if you already have a positive, loving relationship with your child, as you step into the role of teacher, you want your child to see you as the giver of all good things. You want him running to you, excited to learn what you have to teach. You might hear ABA professionals use terms like rapport, instructional control or pairing.

These terms just mean that your child associates you, and learning, with the things that he likes best. This is the beginning of your collaborative relationship with your child. Together you will work toward a life of happiness and independence for your child.

CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT

To begin building a collaborative relationship, you must make some adjustments to the environment.

Collect your child's favorite items and go to where he likes to play. Make sure there aren't other things in the environment he will want to play with. The goal is to get him to come over to you to get access to the things you have, rather than simply finding them around the room.

When he shows interest in any of the items you have, give him the item. Don't ask him to do anything at all, just hand it over. Model language by saying the word as you hand it over, but don't ask him to repeat it. He can have any of the items as long as he gets it from you and stays near you while he has it. If he starts to move away, gently remove the item and allow him to go.

WHERE DOES YOUR CHILD LIKE TO PLAY?

LET YOUR CHILD COME TO YOU

Spend as much time as you can hanging out with your child's favorite things, waiting for him to approach you. When he approaches you, engage with him in any way that he likes while handing over the object he wants. Do this in different places and continue until he runs up to you rather than the toys.

When you're ready to begin teaching, go to a place he enjoys and just play with him for several minutes. Be silly and engage with him in any way that he enjoys. Do this any time you want to teach new skills or when you need to ask him to do something he might see as hard. Remind him that you are the one who gives him all the things he likes and you're the one who makes things fun. Enjoy your collaborative relationship, but don't take it for granted. Keep being the source of fun and excitement for your child as you work together to help him develop into an independent, happy adult.

LIST THE ITEMS AND ACTIVITIES YOUR CHILD ENJOYS:



Collaborative Relationship Assignment

Your relationship with your child has a significant impact on your ability to teach him new skills.

Make a list of activities that he enjoys engaging in with you like blowing bubbles, swinging or being tickled. Make another list of toys or objects that he enjoys that you can give him access to.

Activities

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

Toys or Objects

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

Building a Collaborative Relationship with Your Child Quiz

1. When building a collaborative relationship with your child you should:
 - A. Avoid demands and give him access to the things he likes best
 - B. Engage with your child during his favorite activities
 - C. Sit with his favorite items so he comes up to you to get them
 - D. All of the above
2. You should make sure that your child's favorite items are spread around the room so he can be positively engaged when you're trying to build a collaborative relationship.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. You should spend a few minutes engaged in some of your child's favorite activities before trying to teach him new skills.
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. Rapport, instructional control, and pairing mean:
 - A. He's happy to see you when you get home
 - B. Your child associates you and learning with getting the things he likes best
 - C. He listens and follows all of your directions
 - D. He's willing to sit at the table and work for at least 15 minutes
5. If you already have a positive, loving relationship with your child, you can immediately jump in to teaching new skills.
 - A. True
 - B. False

Answer Key

Introduction to Teaching New Skills Answers

1. Asking your child to “give me something brown that fell from a tree” is an example of what type of skill?
 - A. Listener skills

2. When assessing skill deficits, teaching your child to ask for the things he wants fits into which category?
 - B. Expressive communication

3. Skill deficits lead to:
 - A. Dependence on adults
 - C. Challenging behavior

4. Teaching your child to put a pot on his head and pretend it’s a drum is an example of which type of skill?
 - D. Play

5. Assessments help you determine which skills you should teach your child.
 - A. True

The Importance of Motivation When Teaching New Skills Answers

1. The money tree refers to:
 - A. Free access to potential reinforcers

2. When a child has unlimited access to everything they want, what happens to motivation?
 - B. It decreases

3. What's the one thing a child needs more than anything else when teaching new skills?
 - C. Motivation

4. Everyone is motivated by the same things.
 - B. False

5. Objects, activities and interactions that motivate someone to do something are called:
 - D. Reinforcers

Building a Collaborative Relationship with Your Child

Answers

1. When building a collaborative relationship with your child you should:
D. All of the above
2. You should make sure that your child's favorite items are spread around the room so he can be positively engaged when you're trying to build a collaborative relationship.
B. False
3. You should spend a few minutes engaged in some of your child's favorite activities before trying to teach him new skills.
A. True
4. Rapport, instructional control, and pairing mean:
AB. Your child associates you and learning with getting the things he likes best
5. If you already have a positive, loving relationship with your child, you can immediately jump in to teaching new skills.
B. False

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ABOUT MASTER ABA

While everyone who enters the ABA field does so with the best of intentions, the application of these strategies are sometimes still used to make individuals with autism appear “normal.” At Master ABA we take a different approach. We celebrate all individuals as neurodiverse and teach professionals how to use these techniques to teach critical skills while maintaining the rights of the individual.

Applied Behavior Analysis remains the best way to help those with autism. As professionals in the field, we need to acknowledge and respect those who fear ABA, while helping them understand the benefits of these strategies. Together we can ensure Applied Behavior Analysis is used in a way that is ethical and respectful of the individual. We can be the voice of change and encourage others to follow suit.

Amelia Dalphonse is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who earned her Master's in ABA from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She has been working with children since 1996, and specifically with children with autism since 2009. Her passion is helping children with autism and their families meet their full potential.

Her twin sister, Dianna Kelly, has joined her in her quest to help autistic children by changing the field of Applied Behavior Analysis. She is committed to supporting the rights of children and fighting for acceptance of all individuals.

Together Amelia and Dianna are leading a tribe of ABA Masters to advocate for the autistic community.