

ABC Behaviour chart

This ABC chart can be used to record behavioural concerns.

- 'A' stands for **antecedents**, that is, what happens immediately before the behavioural outburst and can include any triggers, signs of distress or environmental information.
- 'B' refers to the **behaviour** itself and is a description of what actually happened during the outburst or what the behaviour 'looked' like.
- 'C' refers to the **consequences** of the behaviour, or what happened immediately after the behaviour and can include information about other people's responses to the behaviour and the eventual outcome for the person.

It can also be a good idea to keep track of where and when the behaviour occurred to help in identifying any patterns. There are some filled in examples from page 2.

Day, date and time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes

ABC chart examples

Example 1

Male autistic adult, non-verbal, with sensory difficulties, lives in a placement. His mum visits on weekends and Wednesday evenings

Day, date and time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes
Wed 1 Nov	Son calm. Watching TV with staff and other service users.	Son ran away from mum. Shut door of room and would not come out. Screamed and lashed out when she came into room.	Mum left. Son eventually calmed and was distressed mum was not there.	
Wed 8 Nov	Son calm. Playing with tablet computer in room alone.	Son screamed and covered face when mum entered room.	After trying to talk to son Mum left. Son calmed down.	
Wed 15 Nov	Son calm. Watching TV with staff and other service users.	Son ran into bathroom. Would not come out. Screamed and lashed out when mum came into bathroom.	Mum left whilst son calmed down.	Mum tried to come back when son calmed down and the process repeated itself.

Interpretations:

Son is reacting to mum but only on Wednesdays. Does not display this behaviour at the weekends when she visits. After thinking about what is different about her visits on Wednesdays, Mum realised that she dresses differently and wears perfume on Wednesdays as she goes to a book club after visiting her son. As son has sensory difficulties, she concluded that he may be reacting negatively due to her perfume.

Strategies:

After not wearing perfume, her son didn't react negatively to her Wednesday visits.

Example 2

Boy 8, with autism, verbal and fairly articulate. Starting new mainstream school, no support in place.

Day, date and time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes
Mon 3 Sept 11.45	Sitting working on literacy. At table with 3 other children. Started asking repetitive questions about when it would be lunch time.	When bell for lunch went, he wouldn't get out of his seat. After being asked repeatedly by teacher, he threw himself on the floor crying.	He stayed in classroom with a teacher. Ate lunch there when he calmed down.	First day so first experience of this type of behaviour.
Tues 4 Sept 11.40	Sitting working on numeracy. At table with 4 other children. Started fiddling with sleeves on jumper.	Started to cry when the bell for lunch went. Put his head on the table and became hysterical. Would not be moved or comforted.	He stayed in classroom with a teacher and when he calmed down he ate lunch at his table.	
Wed 5 Sept 11.39	Sitting on the carpet for reading time with whole class. Getting fidgety and fiddling with his jumper.	Hid behind book box when everyone got up for lunch time. Would not be moved, lashed out when teacher tried to move him. Crying.	Ate lunch in classroom with teacher.	

Interpretations:

Consistent reaction to the same event – likely caused by anxiety about lunchtime at school.

Strategies:

Giving him anxiety reducing tools before he gets overly anxious. Consider adjusting how he experiences lunchtime – could he leave for lunch early before it is too busy? Or start lunch in the classroom before joining classmates later in the lunch time? Look at offering him extra support at that time. Visual supports explaining what will happen at lunchtime, structure added to reduce anxiety. If there are sensory needs, make sure they are met.

Example 3

Girl, 3, with autism and limited communication. She attends nursery with support 2 days per week.

Day, date and time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes
Monday 18 Feb 7.30am	Driving to nursery in car with dad.	Suddenly started screaming, trying to get out of her car seat.	Cried all the way to nursery. Calmed down when got to nursery but was struggled for the rest of the day.	She has never reacted like this in the car before – normally she likes driving.
Monday 18 Feb 6pm	Driving home from nursery with mum.	Same as this morning!	Cried all the way home and was upset all evening.	

Interpretations:

Something is happening during the journey to upset her. After thinking about what was different about today's drive, parent's realised that they were having to drive a different way to and from nursery due to roadworks. Their daughter was screaming at the point the diversion happened as it was a change to her routine.

Strategies:

Use visual supports to explain the change and reinforce that the rest of her routine would remain the same. Provide calming activities to play with in the car.

Example 4

Girl 14, with autism, very intelligent, attends a mainstream school with no support, has a peer group of female friends.

Day, date and time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes
Sat 12 April 1pm	Spent morning with friends at local park.	Got home and went to her straight to her room, clearly upset. Cried and broke her belongings.	Was withdrawn for the rest of the day. Sad about the possessions she broke.	
Sun 13 April 4pm	Spent afternoon at the cinema with best friend.	Screamed at mum when asked whether she had fun and then cried hysterically.	Spent the rest of the day in her room.	Couldn't explain why she was so upset when asked.

Interpretations:

These incidents are occurring after she spends time with her friends, particularly her best friend. Seems unwilling or unable to discuss why she is so upset.

Strategies:

Increase communication methods (eg worry book, texting) to give her an outlet to express what is going on. Work with her on social skills and understanding and expressing emotions to give her more appropriate ways to express herself.