

FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

BREAKING DOWN THE "WHY"



Access to tangibles

Behavior may be reinforced (made more likely in the future) by access to objects or preferred activities.

Examples:

- Pressing TV remote buttons to change channel
- Saying "Please" to receive a toy
- Taking a phone from a sibling to play a game



Social Attention

Behavior may be reinforced (made more likely in the future) by attention from others.

Examples:

- Joke followed by peers laughing
- Pushing a sibling followed by a reprimand
- Crying followed by soothing from parent



Escape

Behavior may be reinforced (made more likely in the future) by ending a set of non-preferred circumstances.

Example:

- Running away while being scolded
- Tearing up homework so it can no longer be completed
- Asking for a break from chores



Automatic

Behavior may produce its own reinforcement (be made more likely in the future) without access to anything outside the person's own body.

Example:

- Scratching an itch removes uncomfortable sensation
- Flapping hands produces a preferred physical sensation



General Information

Both desirable and undesirable behavior are learned through experiences and interactions with our physical environment. Understanding function is important because it guides the decision making process when designing interventions for an individual. Interventions based on the function of target behavior are more effective than interventions without concern for function.

For more information on behavior analysis, including parent resources:

Visit: learningbehavioranalysis.com



ABA terms explained