**Preferred Items/High-Interest Items**

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| **Reference Articles:** |
| Using Functional Assessment and Children’s Preferences to Improve the Behavior of Young Children. Blair, Kwang-Sun C; Umbreit, John; Bos, Candace S; *Behavioral Disorders*; Feb 1999; 24; 2.A Classroom-Based Antecedent Intervention Reduces Obsessive-Repetitive Behavior in an Adolescent with Autism. Sigafoos, Jeff; Green, Vanessa A; Payne, Donna; O’Reilly, Mark F; Lancioni, Guilio E; *Clinical Case Studies*; Feb 2009; 8; 1. |
| **Function of Intervention:** |
| Escape; Attention; Tangible |
| **Description of Intervention:** |
| The use of highly preferred or high-interest items/topics embedded within an existing curriculum is proven to reduce problem behaviors, including aggression and elopement, and increase appropriate, on-task behaviors in school settings for students with both Emotional-Behavior Disorders and Autism Spectrum Disorder.  |
| **Description and Steps of intervention:** |
| 1. Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to determine if the target behavior serves an escape, attention, or access to tangibles function.
2. Identify highly reinforcing or preferred items or topics for the student through preference assessments, observations, parent interviews/questionnaires, or student interviews/questionnaires. Choose a method based on student age, level of cognitive functioning, and severity of behavior.
3. Collect baseline data on frequency or duration of behavior prior to introduction of preferred items to determine how often and for how long access should be given and how this access may vary across the school day.

B) For example, if the data indicate that the student engages in problem behavior 3 times in an hour, he might initially have access to his preferred item(s) 3 or 4 times an hour. Or, if the data show more frequent problem behavior during Math than other periods, he might have more frequent opportunities to access items during Math.1. Access to preferred or high-interest items or topics (or a choice of several items) should be provided to the student on a fixed schedule (noncontingent on behavior) in a timed break format between work sessions, incorporated into the academic tasks themselves, or as a reward immediately following appropriate behavior. Access to items may be paired with social interaction with staff or peers (for an attention function) or given in isolation (for an escape or tangible function).
2. Used effectively as both an antecedent modification (noncontingent access on a schedule) and a consequence strategy (access provided contingent of appropriate behavior), use of high-interest items/preferred topics should reduce problem behavior, especially when used in conjunction with other function-based interventions, such as verbal praise and proximity control (attention function) or self-monitoring and scheduled exercise (escape function).
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| **Examples: (if intervention looks different for Elementary vs. Middle/High or EBD vs ASD, please indicate):** |
| -For a student with EBD, younger students, or low-functioning students with ASD, student would only be able to access one preferred item at a time on a fixed schedule (noncontigent) or immediately following performance of a desired behavior (contingent), for a set amount of time. If more than one item has been found to be of high interest, items should be rotated to avoid satiation. In these cases, it would also be prudent to embed high-interest topics in curriculum throughout the school day, such as a Reading Comprehension activity featuring SpongeBob SquarePants as the protagonist, or simply a picture of Spiderman or ceiling fans on the bottom of a math worksheet. -For a student with high-functioning ASD, older students, or more emotionally stable or mature EBD students, access to a choice of two or three preferred items or topics may be provided in a break format between timed work sessions for a fixed amount of time. Students may also use self-monitoring tools or checklists to identify times of stress or challenge throughout the day, during which they might have controlled access to their highly preferred items in a designated area for a short time. |
| **Data Collection Method: (how would you take data on this intervention?)** |
| During the initial intervention implementation (4-6 weeks), frequency/duration as well as ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence) data should be collected and analyzed to determine effectiveness of intervention and to identify times of day and locations where more frequent access may be needed.Frequency or duration data should continue to be collected and analyzed to determine if number or length of behavior episodes is being reduced by access to preferred or high-interest items/topics. |
| **Links to video examples:** |
| <http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/mod_view.php?nav_id=637>You will have to create a *free* account to access this website. |
| **Important notes:** |
| -Other specific behavioral strategies which may incorporate high-interest topics, such as Power Cards and Social Stories, may be used in conjunction with this intervention to reinforce behavioral expectations while still including preferred items in as many activities as possible throughout the day. -Use of visual reminders of the topic or item of interest may be effective with younger or low-functioning students to cue them that the opportunity for reinforcement is coming soon. For example, a student who enjoys insects may carry a plastic bug in his pocket to remind him of the upcoming break or access time. |