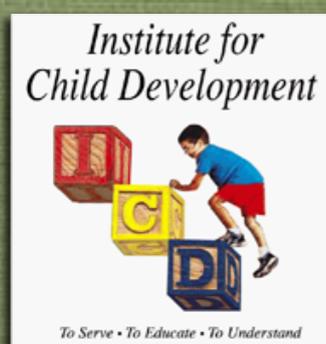




# Autism Initiative Training Series

## Module 4: Chapter 4.1 Monitoring and Evaluating

<http://bddso.icd.binghamton.edu>



# Learning Objectives

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- Define behavior.
- Define and apply operational definitions.
- Define interobserver agreement.
- Name 6 program goals.
- Identify 3 components of a behavior program.

# Behavior (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- Behavior:
  - What people say and do.
  - Can be observed, described, and recorded.
  - Can be affected by the environment.
  - Has an impact on the environment.

# Operational Definition (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- After selecting a target behavior, provide an operational definition.
- Operational definitions:
  - Are precise descriptions of the behavior.
  - Specify what is to be observed and recorded.
  - Do not refer to objects, feelings, or emotions.

# Interobserver Agreement (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- One characteristic of a good operational definition is that two people can independently observe the same behavior and come up with the same results
- Example: Two staff members are tracking an individual to determine the frequency of tantrums and agree that the behavior occurred or did not occur.

# Interobserver Agreement (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- When interobserver agreement is high, it suggests that the definition of the target behavior is clear and that the two observers are recording data in the same way as it occurs.
- A minimum of 80% agreement between raters is acceptable in research studies, but 90% and above is preferred.

## Example

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- Operational Definition of **hitting**:
  - Contact made against another person by forceful motion of an open hand against another body surface.
  - Bob and Sally independently record data on the occurrence of Steve's hitting. They agree 95% of the time that Steve engaged in hitting.

# Program Goals

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- Acquisition
- Acceleration
- Deceleration
- Maintenance
- Generalization
- Mastery

# Acquisition (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- Develop a new skill that is not already present in the individual's skill set
- For example, if staff want to teach Tom to cook and he does not already have the skill set to do so, staff can start by teaching him how to use the microwave to independently heat up some of his favorite foods.

# Acceleration (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007)

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- Increase the occurrence of a skill that already exists in the individual's skill set.
- For example, if Emma is babbling and staff want to increase the frequency of babbling to promote language, they would use an acceleration program to increase the occurrence of babbling over time.

# Deceleration (Cooper et al., 2007)

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- Decrease the occurrence of a skill that is present in the individual's skill set.
- For example, staff want to decrease Adam's calling out, they would use a deceleration program to decrease the occurrence of calling out over time, and replace it with a more appropriate behavior such as raising his hand.

# Maintenance (Cooper et al., 2007)

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- Means that a skill that was developed through acquisition or acceleration continues to occur over time.
- *Maintenance should be a part of every program.*
- For example, staff teach Maggie to use the microwave independently, and a month later, they go back and check skill use. If the skill was maintained staff would see that Maggie was still using the microwave independently.

# Generalization (Cooper et al., 2007)

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- The use of a skill across different settings, responses, or people.
- *Generalization should always be included in behavioral programs.*
- For example, Jane teaches Joe to ask permission in the house when he wants to borrow something that is not his. Jane would want the same skill to occur when he is working with Peter in the bookstore, and when he is at the park with his parents.

# Mastery (Newman, Reeve, Reeve, & Ryan, 2003)

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- Mastery is the goal of every program.
- Once a skill is taught, the ideal is for that individual continues to use the skill independently, consistently, and flexibly.
- For example, the staff are currently teaching Michael to indicate when he has to use the bathroom. He will have reached mastery when he is able to indicate this need at home, school, and any other situation where he needs to use the bathroom.

# Behavioral Programs (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- Once a target behavior and a program goal are selected, the next step is to create an individualized behavior program.
- Determine:
  - The steps required to reach the desired outcome and criteria that define step mastery.
  - The reinforcer that will be used.
  - The prompting procedure that will be used to help the individual learn the skill.

# Steps (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- Behavior is complex, and should be broken down into smaller manageable steps.
- For example: To teach someone to brush their teeth, break down the behavior into manageable steps.
  - Step 1: Go to bathroom.
  - Step 2: Get toothbrush and toothpaste.
  - Step 3: Unscrew cap on toothpaste.

# Reinforcement (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- Choose a reinforcer that is effective at reinforcing the behavior in the program.
- Reinforcement is determined on an individual basis.
- If the reinforcer chosen is not rewarding, the behavior may not change as outlined in the program.

# Prompting (Miltenberger, 2004)

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- Included in the behavior program so that when the individual does not engage in the target behavior, support is given to help them do so.
- For example, if the staff are teaching Sam to appropriately get someone's attention when they are in a conversation and Sam interrupts by pulling your shirt when you are talking, you can verbally prompt him by saying, "What do you say when someone is speaking?"

# Criteria for Mastery (Newman et al., 2003)

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- Mastery criteria states how successful the individual must be at the target behavior before moving to the next step or completing a goal.
- Build mastery criteria into each behavior program as they are being written.
- For example, if working on decreasing the frequency of kicking that occurs 15 times per hour, mastery criteria for decreasing kicking might be 0 kicks or 10 kicks.

# Plan for Maintenance and Generalization

(Cooper et al., 2007)

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- Plan for skill maintenance and generalization to be sure that the skill continues to occur over time and across settings and situations.
- Teaching a skill is the easy part, having the skill occur over time, in varied settings and situations, is the difficult part.
- Success is defined by the behavior continuing to occur after the teaching procedure has ended.

# Monitoring

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- Just because a skill was mastered during teaching does not mean that monitoring and behavioral recording stop.
- Continually monitor and evaluate behavior programs, goals, and outcomes.
- By continually monitoring behavior programs, it is easier to evaluate progress and growth for each individual.