ABC and Scatter Plot Data:
Helpful Tools for Gathering Information on Challenging Behaviours

THE ABCs OF ABC DATA

What is ABC data?

- Antecedent (A), Behaviour (B), and Consequence (C) data—often referred to as the ABCs of behaviour—help school teams and behaviour analysts identify patterns of behaviour.
- Triggers or antecedents to behaviours of concern may include common situations such as being asked to complete a difficult or less-preferred academic task or school routine, having preferred items or activities restricted (e.g. asking a student to put his iPad® away), and during times of the day when adult or peer interaction is limited (e.g. independent work).
- Knowing the elements (antecedents) that trigger a student's reaction (behaviour) and how peers and school teams respond to the behaviour (consequences) can provide useful information as to why the behaviours continue.
- When combined, this information can ultimately guide teams in developing effective interventions. Assisting teams in changing the environment and adapting the ways in which they respond to behaviours of concern may prevent or reduce the future likelihood of these behaviours.
- Improve fine motor skills

How is ABC data collected?

- ABC data is collected by one or more staff members who frequently work or interact with the student.
- This type of data can be collected for as few as two or three days or as many as several weeks, depending on how often the student attends school and how often behaviours of concern are observed.
- Data may be collected throughout the day or for specified periods of time in which the behaviours are more likely to occur. The goal is to gather enough information to develop a firm hypothesis regarding the student's behaviours that will assist with the development of effective strategies or interventions.

TIPS FOR COLLECTING ABC DATA

1. Identify who will be responsible for collecting the data.

2. Identify one or two behaviours of concern that your team will prioritise.

3. Define the behaviours in very specific terms so that everyone collecting the data will know exactly what behaviours to include and when a specific behaviour occurred. A good definition is one that could be given to someone who does not know the student but would be able to identify the behaviour(s).

4. Decide when and how often data will be collected.

5. When collecting data, try to capture what is happening in as few words as possible (see examples below).

6. Limit your data to what you observe the student or staff doing. Avoid making assumptions about what the student or staff are thinking or feeling.

7. Antecedent data: should include information on what occurred directly before the behaviour was observed. Consider situations like the following:
   a. Student working alone
   b. Adult gives a direction (e.g. "Do your math"; "You need to walk"; "Wait your turn")
   c. Teacher tells student to put his phone away
   d. Student loses a turn during game with peer

8. Behaviour data: should describe the student's behaviour of concern. Here are some examples:
   a. "Threw book"
   b. "Ripped school materials off wall"
   c. "Punched a student"
   d. "Stood on the table"
   e. "Knocked the desk over"
   f. "Ran out of the classroom"
   g. "Spit at teacher"

9. Consequence data: should describe how other adults or peers responded to the student's behaviours. Some examples:
   a. Teacher told the student to stop and discussed behaviour
   b. Peers laughed
   c. Sent to office to talk to principal
   d. Removed writing task and redirected to another activity
   e. Walked away and ignored student

SCATTER PLOT BASICS

What is scatter plot data?
- Like ABC data, a scatter plot helps teams identify patterns of behaviours of concern.

- A scatter plot provides information about the details of the behaviours of concern: when and during what activities they occur. It also can help teams identify when the student does well or the activities in which no behaviours of concern are observed.

- This information can assist teams in identifying specific factors surrounding school routines that may increase or decrease behaviours of concern (e.g. noisy or less structured routines, academic routines, routines that occur earlier in the day or later, etc.).

How is scatter plot data collected?
- Scatter plot data is collected by one or more staff who frequently work or interact with the student.

- This data is typically collected for one or two weeks across the student's entire school day.

TIPS FOR COLLECTING SCATTER PLOT DATA

1. Make a list or schedule of the student's weekly activities and a timetable of when the activities occur (see attached example).

2. Identify and define one or two behaviours of concern that your team will collect data on.

3. Identify who will be responsible for collecting data throughout the day.

4. If a behaviour of concern is observed during an activity. Indicate this by placing an "X" in the timetable that corresponds to that activity or time of day. If no behaviours occur, leave that area blank.

5. If data is not collected during an activity, use a different code to indicate this.

THE EDUCATION STATE

Antecedent/Behavior/Consequence (ABC) Form

Student's Name: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

Individual Completing Form: _____

Time of Day & Activity	Antecedent (A) What occurred before the behavior?	Behavior (B) What did he or she do?	Consequence (C) How did you or others respond?

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Antecedent/Behavior/Consequence (ABC) Form

Student's Name: Alex

School: Martin Luther King Day MS   Date: 12-2-17

Individual Completing Form: Teacher

Time of Day & Activity	Antecedent (A) What occurred before the behavior?	Behavior (B) What did he or she do?	Consequence (C) How did you or others respond?
Bathroom 10 am	Directed to use bathroom from adult	Scratched adult's arm Layed on floor/took off shirt	Moved away; gave a sensory toy and waited for him to stand-up
Individual Work Time (ILP Goals) 9:30	Asked to identify numbers "Give me 5"	Tried to bite adult's arm and took off shirt	Told, "no biting." Removed the task for a minute then tried again.
Individual Work Time (ILP Goals) 10:15	Asked to sort categories of pictures	Tried to bite and head-butt teacher in arm	Told, "No biting". Removed task and then kept trying and removing task until he ran away. Ended activity.
Lunch 12:00	Given a choice of water or sandwhich	Dropped to floor and laid down	Gave another choice and let eat on floor
Bathroom 12:20	Directed to go to bathroom.	Hit teacher	Told, "We don't hit. No!" Continued to walk him to bathroom.
Individual work time (ILP Goals)	Asked to trace his name.	Tried to bite teacher	Allowed to take a brief break and bounce on the ball.

Activity-Routines Scatter Plot

Student Name: _____   School: _____   Grade/Age: _____

Person Completing Data Sheet: _____

Description of Behaviour(s) (be specific):

Directions: List the student's daily activities/routines in chronological order in the left column. For each activity, fill in the box according to the key provided. If you were unable to collect data leave the box blank.

Key:

| X | = Behaviour occurred |

| (blank) | = Behaviour did not occur |

| NA | = No data collected |

Activity/Routine	Activity/Routine									
	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F

Activity-Routines Scatter Plot

Student Name: Alex _____ School: Martin Luther King MS __ Grade/Age: 8th/14 yrs _____

Person Completing Data Sheet: Teacher and Classroom Assistant _____

Description of Behaviour(s) (be specific):

(a) Aggression - bites or scratches staff on arms; head-butts (bangs head on staff's body); (b) lays on floor (c) disrobes - takes all or part of clothes off

Directions: List the student's daily activities/routines in chronological order in the left column. For each activity, fill in the box according to the key provided. If you were unable to collect data leave the box blank.

Key:

| X | = Behaviour occurred

| | = Behaviour did not occur

| NA | = No data collected

Activity/Routine	Activity/Routine									
	Dec 2nd- 6th and 9th-13th									
	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
Arrival Routine										
Free Time										
Bathroom		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Individual Work			X	X		X	X		X	X
Snack										
Vocational Work										
Free Time										
Individual Work	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lunch	X	X			X		X	X	X	
Bathroom			X	X	X			X	X	X
Specials (PE/Music)										
Individual Work	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Departure Routine/Home										