

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS TO ABA PARENT TRAINING

Workbook



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ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

Parent training is a key component to any successful ABA program. When parents and caregivers understand the principles of behavior, and are able to implement basic ABA strategies, their child can see gains not otherwise possible.

Yet getting parents and caregivers to actively participate in training and use the techniques they are taught can be challenging.

This workbook accompanies our parent training videos and curriculum to help you provide more effective training for your families.



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The challenge of parent and caregiver training.

OBSTACLE 1

Parents don't understand the need for parent training, or they don't have confidence in their ability to help their child.

OBSTACLE 2

Changing behavior is difficult, even when you know what needs to change.

OBSTACLE 3

Busy schedules make arranging time for training difficult.

TIPS TO IMPROVE TRAINING

Learn ways you can change your approach to training to help improve engagement and success.

Introduction

Parent training is required by most insurance companies, however even more importantly, this training can lead to the biggest gains for your clients.

When everyone in a child's life knows and understands ABA and the principles of behavior, children receive the consistent feedback they need to be successful.

Imagine how much your clients could improve if they received instruction and reinforcement based on ABA concepts all day, every day. When parents and caregivers understand ABA, this becomes possible.

Challenges

While every situation is unique, there are challenges common to many families. In this workbook we will be covering 3 areas many BCBA's struggle with:

1. Parents don't understand the need for parent training, or they don't have confidence in their ability to help their child.
2. Changing behavior is difficult, even when you know what needs to change.
3. Busy schedules make arranging time for training difficult.

WHAT OTHER CHALLENGES DO YOU COMMONLY ENCOUNTER?

List other challenges you're likely to encounter so you can look for ways to overcome them.

Obstacle 1

Parents don't understand the need for parent training, or they don't have confidence in their ability to help their child.



Although parents often see the need for ABA therapy, they don't realize how important it is to use these same strategies at home.

They feel that their child should be able to learn skills with the therapists, but don't realize that generalizing these skills to other people and environment doesn't always happen naturally for these children.

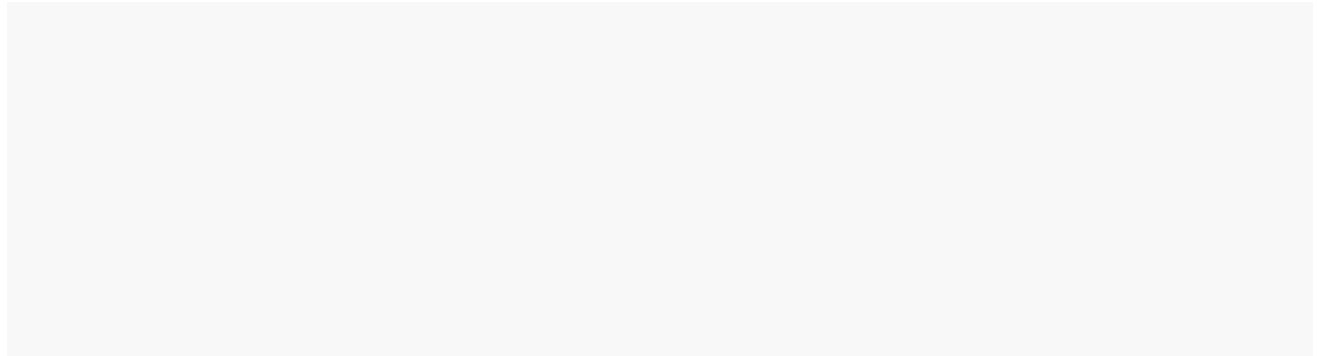
They may also believe that ABA is too complex for them to learn, or doubt their ability to parent in a way that will help their child.

WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE

Right from intake talk about the importance of parent training.

Include common goals such as helping the learner to perform a task for not only a therapist but also at home. This can be more difficult if the parents have been working with a different BCBA.

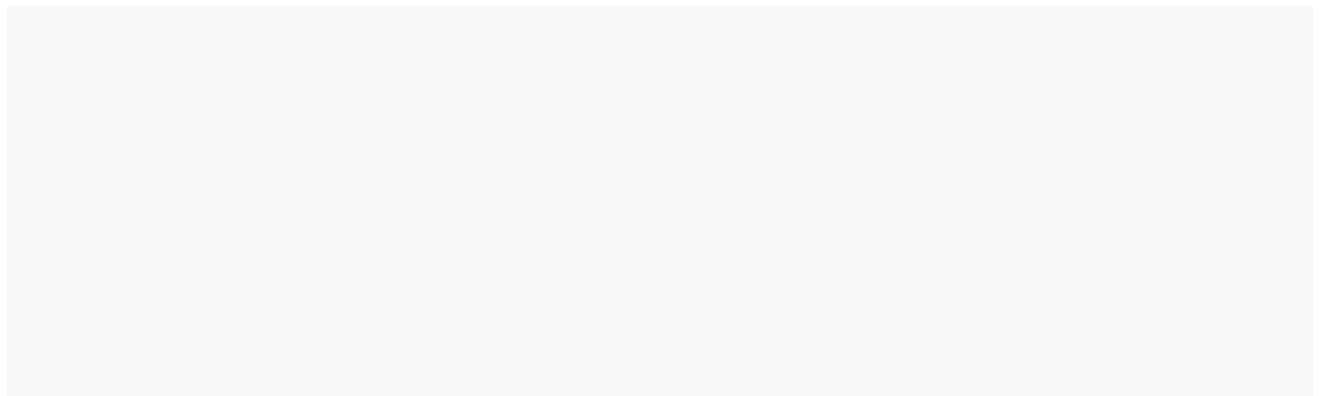
What other goals can you set for parents that will help them understand the importance of parent training?



Identify the function of the parents' behavior. Have an honest conversation about why they aren't following through. Consider these questions:

- Are you setting unrealistic expectations for the family?
- Are you setting a goal that isn't a priority for the family?
- Are you asking the family to do something that the parent might not be comfortable doing?

What other reasons might your parents have trouble implementing your plan?



WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE

Make the interventions easier to implement. Simplify procedures as much as possible to get the ball rolling. Then shape their behavior by gradually increasing the difficulty for the parents.

What "first steps" can you show parents to get them started?

Use homework calendars to make expectations more concrete.

Create a monthly calendar where they can record whether their child completed a task independently (I) or with help (H) so you can demonstrate parent engagement.

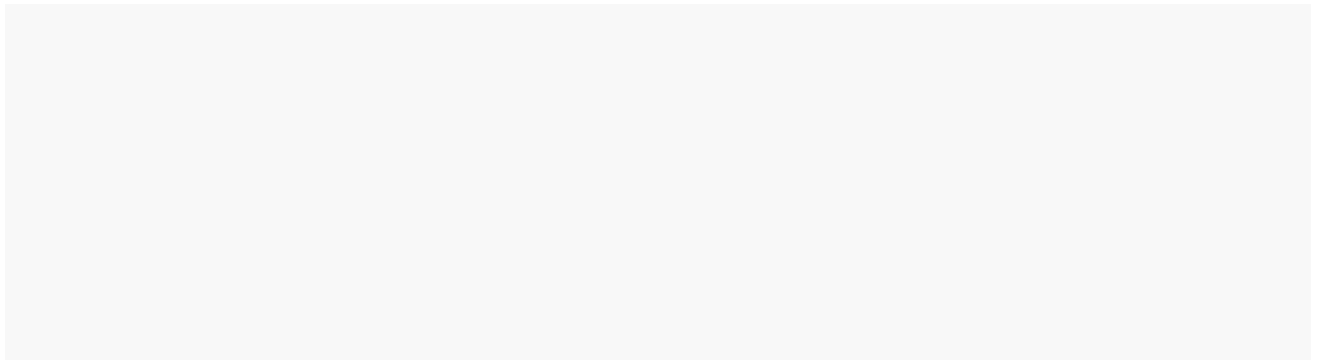
What tasks might you include on a homework calendar?

WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE

Make tasks as normal as possible, but teach parents to play with their child in a little bit of a different way. For example,

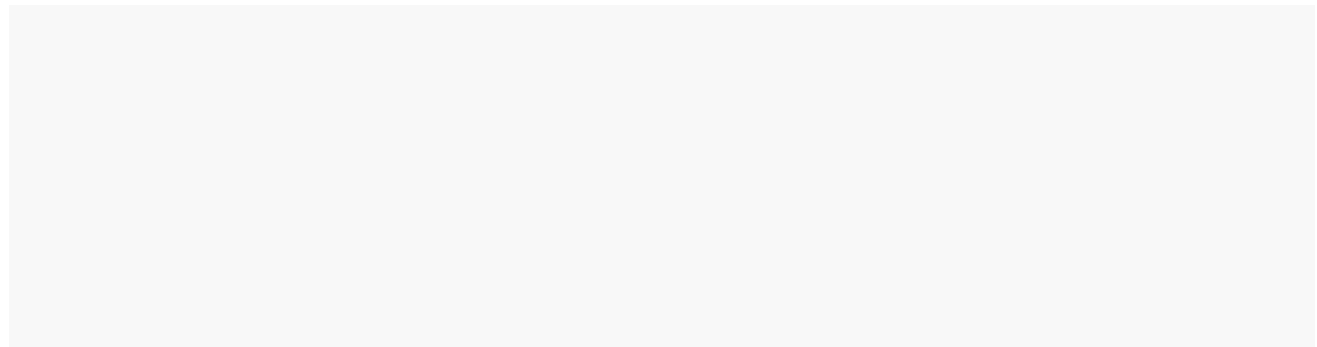
- Have the family take a walk and ask the child to tact dog when they see a dog.
- Build with Legos for 5 minutes
- Practice mand training just 2-3 times a week.

What other everyday activities can include an element of ABA?

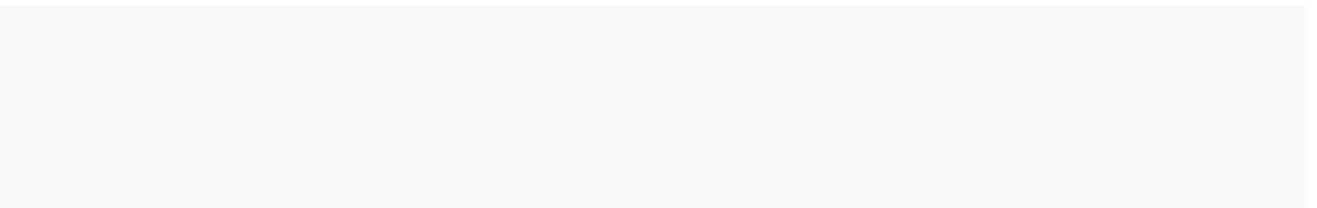


Show a little success. Teach a small, easy, even unimportant skill to demonstrate how the strategies work.

List some simple skills you can demonstrate for parents.



ADDITIONAL NOTES:



Obstacle 2

Changing behavior is difficult, even when you know what needs to change.



Change is difficult for all of us. As humans we establish routines and habits to help us function more efficiently.

Because these habits have been reinforced for a long time, they can be difficult to change.

Parents may not be aware of the way they respond to certain behaviors or they might have trouble responding differently than they have in the past.

Helping parents change their own behavior to incorporate ABA strategies is an important part of your training.

WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE

Talk about why changing behavior is hard. Behavior chains are reinforced over time and can be difficult to change.

Why would change be especially hard for your parents?

Recognize to parents that the tasks you ask parents to do is contrived to create learning opportunities that might not normally exist for their child.

Find ways to work these tasks into everyday activities. For example:

- During dinner get their child to mand for their favorite food. If their child likes hotdogs they can work on shaping the word, start with dog, or just the “d” sound. Make a note of this on the homework calendar.

What other daily activities could you include?

WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE

Help parents identify potential reinforcers for themselves. This conversation will not only help them understand reinforcement, but will also help them change their behaviors.

Try using interventions such as the Premack Principle: First they play a game with their child, then they can have a cup of tea.

What are some potential reinforcers for your parents?

Establish a system for accountability. Although you can blame it on the insurance companies (who often require proof of parent involvement), parents are more likely to follow through if there is a level of accountability.

You can use homework calendars for this. Are there other tools you can use?

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Obstacle 3

Busy schedules make arranging time for training difficult.



Parents have many conflicting priorities. In addition to dealing with the challenges of having a child with disabilities, they may also be managing many medical appointments for their child. They are often caring for multiple children, all while trying to hold down a job to help pay for everything they need.

Add to this your busy schedule and it's no wonder finding time for parent training is a challenge.

But with a little creativity you can fit it in.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE TIME FOR PARENT TRAINING?

Think creatively about your schedule and that of your parents.
Can you think of any other ideas in addition to those listed?

☐

Come in 15 minutes before dropping off their child.

☐

Stay 15 minutes after picking up their child.

☐

Schedule a video or phone call during parents' lunch break.

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Are there tasks you can remove from your schedule or delegate to someone else to free up more time for parent training?

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Tips to Improve Training

Make your parent training even better!



As with all things, experience will improve your parent training over time. Yet even seasoned professionals can continue to enhance their program.

The following tips will allow you look at training from another perspective and help you understand the importance of following a predefined curriculum with your parents.

START USING THESE TIPS TODAY!

These quick tips can significantly improve parent engagement and the effectiveness of your training.

1

HELP PARENTS UNDERSTAND THE VALUE

Parents don't always understand how important their role is. When parents use ABA strategies they will see the biggest gains for their child. As part of your training, help them see how much they can influence their child when they learn ABA strategies.

2

IMPLEMENT SMALL INTERVENTIONS

Be sure parents understand reinforcement so they don't reinforce the wrong behaviors, and help them learn how their child learns best. Then work with them to begin using simple ABA techniques. Start small to win big.

3

ESTABLISH A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

Some parents need to vent and talk about their challenges while others will want you to lead the way. Learn to identify each parent's needs for the best results. While spending time listening to a parent vent might feel unproductive, use this as an opportunity to learn how you can better help the family.

4

BE AWARE OF SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

You're asking the parent to change how they parent their child. You'll be explaining that some of the ways they've parented in the past aren't as effective or efficient for their child as the strategies you're teaching them. This might not be easy for parents to hear.

Parents might feel guilty for not knowing how to help their child, or they may feel criticized. Be aware of how you and your advice comes across to them.

5

HAVE PARENTS IDENTIFY A PHRASE

Have the parents identify a phrase they relate to such as, “How is that working for me?” that they can use to check their own behavior. This keeps you from appearing critical and gives parents a tool to analyze what they're doing.

6

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

Many parents have their own physical and emotional challenges. They may not be open about these difficulties. You need to tune into different signals that they're not understanding what you're asking them to do or that they're not capable of following through to the level that you would like. This is okay.

7

USE A CURRICULUM TO STAY ON TRACK

While listening to a parent's concerns about their most recent challenges is important, this type of discussion can take up a significant amount of time. Having a structured curriculum to follow will ensure you cover all of the most important topics, and will provide a way for you to redirect the conversation.

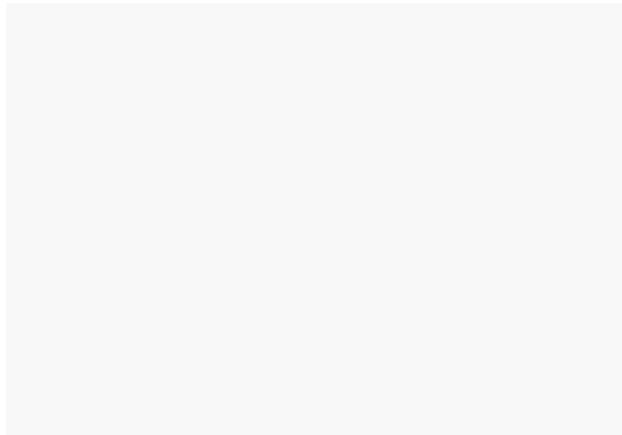
ADDITIONAL NOTES:

PARENT TRAINING TOPICS

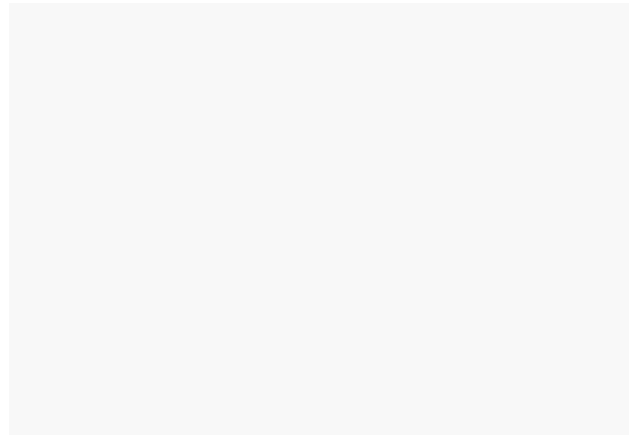
Brainstorm topics to include in your parent training curriculum.

Don't want to create your own? We've created a complete ABA Parent Training curriculum for you!

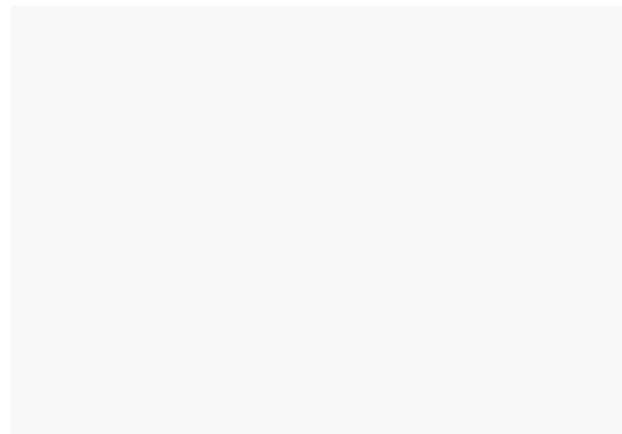
☐ EXPECTATIONS



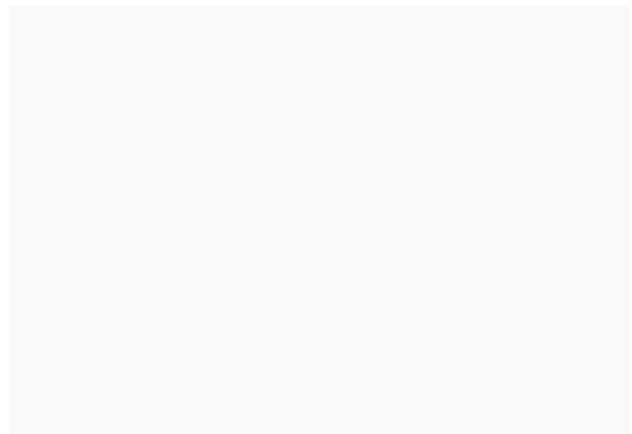
☐ WHAT IS ABA



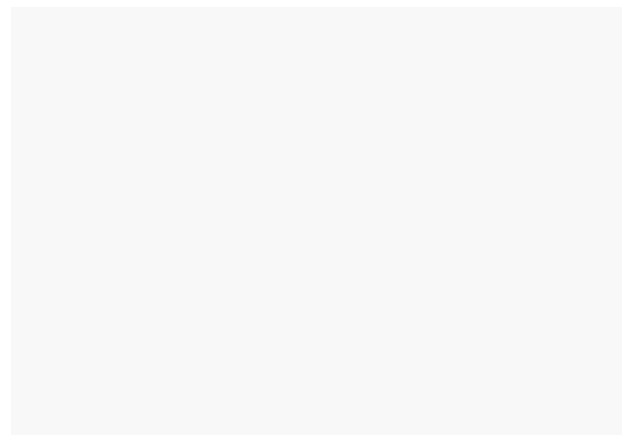
☐ CONTEXT OF BEHAVIOR



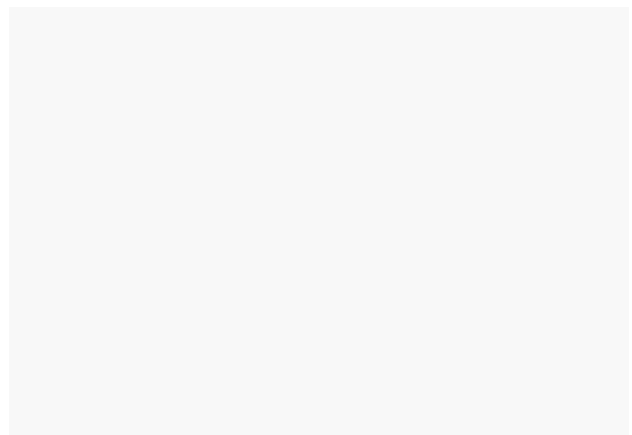
☐ SETTING GOALS



☐ DATA COLLECTION



☐ FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR



BEHAVIOR REDUCTION

Behavior reduction is often a priority for parents, but can be one of the more difficult concepts for parents to understand. Use the space here to decide what you should include.

☐ CHOOSING A BEHAVIOR

☐ BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

☐ WHAT'S THE FUNCTION?

☐ ANTECEDENT INTERVENTIONS

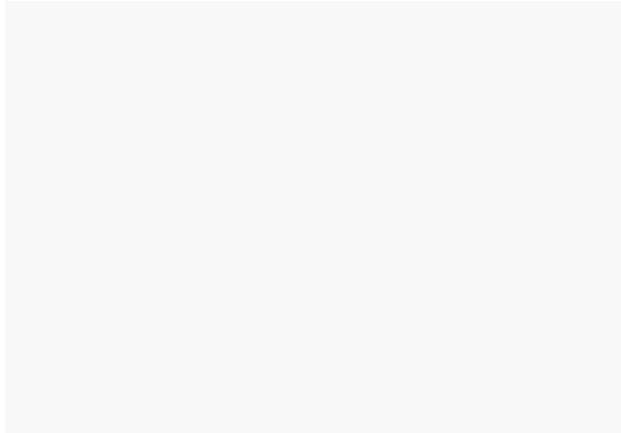
☐ SKILL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

☐ CONSEQUENCE INTERVENTIONS

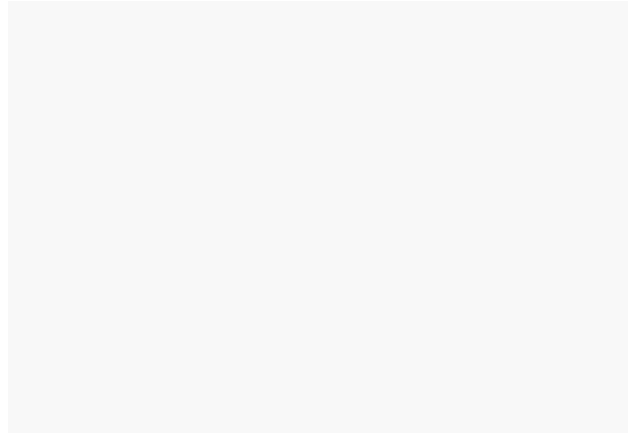
SKILL ACQUISITION

Teaching replacement behaviors is an important part of behavior reduction. What topics are most important for parents to understand?

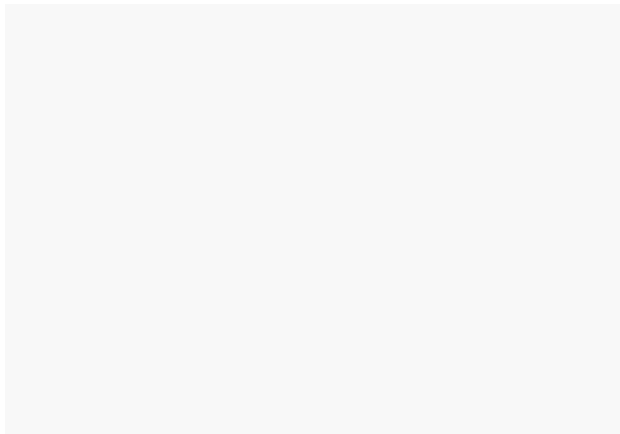
☐ **ASSESSMENTS**



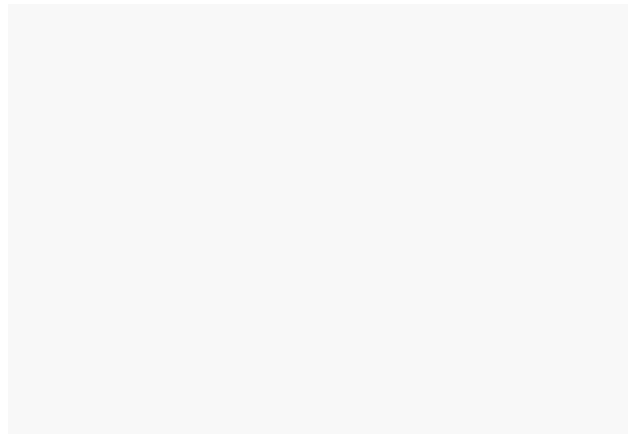
☐ **TEACHING STRATEGIES**



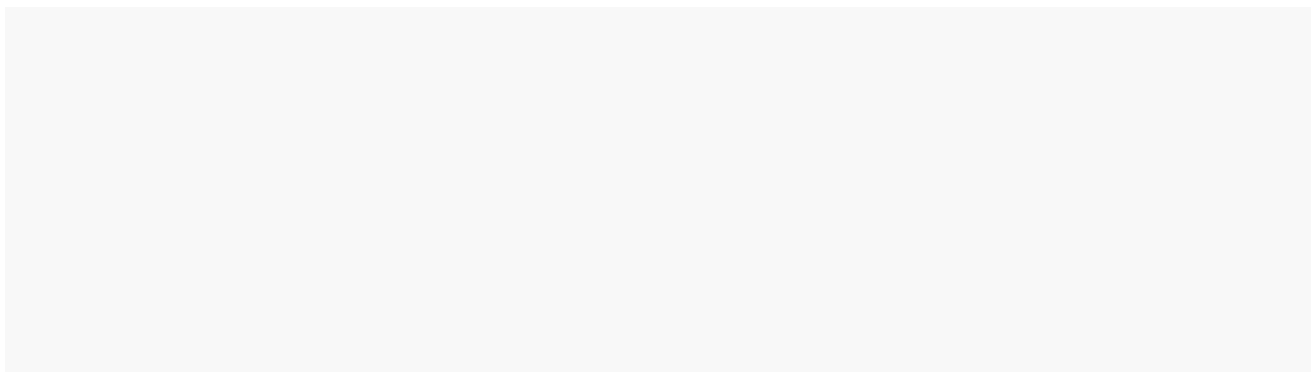
☐ **GENERALIZATION**



☐ **MAINTENANCE**



ADDITIONAL NOTES:



PARENT GOALS

Concrete goals for parents can help keep them on track with their training. Goals can provide a roadmap that will show where they are, and where they will end up. What goals do you have for your client's parents and how can you help them reach them?

Goal

Strategies

Goal

Strategies

Goal

Strategies

Goal

Strategies