

VERBAL BEHAVIOR

Verbal Behavior is a methodology that is based upon behavioral principles, but combines the functionality and generalization of Floortime.

Verbal Behavior relies on an intensive teaching setting, fast tempo, and a rapid succession of questions from the adult and later the child. In order to reinforce correct answers and decrease frustration verbal behavior methodology urges interspersing easy and hard demands (by a ratio of 20% hard to 80% easy). The therapists will challenge the child in areas of weakness while cutting down frustration by allowing the child to respond to simple tasks.

Although Verbal Behavior uses a systematic, highly structured teaching approach, its method moves away from the traditional ABA setting and Discrete Trial Teaching. Because verbal behavior does not require a specific number of trials before decreasing prompts, Verbal Behavior, like Floortime, encourages the Therapist to probe the skill level of the child by fading prompt levels as quickly as possible. This allows for a fast paced learning environment and quicker success. This also allows the child to be more flexible and less rote because of the variety of topics touched upon.

Like Floortime therapy, verbal behavior uses the child's reinforcement as a method of teaching. For example, many children are motivated by videos.

Verbal Behavior believes in teaching and generalizing all the meanings of a word. For example, if you are teaching the child about Coffee you need to have the child complete the following steps before the item is considered mastered:

1. MAND (Request)
2. TACT (Expressively Label)
3. ECHOIC (Vocal Imitation)
4. INTRAVERBAL (Answering a question, "What's your favorite morning beverage")
5. RECEPTIVE (Non-verbal comprehension, pass the coffee),
6. RFFC (Receptive labeling by Feature, Function, and Class)

Generalization occurs in steps three – six and prevents the child from just learning how to only expressively label "coffee" or how to only identify coffee among pictures and places (as occurs often in ABA). Verbal Behavior places more emphasis on day-to-day involvement and understanding of what coffee is and learning this information in context, versus teaching information out of context, hence making the teaching more functional.