CJ Conard, BCBA-D, General Operations Director, ACES ABA
The Function of "Do" and "Don't" Requests

(and a simple tool for parents)
Objectives

As a result of this presentation, the learner will be able to:
1) list "don't" instructions and identify them as antecedent or consequence;
2) generate replacement (incompatible, alternative, redirective) instructions; and
3) report the strategy used in the exercise provided.
Parent/Teacher Training

Problem-solving

- Reducing inappropriate behavior

Teaching

- Increasing appropriate behavior
## PARENT EXERCISE

**DON’T SAY DON’T**

*Don’ts to Do’s A Common List Exercise*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t</th>
<th>Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yell so loud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV on school nights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play basketball inside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play in the street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewind the movies when we’re watching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump on the couch/sofa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push your brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get so close to the BBQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make loud noises inside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spill your milk (or water) on purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat sand and look at me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go into your sister’s room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get out of bed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw garbage in the car</td>
<td></td>
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Title

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Purpose: When someone is doing something you don’t want, try to use a phrase that tells what to do “instead”. This can create an opportunity to reinforce something else you do want that is ok to do.

Consider using an: alternative behavior that still meets their needs

Consider using an: incompatible behavior that will prevent doing the problem behavior

Consider using a: redirection, an instruction to do something else entirely or distracts

As with all forms of attention, the TIMING is important, work to “prevent” problem behavior when possible and use this strategy to “correct” problem behavior. State expectations ahead of time.
Don’t vs Do Exercise

Handout

• List 6-10 “don’t” statements addressing problem behavior

• Identify as antecedent or consequence

• List appropriate behavior
Will it work? Why?

What does the literature teach us about “don’ts and do’s”?

A quick review of 3 JABA studies provides helpful suggestions.
10 SECOND STRETCH BREAK
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis

- The Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t” Requests to Interrupt Ongoing Activities (1999)
The Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t” Requests to Interrupt Ongoing Activities, 32, 437-449, 1999, 32, 519-523.
Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t”

Subject:
Raffie—27 y.o. male, Autism and mild-moderate MR.
bx – severe aggression, ambulatory, could follow 2-3 step instructions, spoke in 1-2 word utterances.

Physical aggression – hitting, biting, kicking and pulling hair.
Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t”

**Phase 1: Functional Analysis**

Aggression low in frequency (near zero) low intensity

Observation suggested aggression increased when interrupted during on-going/inappropriate behavior (lying on the floor, pica, inappropriate touching)

Modified Fx Analysis – 2 conditions
Control – free access to leisure w/o interruption
Don’t condition – praise vs physical prompt
Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t”

Phase 1: Functional Analysis

Don’t requests on a 30 sec (FT) schedule to interrupt the ongoing activity

Compliance – brief verbal praise

Non-compliance – physical prompt

Aggression – terminated prompt/access to activity

Control – free access to leisure w/o interruption
Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t”

Phase 2: Evaluation of Symmetrical “do” requests and “don’t” requests

Don’t requests on a 30 sec (FT) schedule to interrupt the ongoing activity

Do requests interrupted with incompatible behavior
“don’t lie on the floor” vs “sit in a chair”

Aggression – terminated prompt/access to activity

Compliance – brief verbal praise
Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t”

Phase 3: Treatment Generality
Use of Symmetrical “Do” and “Don’t”

Discussion

In summary, the current investigation contributes to research conducted in this area by suggesting that for some individuals, destructive behavior occasioned by the interruption of activities using “don’t” requests may be reduced by simply modifying the stimulus properties of the request.
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis


Fx Analysis and Tx of Destructive Bx

Subjects:
Ike – 13 y.o. male, mild-moderate MR, ADHD, ODD, obesity, bx – physical aggression, verbal aggression, disruption and dangerous behavior, ambulatory, could follow 2-3 step instructions, spoke in complete sentences.

Physical aggression – hitting, kicking, pushing and pulling hair and throwing objects, Verbal aggression - cursing, using insulting or offensive statements, Dangerous bx – standing on furniture, throwing furniture, touching light sockets and striking the ceiling with objects.

Target Bx- appropriate communication – handing a green picture communication card to the therapist.
Fx Analysis and Tx of Destructive Bx

Subjects:
Tina – 14 y.o. female, PDD, severe MR, bipolar Type II, bx – physical aggression, ambulatory, followed simple 1-step instructions, expressive vocabulary approx. 50 words.

Physical aggression – hitting, kicking, biting and pulling hair.

Target Bx- appropriate communication – handing a stop sign to the therapist.
Fx Analysis and Tx of Destructive Bx

Phase 1: Functional Analysis
Fx Analysis and Tx of Destructive Bx

Phase 2: Descriptive Assessments

For Ike, destructive behavior consistently occurred when demands were presented that interrupted high-probability (and presumably preferred) activities. For example, watching game shows (e.g., “The Price is Right”) was a high-probability (and preferred) response for Ike, and he consistently displayed destructive behavior when he was instructed to turn off the television. Based on these observations, we hypothesized that demands that interrupted an ongoing preferred activity evoked destructive behavior.

We surmised that demands did not evoke destructive behavior during the functional analysis because they did not interfere with a preferred activity.
Fx Analysis and Tx of Destructive Bx

For Tina, destructive behavior also consistently occurred when demands were presented that interrupted high-probability activities. However, for Tina (unlike Ike), these same demands usually involved a fair amount of gross motor movement. For example, during her free time, Tina frequently stood by a door to the living area and looked out of the window. When a staff member requested that she move away from the door to allow other clients through, she often engaged in destructive behavior. Based on these observations, we developed two hypotheses regarding the function of Tina’s destructive behavior. One was that instructional demands evoked problem behavior primarily when they interrupted an ongoing preferred activity. The second hypothesis was that demands involving gross motor activity evoked destructive behavior.

We surmised that demands issued during the functional analysis did not evoke destructive behavior because they neither interrupted a preferred activity nor involved gross motor activity.
Fx Analysis and Tx of Destructive Bx

One potentially important difference between the observations conducted during the descriptive assessment and those conducted prior to the initial functional analysis was that the therapists actually probed a variety of demands with the participants. These probes were conducted to determine which demands were associated with destructive behavior (as opposed to simply observing the demands that were presented on the living unit).

Thus, the observations conducted as a part of the descriptive assessment were more structured and more focused on identifying specific aspects of demands that might evoke destructive behavior than were the observations conducted prior to the first functional analysis.

*emphasis added*
Phase 3: Analysis of “Don’t” Requests
Phase 4: Symmetrical “Do” Requests
Phase 5: Treatment Evaluation

Graph showing responses per minute over sessions for two individuals: Ike and Tina.
Contributions:

1. Descriptive assessment data may be useful (when Fx Analysis inconclusive):
   a. Generate hypothesis re: antecedents/consequences evoking/maintain bx
   b. Develop specific experimental analysis to test the generated hypothesis
Contributions:

2. Termination of “requests” may function as positive reinforcement for destructive behavior (because it disrupts an ongoing preferred activity).

(Generally assumed destructive behavior is maintained by negative reinforcement when it occurs in response to demands)
10 SECOND
STRETCH
BREAK

An Evaluation of the Properties of Attention as Reinforcement for Destructive and Appropriate Behavior, 32, 437-449.
Evaluation Properties of Attention

Subjects:
Ike – 11 y.o. male, PDD, ADHD, moderate MR, bx – physical aggression and disruption behavior, ambulatory, could follow 1 and 2 step instructions, communicated using one-word utterances.

Physical aggression – hitting, kicking, scratching, pinching, hair pulling, head butting, throwing objects at people, pulling others’ clothes and Disruption – throwing objects, kicking or banging on surfaces, knocking objects off surfaces, property destruction, and placing objects with 10 cm of a person’s face.

Appropriate behavior– communication (handing a picture card to the therapist) and toy contact.
Evaluation Properties of Attention

Subjects:
Paul – 13 y.o. male, mild-moderate MR, Autism, ODD, bx – physical aggression, verbal aggression, disruption and dangerous behavior, ambulatory, could follow 2-3 step instructions, spoke in complete sentences.

Aggression – hitting and kicking others, pushing on others, chin pressing on others, and throwing objects, in the direction of others.

Appropriate behavior – communication (handing a picture card to the therapist) and in-seat behavior.
Study 1: Asmt of Praise/Reprimands
Study 1: Toy Contact
Study 2: ID Type of Attn / Verbal Reprimands
Anecdotal observations may be helpful in describing the various ways in which attention is delivered in the natural environment, but these observations do not result in precise identification of the variables that maintain destructive behavior (Lerman & Iwata, 1993) or in determination of which aspects of attention may be more effective reinforcers than others. A benefit of experimental analyses, such as the ones used in the current investigation, is that the relative effectiveness of various forms of attention (or other reinforcers) can be tested directly.
Don’ts and Do’s

Participant “take-away” comments.

Please share your experience / comments with don’ts, do’s or other variations you have encountered.

What strategies have you used?
Thanks for your participation, enjoy the rest of the conference.

For a pdf of the articles: email me at: cj@conard.com
The Function of "Do" and "Don't" requests

ACES ABA, San Diego County
3731 6th Avenue, Ste. 100
San Diego, CA 92103
(619) 298-7198 Main Office)

www.acesaba.com

cjconard@acesaba.com