



## Go with the Flow



Restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior are one of the groups of behaviors included in the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Research shows that parents commonly report that repetitive behavior symptoms are among the most difficult aspects of ASD that they have to manage on a daily basis. A child's excessive adherence to routines, resistance to change, "insistence on sameness" can be incredibly challenging. We want our kids to be "flexible" – have the skills to manage variability – differences or changes in routines, items, or situations. We all like some predictability for our days and most of us have some rigidities about where things should be or how things should be done, but most of us also have the self-management skills to adapt to changes in routines or changes in our environment – certainly COVID and hurricanes have tested our own flexibility! And like any skill set, behaviors that are needed to be "flexible" can be taught with evidence-based ABA strategies.

- Positive reinforcement – *any time* you catch your child staying calm when a routine changes, trying something new, or doing something in a new way, give your child lots of attention and praise immediately
- "Flexible" is a general term that describes a group of behaviors – identify the specific behaviors that you want to see more of – e.g. drinking from a new cup ...
- Practice! Like any new skill, learning to be flexible takes practice -Create situations that expose your child to a change – start small!
- Use schedules – a written or picture schedule can help a child know what to expect when routines change
- As parents, we also have to look at our own behaviors – how might we be accidentally reinforcing rigidity? Often, we jump through hoops to manage our child's environment so we can escape or avoid the challenging behaviors of our kids- might seem to work in the short term, but our behaviors could be maintaining or even strengthening rigidities in the long term
- Be prepared – often when we change a rule or contingency, we may see an extinction burst – an increase in challenging behaviors – it might get worse before it gets better – Hang in there!
- These are general considerations and suggestions – an individualized, systematic plan may need to be developed by your BCBA to decrease specific rigidities – reach out.

I hope you all have a healthy and happy November!  
Janice  
jhuber@tc-aba.com

## THIS MONTH'S FAMILY MEETINGS

Houma/Thibodaux 11/18 Group Meetings at 9:00am, 12:30pm, & 5:30pm

New Orleans 11/24 Group Meeting at 9:00am & 3:00pm

Baton Rouge School-aged clients 11/25 at 12:00, Baton

Rouge Preschool clients 11/25 at 1:00pm – in person

Hammond 11/16 Group Meeting at 10:00am

Lafayette 11/10 Group Meeting at 9:30am

Group meetings this month, except for BR pre-school, are currently being held online. You will receive an email with a link to join the meetings. **Join Us!** If you are unable to attend your monthly meetings, please contact Angie Lanoux at: [alanoux@tc-aba.com](mailto:alanoux@tc-aba.com) to set up individual meetings



### Touchstone SUPERHERO Sh'Laya Coleman, RLT

Sh'Laya is a line technician in the Hammond center where she has been for a little over a year. She is a senior at Southeastern University studying Family Consumer Science.

She was introduced to ABA in her college coursework and after attending a job fair was "sold" on Touchstone- she followed her mom's advice to "obtain a job that's worth getting up for in the morning." She loves being able to see a child's progression and learning abilities – teaching a child how to wave or say "Hey Sh'Laya" she says is truly a blessing for her. She is also grateful to have Kelly King as her supervisor, who she says is always reminding her to believe in herself. She also notes that she's grateful to have a position at Touchstone that "coincides" with her family values and beliefs. Sh'Laya attributes her passion for learning and her compassion to lessons she learned from her Great Grandmother – to put her trust in God and he will direct her path. In her free time, she enjoys shopping, Netflix, seafood, and working with youth to mentor leadership in her community. Congratulations Sh'Laya! We are grateful for your commitment to your students, to Touchstone, and the field of ABA!