Prevent Interventions

Universal Prevent Practices for All Children

1. "Provide high rates of positive attention (5:1 ratio   Positive: Negative)"
2. "Establish and Maintain Predictable daily schedules"
3. "Include Consistent Patterns of Activities within Daily Routines –routines within a routine"
4. "Direct Teaching of Behavioral Expectations within the contexts of the daily routine"
5. "Direct Teaching of peer-related social skills"

Individualized Prevent Intervention Strategies

1. **"Provide Choices**: Allows child to select choices and have some control over what happens. Appropriate when challenging behavior (CB) occurs when asking child to do something that he finds disagreeable, when giving a direction, during transitions, oe when a child says "no" to everything or refuses what is asked of him. Offer choices during routines, especially before a difficult or nonpreferred routine or transition. Examples: Choose bubbles or no bubbles during bath, where to sit at mealtimes, what toy to take in the car, movement or song to sing during transition" (hop on one foot to bathroom).

2. **"Intersperse Difficult or Non-preferred Tasks with Easy or Preferred Tasks:** Reduces CB by mixing up preferred or easy tasks with more difficult/nonpreferred tasks, making overall activity more pleasant and providing multiple opportunities for child to succeed. Useful when child avoids learning new skill, does not respond well to failure, has limited skills and/or interests, or takes a long time to learn new skills. Identify routines/skills that are challenging as well as routines/skills that are strengths or reinforcing for the child. Sprinkle in preferred activities with non-preferred, i.e. change the order of the bedtime routine so that the nonpreferred task (i.e. brushing teeth) is interspersed with preferred ones, i.e. go to the bathroom, put on pajamas, brush teeth, read a bedtime story."

3. **"Embed Preferences into Activities:** May increase child's interest and engagement in activity, which can decrease CB. Useful when CB occurs when child is asked to perform nonpreferred activity, when transitioning to or beginning an activity, when an activity is not an option, during certain times of the day, when parental attention is limited, or when child refuses to participate in the routine. i.e. Allow child to bring her favorite stuffed animal during a difficult process (getting ready for school), Mom sings favorite songs to child (preferred activity) as she brushes her teeth (non-preferred activity)."

4. **"Enhancing Predictability with Schedules.** Purposefully plan a routine or a transition so child can understand and follow activity sequences. Useful during routines and transitions. Materials for a visual schedule should be prepared and readily available, and if a timer is used for transition warnings, it should be available. Useful when CB occurs around transitions, when following the daily routine, during specific times of the day, when a child is given a direction, when preferred activity ends or at beginning or nonpreferred activity, or when there is change in schedule. i.e. Show visual schedule of all components of bedtime routine or getting in the car to run errands. Visual schedules or timer should be portable to use in the community as well."

5. **"Use Timers and other Visual or Auditory Supports for Added information or Structure.** Gives child added support to follow direction. Useful when child exhibits CB following daily routines, when given direction, during transitions to or before a nonpreferred activity, or when preferred activity ends. i.e. Use of a stop sign when access to activity is not allowed, set the timer to indicate duration of an activity, such as sitting at the table during lunch, or getting dressed in the morning, singing clean up song when clean up activity begins."

Reference: Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families**,** by Dunlap, Strain, Lee, Joseph, Vatland & Fox. Brooks Publishing, 2017

6. **"Alter Physical Arrangement of the Environment or Activity Area.** Includes changing a seating arrangement, turning off TV, putting up baby gate, and making items more accessible (or less accessible) to promote appropriate behavior. If the environment makes expectations clear, it reduces number of directions or commands which can reduce number of power struggles with adults, which could lead to less challenging behavior. i.e. If child demonstrates CB while playing with a particular toy, remove toy from play area until the family can teach the child the skills needed to play with the toy."

7. **"Remove Triggers for Challenging Behavior.** Change the antecedent stimulus to change the behavior. Useful if child's CB occurs **consistently** around specific people, or particular activities, or when consistent words or phrases are used. i.e. If CB occurs when particular food is offered, stop offering that food, or find a substitute food. If CB occurs when you say "time to clean up", start using a bell to signal clean up, or put music on during clean up, or sing clean up song. If CB occurs when parent says "time for diaper change", have parent hand the child the wipes when it is time to change his diaper, without saying anything."

8. **"Reduce Distractions or Competing Events or Materials.** This may increase child's ability to get things done and to learn new skills, which lowers frustration level. Often seen as a temporary strategy. Removing distractions can sometimes trigger CB. Also, distractions can limit the CB at times by helping the child shift focus. Examples of removing distractions when CB occurs include limiting TV time during morning routine until AFTER all other steps are completed (breakfast, get dressed, brush teeth) so as not to slow down routine. Another example is if child is distracted by computer games, limiting computer game time to a specific time during the day, and during the computer game time, limit demands on the child".

9. **"Modify what is Explicitly asked of the Child.** Includes changing the way commands or requests are worded and made to the child so that the child knows exactly what is expected of him. Useful when CB occurs when child requires a lot of prompts, when adults have to repeat directions over and over again, or when child is unclear about expectations. i.e. Don't word requests as a question, such as "could you put your dirty bowl in the sink?" which implies the child has a choice. When child takes a toy car from his sister, tell child what they can say instead, such as "Say, 'Can I have the car?'" Or, tell child exactly what is expected ahead of time, i.e. "When we get inside, put your shoes in the closet and put your lunchbox on the kitchen counter". "

10. **"Change how Instructions are Delivered.** Try a variety of ways to deliver instructions to avoid CB. Useful when CB occurs when transitioning to or during a non-preferred activity, when an activity is not an option, when there's limited parent attention to child, or when child refuses to participate. i.e. Child struggles getting dressed every morning. Mom says she is going to tickle her after each clothing item is put on, which child loves. After dressing routine is complete Mom tickles her all over. Other examples: Use different types of voices, change tone of voice, present instructions as a request versus a demand, sing the instructions."

11. **"Provide a Warning to Inform the Child of Follow-up Activities.** By providing child with a warning that the nonpreferred activity or routine is about to end, it reduces the child's uncertainty regarding the length of time that the child will have to remain engaged in the routine (Johnston & Reichle, 1993) Useful when child's CB is maintained by escape, or when CB occurs during an extended, lengthy, or nonpreferred activity, or when child avoids a particular task/routine. i.e. "We are almost done, just 5 more seconds of brushing teeth"."

12. **"Use Scripted Social Stories to Describe Problematic Situations and Potential Solutions.** Prepares child for an activity by providing a social script for what might occur and what is expected of the child. Write script for child including the events and expectations that are likely to occur. Useful when CB occur during specific activities, routines or in specific settings. Stories should be illustrated with visuals, and placed in a book format, and read to child prior to engaging in activity. "We will sit down and wait for someone to take our order and bring our food.""

Teach Strategies

**Inherent in all teaching strategies is the need to teach the caregivers how to teach their child.

1. **"Teach appropriate ways to communicate (Functional Communication Training- FCT):** Identify the function or purpose of the Challenging Behavior (CB) and teach the child a more appropriate way to communicate that serves the same function or purpose." Example: Child hits another child to get a toy. "New communicative method to be taught: speech, pictures, gestures, sign language, technology-aided communication , or a combination of these methods to ask for a toy." We need to honor the more appropriate communication method for the child to get his wants and needs met. i.e. when he asks "my turn please" he needs to get a turn with the toy.

   Steps to implementation:
   a) "Identify function of behavior": Usually the function is to get something or get rid of something.
   b) "Identify a desirable way for the child to communicate the same message as the challenging behavior, but in a more appropriate way. Choose a communication behavior that the child can already do or can quickly learn. The replacement communication behavior must be conspicuous enough to be noticed when child uses it."
   c) "Identify situations where challenging behaviors occur to communicate and that afford practice opportunities for child to use new replacement behaviors, i.e. asking for a toy. Arrange for many practice opportunities throughout the day."
   d) "Try to anticipate when challenging behavior might occur and prompt child to use replacement behaviors. Be sure to honor the child's request."
   e) "Plan for multiple opportunities to practice this new communicative behavior throughout the day, and ensure that every time the child uses it that it "works". (he gets what he wants)"
   f) "If the replacement behavior is to be used with a peer, sibling, etc, it is important that the adult facilitate the communication and that the peer or sibling responds positively, so that the new communication behavior "works" every time (during the learning phase). "
   g) "As the child learns to use the replacement communication behavior instead of the CB, gradually remove adult assistance (prompts) so that child can start to use the new behavior on his own. (don't remove the prompts too quickly)."

2. **"Teach Social Skills:** Teach skills that help the child interact effectively with peers and adults, such as sharing, taking turns, waiting, identifying emotions, following rules, requesting, initiating and/or sustaining interaction, and cooperating with others. Teach social skills if challenging behaviors occur in the context of peer or adult interaction. Social skills are instrumental for children in getting their needs met, and if a child can meet his or her needs through the use of good social skills, then there may be little need for challenging behaviors". Dunlap, et al, p 198.

   Steps for implementation:
   a) "Identify the specific social skill target for instruction. Precisely define the skill, i.e. child will ask the adult or peer to take a turn."
   b) "Identify when you might give the child learning opportunities within routines and activities. Teaching should occur during activities/routines where challenging behavior is not likely to occur, in order to afford as many practice opportunities as possible during activities/routines that are often associated with challenging behaviors."

c) "Identify **how** the skill will be taught. i.e. Most to least or least to most prompting. Use a systematic instructional procedure to ensure the child will be successful in using the skill, i.e. begin with full assistance and fade prompts. Always ensure success while child is learning new skill. "
Strategies: "Teach the new social skills during playtime with other children or playtime with parent (taking turns and sharing) or during simple chores/activities around the house, i.e. putting laundry in hamper. Extra reinforcement may be needed when child started to use new skills, as they may not be as effective at first. i.e. asking for a turn with a toy may not be as effective as grabbing the toy, so added praise or playtime may be given."
Child needs many opportunities to practice new skills, and ongoing recognition when using new skills.

3. **"Teach Self Monitoring**: Teach child to indicate or notice when the challenging behavior occurs, and then have adults provide rewards for changes in the designated behavior as well as for successful self-monitoring. Research shows that when children observe own behavior, behavior tends to improve. Most appropriately used for older children (4-5 y.o) but some younger children may benefit. "
   a) "Define positive targeted behavior – any behavior important to the child that you want to increase, "i.e. staying in the chair during lunchtime.
   b) "Identify effective rewards."
   c) "Determine the period during which child will use the self-monitoring strategy", i.e. staying in chair for 10 minutes during lunchtime routine.
   d) "Determine how the child will observe and monitor the behavior: i.e. respond to adult question", did you stay in your chair?" with yes or no and when child can respond correctly, move toward sticker chart for staying in chair.
   e) "Teach child to self-monitor and use self-monitoring device", i.e. timer and sticker chart. Child/Adult sets timer for 10 minutes, and child gives himself a sticker when achieves sitting at lunch for 10 minutes. Fade prompts.
   f) "Gradually reduce the amount of parental assistance. Provide reinforcement for both accurate self-monitoring and for desired improvements in the target behavior."

   "Teaching periods should be short and frequent. Tasks may be broken up into smaller component parts for younger children and children with cognitive delays", i.e. give rewards for sitting on the chair for any amount of time at first.

4. **"Tolerate Delay of Reinforcement**: Purposefully teach a child how to wait for reinforcement or gratification, such as through use of timers, counting down wait time, and singing a song to measure wait time. Initial wait times should be short, then gradually extended as child becomes better at waiting longer. Requires knowledge of child's current ability to wait. Use observation to help gauge what the current wait time is".
   "Set the child up for success – begin with an achievable wait time, allow a visual countdown of remaining wait times, use positive praise, and consistently allow immediate access to preferred activity when the wait time has ended."
   <u>Teaching methodology for increasing wait times</u>
   a) "Discuss with child that waiting can be difficult"
   b) "Develop a planned visual sequence for waiting, i.e. electronic or sand timer"
   c) "Directly teach child about how the timer works – when time runs out it will be your turn."
   d) "Practice waiting and using the timer with the child"

e) "Set up specific practice opportunities for child to practice using the timer and waiting"

f) "Give praise (or other rewards) for waiting"

g) "Duration of the wait times should be gradually extended".

"Situations offering practice opportunities are turn-taking when playing a game with siblings in which waiting for your turn is part of the game, during art projects where waiting is required because sharing of certain supplies is necessary, and using a timer to wait for a caregiver's attention. Remember, start with short wait times, ensure structure so child can see a clear beginning and end to the delay, make sure reinforcement is specifically positive for each individual child, and take into consideration individual disabilities or learning differences when setting expectations. Planned and structured practice opportunities are essential, where immediate, meaningful, and consistent rewards for waiting are provided."

5. **"Teach Independence with Visual Schedules:** Directly teach the child to use schedules to increase independence. This helps the child to understand and predict the sequence of events within and individual routine or during a portion of the day. As a teach strategy instruction to the child must be provided with the goal of the child performing a task independently and successfully."
   a. "Observe the child so you can identify the current level of skill and child's learning style. "
   b. "Identify the skill that will be taught to assist the child in self-management"
   c. "Introduce the strategy and teach the child the steps"
   d. "Facilitate the use of the visual schedule with prompts such as "What's next?""
   e. "Fade prompts as soon as child demonstrates that the skills have been learned".
   f. **"Provide reinforcement of success. "**

6. **"Teach Active Participation:** Directly teach child to actively participate in a specified routine or activity. Goal is for the child to participate as independently as possible, which may require breaking down the routine into more manageable steps. Teaching independence in using visual supports may be helpful in strengthening the child's expectations for the routine or activity."

   Steps for Implementation
   a. "Identify the target routine or activity for instruction." Focus on one at first, build from there.
   b. "Identify specific steps for the routine."
   c. "Identify how you want the child to participate in each step of the routine. Write down the operational definition of the routine or activity (observable and measurable) of what the child will be doing for each step, so that it is clear whether or not behavior is occurring."
   d. "Identify which steps the child can and cannot do independently, to identify which steps need more direct instruction." Scaffold your teaching to the individual needs of the child and caregiver.
   e. "Determine how you will teach the individual steps to the child, either during the routine or separately from the routine." All teaching materials and the specific teaching details in how each individual step will be taught should be made available to the team to enhance consistency.
   f. "Effectively monitor progress", creating ways to detect small improvement in implementing steps.
   g. "Reinforce as much of the desirable behavior (active participation) as possible, especially in the early teaching stages. The child's effort in even trying/attempting should be reinforced initially."

Reference: Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families**,** by Dunlap, Strain, Lee, Joseph, Vatland & Fox. Brooks Publishing, 2017, pp 194 – 209.

Reinforce Strategies

1. "Identify functional reinforcer(s)"
2. "Provide reinforcer for desirable behavior"
3. "Remove reinforcement for challenging behavior"

Desirable behavior is usually socially appropriate and likely to include communication.

Steps for Implementation:

1. "Identify a functional reinforcer(s) that works for the individual child, i.e. attention from parent, activities with parent, physical affection, snacks, praise, tangibles (toy), outings, avoidance of leaving the house, avoidance of brushing teeth or a transition. Monitor the effectiveness of the reinforcer for the child, on a consistent basis, because its effectiveness can change. A selected reinforcer can only be available for the desired behavior, i.e. special toy or outing, "special" activity with parent," etc

2. "Provide reinforcer for desired behavior. It needs to be provided immediately following the desired behavior. Natural reinforcers are recommended (praise, high fives, hugs) but will need to be more powerful and tangible at first (such as stickers, food, access to a toy)."

3. "Remove reinforcement for challenging behavior. Determine what the reinforcers/consequences are for the challenging behavior. Then determine how the maintaining consequences for challenging behavior can be removed or discontinued." Make sure that the maintaining consequence **IS** available to the child for the desired behavior but **NOT** for the challenging behavior. i.e. if playing with his trucks was a maintaining consequence for throwing a tantrum, the child will only be able to play with trucks if he asks appropriately but never when he tantrums. This reduces the motivation to engage in the challenging behavior and supports the desirable behavior. It may be necessary to discuss plan with others (siblings, other adults, caregivers) so that they are not responding to challenging behavior with attention (if that is the maintaining consequence).

Things to consider:

At first, "challenging behavior sometimes gets worse before it gets better", as child tries to obtain the desired reinforcers or avoid certain activities/attention. i.e. child may tantrum longer and more vehemently for a truck when he doesn't get it right away. Include "prevent" strategies in behavior support plan to help with this.

"Child must have access to reinforcers for desirable behavior."

Reference: Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families**,** by Dunlap, Strain, Lee, Joseph, Vatland & Fox. Brooks Publishing, 2017, pp 210 - 212