



Function-Based Interventions

Children engage in millions of different behaviors each day from crying to hugging to running away from someone to engage in a game of chase or darting away to avoid certain activities.

There's a purpose for every behavior and the function falls into four main categories (**SEAT**):

- S**ensory
- E**scape task or environment
- Gain **A**ttention
- T**angible

If your child is being seen by a behavior specialist, he or she likely has an FBA (i.e., Functional Behavioral Assessment). FBAs typically lists concerning behaviors, the function of behavior, and intervention strategies.

The table below offers possible intervention strategies based on the function of problem behaviors.

Function of Behavior	Intervention Strategy	Examples
Sensory	Enrich environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer stimulating and engaging activities in the environment (e.g., sensory bins or fake grass mats)
	Provide alternative sensory reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer tactile reinforce (e.g., trampoline) to child seeking tactile reinforcement, or audio reinforce (e.g., musical toys) to child seeking auditory reinforcement
Escape Task or Environment	Alter length of task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorten the activity • Provide frequent breaks



Modify mode of task completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change medium/material (e.g., use electronic book instead of paper book)
Use behavioral momentum, task dispersal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with easier requests and increase the level of difficulty
Increase child preference or interest in activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include child's hobbies into intervention (e.g., trains for matching, Legos for sorting colors, etc.)
Increase predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide cues for change of activities (e.g., visual schedule, timer, verbal warnings, etc.)
Use functional or relevant activities for the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide valued-outcome activities (e.g., string fruit loops instead of beads)
Adjust demand difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer easier tasks Decrease amount of work
Non-contingent escape (NCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide breaks from activities on time-based schedule
Modify instructional delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify voice
Offer choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow child to choose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task to complete Order of tasks to complete Materials to use When to complete task Where to complete task



	Differential negative reinforcement of zero rates of responding (DNRO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With whom to complete task ● Provide breaks when problem behavior has not occurred for a specific period of time and place the behavior on extinction
	Differential negative reinforcement of alternative behavior (DNRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow a break from instruction based on an alternative appropriate response (e.g., compliance) while replacing problem behavior on extinction
	Extinction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ignore problem behavior and continue presenting the task regardless of problem behavior
Gain Attention	Schedule adult/peer attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adult works 1:1 with the child ● Provide periodic attention ● Increase positive interactions with child ● Provide increased positive reinforcement/praise for appropriate behavior
	Increase proximity to child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrange seating ● Periodically move around the room
	Provide preferred activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assign a more preferred activity when adult is occupied and cannot provide attention



<p>Tangible</p>	<p>Increase accessibility</p> <p>Schedule a transitional activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put highly preferred items within the child’s reach • Schedule a moderately preferred activity between highly preferred and highly non-preferred activities (e.g., music on the tablet)
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Adapted from National Center on Intensive Intervention (2013) *Handout 3c: A-B-C Report Form*, part of *Using FBA for Diagnostic Assessment in Behavior*.

References

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