

# ABC Data Collection Cheat Sheet

Quick-reference guide for Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence data collection

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## The 4 Functions of Behavior

| Function  | What Student Gets        | Common Consequences                       |
|-----------|--------------------------|---|
| Attention | Reaction from others     | Ignoring, peer interaction, raised hand   |
| Escape    | Removal of demands/tasks | Sent out, task removed, break given       |
| Tangible  | Items or activities      | Gets iPad, snack, preferred activity      |
| Sensory   | Internal stimulation     | Self-stimulation, automatic reinforcement |

## Common Antecedents by Function

### Attention-Seeking Behaviors

- Teacher helping other students
- Independent work time
- Low adult interaction periods
- Peer ignoring student

### Escape-Maintained Behaviors

- Difficult academic task presented
- Non-preferred activity begins
- Transition to demanding activity
- Extended work period

### Tangible-Maintained Behaviors

- Preferred item visible but unavailable
- Peer has desired item
- Told "no" to a request
- Preferred activity ending

### Sensory-Maintained Behaviors

- Under-stimulating environment
- Over-stimulating environment
- Physical discomfort
- Anxiety or stress

## The Quick Function-Check Formula

Ask yourself: "What does the student GET after the behavior?"

- Gets attention! Attention function
- Gets out of something! Escape function
- Gets an item/activity! Tangible function
- Gets nothing external! Consider sensory function

## Red Flags: Wrong Function

### Important

- Intervention makes behavior worse
- Behavior occurs across ALL settings equally
- No clear pattern after 15+ observations
- Multiple functions may be at play

## ABC Data Collection Best Practices

1. Record immediately (within 2 minutes of incident)
2. Be specific: "Given math worksheet" not "During class"
3. Include setting events when known (sleep, illness, conflicts)
4. Collect minimum 12-15 data points before forming hypothesis
5. Look for patterns in BOTH antecedents AND consequences

## Track ABC Data Digitally

Classroom Pulse makes ABC data collection simple with one-tap logging, automatic pattern detection, and function analysis. Start your free 14-day trial.

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