

# BETTER BEHAVIOR WITHOUT PUNISHMENT

SHANE NICHOLS, M.S., BCBA

CLINICAL DIRECTOR | KIWI ABA



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# FAQs & COMMON CONCERNS: EDUCATORS & ABA

**1**

**Keep track of the keywords throughout the presentation – there will be 4 keywords in total!**

**2**

**Scan QRcode with your device's camera at the end of the presentation to be redirected to the quiz!**

**3**

**Submit your quiz with all 4 keywords accurately selected along with your contact information and be entered to win a special prize!**



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# #1 QUESTION I GET ASKED AS A BCBA:

**KEYWORD #1:  
DISCIPLINE**

***"What's the best way to  
discipline a child when  
he's misbehaving?"***



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# OBJECTIVES

- 1. Attendees will be able to identify key differences between reinforcement and punishment.**
- 2. Attendees will be able to identify the benefits of using reinforcement instead of punishment.**
- 3. Attendees will be able to implement reinforcement strategies and systems in school as well as avoid more aversive behavior management techniques.**



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# REINFORCEMENT & PUNISHMENT: THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE ETHICAL

- DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES
- PROBLEMS WITH PUNISHMENT
- BUT PUNISHMENT IS EFFECTIVE ...
- USING REINFORCEMENT INSTEAD
- BUT ISN'T THAT BRIBERY .. ?
- REINFORCEMENT DONE RIGHT
- HOW TO IDENTIFY REINFORCERS
- WHAT SHOULD BE REINFORCED?
- REINFORCEMENT SYSTEMS



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES: PUNISHMENT

## DEFINITION

- A consequence that weakens a behavior or makes it *less likely* to occur in the future

## EXAMPLE

- A teacher sends a student to the office for being disruptive (yelling, running around the classroom, etc.); wanting attention from peers, the child does not like being removed and is less disruptive in the future.



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES: REINFORCEMENT

## DEFINITION

- A consequence that strengthens a behavior or makes it *more likely* to occur in the future (R<sup>+</sup>)

## EXAMPLE

- A teacher sends a student to the office for being disruptive; wanting to avoid completing math work, the child likes being removed and is more likely to be disruptive in the future.



# KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER



IF THE BEHAVIOR IS  
NOT **DECREASING**, IT  
IS **NOT** PUNISHMENT



IF THE BEHAVIOR IS  
NOT **INCREASING**, IT IS  
**NOT** REINFORCEMENT



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# PROBLEMS WITH PUNISHMENT

**Often elicits emotional and/or aggressive reactions**

**May trigger undesirable escape/avoidance behaviors (e.g., lying, stealing, cheating)**

**Does not typically teach appropriate behaviors**

**May involve modeling inappropriate behavior**

**May negatively impact your relationship, as the child pairs you with aversive situations**

*In general, punishment has been strongly correlated with greater susceptibility to antisocial behavior and mental illness.*



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# BUT PUNISHMENT IS EFFECTIVE ...

**KEY WORD #2:  
EFFECTIVE**

- Typically only effective when the "punisher" is present
- **Example:** When police vehicles are present, drivers are less likely to speed; when police vehicles are not present, drivers are more likely to speed.
- Typically only effective when punishment is delivered *immediately* after *every* occurrence of the target behavior



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# USING REINFORCEMENT INSTEAD

Motivates the child to complete the task as opposed to motivating them to avoid punishment

VERBAL PRAISE

Teaches appropriate skills and behaviors

STICKERS

TOYS

May have a positive impact on relationship, as the child pairs you with positive situations

HIGH FIVES

MONEY/ALLOWANCE

TOKENS

TRIP TO PLAYGROUND



KIWI  
ABA

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# BUT ISN'T THAT BRIBERY

**KEYWORD #3:  
BRIBERY**

*"I don't want to have to use bribery to get my students to do what I ask them to."*

## Reinforcement

"If you clean your room, you can have a popsicle"

Child cleans room

Child is given a popsicle

More likely to listen and clean room when asked in the future

When used right, R+ increases appropriate behavior

## Bribery

"Can you please go clean your room?"

Child refuses and has a tantrum

"If you clean your room, you can have a popsicle"

More likely to tantrum when asked to clean room in the future

Bribery reinforces inappropriate behaviors in the long term in order to stop them in the short term

*"Still...I want my students to do things just because they are supposed to. I shouldn't always have to give them something when they do something good."*



**Think of reinforcement as  
a support – like glasses or  
hearing aids**

**REINFORCEMENT CAN AND SHOULD BE FADED OVER TIME UNTIL  
THE CHILD IS PERFORMING THE TARGET SKILL INDEPENDENTLY  
WITH LITTLE TO NO REINFORCEMENT PROVIDED**

**Also remember that R+ is  
not the end-all be-all but  
just the starting point**



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



**KEYWORD #4:  
REINFORCEMENT**

**"We've tried  
reinforcement,  
but it doesn't  
work for him."**



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# REINFORCEMENT DONE RIGHT: QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE R+

## IMMEDIATE

- R+ should be delivered directly after the behavior/expectation (2-3 seconds)

## PERSONALIZED & PREFERRED

- R+ should be individualized to the preferences & characteristics of the child

## SPECIFIC

- R+ should be paired with specific verbal praise so the child knows what the R+ is for

## CONSISTENT

- R+ should be provided for the same behavior at the same rate across people & places

## EQUAL TO EFFORT

- Quality & magnitude of R+ should match the child's response effort



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# HOW TO IDENTIFY REINFORCERS

## ASK

- Ask the child
- Ask significant others
- Give pre-task choices

- What do you like?
- What's your favorite...?
- What do you want to work for?
- Preference surveys
- Choice boards

## FREE OPERANT

- Contrived observation
- Naturalistic observation

- Set up a space filled with things you think the child might like or use the natural environment
- Observe what the child interacts with the most

## TRIAL-BASED

- Single item
- Paired choice
- Multiple choices



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# HOW TO ID REINFORCERS (CONT.)

## SINGLE ITEM

- Acquire items the child might enjoy
- Present each item to the child one at a time
- Record the child's response to the item
  - Did the child accept the item or reject it?
  - How long did the child play with it?
- Good for children who struggle with choices

## PAIRED CHOICE

- Acquire items the child might enjoy
- Systematically present the items to the child two at a time so that each item has been presented with each other item twice (once on each side – right/left)
- Record the child's selection for each choice to develop a hierarchy of preferences

## MULTI-CHOICE

- Acquire items the child might enjoy
- Present the items to the child in an array
- May present the same choices for each trial or may remove the last selected item
- Record the child's choice each trial

# WHAT SHOULD BE REINFORCED?

## FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION & OTHER ALTERNATIVES

- Another way to get what they want *without* the negative behavior
- If a child is hitting to get a toy, he should be taught to ask for the toy; asking for the toy should be reinforced instead of hitting.

## TOLERANCE SKILLS & FLEXIBILITY

- Adapting to unexpected or undesired situations *without* the negative behavior
- Accepting "no" or "not right now," transitions from preferred to non-preferred activities, tolerating interruptions to rigid routines, etc.

## COPING SKILLS & SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES

- Appropriate ways to self-soothe and de-escalate after an upsetting event
- Deep breathing, squeezing stuffed animal, volcano breathing, etc.



# WHAT SHOULD BE REINFORCED?

## COOPERATION, *NOT* COMPLIANCE

- Reinforce when the child works cooperatively with you
- Avoid reinforcing total compliance with any direction, as this makes them vulnerable to potential maltreatment from adults who may want to take advantage

## ANY OTHER SKILLS IN WHICH THERE IS A DEFICIT

- Teach and reinforce using skills that are typically difficult or cause frustration
- Avoid using reinforcement for skills that the child already performs independently





# REINFORCEMENT SYSTEMS

## TASK ANALYSIS

- **Break complex skills down into smaller steps; teach & reinforce one step at a time until the child can perform the entire skill independently.**

## SHAPING

- **Break long-term goals into several short-term goals that are more attainable; reinforce when the short-term goals are met.**

## DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF...

- **Alternative Behavior:** Reinforce other ways for the child to get what they want.
- **Other Behavior:** Reinforce all behavior except for the negative behavior.
- **Incompatible Behavior:** Reinforce behaviors that they cannot do at the same time as the negative behavior.

# REINFORCEMENT SYSTEMS (CONT.)

## BEHAVIOR SKILLS TRAINING

- **Teach, practice and reinforce accurately practicing the skill outside of naturally occurring situations**

## REINFORCEMENT COMBINED WITH VISUALS

- **Visuals can be used to help clarify expectations for earning reinforcement, to remind the child what reinforcer they are trying to earn, how close they are to earning R+, etc.**
- **First/then boards, visual schedules, token boards, choice boards, etc.**

## TOKEN SYSTEMS

- **Token systems allow you to immediately reinforce appropriate behaviors while also delaying access to the main desired reinforcer; provide the child with a token each time they do the appropriate target behavior; once the child has earned the agreed upon number of tokens, the tokens can be exchanged for the desired reinforcer.**



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# FREE RESOURCES

**Scan QR code with your device's camera to be redirected to the KIWI ABA Facebook page where we've posted free downloadable resources with complete instructions for you to implement the strategies we've talked about today!**



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*



# FAQs & COMMON CONCERNS: EDUCATORS & ABA

**1**

Scan QR code with your device's camera to be redirected to the quiz!



**2**

Take quiz on the 4 keywords given during the presentation.

**3**

Submit your quiz with all 4 keywords accurately selected along with your contact information and be entered to win a special prize!



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*

# REFERENCES

Bearss, K., Johnson, C., Handen, B., Butter, E., LeCavalier, L., Smith, T., & Scahill, L. (2018).

Reinforcement. *In Parent Training for Disruptive Behavior: The RUBI Autism Network (Clinician Manual)*. Oxford University Press.

Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L., (2019). *Applied behavior analysis* (3rd ed.).

Pearson Education, Inc.

Sidman, M. (1993). Reflections on behavior analysis and coercion. *Behavior and Social Issues*, 3(1), 75-85.

Van Diepen, M. (2019). *ABA visualized*. Studio Van Diepen LLC.

# REFERENCES (CONT.)

QR codes utilized during this presentation were created using:

QR Code Generator at [goqr.me](https://goqr.me)

Keyword quiz utilized during this presentation was created using:

Outgrow Interactive Quiz Maker at <https://outgrow.co/quiz-maker/>



**KIWI  
ABA**

*Nourished Roots, Sweet Results*