

Natural Environment Teaching Competency (brief sample)

Teach your client a skill(s) using NET/NDBI focusing on environmental arrangement, child choice of activity/materials, teaching within daily routines/activities, and/or utilizing natural and related reinforcers

PURPOSE (include brief overview of NDBIs, goal of the competency, and social significance of the target skill(s))

The purpose of this competency was to use components of Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions (NDBIs) to teach my 3 year old client how to appropriately gain an adult's attention to increase access to both social and tangible reinforcement. NDBIs are a set of interventions that integrate research across applied behavioral and developmental science. Common features of NDBIs include environment arrangement, child choice of the activity or materials, and use of natural and related reinforcers. One example of a basic skill that can be taught using aspects of NDBIs is gaining another person's attention. Gaining attention in an appropriate manner is an essential skill for this client as it will provide him with an avenue to appropriately initiate desired interactions with adults and it also serves as a replacement for maladaptive behavior (slapping an adult's face).

METHOD (include participants & setting, dependent variable(s), data collection, and procedure- baseline & intervention)

Participants and Setting

The client used for this competency is a 3 year old boy who has participated in ABA services for a total of six months. He has a diagnosis of ASD and also receives speech and occupational

therapy 2 times per week. Both baseline and intervention sessions occurred in the playroom in the client's home. The room contained a small table and chairs, a couch, and a closet for materials. Sessions occurred every afternoon within ABA intervention sessions that were three hours in duration.

Dependent Variable

The target behavior of interest in this competency was appropriately gaining the attention of an adult (e.g., tapping) in contrived opportunities.

Data Collection

Data collection using Thread software was used to measure correct, incorrect, and prompted responses to each contrived opportunity to gain another's attention. If the client appropriately gained attention by tapping, this was tracked as a correct response. The client was not yet using other appropriate attention gaining strategies (e.g., approximating someone's name), but any appropriate means of gaining attention would have also been tracked as a correct response if the client happened to use a skill other than tapping. An incorrect response was recorded if the client engaged in face slapping or other aggressive behavior. If an opportunity was contrived, yet the client was not motivated (he displayed no attempt to gain attention), the trial was abandoned and no data was collected for that opportunity. The total percentage of correct responses was calculated each session.

Procedure

Baseline. In baseline, the adult contrived opportunities in which the client needed to gain his/her attention to access something preferred within established routines (e.g., the adult held the client's preferred snack while not actively attending to the child). Baseline data were

collected and the client did not yet gain another person's attention appropriately in naturally occurring or contrived opportunities (0% accuracy) and would instead slap the adult's face.

Intervention. Initially, treatment involved teaching the client one way to appropriately gain another person's attention (tapping) within established and preferred routines. The instructor contrived a situation wherein the client needed to gain the attention of an adult to gain access to what was highly preferred in the current context. As the client is highly motivated by Eric Carle animal books (e.g., Brown Bear), this was one example of a routine used to target this skill. A teaching segment within book routines began when the child demonstrated interest (e.g., by taking the book off the shelf). During the routine, one adult read the book, focusing on this target skill as well as additional treatment goals (e.g., tacting, joint attention points). Environmental arrangement was used in which a second adult controlled access to highly preferred items (small animal figures corresponding with each page of the book). After each page was read, an opportunity to gain the second adult's attention to access the corresponding animal figure was contrived. If the child gained attention appropriately, he received adult attention and access to the preferred animal figure (use of natural and related reinforcers).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (include results of the study with a graph of baseline & intervention and a brief discussion of the implications / next steps in treatment)

It took a total of 6 days for the client to master appropriately gaining attention with the adult directly next to the child within book and snack routines (80-100% accuracy across two instructors). Upcoming treatment will include steps such as increasing the distance between the adult and child as well as generalizing the client's newly acquired skills across people, settings,

and additional activities. It is also important to ensure that the client has a wide repertoire of ways to gain attention (e.g., calling an adult's name, calling another person's name and using a directive statement e.g., "look!") and that he displays persistence or use of alternative strategies when his original attempt is not successful.

This competency focused on using components of NDBIs to teach a foundational concept (gaining attention) to a child with ASD. This skill will likely lead to continued decreases in maladaptive aggressive behavior and allow the client to appropriately initiate interactions with adults to gain access to desired attention, activities, or tangibles.

