

# Maintenance

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## WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will explore maintenance by defining and discussing the following:

1. Maintenance and Examples

## 1. Maintenance and Examples

**Maintenance** can be defined as a patient's ability to continue to perform a skill or engage in a behavior with minimal errors over time even after the intervention has been withdrawn. It has been shown to

- help patients keep skills they have learned
- reduce regression
- reduce problem behavior
- increase appropriate behavior



### THINK ABOUT IT

Why do you think maintenance is important?

We work hard to teach new skills and reduce problem behaviors. We want to make sure this behavior change continues long after we are done with the intervention. We are setting the patient up for continued success!

It is important to teach skills that will be used in everyday life; if not, they are less likely to be maintained.



### THINK ABOUT IT

If you do something once, do you remember exactly how to do it five to ten years later? If you do something many times (like riding a bike), do you remember how to do it five to ten years later?

↪ **EXAMPLE** Colin masters the receptive labels “bear” and “cookie.” He needs continued reinforcement of successful discrimination between “cookie” and “bear” to maintain those responses.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Colin masters tying his shoes. Continued practice and reinforcement of tying shoes will ensure that he maintains this skill over the next several weeks, months, years, etc.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Colin learns not to engage in tantrum behavior for attention from his caregiver through the use of a time-out procedure. Once the intervention has been faded out Colin continues to use appropriate

replacement behaviors to gain his caregiver's attention.

## Video Transcription

Hi. Hi.

Look. Say hi.

Hi.

Say I'm Jack Riley.

I Jack Riley. Hi!

[GASPS] I hear someone.

Hi.

[GASPS]

Hi.

Who is it?

Hi, Diana.

Hi.

Now, we will look at how we ensure that previously mastered skills are maintained across time.

## IN CONTEXT

Let's look at examples of maintenance across time.

Example: Colin and receptive labels.

SD: "Touch (object)." (For example, "Touch bear.")

R: Colin touches the labeled object.

While Colin is still learning new receptive labels, as you continue to teach new labels (for example, bubbles, etc.), make sure to review previously mastered labels (for example, bear, cookie, ball, show, cup, hat) as instructed by the BCBA.

After Colin has learned hundreds of receptive labels, the BCBA will move the Receptive Labels program to a separate Maintenance Program. Programs in Maintenance should be done as often as instructed by the BCBA.

## Video Transcription

Do actions and then it looks like we're doing maintenance right now.

Do the ones that he already has mastered.

And that's in a separate bag. OK.

Yeah. And then you would just be asking, what is the little boy doing? The boy is playing. That should be his answer.

OK.

What are they doing?

He's playing.

Yeah, they're playing. Good job, Jack!

Playing with blocks.

They are playing blocks. You're so smart.

What is he doing?

He's playing.

Yeah, another one!

He's playing blocks.

He's playing blocks too?

He's playing cars.

He's playing cars. That's right.

What is she doing?

He's-- He's playing [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah! What are they doing?

He's swinging.

Yeah! You finished! Good job, Jack Riley! Give me high fives. Can you do high fives? Yes, OK!

How often should you reinforce a behavior?

- With new skills (reminder), continuous reinforcement is required. Early on, reinforcement occurs after every attempted or correct trial. As patients progress, intermittent reinforcement is used; we reinforce less frequently, after every second, third, fourth, fifth, etc. trial.
- To maintain a skill that is already mastered (and therefore easier for the patient), we use an intermittent schedule of reinforcement.

Fluency training is another way to teach skills and also ensure they are maintained. Fluency consists of answering things correctly within a certain period of time. It varies from just accurate responding as accurate responding only focuses on responding correctly and fluency focuses on responding accurately and quickly. Fluency can be a measure and focus with many skills but it is particularly easy to program into acquisition skills such as math or reading.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Maintenance

Continued performance of a response after it was first learned



#### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about **maintenance**, which is a patient's ability to continue to perform a skill or engage in a behavior with minimal errors over time even after the intervention has been withdrawn. We work hard to teach new skills and reduce problem behaviors, so we want to make sure that this behavior change continues long after we are done with the intervention – setting the patient up for continued success! Remember, with new skills, continuous reinforcement should be used, shifting to intermittent reinforcement as the patient progresses. To maintain a mastered skill, we use intermittent reinforcement.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

### Maintenance

Continued performance of a response after it was first learned.