

What Is It?

Collaborative activities is a strategy in which an adult offers to collaboratively work with a child to complete a task or activity. This collaboration reduces the demands of the activity and helps prevent challenging behavior from occurring.

When to Use It

- To prevent challenging behavior that is maintained by escape or avoidance of an activity, and/or accessing adult attention.
 - o For behavior maintained by avoidance, the task is shared by the child and the adult to make it easier to complete.
 - o For behavior maintained by adult attention, the adult interacts with the child while completing the task, providing attention for appropriate engagement and participation.
- To systematically increase a child’s participation in activities or tasks that typically occasion challenging behavior by slowly increasing the amount of the activity that the child completes.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

After identifying the activity the child is trying to avoid, or obtain attention:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Identify ways in which the steps of the selected activity or task can be divided or shared (e.g., getting ready to go home can be divided into components of getting the backpack, unzipping the backpack, putting materials inside the backpack, and zipping the backpack).
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Offer to split parts of the task when asking the child to engage in the desired activity (e.g., “It’s time to pack up for home. Go get your backpack, I’ll unzip it, and you can put your lunchbox in the backpack”).
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Complete the task jointly with the child by interspersing which steps you will complete with the steps that the child will complete.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Provide praise or descriptive comments while completing the task (e.g., “Thanks for getting the backpack. There is plenty of room to put your lunchbox inside!”)
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Gradually increase the number of steps the child completes without help from the adult following opportunities in which the child completes the task without challenging behavior.

Example

Caleb typically throws toys when it is time to clean up. A functional assessment determined the behavior is maintained by avoiding cleaning up, and also by gaining adult attention. The preschool teacher implements the collaborative activities strategy at the end of free play. When it is time to clean up, Kim brings a bin to Caleb and says, "After you put a block in the bin, I will put the rest of the blocks in the bin with you." After Caleb is successful in cleaning up collaboratively over several opportunities, Kim gradually increases the amount of cleaning up required of Caleb. During the next free play clean up time, Kim brings the block bin over to Caleb and says, "After you put three blocks in the bin, I will put the rest of the blocks in the bin with you." Caleb is asked to clean up with more and more independence, by increasing the number of items Caleb puts away and decreasing the amount of help Kim provides. This systematic increase in expectation of Caleb occurs gradually and only as Caleb demonstrates the appropriate behavior over the course of several opportunities.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Collaborative activities work best when nested within the child and adult regularly engaging in conversations, play, and everyday nurturing interactions.
- Provide positive feedback and words that describe the child's participation in the activity (e.g., "Nice job getting your carpet square," "I really like how you put your carpet square gently on the floor") when engaging in the activity or task.
- Gradually increase the amount of participation that is required of the child systematically and slowly.
- If the child engages in challenging behavior during the activity, reduce the expected amount of effort from the child.

Resources

Lucyshyn, J. M., Albin, R. W., Horner, R. H., Mann, J. C., Mann, J. A., & Wadsworth, G. (2007). [Family implementation of positive behavior support for a child with autism: Longitudinal, single-case, experimental, and descriptive replication and extension](#). *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 9(3), 131–150.

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.