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Learning the ABCs (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence)

What is ABC?

A = Antecedent » What happened before the behavior

- Teacher says, “It’s time for math!”

B = Behavior » What the person did

- Student throws his pencil across the room.

C = Consequence » What happened after the behavior

- Student is sent out of the class room and avoids math.

What is the main takeaway from the ABCs?

- Many students (and even adults!) think behavior is random or “bad.”
- ABC shows that **every behavior has a cause and a reaction**—it’s part of a pattern.
- We can learn how to identify these patterns! Understanding your own reactions is powerful.

The activity gives you structure to reflect:

“What made me feel that way?”

“What did I do?”

“What happened next?”

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Everyone has different needs and responses! Practicing thinking about why others act a certain way can help us connect and understand ourselves, too.

How can we utilize the ABC's to change our own behavior?

- Once we identify the "A" (trigger) and "C" (what they get), we can find alternative behaviors.
- For example:
 - a) Instead of yelling to avoid math, maybe we can ask for a break.
 - b) Instead of hitting someone or pushing them to get a something back that they took, we can ask them, or ask for help.
 - c) “When I know why I do something, I can choose to do something different next time.”

Once we find the pattern, we can change something:

- Change the A » Avoid the trigger or prepare for it
(Ex: Wear headphones during loud times)
- Change the B » Learn a better way to act
(Ex: Use a calm-down strategy instead of yelling)
- Change the C » Give a better reward for positive behavior
(Ex: Praise for using words instead of throwing)

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Instructions for Personal Practice:

1. Consider 2 - 3 behaviors you have engaged in that resulted in negative consequences and fill out the ABC chart for each one.
2. Rewrite what you would do in the future in the alternative behaviors column
3. Practice these alternative behaviors in future situations!

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| Antecedent (Trigger): | Behavior: (Unfavorable) | Consequence(s): | Alternative Behavior(s): |
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