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Brite Bridge Parent Behavior Toolkit™

Practical tools for behavior, communication, and daily routines

"Guided by the Brite Bridge Model™"

Behavior & Communication Tips

Helping families understand behavior, support communication, and build meaningful skills through positive and evidence-based ABA strategies.

Strategies should be individualized and implemented in collaboration with your child's BCBA.

This resource is intended for general education only. Strategies should not be implemented as a substitute for individualized treatment or clinical guidance. Always consult with your child's BCBA before making changes to your child's intervention plan.

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Part of the Brite Bridge Model™ approach to supporting skill development across home, school, and community environments.

Introduction

Your child's progress extends beyond therapy sessions. Progress is often supported when strategies are used in everyday routines at home, school, and in the community.

This toolkit helps families understand behavior, strengthen communication, and build practical skills using positive, evidence-based Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

The tools in this guide are simple, practical, and designed for everyday use. You will find guidance, examples, and strategies that support your child's learning while strengthening collaboration between families and professionals.

Our goal is to provide caregivers with clear, easy-to-use tools that support children in building meaningful skills and succeeding across environments.

Behavior serves a purpose (e.g., to gain access, escape, or communicate a need).

Strategies should be individualized based on each child's needs and implemented with guidance from a qualified professional.

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Overview & How to Use This Toolkit

Section 1 — Purpose

This Parent Resource Pack was created to help families better understand behavior, support communication, and build positive skills at home using ABA-based strategies.

Section 2 — What's Included

Inside this guide, you'll learn the following:

1. Understanding behavior as communication
2. Why behavior happens (functions)
3. ABC data tracking sheets
4. Replacement behavior planning
5. Reinforcement strategies
6. Calm response scripts
7. Supporting emotional regulation
8. Weekly reflection + progress tools

Each page includes space to write, reflect, and practice new strategies in real-life situations

Section 3 — How to Use This Toolkit

Step 1 → Learn why behavior occurs
Step 2 → Observe & identify patterns using ABC data
Step 3 → Teach a replacement skill
Step 4 → Reinforce success consistently
Step 5 → Review progress weekly

Section 4 — For the Best Results

✓ Review one module at a time — no need to rush
✓ Practice communication strategies daily in short, natural moments
✓ Reinforce all communication attempts — even small ones
✓ Notice small communication attempts — they matter
✓ Share what works with your BCBA regularly

Important Note

TThis resource is for educational purposes only and is intended to be used in coordination with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). It does not replace individualized assessment, treatment planning, or clinical guidance.

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Behavior Is Communication

Understanding what your child may be trying to say

When children are frustrated, overwhelmed, or unable to express themselves, behavior often becomes their way of communicating. This does not mean your child is being "bad." It means they need support in the moment. This guide focuses on how to respond supportively in these moments.

What Does "Behavior Is Communication" Mean?

At Brite ABA, we look beyond the behavior to understand the message behind it. When a child does not yet have the words or skills to express their needs, behavior becomes their way of communicating. Through the Brite Bridge Model™, we help families learn how to recognize and respond to these messages with support and guidance.

Your child's behavior may be communicating:

These messages may not always be spoken, but they are still important.

- "I need help"
- "I don't understand"
- "This is too hard"
- "I want something"
- "I need a break"
- "I'm overwhelmed"
- "I want connection"

When we understand the message, we can respond with teaching, connection, and support — rather than frustration.

Why challenging moments happen

When a child cannot express their needs or feels unheard, frustration can build quickly. This may look like crying, yelling, dropping to the floor, or shutting down. In-the-moment support helps reduce frustration and teaches new skills over time.

What this guide will help you with

- What to say during challenging moments
- How to support communication in real time
- How to stay calm and supportive
- How to help your child regulate emotions
- How to reinforce communication attempts

Progress does not happen all at once. Small attempts, gestures, or calm moments are meaningful steps forward.

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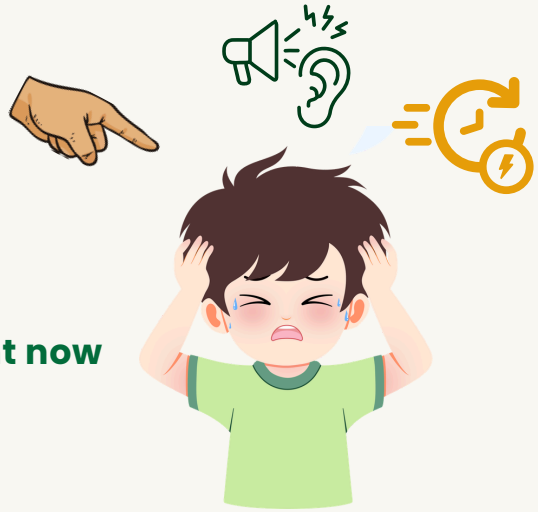
In-the-Moment Communication Support

Simple ways to support your child when emotions are high

When emotions are high, communication becomes harder. This module focuses on simple, supportive ways to help your child communicate during challenging moments — without increasing frustration or adding pressure.

Start by making the moment easier



- Lower your voice
- Slow your speech
- Use fewer words
- Pause before responding
- Get down to your child's level

Calm adults help children stay calm.

Ways to help your child communicate right now

- Offer simple, clear choices
- Model short words or phrases
- Use gestures or pointing
- Show a picture or visual
- Allow wait time (3–5 seconds)
- Give your child time to respond before repeating or adding more words.

Instead of asking many questions, offer simple choices or communication support to help your child express what they need.

Supportive phrases that reduce frustration

- "I'm here."
- "You can show me."
- "Help or break?"
- "Take your time."
- "When you're ready, I'm ready."

You don't need to fix everything — presence matters.

What can increase frustration

- ✕ Long explanations
- ✕ Repeating demands
- ✕ Asking many questions
- ✕ Saying "use your words" repeatedly
- ✕ Correcting speech during distress

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What Helps My Child during Challenging Moments?

Use this page to notice patterns and identify what helps your child during challenging moments.

This page helps you observe patterns during challenging moments. Over time, noticing what works can help you respond more effectively and support your child's communication and regulation skills.

1. Situation or trigger

What was happening right before your child became frustrated or overwhelmed?

2. Early signs of frustration

What were the first signs your child may have been getting overwhelmed?

Examples:

- Pacing
- Whining
- Avoiding tasks
- Becoming quiet
- Covering ears

Signs I noticed:

3. Supports I used

What did you try in the moment?

Examples:

- Offering choices
- Showing a visual
- Modeling words
- Giving wait time
- Offering a break

Supports used:

4. Words or phrases that helped

Examples:

- “I’m here.”
- “Help or break?”
- “Take your time.”
- “You can show me.”

Words or phrases that helped my child:

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5. What helped my child calm down?

Examples:

- Taking a break
- Quiet space
- Sensory item
- Deep breathing
- Moving to a quieter area

Supports that helped:

6. What worked well?

Which response seemed most helpful in this situation?

7. Notes or questions for my BCBA

Write any observations or questions you would like to discuss with your BCBA.

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Calm Response Scripts

What to say during challenging moments to reduce escalation

When a child is upset, the words we choose can either calm the moment or make it harder. Calm response scripts help children feel safe, supported, and understood while emotions settle. This module gives you simple phrases you can rely on when it's hard to think.

Before using a script

- Take a breath before speaking
- Keep your voice low and slow
- Use short, simple phrases
- Match calm body language
- Focus on support, not correction

Your calm helps your child calm.

Calm phrases that work across situations

- "I'm here."
- "You're safe."
- "I can help."
- "We'll figure it out."
- "When you're ready, I'm ready."

Repeating one calm phrase is often more effective than saying many different things.

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Supportive scripts by need

If your child needs help:	"You can ask for help." "Show me." "Let's do it together."
If your child needs comfort:	"I see you." "That was hard." "I'm right here."
If your child needs a break:	"We can take a break." "Let's pause." "You can rest for a moment."
If your child needs time:	"Take your time." "No rush." "I'll wait with you."

Phrases that can increase frustration

✕ "Calm down."
✕ "You know better."
✕ "Use your words."
✕ "Stop crying."
✕ "Why are you doing this?"

Even well-meant words can feel overwhelming during distress.

My go-to calm phrases

Phrase 1: _____

Phrase 2: _____

Phrase 3: _____

Which phrase seems to help my child most?

_____

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MODULE 1 — Behavior Is Communication

Understanding what your child may be trying to say

What Does "Behavior Is Communication" Mean?

- To get something they want
- To escape or avoid something
- To get attention or connection
- To meet a sensory need

Worksheet Area — Operational Definition

Operational Definition Worksheet

Describe behavior clearly, objectively, and measurably.

Behavior looks like: _____

Occurs during/when: _____

Frequency / Intensity / Duration: _____

Vague Description	Clear & Measurable Example
"meltdown"	crying loudly, falling to floor 2–5 minutes
"aggressive"	hits with open hand 1–3 times
"won't listen"	does not start task within 10 seconds

Reframe Thought:
"What is my child trying to communicate?"

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MODULE 1 — Reflection & Practice

Use this page to notice patterns and reflect on what helps your child during challenging moments.

1. What was happening right before the moment? What may have triggered it?)

2. What early signs did I notice? (e.g., pacing, quiet, whining, avoiding)

3. What did I try in the moment? e.g., offering choices, visuals, calming words, giving a break)

4. What seemed to help the most?

5. What is one small, supportive change I can try next time?

6. Notes or questions to review with my BCBA

Taking time to reflect can help you better understand your child's needs and support progress across daily routines.