

H The Helping Hillie

A Newsletter Providing Applied Behavior Analysis Tips and Resources

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Behavioral Momentum is another Applied Behavior Analysis principle
To help support you!

Behavioral Momentum



What is Behavioral Momentum?

Behavioral momentum is a series of high probability requests to increase compliance with lower-probability requests (Ray, Skinner & Watson, 1999).

In simpler terms, Behavioral Momentum is an ABA strategy that builds up momentum to what you really want your child to do by presenting easier/less aversive demands that they are extremely likely to complete prior to the more difficult/aversive demand.

Why should I use Behavioral Momentum?

By presenting a few demands that are easy for your child to complete prior to a more difficult demand, your child will be more likely to complete the difficult task. We are building positive momentum with them.

This means you are not approaching your child with something difficult that you want them to do, but approaching them with something that they are likely to do. Your child will anticipate the next demand as something that is easy for them and more likely to do. Behavioral Momentum gets the child used to following directions before he is asked to do something he doesn't want to do.

How do I use Behavior Momentum effectively with my child?

Using Behavioral Momentum to increase compliance with your child is simple (it just takes some understanding and slight preparation). Below is a general procedure for utilizing Behavioral Momentum:

1. Identify what the easy demands will be (it is recommended to use 3-4) and what the one difficult demand will be.
2. Obtain your child’s attention.
3. Present 3-4 simple, easy demands. The simple, easy demands identified will be specific to your child! Remember to praise your child after each completed demand.
4. Present difficult demand.



Using the above picture, below is Behavioral Momentum in action:

Typical Instruction:

<i>Parent:</i> “Put on your shoes” (difficult demand)	—>	<i>Child:</i> Avoids the difficult request by throwing a tantrum.
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Using Behavioral Momentum:

<i>Parent:</i> “Clap” (easier demand)	—>	<i>Child:</i> Claps their hands
<i>Parent:</i> “Nice job! Now stomp your feet” (easier demand)	—>	<i>Child:</i> Stomps their feet
<i>Parent:</i> “Great! Now Dance” (easier demand)	—>	<i>Child:</i> Dances
<i>Parent:</i> “Awesome! Now sit in that chair” (easier demand)	—>	<i>Child:</i> Sits in chair
<i>Parent:</i> “Excellent work! Now put on your shoes” (difficult demand)	—>	<i>Child:</i> Puts on their shoes

Why is Behavioral Momentum Effective?

- Responding to easier demands builds momentum to increase the likelihood of responding to a difficult demand.
- It is an antecedent-based support.
 - Proactive and preventative rather than reactive and reactionary to problem behavior.
 - Gives opportunity for greater engagement while reducing the chance of reinforcing non-compliant behavior.
- It is based on the principle of reinforcement.
 - It offers your child opportunities to receive high rates of reinforcement for appropriate responding.

Important Considerations (when using Behavioral Momentum)

- In a lot of cases, parents inadvertently turn themselves into an aversive stimulus. An aversive stimulus is something that someone learns to avoid overtime because your experience with it over time is disagreeable. If your child thinks that every time you call their name or squat down to their level to give them a difficult demand, they could start avoiding (i.e. hiding, walking away, stating “no”) before you are even able to give them the demand. But when we use Behavioral Momentum, our calling their name or squatting down to their level, gets associated with positive things that they can do with little effort (and then we sneak in the difficult demand at the end!).
- This isn’t a way to “trick” your child into doing what you want, instead it uses the understanding of behavior to decrease resistance during times when you need your child to follow directions. It turns what could be a negative interaction into one that is positive for both of you.

Behavioral Momentum Resources:

- [Video #1](#)
- [Video #2](#)
- [Video #3](#)

Now for the fun part...Monthly Raffle!

Email your child’s BCBA providing an example of how you have implemented Behavioral Momentum.

Those who submitted an example will be entered into a raffle, with the winner receiving a \$25.00 gift certificate to the Hillies Shop located at 4 Summer Street, Haverhill, MA. Additionally, the winner will be given a “Shout out” (upon approval) in next month’s newsletter.

All email entries must be submitted by February 25, 2022. The winner will be contacted by their child’s BCBA.

If you have any questions and/or would like additional information pertaining to any of the information within this month's newsletter, please reach out to your child's BCBA.

BCBA: Stephen Langlais, M. Ed, BCBA, LABA

Email: Stephen.Langlais@haverhill-ps.org

Schools:

- ★ Consentino Middle School
- ★ Haverhill High School
- ★ Hunking Middle and Elementary School
- ★ Silver Hill Elementary School

BCBA: Jessica Lee, MS, BCBA, LABA

Email: Jessica.Lee@haverhill-ps.org

Schools:

- ★ Bradford Elementary School
- ★ Golden Hill Elementary School
- ★ Nettle Middle School

BCBA: Melissa McCarthy, MS, BCBA, LABA

Email: Melissa.McCarthy@haverhill-ps.org

Schools:

- ★ Pentucket Elementary School
- ★ Walnut Elementary School
- ★ Whittier Middle School