How to Teach Your Special Needs Child by "Capturing" and "Shaping" Their Great Behaviors

With Martha Gabler and Andrew Miller

Today's Topics

- **Introduction to TAGteach**

- **Capturing**

- **Shaping**

Introduction to TAGteach®

A set of tools and techniques to streamline communication between teacher and learner

Key TAGteach Tool

The tag point
1 Clear learning goal

tag point

The Perfect Learning Goal

1

What you want

Phrase in the positive
What you want the learner to do

2

One thing

Ask for only one thing at a time

Ignore all the rest

3

Observable

You must be able to detect and count

4

Five words or less

less is more

① What you want

② One thing
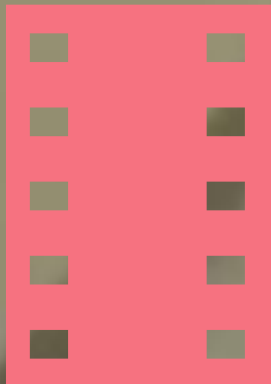
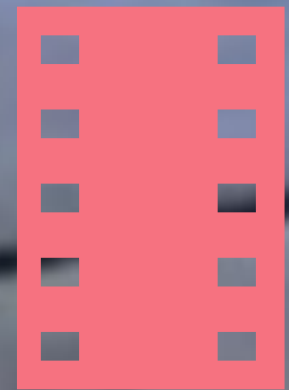③ Observable

④ Five words or less

WOOF

Capturing

- Observe your child
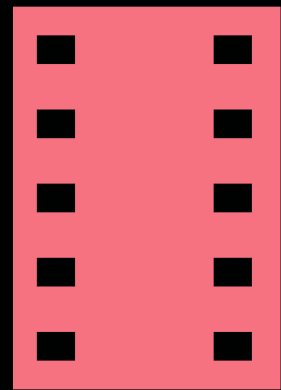- Note one behavior to increase
- Tag immediately to reinforce

What is a tag?

- "A tag is any stimulus that precisely marks the occurrence of the behavior"

  Joan Orr

A tag as a conditioned reinforcer

- When a tag is consistently presented during behavior and reinforcement follows, it may become a conditioned reinforcer (CR). Peiris and Rosales-Ruiz (2022) identify two functions of CR's:
  - Tells the learner 'good job' (reinforcing function)
  - Tells the learner what to do - 'consume your reinforcer' or 'keep going' (discriminative function)

Why do we need to tag?

"While trainers may or may not want to use a clicker, they should be aware that conditioned reinforcers will develop. Rather than letting conditioned reinforcers develop haphazardly, communication during training may be clearer if the trainer teaches and maintains a well- defined and consistent conditioned reinforcer, such as a clicker, that can serve as a discriminative stimulus for collecting the reinforcer." (Peiris and Rosales-Ruiz, 2022, p. 9)

A tag provides the "necessary speed"

"To be effective a reinforcement must be given almost simultaneously with the desired behavior; a delay of even one second destroys much of the effect. This means that offering food in the usual way is likely to be ineffective; it is not fast enough. The best way to reinforce the behavior with the necessary speed is to use a "conditioned" reinforcer."
(Skinner, 1951, p. 1)

What is Shaping?

"Shaping means teaching the behavior using a series of steps, instead of expecting the learner to do the whole behavior at once."

Jesus Rosales-Ruiz and Mary Hunter

Where to Start

Start with something the learner can already do

When do We Need Shaping?

- Component skills are missing
- Other methods are not working quickly

Planning

1. Where are we going?
2. Where are we now?
3. How are we going to get there?
4. How will we maintain progress?
5. How will we monitor progress?

Israel Goldiamond

Shaping Plan

- Plan
- Be ready to adjust
- Expect non-linearity

My Shaping Plan

What behavior will I teach? Describe the SEQUENCE of ACTIONS the learner will do with the OBJECTS. If the behavior involves cues, list the CUES that will be used.

Component analysis

Action	Teaching ideas

Other ideas for how to teach this behavior

Outline of proposed shaping steps

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)
8)
9)
10)

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My Shaping Plan

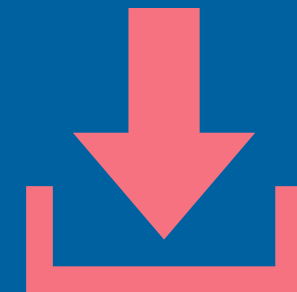|	
What behavior will I teach? Describe the SEQUENCE of ACTIONS the learner will do with the OBJECTS. If the behavior involves cues, list the CUES that will be used.	
When kneeling on the floor and handed the strap/band, Peyton will pull down and move up the band 12 inches in both direction independently for 10 times consecutively without letting go of the strap.	

Component analysis

Action	Teaching ideas
Pull down band	Shape distance using hand target
Move arm up w band	Shape distance using hand target and shape as a link in a chain after pull down movement is performed.

Other ideas for how to teach this behavior

Teach unilateral pull downs when sitting, which is easier than standing

Teach without any weight apart from the resistance from just the band

Once the movement is independent and consistent, put into fluency training

Outline of proposed shaping steps

1) Pull down strap/band 2 inches

2) Pull down strap/band 6 inches

3) Pull down strap/band 12 inches to the chest level

4) Pull down strap/band to chest level & then move up to 6 inches to nose level

5) Pull down strap/band to chest level & then move up 12 inches from chest

6) Pull down strap/band to chest level & then move up 12 inches from chest

7) Pull down strap/band to chest level & then move up 12 inches from chest 5 times

8) Pull down strap/band to chest level & then move up 12 inches from chest 7 times

9) Pull down strap/band to chest level & then move up 12 inches from chest 10 times
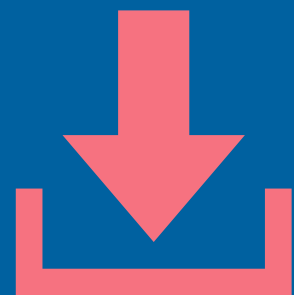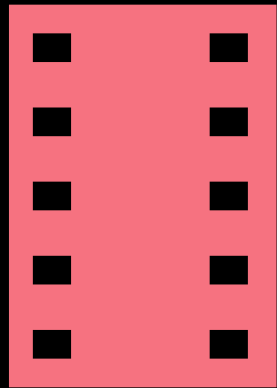
10)

My Shaping Plan

What behavior will I teach? Describe the SEQUENCE of ACTIONS the learner will do with the OBJECTS. If the behavior involves cues, list the CUES that will be used.

When sitting and a ball is presented, Peyton will pick up the ball, pronate and extend wrist, extend the shoulder backward 6 inches, engage in shoulder flexion forward 6 inches, and release the ball towards a bin or pins independently on 5 consecutive occasions.

Component analysis

| Action	Teaching ideas
Move forearm downward	Make a target that is the size of forearm to allow stationing
Wrist pronation & extension	Use a separate target stick to shape after arm is stationed
Shoulder extension	Shape distance by moving yellow target strip back gradually
Shoulder flexion	Use the green target stick to shape forward distance

Other ideas for how to teach this behavior

Teach steps # 1 through 4 without the ball to reduce difficulty

Teach touch target stick to establish target stick as a target for touching hand

Chain the movements together. May need to isolate & practice certain components

Outline of proposed shaping steps

1) Move forearm 2 in to touch yellow target strip underneath

2) Build duration of touch (stationing forearm on yellow target strip)

3) Touch green target stick with finger

4) With step #2, wrist pronation & extension of back of hand to green target stick

5) While holding ball, pronate & extend wrist before touching forearm to target strip

6) Step #5 + shoulder extension 2 inches back towards yellow target strip

7) Step #5 + shoulder extension 4 inches back towards yellow target strip

8) Step #5 + shoulder extension 6 inches back towards yellow target strip

9) Step #8 + shoulder flexion 2 inches towards green target stick

10) Step #8 + shoulder flexion + release ball towards yellow target strip 2 feet away

11) Step #10 without targets

12) Step # 11 with fluency
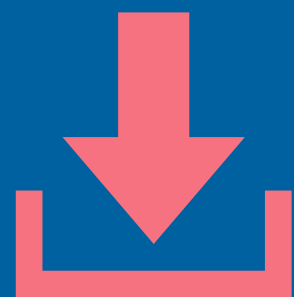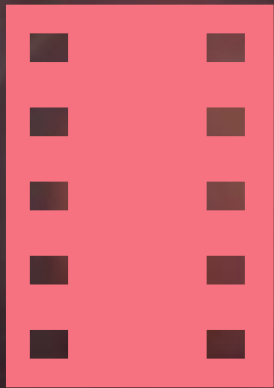
Evaluate

- Procedural fidelity checklist
- Video review
- Expectations

Shaping Procedural Fidelity Checklist

Date: _____   Instructor: _____   Student: _____

		YES	NO	N/A
	1. Does instructor have planned steps towards a goal?			
	2. Does the instructor identify and start with targeting what the learner CAN do?			
	3. Does the instructor arrange the environment to increase likelihood of certain behavior?			
	4. Is the instructor monitoring and reinforcing the correct step throughout the session?			
	5. Does instructor use a conditioned reinforcer appropriately?			
	6. Does the instructor use appropriate reinforcer mechanics (timing, delivery methods)?			
	7. Does instructor have a contingency plan for themselves regarding how/when to adjust criteria (e.g., 2-4 successful steps → increase criteria, 1-2 unsuccessful steps → decrease criteria)?			
	8. Does the instructor reset appropriately when then the learner is unsuccessful rather than having long pauses w/out reinforcement?			
	9. Does instructor diagnose performance problems and make successful adjustments (e.g., slicing to create additional steps, or modify starting point)?			
	10. Is targeting used appropriately including fading of targets (making target smaller or transferring actions when targeting)?			
	11. Is data collected (if needed), on a starting point and ending point of the shaping session?			
IOA and Notes:			____/11	
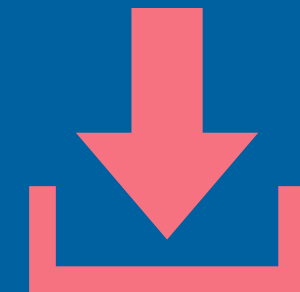
Q & A

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