**Antecedent Interventions to Reduce Anxiety**

***Antecedent-based interventions:*** arranging events that precede the occurrence of an interfering behavior that are designed to lead to the reduction of that interfering behavior.

* **PAIRING/Relationship building:** the process by which we condition ourselves and our teaching materials as reinforces. Before we begin teaching skills, we need to begin the pairing process with the learner. It is all about trust and being a safe person.
* **Increase the predictability** in all environments through visual supports
	+ Provide a daily schedule/routine to reduce stress and anxiety
	+ Advance notice of schedule changes, need to transition to another activity or expectations for the next activity, new event/expectation
* Task list/charts with the time for a break included
* Transition plan; for each transition during the day (activity to activity, setting to setting, etc.)
* **Give advance notice** to any/all changes, differences, transitions
* **“On the spot” modifications** to activities, such as **“Jump Starts”** (advance notice of what will be addressed in a lesson, what materials will be needed)
	+ It is important to be able to shift your own expectations and be flexible.
* **“Behavioral momentum”** (several easy things to do, followed by a more difficult or challenging tasks)
* **Scheduled breaks**; timed to occur before activities/events the child may find difficult
* **Schedule times during the day for children to engage in preferred activities or with preferred items**
* **Alternate between preferred and non-preferred activities**
* **Non-contingent reinforcement (NCR):** a powerful technique that provides rewards/attention/praise whenever a child is NOT engaging in problematic behavior
* **Choice**: provide opportunities for choice (among options that are equally acceptable to teacher) whenever possible
* **Setting up a token economy**
	+ Finding good motivators through a preference assessment
	+ Giving the child the choice of rewards from a list of items/activities of known value to child
	+ Goal is to increase positive, appropriate behaviors and functional communication
* **Teach expected behaviors** to children proactively. Review these behaviors several times a day. Consider written social narratives.
* **Consider environmental accommodations**
	+ Where is the child expected to sit? Are we minimizing distractions?
* **Provide plenty of opportunities to move** (antecedent exercise)
	+ Brain breaks
	+ Whole body learning
	+ Individual breaks (ex. walk to office and back, deliver message)
* **Make sure the child is able to functionally communicate** (ex. needs, questions).
* May need Functional Communication Training (FCT)
* Consultation with a Speech-Language Pathologist
* **Make sure you are aware of the individual child’s skill deficits and are working to improve these deficits**
* **Give clear verbal directions**
* KISS: Keep It Short and Simple
* Match number of steps (1-part, 2-part, etc.) to age group or individual child’s working memory
* Avoid repeating when you can refer to written instruction on board
* **Use visual supports** to supplement verbal instructions
	+ Post-it note
	+ Task list
	+ Schedule posted in visible place; kept in notebook or taped to desk
	+ Expectations for environment visible
	+ Daily routine/schedule written clearly on board