

Boundaries and Expectations: Contingencies

A contingency is a *relationship* between:



When a consequence is **contingent** on a behaviour, the behaviour **MUST** happen for the consequence to happen.

Remember, in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), “consequence” can be a good thing (reinforcer) or a bad thing (punisher).



The consequence of playing hide and seek is **contingent** on Timmy cleaning up toys. If the toys were **NOT** cleaned up, Mom would **NOT** play hide and seek.

Timmy cleaned up his toys when his mom asked him to, and he got to play hide and seek (which he loves). This means Timmy is more likely to clean up his toys in the future when his Mom asks him to.

We help kids be kids!

What's the Benefit of Contingencies?

Contingencies help outline boundaries and expectations. The child/youth learns in order to get reinforced, he/she MUST do the behaviour expected. This can help increase cooperation and teach new behaviours.

How to Use

The child/youth will only learn this if you follow a few important rules:

1. Child/youth does NOT get the consequence if he/she does not engage in the behaviour

If Timmy did not clean up his toys, but Mom played hide and seek anyway, Timmy would learn his Mom will play hide and seek whether or not he cleans up his toys.

2. Must give reinforcement (the consequence) **immediately** after the behaviour you want to see

You don't want to accidentally reinforce a different behaviour, which could happen if you don't reinforce immediately. Imagine Mom was delayed in playing hide and seek and Timmy started crying before they played. Timmy would learn that he cleans up his toys, then cries, in order to get Mom to play hide and seek.

3. Reinforcement must **only** occur when the contingency you are teaching happens

Let's say Mom plays hide and seek when Timmy picks up toys; great! But she also plays hide and seek when he screams, yells, pulls on her hand and whines. Timmy will not understand what behaviour he needs to do in order to play hide and seek with Mom.

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Contingencies

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How do I Start?

When your child/youth wants something, you can place a contingency!

When my child/youth wants...	He/she can...	Then I will...
Bath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take off a sock • Throw toys in the bath 	Give access to tub, toys, soap, etc.
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit at table • Hold a spoon • Shut cupboard 	Give access to food, utensil, etc.
Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade to get different colour • Put on apron 	Give access to new colour, paintbrush, etc.
Television/Movie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring remote to me • Make choice 	Turn TV on, put on chosen movie, etc.

Want to learn more? Call to see how else we can help.

1-866-590-8822, press 1 to book a meeting today!

Services and supports in partnership with:



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