

References

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- Davis, C.A., Brady, M.P., Williams, R.E., & Hamilton, R. (1992). Effects of high- probability requests on the acquisition and generalization of responses in young children with behavior disorders. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 25*, 905-916.
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- Nevin, J. A., Mandell, C., & Atak, J. R. (1983). The analysis of behavioral momentum. *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, 39*, 49-59.

Video Resources:

<https://youtu.be/ROKT0CLLCsY>

<https://youtu.be/0hkMrDzq8L4>

Guidelines for Behavior Momentum Program:

1. Identify low-p behaviors. Researchers typically identify low-p behaviors as complying with directives 50% or less. Researchers conducted 10 trials per behavior (low-p and high-p) to determine this percentage.
2. Identify high-p behaviors. Researchers typically identify high-p behaviors as complying with directives 80% or better. Develop a list and vary the high-p requests given. Avoid repeating identical high-p chains.
3. Deliver 3-5 high-p requests rapidly just prior to administering a low-p request.
4. Deliver verbal or gestural praise (thumbs up, waving hands in the air) for each response to a high-p request.
5. Deliver the low-p request within 5 seconds of reinforcing a response to the last high-p request. Delaying the low-p request (e.g., 20 second delay) can decrease the likelihood of compliance.
6. The topography of high-p requests may need to be altered to be consistent with the student's age and functioning level.
7. Generalize behavior with other instructors.
8. Program to fade out high-p requests slowly. One study faded from 3 high-p's to 1 high-p prior to delivering 1 low-p.
9. Record data on the target low-p behavior to monitor progress.



Increasing Compliance with Behavior Momentum

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“ARGGHHH! My student won’t listen to me!” Noncompliance is the failure to initiate or to complete an assigned task or demand in a timely manner. It is one of the most problematic behaviors in students with developmental disabilities, as well as one of the more pervasive problems in the general school setting (Belfiore, Basile, & Lee, 2008). Failure to respond to requests has been identified as a primary reason for children’s exclusion from community, social, and instructional opportunities (Davis, Williams & Hamilton, 1992). Typical strategies used to combat noncompliance result in aversive consequences such as physical guidance, scolding, or time out from activity. Students may temporarily decrease noncompliant behaviors, but soon reengage because they were not taught alternative compliant behaviors. For other students, these strategies increased noncompliant behaviors by delivering additional attention for off task behavior.

Behavior Momentum (Nevin, Mandell, & Atar, 1983), also known as, High-Probability Command Sequence (HPCS), (Belfiore et. al., 2008), is an effective antecedent strategy that increases compliant behaviors. Behavior momentum consists of the instructor administering high-probability (high-p) requests, which are a rapid series of short, easy requests, prior to delivering a low probability (low-p) request, which is identified as difficult or historically results in noncompliant behaviors. Reinforcement is delivered contingent on the demonstration of high-p behaviors as well as the low-p behavior.

Example: 3 high-p behaviors prior to 1 low-p behavior for a young child. Teacher should be in close proximity to model and reinforce high-p and low-p behaviors.

1. “Clap hands”...(model if needed) “Wonderful clapping hands!”
2. “Touch nose”.... (model if needed) “Super job touching nose! Tickle attack!” Give tickles.
3. “High five”...(extend hand as a model) “Thanks buddy!”
4. “Sit down” (low-p behavior), walk with student to desk, once seated, “You are sitting so nicely!”

The theory of behavior momentum is likened to Newton’s first law of motion (Nevin et. al., 1983). Imagine a large boulder rolling down a mountainside. The boulder increases velocity as it rolls. The child engages in several high-p behaviors increasing the velocity or rate of responding within a response class (e.g., compliant behaviors). The increased rate, or frequency, responding results in increased resistance to change, allowing behavior to persist, even when presented with a low-p request (Belfiore, et. al., 2008).