

# ABA STRATEGIES THAT STICK

## GOAL

Turn ABA strategies into habits that fit into your everyday routines, making them easier to use consistently and more effective for your child.

## BACKGROUND

Habits are things we do without even thinking about them, like brushing our teeth or making coffee in the morning. They save time and effort because they're automatic. What if using ABA strategies could feel just as easy?

When ABA strategies become habits, they're easier to use regularly, even on hectic days. Research shows that consistency is key to helping your child learn new skills and reduce challenging behaviors. By making small changes to your routines, you can build habits that support your child and make daily life smoother for everyone.

## CREATE ABA HABITS

Fit ABA into your routines: Look for moments in your day, like snack time or bedtime, where ABA strategies can naturally fit.

- Start small: Focus on just one change at a time so it's easier to get started and stick with it.
- Celebrate your progress: Give yourself credit for small successes. Every step forward matters!
- Plan for challenges: Life can get busy, but reminders like sticky notes or phone alarms can help you stay on track.
- Make it automatic: With practice and consistency, these strategies will become second nature, helping you and your child thrive.

# HABITS THAT WORK FOR YOU

## ANCHOR ABA STRATEGIES TO DAILY ROUTINES.

### **Habits are formed through repetition and reinforcement.**

Start by looking at the routines you already follow every day. These are perfect places to add ABA strategies. For example:

- Mealtime: Prompt your child to ask for their drink before handing it to them.
- Bedtime: Use reinforcement when your child follows the bedtime routine.
- Transitions: Count down from five before leaving the house to prepare your child for the change.

## TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME.

### **Start small to ensure success.**

Focus on just one small change. Once it feels easy, add another. For example:

- Week 1: Practice prompting communication at snack time.
- Week 2: Add reinforcement for following directions during the bedtime routine.
- Week 3: Use countdowns during morning transitions.

## CELEBRATE YOUR PROGRESS.

### **Celebrate every small victory.**

Small wins add up! Give yourself credit for using a strategy, even if it's just once a day. Acknowledge that building habits takes time, and every step forward makes a difference.

# REINFORCING YOURSELF

## PARENTS NEED REINFORCEMENT, TOO!

Just like your child is motivated by positive reinforcement, you can use rewards to help stay consistent with new habits. Reinforcement can keep you motivated, especially on challenging days.

## Why Reinforcement Works for Parents

Positive reinforcement helps you feel accomplished and reminds you that your hard work is making a difference. Small rewards for meeting your goals can give you the energy to keep going.

### Ways to Reinforce Yourself:

- ✓ **Track Your Progress:** Use a chart or app to record each day you use a strategy. Seeing your progress can be incredibly motivating.
- ✓ **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge your effort with small rewards like a favorite snack, a quiet moment with a book, or a coffee break.
- ✓ **Reflect on Success:** At the end of the day, think about what went well and how your efforts are helping your child grow.

### Examples:

- ✓ **Goal:** Prompt your child to use communication during snack time every day.  
**Reward:** If you meet this goal for three days, treat yourself to a walk in the park or your favorite podcast.
- ✓ **Goal:** Offer choices to make transitions easier.  
**Reward:** If you meet this goal for a week, buy yourself the audio book you've been wanting.

## WHAT DO YOU FIND REINFORCING OR MOTIVATING?

# COMMON CHALLENGES AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Building habits takes time, and you might face some bumps along the way. Here are common challenges and practical solutions:

## Challenge 1: Forgetting to Use Strategies

### **Solution:**

- Place visual reminders in areas where routines happen, like a sticky note on the fridge or an alarm on your phone.
- Pair ABA strategies with specific actions in your routine (e.g., "Before I hand my child a snack, I'll pause and prompt communication").

## Challenge 2: Feeling Overwhelmed

### **Solution:**

- Start small. Focus on one habit at a time instead of trying to make many changes all at once.
- Let your BCBA know if you feel stretched too thin. They can adjust your goals to fit your current needs.

## Challenge 3: Not Seeing Results Right Away

### **Solution:**

- Remember that habits take time to build, and behavior change is a gradual process.
- Celebrate small improvements, even if progress feels slow. Progress is still progress!

## Challenge 4: Life Gets in the Way

### **Solution:**

- Be flexible. If you miss a day, don't stress—just pick up the habit again tomorrow.
- During busy times, simplify the strategy to something manageable (e.g., practice just once a day instead of at every mealtime).

# MAKING ABA A NATURAL PART OF YOUR LIFE

The goal of building habits is to make ABA strategies feel like second nature. When strategies fit seamlessly into your routines, they're easier to use and more effective for your child.

## How to Make ABA Strategies Feel Natural

### **Build on What You Already Do:**

Look for moments in your day where ABA strategies fit easily. For example:

- When getting dressed, reinforce your child for completing each step independently.
- Before playtime, prompt your child to ask for their favorite toy.

### **Practice Makes Perfect:**

The more you use a strategy, the easier it becomes. Over time, you'll find yourself using it without thinking.

### **Involve the Whole Family:**

Share ABA strategies with other family members or caregivers so that everyone can support your child consistently.

### **Reflect and Adjust:**

Think about what's working and what's not. If something feels too hard to stick with, adjust it to better fit your day.

## Example Routine with ABA Strategies

- Morning: Use a countdown to help your child transition out of bed.
- Afternoon: Prompt communication before giving snacks or toys.
- Evening: Reinforce your child for following their bedtime routine.

## Final Thought

Making ABA a part of your everyday life doesn't mean adding more to your plate. It means weaving strategies into what you're already doing. With time, these small changes will make a big difference for your family.