Horses, Behavior, Independence… Oh MY!

Dr. Kate Cook
katherine.cook@ndsu.edu

Why Independence is Important

- Independence for individuals with disability is defined as
  - Having individual autonomy, the opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making and the opportunity to experience the physical, social, economic and cultural environment (UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability)
  - Independence by design (Phillips, 2019)
  - Independence builds self-confidence

5 Ways to Encourage Independence

1. Be supportive, not controlling
2. Facilitate the ability to make decisions by introducing "choices"
3. Be patient and positive
4. Celebrate little victories
5. Encourage interaction with other people

(Caremark, 2023)
# 1 Form of Communication is...

**BEHAVIOR**

Functions of Behavior...

- The “Why” behavior occurs
  - Access to something
  - Attention, tangible, preferred activities
  - Avoidance of something
    - Escape task demands, activities
  - Sensory
    - Seeking or avoiding
    - Sensory Systems
      - Visual
      - Auditory
      - Olfactory (smell)
      - Gustatory (taste)
      - Tactile
      - Vestibular (sense of head movement in space)
      - Proprioceptive (sensations from muscles and joints)
      - Interoception

Strategies that Work...

- Prompting
  - Prompt hierarchy (least to most or most to least)
    - Independent
    - Gesture
    - Indirect verbal
    - Direct verbal
    - Visual
    - “Do It”
    - Partial physical assist
    - Full physical assist
  - Reinforcement
    - Present or remove something that increases the likelihood of the desired behavior to occur again
  - Token economies
    - Introducing non-desired behavior and extinction to target behavior
  - Scripting
    - Telling individual what to expect or what is expected of them
  - Task Analysis/Behavior Chaining
    - Break target skill into smaller steps/steps
  - Video Modeling
    - Demonstrate desired behavior and then demonstrate the target behavior
Tips and Tricks…
- Only give a choice…if it is a choice
- “Do you want to push the wheelbarrow vs. Your turn…push the wheelbarrow”
- Wait time or Response time may need to be 5-7 seconds or more

Visual Supports

Visual Schedule….
Behavior Cue Cards

In the Barn....
What can independence look like?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

...