

Reflection Paper

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### Reflection Paper

A behavior that I would like to see altered is children up to the age of seven incessantly and randomly screaming as a means of verbal communication. Often, this behavior is left unaddressed as a childhood phenomenon that will eventually subside. However, it can be cumbersome behavior in various social and family settings. Applying the theoretical framework of operant conditioning, I would seek to alter screaming behaviors using reinforcement techniques rather than punisher techniques.

Although punishment can weaken behavioral practices, its association with other negative emotional and behavioral patterns is of concern. For example, punishment can often only temporarily suppress the undesired screaming episodes, which could return once the punishment is stopped. Also, increased aggression is a serious consequence that can be undesirable. Regarding this approach, I would also exclude negative reinforcement as a behavioral intervention since it can be difficult to distinguish it from punishment intervention in practice.

To effectively alter the screaming episodes in children, I would recommend using positive reinforcement techniques described under the operant conditioning framework. The basic premise would involve providing a reward to the child for ceasing to scream shortly after onset, regardless of whether the triggering stimulus is still present. Since there can be times when children exhibit random episodes of loud verbal forms of communication, it is key to identify these moments for the reinforcement intervention. The reward could be in any form that is desirable and familiar but not always accessible, for example, a favorite ice cream flavor.

The exact reinforcement type would depend on the frequency and severity of the screaming episodes but could involve continuous reinforcement or fixed interval reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement, as described here, is, of course, not this simple a technique for human behavioral modification. It does, however, highlight some key basic principles of avoiding undesirable behavior.