

# ABC Behavior Charting

Challenging behaviors can be a part of every family's life.

It can be hard to understand **why** a challenging behavior happens.

When we understand the **REASON** behind the behavior, we are able to better overcome that behavior.

**ABC Behavior Charting** is one way to help chart and keep track of challenging behaviors.

It also lets us see what happens right before and after the behavior.

This helps us find the pattern in the behavior so we can help to change it.

## Behavior A B C'S

- A~ Antecedent** What happened to trigger the behavior?  
What happened just before the behavior?  
Where was the child; what were they doing?
- B~ Behavior:** What happened?  
How long did it last?  
How intense was it?
- C ~ Consequence:** What happened just after the behavior?

### Example:

Jacob is at the table and throws his cup. I pick it up and see it is empty.

I refill Jacob's cup and give it back to him.

**Antecedent:** Jacob was at the table

**Behavior:** Jacob threw his cup.

**Consequence:** I refilled his cup.

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## How do I chart my child's behavior?

Think about charting behaviors you want to decrease and behaviors you want to increase.

The goal is to help replace a challenging behavior with a safer behavior.

We recommend working on 1 behavior at a time.

For each behavior, chart: how often it happens, the intensity (how “big” it was), how long it went on.

Once you have charted about 10 behaviors, you might be able to see a pattern that you can talk about with your doctor or a therapist. You can also start making small changes to correct the behavior.

**Example:** I see now that every time Jacob throws his cup, it is empty. I **reinforce** the throwing because I refill the cup after he throws it.

I can teach Jacob a safe way to ask for more drink instead of throwing his cup.

### Tips on Charting Behavior

- Explain to your child why you charting. “We can have more fun if you stop throwing toys and pick them up when it is time. So we’re going to count how many times you throw toys AND how many times you pick them up.
- Involve each caregiver in charting and record at difference times of the day.
- If the behavior happens often, just record for 1 or 2 hours a day. If the behavior happens less often, you might have to keep track all day.
- Keep the chart visible so the child knows you are counting. This will also remind you to chart.

For questions or for more information you can call

**OSF Autism Pathways** at 844-910-0770



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