

* Welcome *

Breakout sessions are provided by presenters who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with us today at the 2025 Family Summit.

Please remember that the information and experiences shared are understandings and perspectives of the presenters.

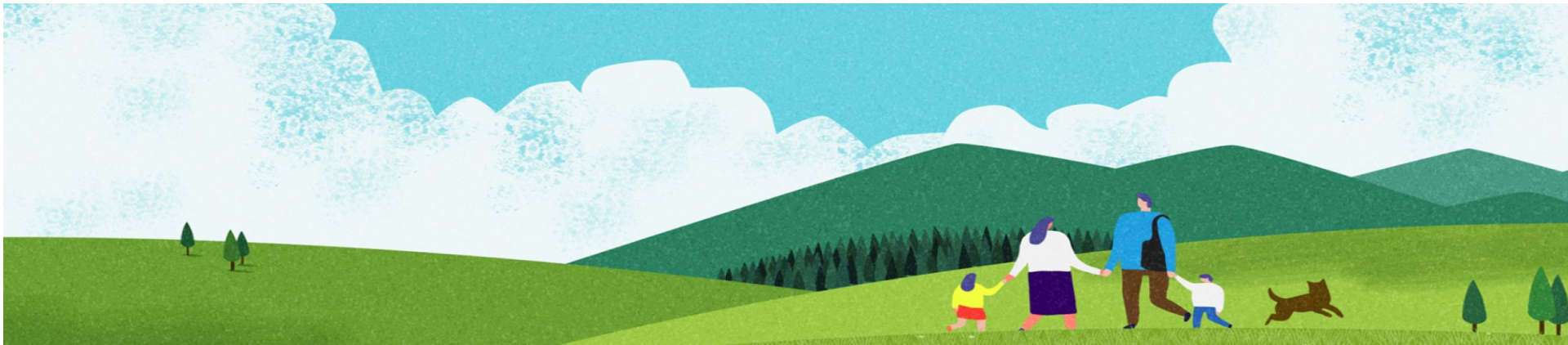


Fostering Independence

for students with Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Family Summit 2025

Office of Special Education Instruction, Applied Behavior Analysis Program



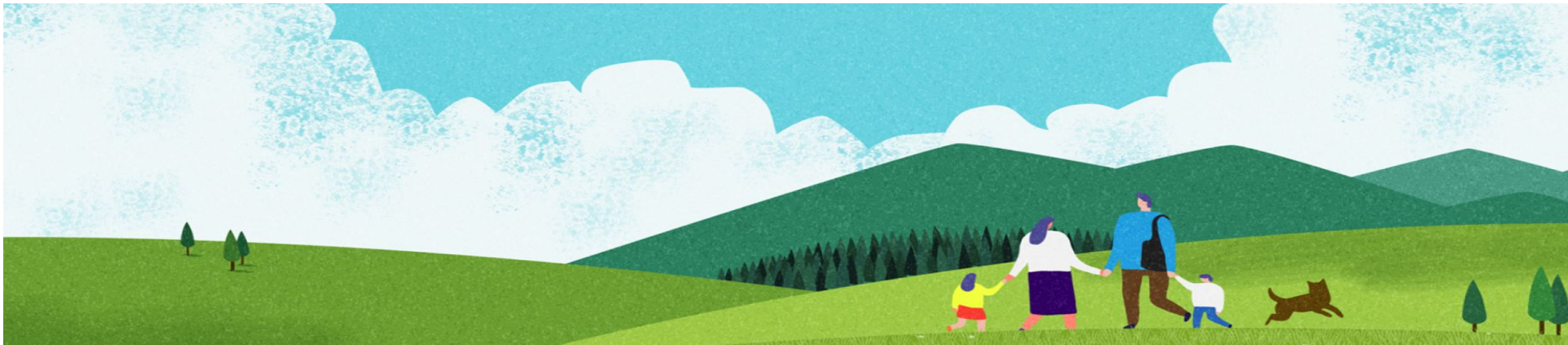
Today we will answer and consider the following:

- What is independence?
- Why are independent skills important?
- How can I start a plan that embeds strategies into everyday life?
- How can these strategies expand opportunities for my child as they age?



What does “**independence**” mean to you and your child?

- Let's define it for today:
 - **Independent Skills:** are typically described as a chain, or sequence of behaviors completed, where most, if not all steps are done so without help



Examples of Independent Skills

Self Help: Toileting, hand washing, teeth brushing, showering, dressing and undressing, grooming

Routines: Coming to the dinner table when called, packing their lunch or backpack, performing chores (cleaning their room, making a bed, unloading the dishwasher, cleaning up their toys, setting the table)

Leisure: Playing a computer game, doing a puzzle, reading a book (or listening to an audio book), riding a bike, drawing in a sketchbook,

Play: engaging with toys, using playground equipment, playing a board game, playing a sport

Academic: Tracing/Writing practice, Sorting or matching activities, studying for a test with flashcards, taking notes,

Why are these skills important?

- Decrease frustration and prompt dependency
- Improve quality of life
- Teach constructive use of free time
- Develop age appropriate interests
- Establish means for interacting socially with peers
- Increase ability to access community activities
- Improve self-confidence and self-advocacy



Building Blocks of Learning: 3-Term Contingency

A	B	C
Antecedent Environment, Materials, People, Instructions, etc.	Behavior Anything a person says or does. It is observable.	Consequence Anything that follows a behavior.

Today we will focus on:

Naturally occurring cues and instructions used	Different independent skills	The role reinforcement and feedback play in learning
---	---------------------------------	---

Where do we start?

- **Select a skill to teach based on these considerations:**
 - Most relevant impact on child and family's lives
 - Current strengths and needs
 - Child's preferences and interests
 - Age appropriateness
 - Practicality



Where do we start?

- **Gather information on where they are at with the skill(s)**
 - Do it yourself (write it down as you go through the steps)
 - Watch someone else do it or capture video
 - Watch your child to determine where to start
 - What steps can they already do fairly independently?
 - Where is the breakdown occurring?
- This is called a **Task Analysis**

Antecedent

Behavior

Consequence



Example Task Analysis of Handwashing

1. Turn the water on
2. Get the soap
3. Rub hands
4. Rinse hands
5. Turn off water
6. Dry hands
7. Put away/throw away towel



Where do we start?

- **Determine what will signal this/these behavior(s) to happen.**
 - Direct instructions
 - “Go play”, “Time for dinner”, “Get dressed”
 - “How do you want to pay?”,
 - Environmental cues
 - Alarm clock or timer, toilet flushes, finishes eating
 - Metro signage, Chairs in waiting area

Antecedent

Behavior

Consequence



Where do we start?

- **Think about what help or assistance can be added to these cues temporarily, to increase success**
 - Visual prompts
 - Gestures/Physical help
 - Modeling
 - And more...

Antecedent

Behavior

Consequence



Put the plan in action

- **Define the behavior(s) you want to see**
 - Be as specific and objective as possible
 - Ensure everyone is on the same page

Antecedent

Behavior

Consequence



Put the plan in action

- Provide **specific praise** and access to **reinforcement** for correct responses
- Give **corrective feedback** if they need to try again, and consider altering **assistance** the next time you try so they are successful

Antecedent

Behavior

Consequence



Examples of Reinforcement and Corrective Feedback

A		B		C
“Time for dinner”		Takes food from plate on counter and walks around with it.		Hm, that isn't what we do for dinner. Let's try again.
“Time for dinner” + Help guide child to get plate		Gets plate from kitchen and brings to table, sits down.		“Wow, you did everything to get ready for dinner” + you get your favorite chocolate milk

Put the plan in action

- **These ABC's are your building blocks of instruction**
- **Find time where your child gets lots of practice opportunities**
 - Practice with different people and places
- **When you start to see success, fade out assistance and increase the steps or behaviors you focus on.**
 - A common strategy to use to aid in this are **visuals** and **activity schedules**



Video Example of Grocery Shopping



Video Example of Visual Schedule and Routines



More Examples of Activity Schedules



More Examples of Activity Schedules

Publix-

Get Cart

- Shop for
 - 2 Store Top Stuffing ⁰⁸
 - green onions ^{Produce}
 - 2 frozen Chopped ¹⁷ Spinach
- Find Aisle Checkout
- Pay
- Get Change and Receipt
- Meet the Bus at Big Lots



Putting it All Together

- **Revisit your plan periodically and ask:**
- Are you seeing success and it continues to improve over time?
 - If no:
 - Can I break down the skill further?
 - Are my reinforcers still motivating?
 - Would a different prompt be more effective?
 - If yes:
 - Are there any prompts or assistance that can be faded?
 - Can the behavioral expectation be increased?

To Recap

- Prioritize which skill(s) you choose
- Make a plan
- Practice, practice, practice
- Reinforce, reinforce, reinforce
- Teach when your child is calm and available
- Make adjustments as needed
- Fade assistance over time

Thank you for joining us!

We invite you to join us for our monthly family trainings

March 19, 2025

Virtual Offerings at 10am and 7pm

For more information, please visit our website:

<https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/applied-behavior-analysis-a-ba-program>

