

Importantly, children don't have to say the actual word to receive the desired item. In the beginning, he or she simply needs to signal requests by any means. Pointing at the item represents a good start.

This helps the student understand that communicating produces positive results. The therapist builds on this understanding to help the student shape the communication toward saying or signing the actual word.

Verbal Behavior therapy uses “errorless learning.” The therapist provides immediate and frequent prompts to help improve the student’s communication. These prompts become less intrusive as quickly as possible, until the student no longer needs prompting. Take, for example, the student who wants a cookie. The therapist may hold the cookie in front of the student’s face and say “cookie” to prompt a response from the child. Next, the therapist would hold up the cookie and make a “c” sound to prompt the response. After that, the therapist might simply hold a cookie in the child’s line of sight and wait for the request. The ultimate goal, in this example, is for the student to say “cookie” when he or she wants a cookie – without any prompting.

VB and classic ABA use similar behavioral formats to work with children. VB is designed to motivate a child to learn language by developing a connection between a word and its value. VB may be used as an extension of the communication section of an ABA program.

Who provides VB?

Verbal Behavior therapy is provided by VB-trained psychologists, special education teachers, speech therapists and other providers.



What is the intensity of most VB programs?

VB programs usually involve 30 or more hours per week of scheduled therapy. Families are encouraged to use VB principles in their daily lives.

For Information on VB, go to the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies website at behavior.org/vb.

