



CAPTAIN X

Evidence-Based Practice of the Month:

Functional Communication Training (FCT)

Functional communication training (FCT) is a set of practices that replace a challenging behavior that has a communication function with more appropriate and effective communication behaviors or skills. The distinct component of FCT is that the alternative response is a recognizable form of communication (e.g., a vocalization, manual sign, Picture Exchange Communication System®).

(National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team, 2020)

FCT involves identifying the function of the challenging behavior, selecting the appropriate alternative communication behavior or skill, and teaching the alternative communication behavior.

Free module to learn more about FCT:

<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/functional-communication-training>

IN THE CLASSROOM:

- When possible, use an existing mode of communication for the student
- Choose an alternative communication behavior with a response effort that is less difficult than the interfering behavior
- Examples may include: a break card/signal, a signal for attention, a gesture to request a want or need, etc.

AT HOME:

- Consider situations in which the interfering behavior is likely to occur (mealtime, bath time, grocery shopping, etc.)
- Reinforce all use of the alternative communication behavior
- Try to select a method that is always available (manual sign, picture/icon)

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