


**AlphaBee Pro**  
a division of AlphaBee

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## ABA IN THE CLASSROOM

Getting Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder to Follow Instructions

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This presents is for informational purposes only and does not constitute clinical or legal advice. Follow up with a BCaB/BCBA/BCBA-D is recommended to develop a specific plan for your child or student.

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## PURPOSE

This workshop will guide you on how to use ABA strategies to teach children with ASD and other developmental disabilities to follow instructions in the classroom.

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## TOPICS COVERED

1. What is compliance?
2. What is reinforcement?
3. How to use reinforcement
4. Developing instructional control
5. Strategies to use in the classroom

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## WHAT IS COMPLIANCE?

From a behavioural perspective...

**Compliance is following an instruction within 5-10 seconds**

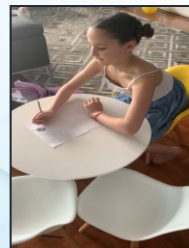
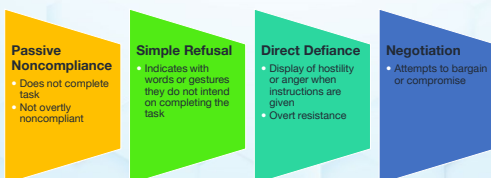
## WHY IS COMPLIANCE IMPORTANT

- Common concern for teachers – 78% of teachers identified “follows directions” as a very important and essential kindergarten entry level skill (Gorrell, 2003)
- Noncompliance is a very common challenging behaviour in children (McMahon & Forehand, 2003)
- Compliance is a foundation skill for learning a variety of more complex social, academic, and self-care skills (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003)

## WHY IS COMPLIANCE IMPORTANT

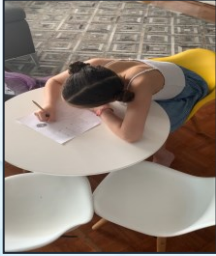
- For children with disabilities, it may be correlated with academic progress (Wehby and Lane, 2009)
- Noncompliance is correlated with a number of psychiatric diagnoses later in life (Keenan and Wakschlag, 2000)
- Compliance is predictive of the frequency and severity of problem behaviour later in development (Keenan et al., 1988)
- Important for safety reasons
- Can result in stress and social isolation for parents

## TYPES OF NON-COMPLIANCE



## Passive Non-Compliance

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Simple Refusal

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Direct Defiance

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Negotiation

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### UNDERSTANDING COMPLIANCE



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## UNDERSTANDING REINFORCEMENT

Motivation has two states

Deprivation      Satiation

- Motivation can change throughout the day
- For some learners social praise is not enough

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## REINFORCEMENT IS KEY!

- *“If you don’t have good reinforcers and are not working to establish them, you might as well go home.”*  
– Ron Leaf
- *“Positive Reinforcement is the most important and most widely applied principle of behaviour analysis.”*  
– Cooper, Heron and Heward (2007, p. 257)

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## WHAT IS REINFORCEMENT?

The relationship of *delivering or removing* an item from the learners environment to **increase** a target behaviour

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## WHAT IS A REINFORCER?

Tangible	Activity	Person/ Attention
Sensory		Edible
Social		

## REINFORCEMENT VS. BRIBERY

### Reinforcement

- Rewards are earned for a job well done
- Creates a lasting positive change on behaviour
- Planned ahead of time and delivered with praise
- Adult is in control – they decide when (and if) rewards have been earned

### Bribery

- Bribes are often given in response to a challenging behaviour
- Changes behaviour in the moment but not other time
- Reactive and delivered in frustration
- Child is in control – negotiation is made in exchange for compliance

## REINFORCEMENT

Remember....

- Reinforcement is the process of delivering a reinforcer to a learner which results in the increase of future behaviour

## RULES OF USING REINFORCEMENT

### Identify Reinforcers

Should be motivating

Find variety

Find novel reinforcers

### Deliver Reinforcement

Pair with social praise

Delivered immediately after desired behaviour

Delivered after each instance of desired behaviour

Label the item and why its being delivered

### Maintain Reinforcement

Continue to develop this process

Start to reinforce every other response once consistently following instructions

Overtime make it practical

## SELECTING A REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULE

- At the beginning, reinforcement is provided frequently
  - Your student may require reinforcement every few minutes for the absence of disruptive behaviour, and the presence of appropriate behaviour should result in even stronger reinforcement
- The initial schedule should be based on a baseline rate of the disruptive behaviours
  - For example, if the student acts out every 15 minutes, they should receive feedback and reinforcement before 15 minutes (10 mins)
- This way the student will be able to be successful and receive reinforcement
- As you fade a reinforcement schedule, more powerful reinforcers should be used

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## CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

- In a school setting, there may be some restrictions on the categories of reinforcement you are able to deliver based on the classroom, teacher and your student (e.g. edibles, iPad)
- If they are an early learner they will need to be reinforced more frequently
- If you are working with an advanced learner you may be able to introduce a token economy system where they can work for longer periods of time and choose their reinforcer

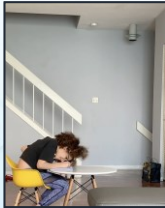
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## IDEAS FOR REINFORCERS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Vary your verbal praise – check out 100 Ways to Praise a Child
- Use particular reinforcers during specific times of the day
- Use a bin or backpack and either leave it in the classroom or bring it with you
  - Rotate items in the bin frequently

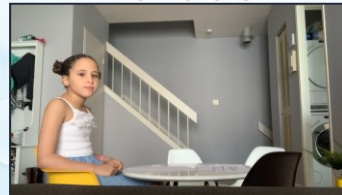
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## REINFORCEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM



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## REINFORCEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM With Tokens



## REINFORCEMENT IN ACTION

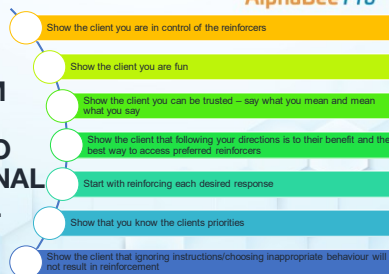
- Pairing is the first step to gaining instructional control
- Instructional control is the most important aspect of any learner-teacher relationship
- It creates a positive working relationship and can be described in terms such as compliance training, or earning your student's respect

## PAIRING

- Pairing is the process where a learner learns that teachers are the givers of good things and good things come when we are nearby
- Set up the environment - put things away, or up high on shelves that are normally available to your student for free.
- You want the reinforcers to be in your control. You should have the most powerful reinforcers in your possession and also be the most important reinforcer so that you can begin to establish instructional control.

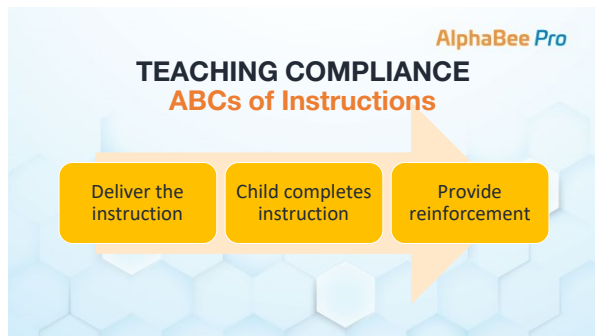
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## 7 STEPS TO INSTRUCTIONAL CONTROL



## TEACHING COMPLIANCE ABCs of Instructions

A (antecedents/ teacher behaviour)	B (learner behaviour)	C (consequence/ teacher behaviour)
Instructions Prompts	Correct response Incorrect response No response	Reinforcement Error Correction Prompts



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## TEACHING COMPLIANCE

- Use **antecedent** strategies (what happens before a behaviour) and **consequence** strategies aka **reinforcement** (what happens after a behaviour)
- Complete daily **compliance drills**.

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## TEACHING COMPLIANCE The Set-Up

- Establish fun activities without placing demands on your learner
- Occasionally call the student's name and then deliver a reinforcer to pair the student's name with reinforcement
- Follow the child's motivation when pairing

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## TEACHING COMPLIANCE The Set-Up

- In a classroom, it is helpful to have a bin, wear an apron or use a backpack of reinforcers that the student knows they have access to through you
- The delivery of reinforcement in the classroom can take on many forms – this is a time to get creative



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### Antecedents

#### Create a Task analysis

- Break skills down into smaller, teachable steps
- List the steps in sequential order
- Learners with ASD may need complex skills broken down into smaller steps
- Number of steps vary by skill and learner needs

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### Antecedents

- Make eye contact
- Deliver instructions a directive/ statement
- Ensure to be at child's eye level
- Increased proximity to the child
  - e.g. within 3 feet when giving the instruction

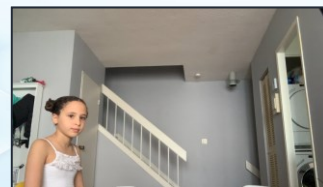
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### Antecedents

- Present **high probability requests** immediately your target instruction
  - A series of instructions a student is most likely to perform
- Learners are more likely to follow instructions easy instructions before completing a harder task
  - Think of a printing worksheet – first you start with just a letter then by the end of the page you are practicing the whole word

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### High-P Example



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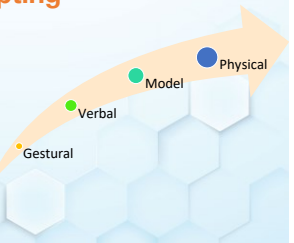
### Antecedents

- Deliver clear concise instructions
- Decrease the amount of instructions per day (to start)
- Only provide instructions for things you can follow through with
- Provide your student with choices throughout the day to provide them with a sense of control
  - e.g. the order to do chores, what to have for snack, what to work on first

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### Prompting

- If the child does not comply to your instructions within 5 seconds:
  - **Prompt** to complete the task
  - Deliver **reinforcement** (e.g. tangible or token paired with social praise) contingent upon compliance



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### Prompting

- Prompts are used to increase the chance that the client will perform a given behaviour
  - Too much = prompt dependence
  - Too little = errors, trouble learning
- Use more prompts for new skills that are difficult and fewer prompts for skills that the learner is somewhat familiar with
- Prompts need to be faded

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### Prompting

#### Least-to-Most

- Providing no or minimal assistance at first, then prompting after the child has responded incorrectly or not at all
- Give the instruction---wait 2 to 3 seconds---prompt response
- Say-Show-Do: Verbal, model, physical

#### Most-to-Least

- Better for brand new skills
- Provide higher level prompts right away to avoid errors and then fade
- Physical-Model-Gestural-Verbal-Visual

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### Prompting

- Must plan to fade prompts so that the learner can perform the skill independently
- Goal is for the learner's behaviour to be under the control of relevant environmental cues
  - For example, when the bell rings, you line up. We want to fade additional prompts (e.g. teacher saying "time to line up", teacher pointing to the line, etc.)

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- Complete 5-minute compliance drills each day
- Set up about 15 artificial tasks for your learner to do
  - Choose tasks he/she already knows how to do or are easy to do
- Give the instruction once
- Praise and reinforce your learner when they initiate the task within 10-sec and completes the task in 30-sec

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### Correcting Errors

- If your learner does not initiate following the instruction within 5 seconds, walk quickly to your child take them hand over hand and repeat the instruction, follow through with the task and praise them ("That's \_\_\_")
- You will start to see your child spontaneously comply in real life
- Also complete daily drills for instructions related to safety. For example, "Come here" and "Stop"

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### Step by Step



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**TEACHING COMPLIANCE**

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**TEACHING COMPLIANCE**  
**Error Correction**

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**TEACHING COMPLIANCE**  
**Delivering Reinforcement**

- In the beginning don't let a good response of any kind pass without meeting some form of reinforcement (e.g. a sticker, stamp, social praise, etc.)
- Later when student is following your directions consistently you can begin to thin out the ratio of reinforcement
- Once your student is consistently following your instructions this can be maintained by slowly thinning out the amount of reinforcement through an increase in the response – reinforcement ratio.

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**THROUGHOUT THE DAY**

- When you give instructions in real life, remember to reinforce! A special treat, praise etc.
- Only provide instructions with which you can follow through
- When non-compliance occurs get up and complete the correction procedure, follow through

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## TAKE HOME POINTS

- Compliance is critical for children with and without disabilities
- Should be a focus of instruction at home, school and community
- Methods supported by research such as, guided compliance and differential reinforcement, should be used to teach compliance, beginning at an early age

## REFERENCES

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