C Is for Consequence

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A is for antecedent.

- An event, activity, or environmental stimulus preceding a behavior
  - immediately before
  - accumulation of previous events
  - a collection of events
The Other ABCs

B is for behavior.
  – Desired, undesired, and neutral

and

C is for consequence.
The kids who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving of ways.
Overview

1. Discipline vs. Consequence vs. Punishment

2. Consequences
   - Alignment
   - Reinforcing
   - Accidental reinforcement
   - Positive consequences for desired behavior
Consequence and/or Discipline

- Punishment is exerting power over another to “get even.”
- Discipline: instruction or self-control
- Consequence: can be positive, negative, or neutral, and is the direct result of a choice or behavior

It is our duty to assist youth in learning self-discipline so they can choose behaviors that received the desired consequences.
Natural Consequences

Natural consequences are outcomes of behavior that are not planned or controlled.

- They can be powerful reinforcers or deterrents.
  - “Tipping” or leaning back in a chair until it is on two legs and the chair slips, causing a fall
  - Smiling at a person and getting a smile back
  - Going outside without a coat or hat on a cold or rainy day
Thoughtful Consequences

- Consequences reinforce behavior and choices, so an effective behavior modification plan must consider the consequence prior to the behavior occurring.

  - The consequence should align to:
    - the function of the behavior and
    - the individual student preferences
But How?
First Understand Our Beliefs

- Adults often have two different approaches to dealing with problem behaviors. These different approaches are based on different beliefs.

- One belief is that the child *is* a problem, and the other is that the child *has* a problem

A student is seen in the hallway during scheduled class time. They are asked “where are you supposed to be?” The student then runs quickly away and out of the building.

Student IS the problem: The student is disrespectful and doesn’t even want to be at school.

Student HAS a problem: Student is not sure what the question was, if they are in trouble, or what to do. They are running because they are scared of a consequence.
There are four main categories of function:

- Escape
- Affiliation
- Tangible
- Sensory

These are also the 4 main categories of reinforcement.
• Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs reflects these same mitigating factors.

• These are the factors that change the degree, intensity or perception, but are not antecedents or consequences.
Reinforcement

- Reinforcement: the process of encouraging or establishing a belief or pattern of behavior, especially by encouragement or reward

- Positive Reinforcement (adding something they desire to their environment/experience)
- Negative Reinforcement (remove or subtract something they desire removed from their environment/experience)

To select strong, positive reinforcement, you must know your student.
Know Your Student
A child does not want to eat their lunch of chicken, mashed potatoes, and green beans.

- Positive reinforcement (sensory needs): add a different plate that separates the food and provides a space for ranch dip
- Negative reinforcement (sensory needs): remove the green beans from the plate

- Positive reinforcement (escape/avoidance): provide choice of eating location, perhaps with preferred activity or privacy
- Negative reinforcement (escape/avoidance): adult leaves the space, and/or the child chooses which two to eat and which one to leave
Reinforcement Results

- Defines desired behavior, undesired behavior, and neutral behavior
- Provides the structure and predictability
- Defined by individual motivation
- Focuses on teaching self-discipline and self-monitoring
- Get what they want
- Avoid what they don’t want
Accidents Happen

• It is significantly easier to get attention for doing something wrong than doing something right.

• The undesired behavior evokes an emotional response that creates reinforcement for the child.

• We are human, we make mistakes, get tired, and balance a lot at once.
Accidents Happen
Positive Consequences and Desired Behavior
Desired Behaviors

- Desired behaviors must be:
  - clearly defined,
  - taught, and
  - reinforced.

Telling a child what to “not do” does not mean they know what “to do.”
Replacement Behaviors Examples

• Students runs out of the classrooms and/or building
  – Student requests time in “safe spot” through the use of a signal

• Student bites adults, self, or peers
  – Student uses a safe necklace, pencil topper, or hard candy to chew when needed

• Student yells and throws items at the teacher
  – Student requests time to talk with the teacher or moves to a seat near the teacher

• Student steals from the cafeteria
  – Student assists in the cafeteria to earn a small snack or “money” in their lunch account
Positive Consequences

- Positive consequences need to be aligned to the child/student’s motivation:
  - Escape
  - Affiliation
  - Tangible
  - Sensory

Once a child/student has shown mastery of the desired behavior, using intermittent, unpredictable or irregular intervals is the most powerful reinforcement schedule.
Positive Reinforcement

• Reinforce the behavior you and expecting or requesting:
  – “Great job__________, during _________”
  – You may have 5 minutes to use your iPod
  – Tonight you may reduce your homework by 3 math problems
  – A sticker
  – Snack or small treat
  – Token economy
  – Talking chip
  – Chosen preferred seat at lunch/classroom/dinner
  – Speech-to-text software privilege, internet helper
  – Extra recess/p.e./walk/time outside
  – High five
  – Phone call home or to important adult
When Discipline is Required
When Discipline is Required

• Discipline is instruction and learning, so we need to reinforce the learning using similar principles.

• When restorative action is required, it should be aligned to the offence to the greatest extent possible.
  – If a child breaks a window, they need to help with the clean-up, repair, cost, or time lost.
  – If a child hurts a friend's feelings, they need to find a way to be kind to them by helping them, doing a favor, etc.
  – If a child writes on a wall, they should help clean or paint.
  – If a child breaks a trust, they need to determine a plan to demonstrate they are trustworthy.
Take Care of You Too
Forgive Yourself

- No one is perfect.
- No plan is perfect.
- No day is perfect.

- But, loving a child enough to try is **perfect**.
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