

What Is It?

Collaborative activities is a strategy in which the student and an adult share the responsibility of completing the steps of an activity or a task that typically occasions challenging behavior.

When to Use It

- Collaborative activities are effective to use with challenging behavior that is maintained by escape from a task. The adult initially decreases the demands of the task by splitting the responsibility for completing parts of a task between the student and the adult.
- Collaborative activities are effective to use with behavior that functions to obtain attention. By interacting with the student when he or she is completing the task, you provide attention for appropriately engaging in the task.
- Collaborative activities can be used to systematically increase a student’s participation in activities or tasks that typically occasion challenging behavior.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

After identifying a task the student is trying to escape or obtain attention and a task that can be completed while engaging with someone (i.e., teacher or paraprofessional):

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| | <p>1. Identify ways in which the steps of the selected activity or task can be divided or shared. For example, getting ready to go home can be divided into components of getting the backpack, putting take home materials in the appropriate folder, putting folder in the backpack, putting lunch sack in backpack.</p> |
| | <p>2. Offer to split the components of the task when asking the student to engage in the desired task (e.g., “It’s time to pack up for home. Go get your backpack, I’ll put your homework in the folder and you can pack it in the backpack”).</p> |
| | <p>3. Complete the task collaboratively with the student by interspersing which steps you will complete with the steps that student will complete.</p> |
| | <p>4. When completing the task, provide praise, or descriptive comments (“Thanks for getting the backpack. There is not too much homework to put in the folder.”)</p> |
| | <p>5. After each successful opportunity in completing the task without challenging behavior, systematically increase the student’s responsibilities in the collaborative activity or task.</p> |

Example

Caleb typically crumples his papers and does not complete his math work. By conducting a functional assessment, the team determines the behavior is maintained by escaping the task and gaining the teacher's attention. The teacher implements the collaborative activities strategy in the classroom. During math, Mr. Johnson presents Caleb with the assigned worksheet and says, "After you do the first three problems on your own, I will do the next three with you." After Caleb is successful in completing portions of his math work collaboratively over several opportunities, Mr. Johnson gradually increases the amount of responsibility required of Caleb. During the next math activity, Mr. Johnson presents Caleb with the math worksheet and says, "If you do the first five problems, I will do the next three with you." Caleb is asked to complete more and more of the task independently by increasing the amount of work Caleb completes and decreasing the amount of help Mr. Johnson provides. This systematic increase in responsibility occurs gradually and only as Caleb demonstrates the appropriate behavior over the course of several opportunities.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Use intermittent praise and words that describe the student's participation in the task (i.e. "Nice job writing your name on your worksheet", "I really like how you put your papers away neatly in your folder") when engaging in the activity or task.
- Gradually increase the amount of participation or responsibility that is required of the student systematically and slowly.
- If the student has challenging behaviors during the activity, you may need to reduce the required amount of work the next time you do a similar activity.

Resources

Carr, E. G., & Carlson, J. I. (1993). Reduction of severe behavior problems in the community using a multicomponent treatment approach. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *26*, 157-72.

Petscher, E. S., Rey, C., & Bailey, J. S. (2009). A review of empirical support for differential reinforcement of alternative behavior. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *30*, 409-425.