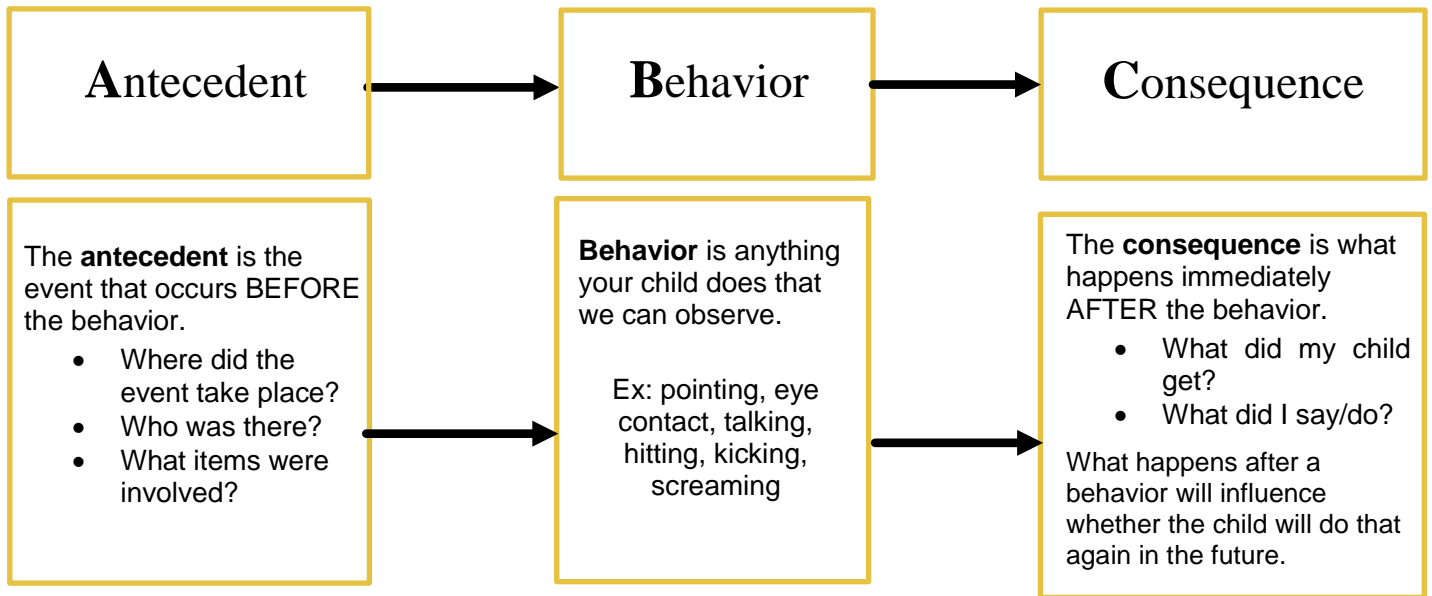


ABCs of Behavior and Learning



Children often engage in behavior to communicate their wants and needs. All behavior is functional and occurs for a reason. There are two main functions of behavior: **Access** and **Escape**.

- Behavior occurs:
- To ACCESS **Attention/Tangible** ⇒ “Look at me/play with me!” or “I want that item”
 - To ACCESS **Self-Stimulation or Sensory Input** ⇒ “This makes me feel good!”
 - To ESCAPE **Attention/Demand** ⇒ “I don’t want to do that.” Or “I don’t want to play with you”
 - To ESCAPE **Sensory Input** ⇒ “I don’t like how that feels/sounds.”

To determine why a behavior occurs, we often have to look at the patterns of events that occur immediately before and after the behavior. Let’s look at some **examples**:

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Reason for behavior
Mom is talking to a friend	Child hits and pinches Mom	Mom stops talking to her friend and tells child to wait	Access Attention
Dad asks child to clean up toys	Child runs out of the room	Dad puts child in time out and Mom cleans up toys	Escape Activity
Mom puts away child’s favorite toy	Child cries uncontrollably	Mom gives toy back; child settles down	Access Tangible

These antecedents and consequences are going to impact your child’s behavior over time. After you have identified the reason for your child’s behavior, begin replacing challenging behavior with appropriate behavior using reinforcement. (See: *How to Use Rewards to Increase Appropriate Behavior*)