

How to Become a BEHAVIOR DETECTIVE



Looking for clues to understand behavior using the ABCs

Every behavior happens for a reason. By looking at what happens **BEFORE** and **AFTER** a behavior, we can better understand what your child may be communicating and how the environment can influence behavior.

A = Antecedant

What happened **BEFORE** the Behavior?

Before

Ask yourself:

- What was my child doing?
- Was a demand given?
- Did something change in the environment?

Antecedents may "trigger" a behavior.

B = Behavior

What did the **BEHAVIOR** look like?



- Crying
- Hitting
- Throwing Items
- Running Away
- Refusing

Describe observable behavior, not assumptions.

C = Consequence

What happened **AFTER** the behavior?

After

Ask yourself:

- Did my child get attention?
- Did they get access to something?
- Did they avoid or escape something?
- What stopped the behavior?

Consequences can influence whether a behavior happens again.

Why Does This Matter?

When we look at what happens before and after a behavior, we can identify **patterns**.

These clues help us:

- Understand what behavior may be communicating
- Identify patterns and triggers
- Understand why behavior keeps happening
- Teach more effective skills to replace challenging behaviors



Parent Detective Tip

Instead of asking:

✗ "How do I stop this behavior?"

Try asking:

✓ "What is my child trying to communicate?"

Research:

Hanley, G. P. (2012). Functional assessment of problem behavior: Dispelling myths, overcoming implementation obstacles, and developing new lore. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 5(1), 54-72.

