

# Every Behavior Tells a Story: Discovering Your Child's Voice

QR Code For Presentation Slides



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QR Code For Reflection Worksheet





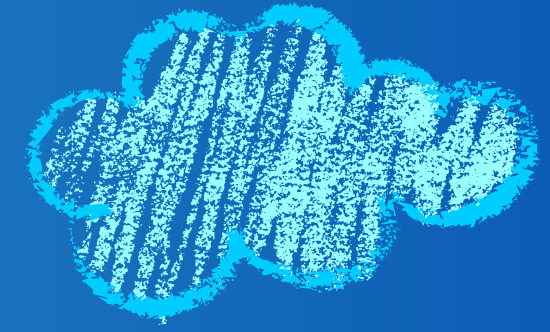
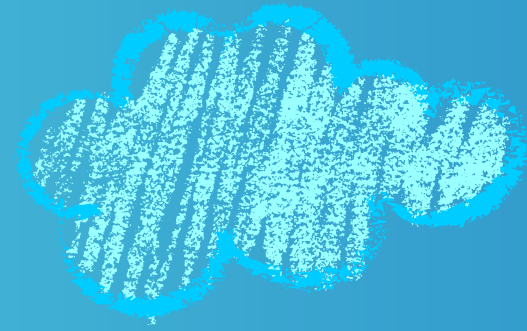
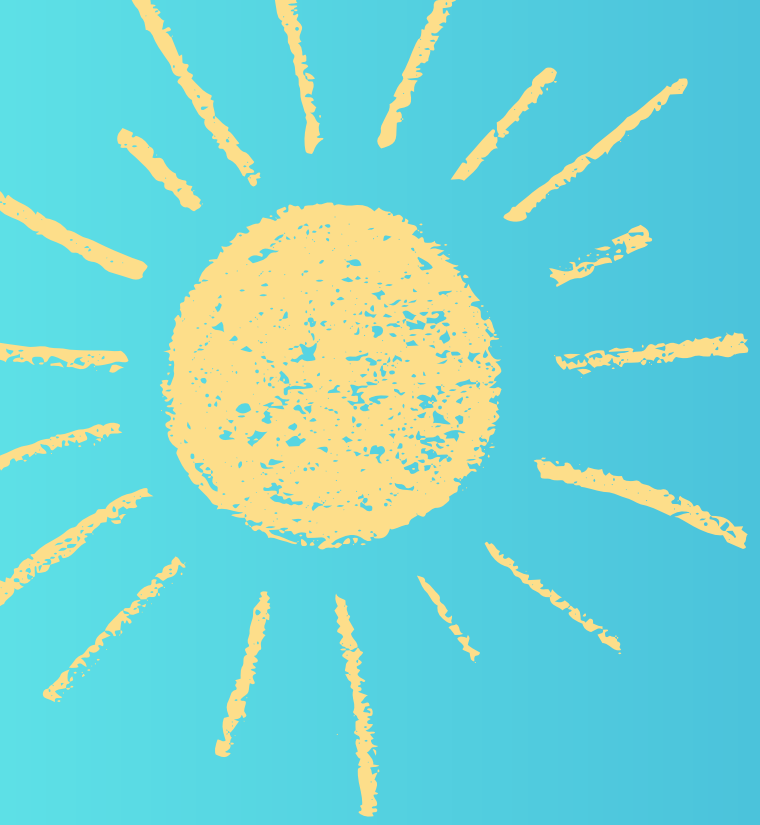
# Learning Outcomes:

- Describe what your child's behavior is communicating
- Identify common reasons for your child's behavior
- Learn simple strategies to support positive behavior and communication at home

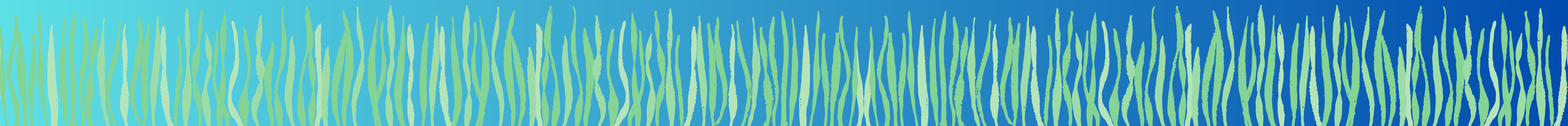


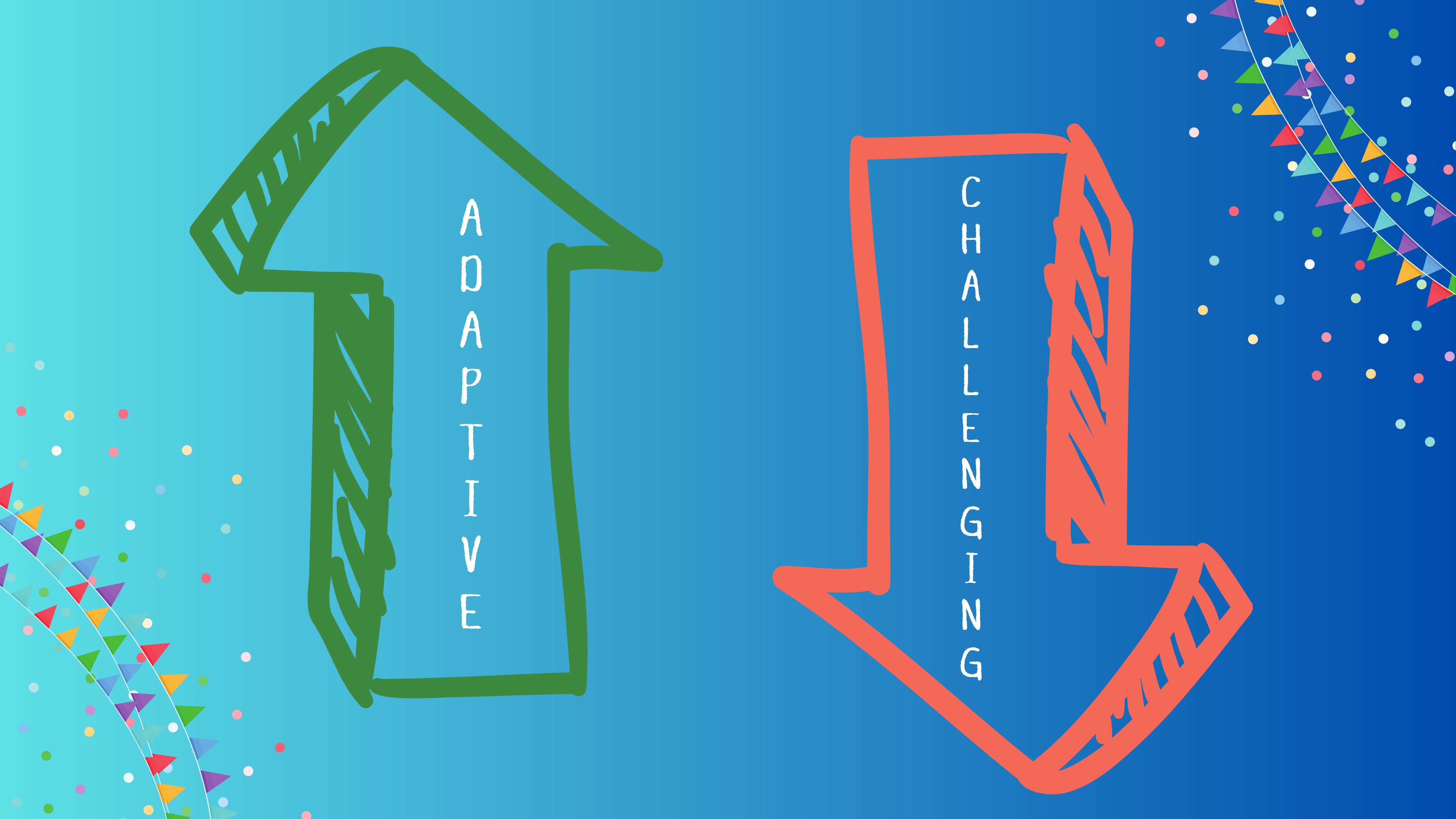
What do you mean by  
"behavior"?





Behavior is anything a person  
does that can be seen or heard





ADAPTIVE

CHALLENGING

# ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills that all people learn in order to function in their daily lives.

# ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES



# CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Behavior that interferes with a person's daily living activities or their ability to adapt to and participate in particular settings. Also sometimes referred to as "maladaptive behavior".

# CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES





All behavior is a form  
of communication

# REFLECTION

Think about a challenging  
behavior your child has engaged in.  
What do you think your child was  
trying to say?



Let's take a  
closer look...

Think about the

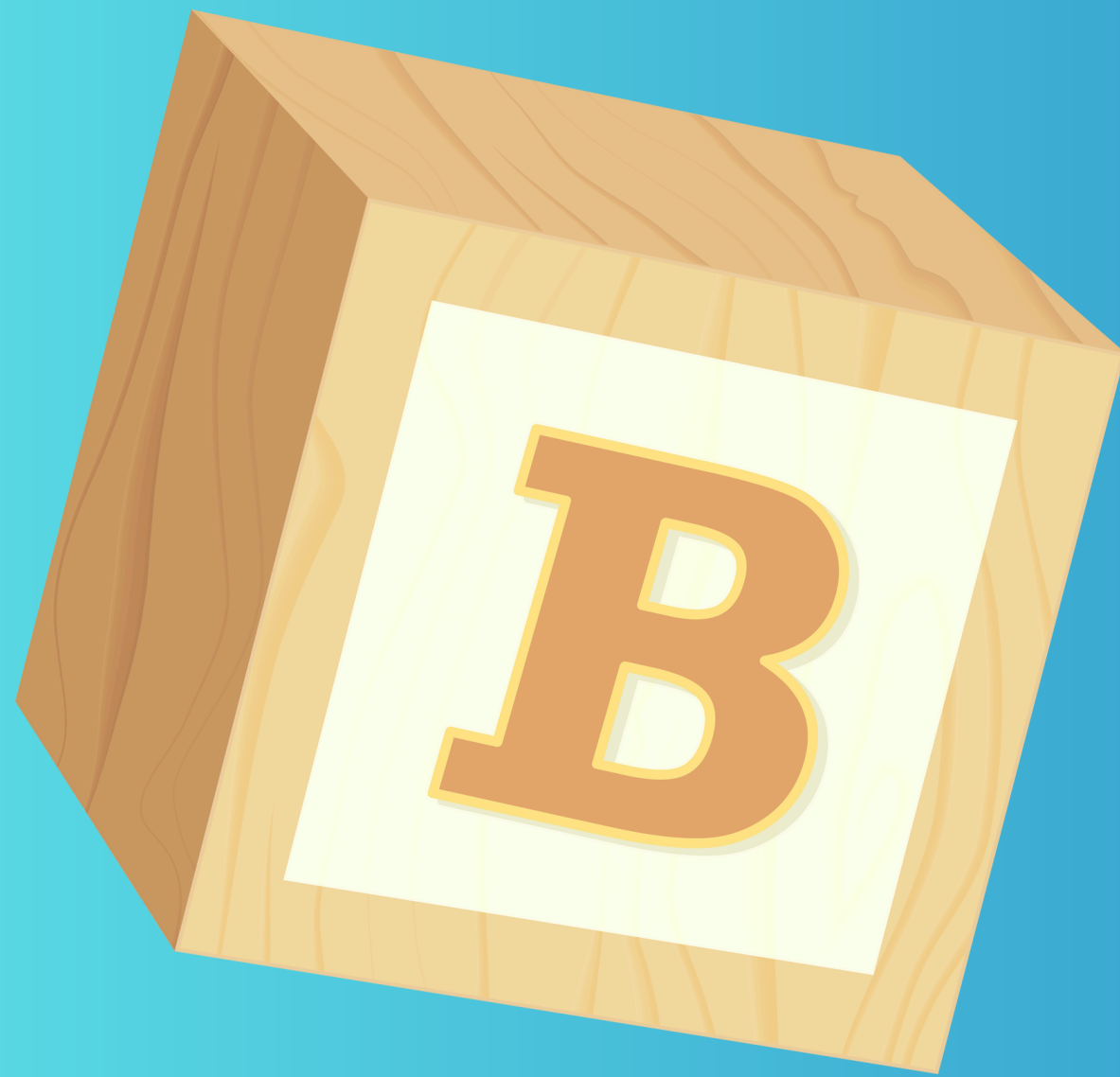
A B C

of behavior



is for ANTECEDENT

The antecedent is what happens right BEFORE the behavior. It is also commonly called a "trigger".



is For BEHAVIOR

The behavior is any observable and measurable action. It is what a person says or does.



is for CONSEQUENCE

The consequence is what happens right AFTER the behavior. It often determines the likelihood the behavior will occur again.



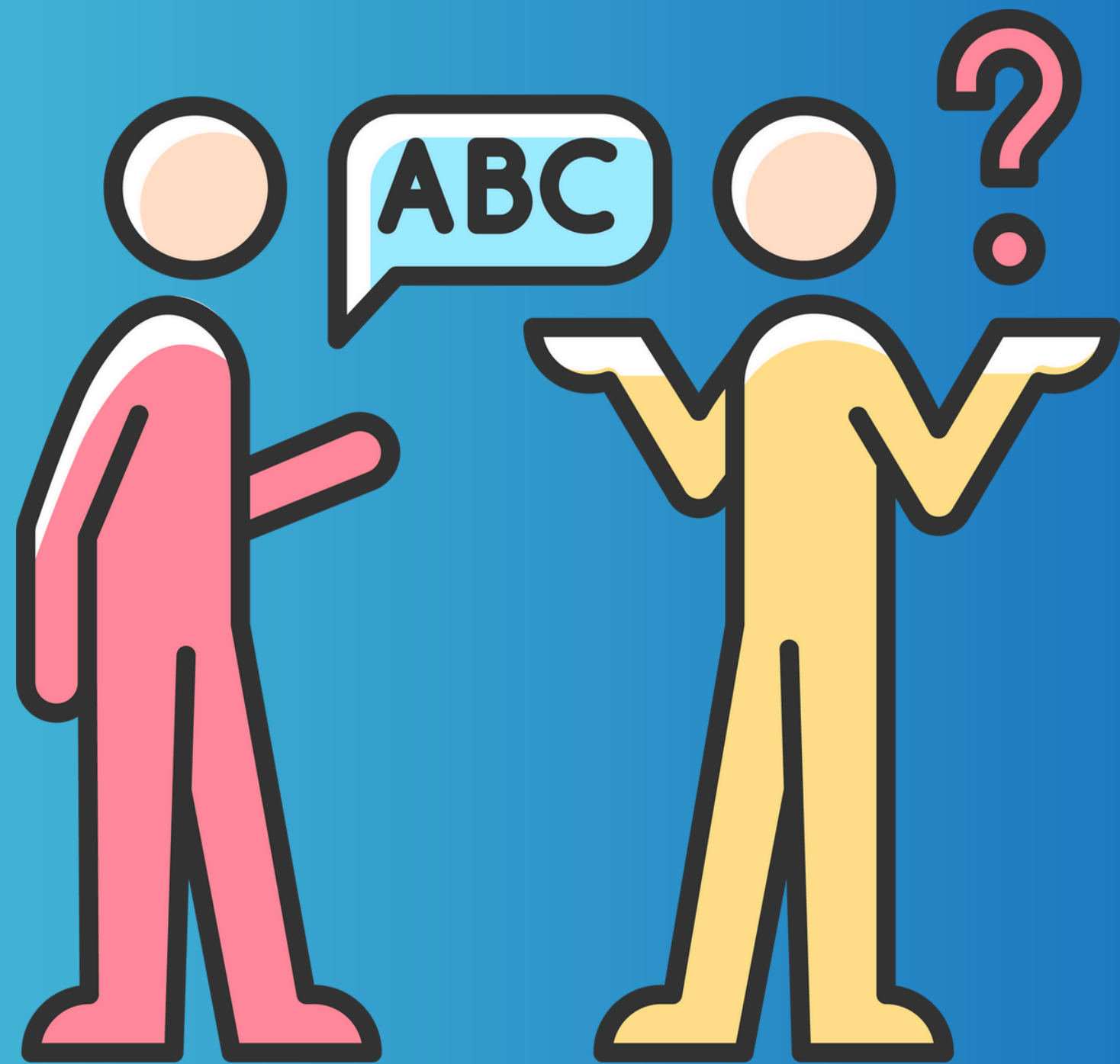
# REFLECTION

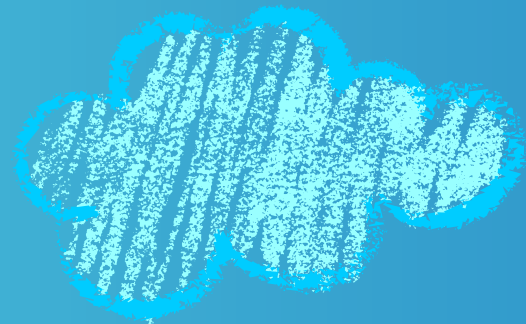
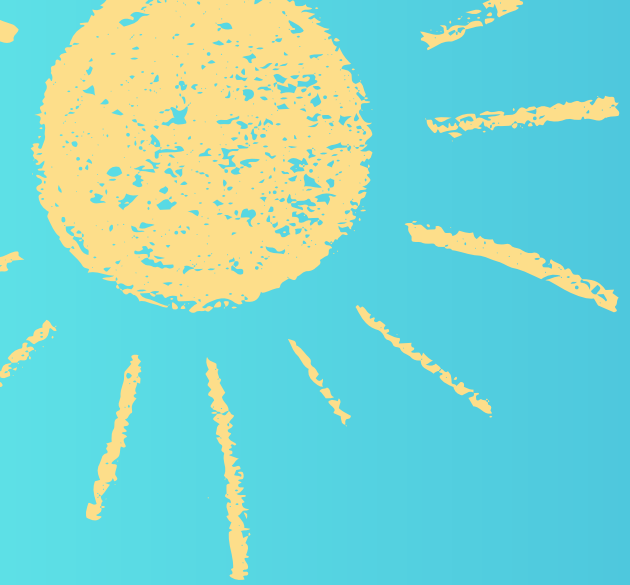


Think about the challenging behavior you identified earlier. What happened right before the behavior occurred? What happened right after the behavior ended?



# Why is this important?

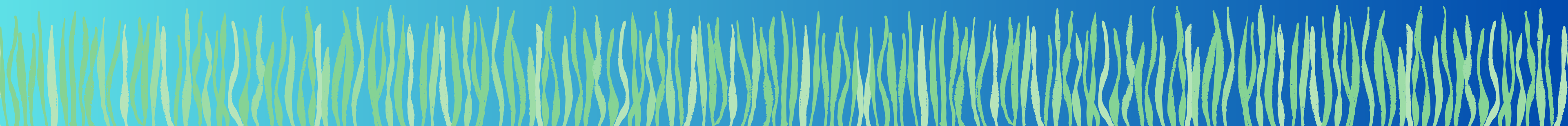




A B C



WTF





# What's The Function

ABC data helps to identify the function of a behavior.

Knowing the function of a behavior allows deeper understand of WHY your child is engaging in the behavior and informs appropriate ways to respond.

# Functions of Behavior

S ENSORY

E SCAPE/AVOIDANCE

A TTENTION

T ANGIBLE



# SENSORY



WHAT?

Behaviors that feel good to your child or help them to internally regulate their body

WHEN?

Anytime, especially when anxious, excited, or disengaged

WHY?

It makes your child feel good, comforted, or stimulated

# ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE

## WHAT?

Behaviors that allow your child to escape or avoid unwanted interactions, activities, or situations

## WHEN?

When an interaction, activity, or situation is too hard, non-preferred, or aversive

## WHY?

Escape or avoidance provides relief to your child



# ATTENTION



WHAT?

Behaviors that provide your child a reaction or response

WHEN?

When your child wants social engagement or feels ignored

WHY?

Attention from others (either good or bad) feels rewarding

# TANGIBLES

WHAT?

Behaviors that allow your child access to desired items or actions

WHEN?

When your child does not have access to a desired item or action

WHY?

It provides access to items or actions your child wants



# REFLECTION

Think about the challenging behavior you identified earlier and the possible antecedent and consequence. What do you think the function of the behavior might be? What do you think your child is trying to say through their behavior?

# Now What?



# Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors

- Meet the same need (i.e., function) as the challenging behavior
- Helps reduce challenging behaviors over time
- Builds your child's independence and communication skills
- Teaches your child a better way to get what they need/want in a way that is:
  - safer
  - more appropriate
  - easier for others to understand.



# Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors

- Choose a replacement behavior that is:
  - Simple
  - Doable
  - Functionally the same as the challenging behavior

Example Challenging Behavior	Hypothetical Function	Example Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors
Screaming	Attention	Gently tap the other's shoulder or arm
Running Away From Designated Space	Escape	Use a "break" card to ask for a break
Hitting Other & Grabbing Item From Hand	Access to Item	Ask for the item
Pinching Skin on Own Arm	Sensory	Roll spiky ball on arm



# Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors

- Teach your child how and when to use the replacement behavior
    - Show your child what it looks like – over and over
    - Use your hands, pictures, or gestures
    - Keep it simple: you might say, "When you want a break, give me this card"
    - Practice engaging in the replacement behavior when your child is calm, not in the middle of a challenging behavior
    - Make it fun
- 
- 

# Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors

- Give lots of praise and encouragement when your child engages in the replacement behavior
  - Be specific with your praise. Examples:
    - "I love how you asked for help – great job!"
    - "Awesome job using your picture!"
- Honor the replacement behavior as soon as it occurs
- Use positive reinforcement such as a high-5, a favorite activity, or a small reward



# Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors

- Be consistent and patient
  - It takes time, repetition, and love for a new behavior to become a habit
  - If your child forgets, gently prompt or model again
  - Avoid punishment – learning is a process
  - The goal is progress, not perfection



Every small step is a big win!

# REFLECTION

Think about the challenging behavior you identified earlier. What could be an appropriate functionally equivalent replacement behavior your child could use?

# Communication System

- A communication system is the method your child uses to share their wants, needs, thoughts, and feelings. It can include:
  - Spoken words
  - Sign language
  - Picture Exchange (PECS)
  - Communication boards or books
  - Speech-generating devices
  - Gestures or body language
  - Visual Cards (e.g., Yes/No cards)



# Communication System

- When your child can appropriately express themselves:
  - Behavior challenges often decrease
  - Independence and self-advocacy increases
  - They have more control over their world
  - It helps others understand and support them better
- Identify a communication system your child can effectively use every day, with everyone
  - Suggestion: Consult with a licensed professional (e.g., speech language pathologist or licensed behavior analyst)



# Communication System



- Choose one system and use it consistently throughout each day
- Make it portable and accessible at all times
- Train everyone how to use it: siblings, teachers, family members should all use it
- Celebrate and encourage communication

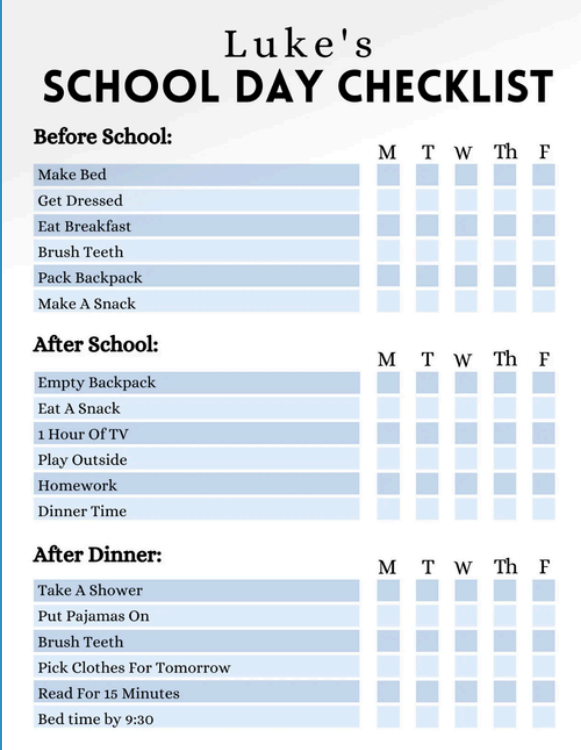

**Remember!**

If your child doesn't have a reliable way to communicate, they will use behavior instead. So give them a voice – in whatever form works best for them

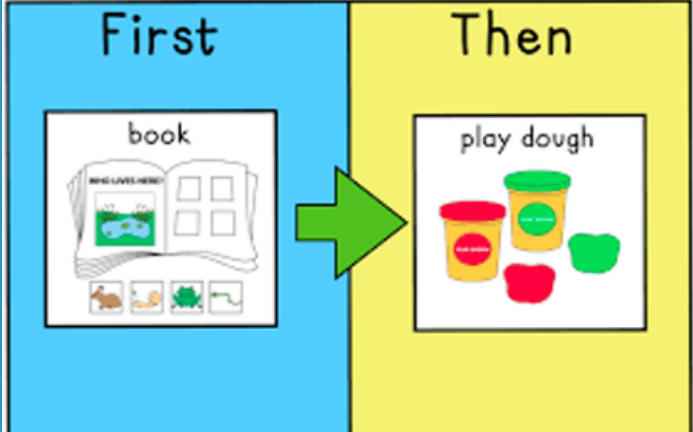
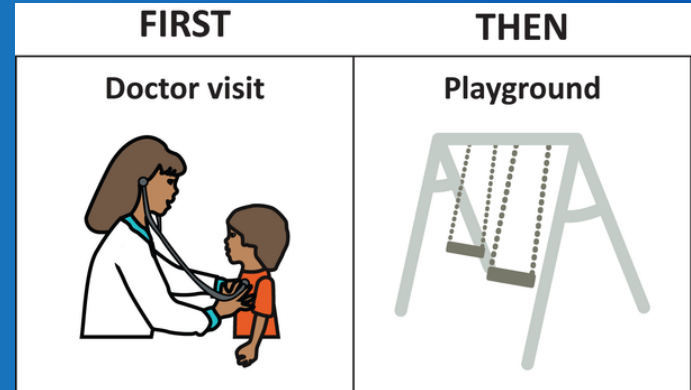
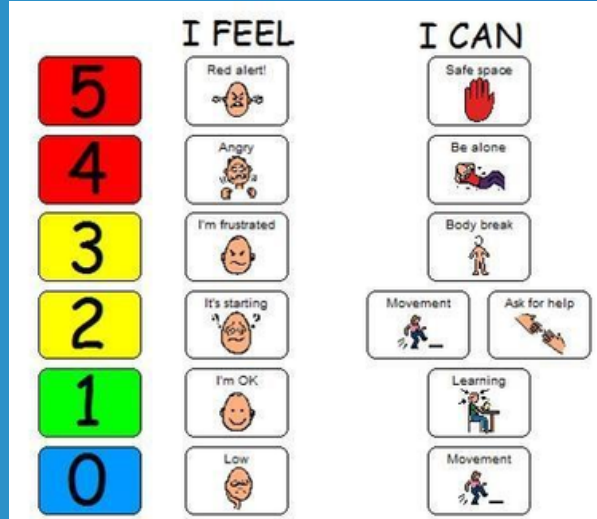

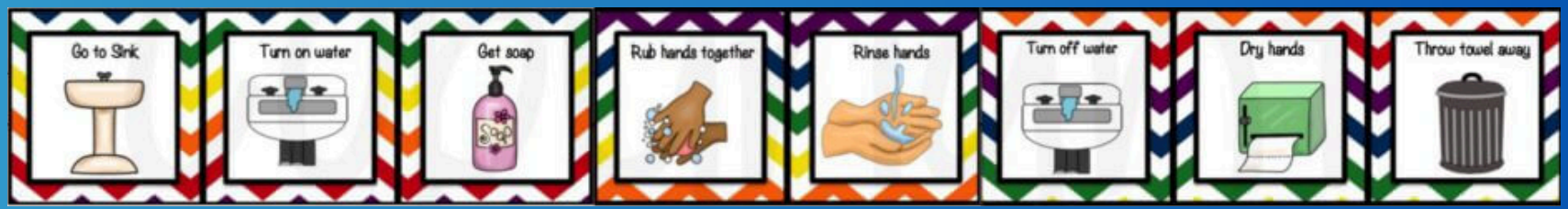
# Visual Supports

- Visual supports are pictures, symbols, objects, or written words that can help your child:
  - Understand routines
  - Make choices
  - Communicate needs
  - Feel safe and prepared
  - Be independent and self-determined
- Ensure visuals are accessible and easy to see for your child





# Visual Supports

Type	Purpose	Example
Visual Schedule	Shows routine and expectations	<div>A checklist titled "Luke's SCHOOL DAY CHECKLIST" with sections for "Before School:", "After School:", and "After Dinner:". Each section lists tasks and has a grid for tracking completion across days of the week (M, T, W, Th, F).</div> <div>A vertical visual schedule titled "Morning Routine" showing tasks with icons and times: Wake Up (6:15 am), Feed &amp; Water Dog (6:20 am), Make Bed (6:25 am), Brush Teeth/Wash Face (6:30 am), Brush Hair (6:35 am), Get Dressed (6:40 am), Take Medication (7:00 am), and Get on Bus (7:10-7:20 am). Each task has a corresponding icon and a green checkmark box.</div>

# Visual supports

Type	Purpose	Example
First-Then Board	Sets clear contingencies	 
Emotion Chart	Helps to identify feelings and emotionally regulate	 
Task Analysis/Strips	Breaks down a task into smaller steps	

# Tips When Communicating With Your Child

- Say what to do instead of what NOT to do
  - Example:  "Please walk"  "Don't run"
- Use minimal words when giving directions
- Be sure you gain their attention before speaking
- Place demands as statements, not questions
  - Example:  "Sit down"  "Don't run"
- Provide choices

# REFLECTION

What is one strategy that you can  
try at home?

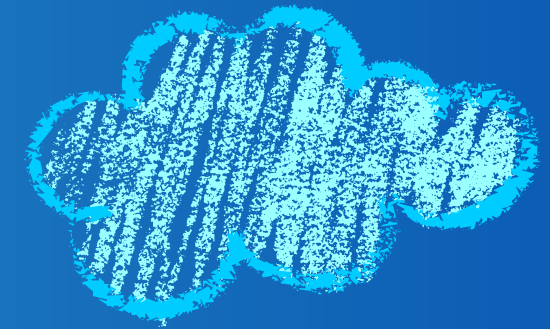
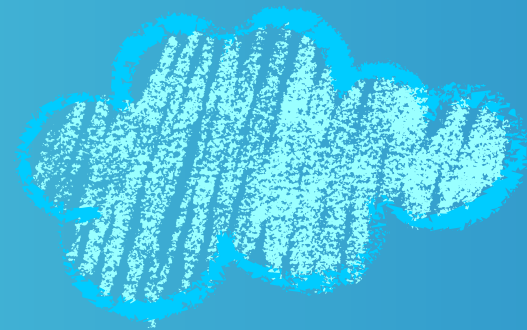
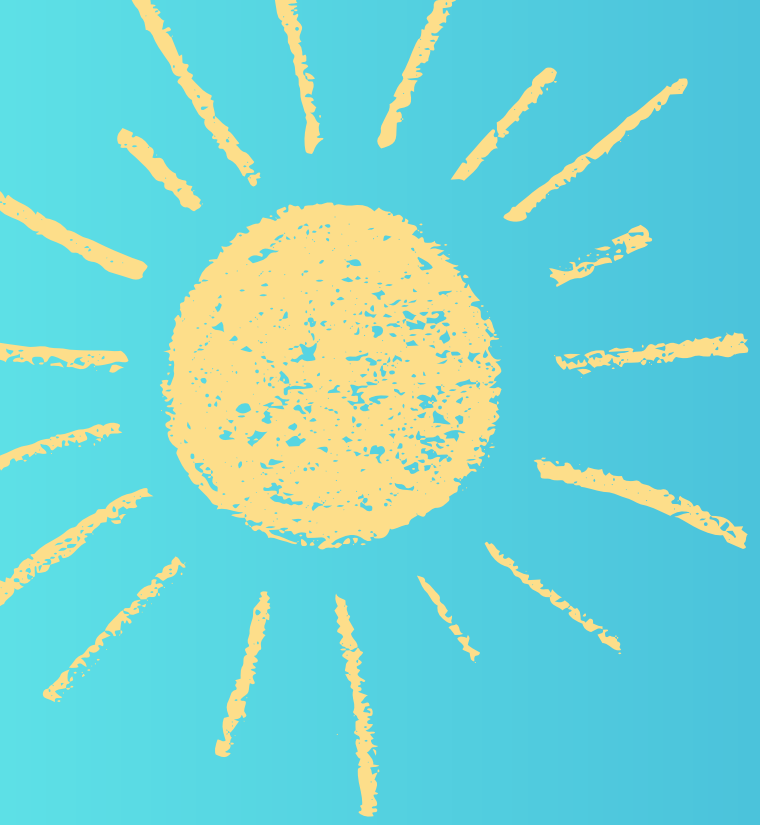
# Stay Connected

- Seek out social opportunities
  - SPIN Calendar of Events (linked)
- Communicate and collaborate with your community partners (e.g., school, insurance services, state programs)
  - SPIN List of Community Partners (linked)
  - SPIN Special Education Resources (linked)
  - SPIN Infographics (linked)
  - Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Infographics (linked)

# Don't Forget to Take Care of Yourself!



DO WHAT  
YOU CAN,  
WITH WHAT  
YOU HAVE,  
WHERE  
YOU ARE.  
-Theodore Roosevelt-



# Questions?

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