

# Understanding behaviour

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| Background information All behaviour is communication and it is our job to try to establish what the child is trying to tell us through the behaviour that they are presenting. The behaviour that we see will be the ‘tip of the iceberg’ for what is happening for that child. By analysing the situation and trying to put positive behaviour strategies in place we can fulfil the child’s unmet needs and reduce these unwanted behaviours.  The functions of a child’s behaviour may include:  **Sensory** - because it feels good (e.g. biting, pinching, etc.)  **Escape/avoidance** - to get away from a situation or task the person finds difficult  **Attention-** to get noticed or acknowledged by others  **Tangible** - to get something they want (e.g. food, activities, etc.)  **It may also be that the child has pain or is feeling unwell but does not have a way to communicate this (e.g. biting for toothache, head banging for a headache, becoming upset at lunch time for a sore throat etc.) You should discuss any such concerns, especially if this is a new behaviour for the child, with the child’s parent as soon as possible.** |
| Strategies  * Complete an ABC chart to try to understand the function of the unwanted behaviour and see if there are any repeating patterns in situations (e.g. the behaviour always occurs at home time etc.) * A=Antecedent – what was happening before the child started to demonstrate the behaviour. This will help us to uncover any environmental or situational factors that may be affecting the child. * B=Behaviour – what exactly did the child do? Who was the behaviour aimed at, if anyone? * C= Consequence – what happened as a result of the behaviour? Was the child removed from the situation? If so, could this have been the function of the child’s behaviour (Escape)? Did an adult have a 1-to-1 discussion with the child? Again, could this have been the function of the child’s behaviour (Attention)? * Once you have looked at whether there are similarities or patterns in incidents and have tried to unpick the function of the behaviour we can put positive behaviour strategies in place to hopefully prevent such incidents from reoccurring. For example, if the behaviour always happens when the children are coming in from outside, can we give the child a time warning for when outside time will be finishing? Sand timers and a visual timetable will also help the child to prepare for this change. This may help to lessen the child’s anxiety caused by the change as they can prepare for this and support their understanding. |
| Useful websites & further reading  * <https://contact.org.uk/media/629551/understanding_your_childs_behaviour.pdf> * <https://www.camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities-challenging-behaviour> * <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/guidelines.aspx> * <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/sensory-world.aspx> |