



Academic Behavior Check- in/Check-out (ABC)

Jessica Turtura & Cynthia M. Anderson

University of Oregon

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Overview

Academic Behavior Check-in/Check-out (ABC) is an intervention for students who struggle with organization and/or have difficulty getting their work done in class or staying on task. ABC is a way to help students be more motivated to come to school and complete work—the goal is to help students be more successful in school. The intervention is simple to implement and consists of the following components:

1. Students carry a point card and earn points for meeting school-wide expectations
2. Students interact with teachers prior to each class
3. Students receive frequent feedback on in-class behavior
4. Students complete a homework tracker to help them stay focused on assignments
5. Students meet with the intervention coordinator before and after school each day
6. Students earn rewards for meeting school-wide expectations
7. Parents monitor homework completion

Daily Cycle of ABC

Students on ABC participate in a morning check-in, daily feedback sessions with teachers, an afternoon checkout, and a home component.

Morning Check-in

- Each morning students meet with the ABC coordinator. This interaction is brief and positively focused—the goal is to set the student up for a successful day in school
- At check-in, a student will demonstrate that he or she has all needed materials and that assignments are complete. If assignments are not complete or materials are missing, then students have an opportunity to complete assignments and get missing materials

Daily Point Card and Homework Tracker

- Students carry a daily point card that is used to help students monitor their behavior. One side of the card has expected academic behaviors—students earn points for meeting these expectations. The other side of the card has a homework tracker
- Students earn points for meeting academic expectations. They earn “bonus” points for being prepared and having all assignments complete at the beginning of the school day
 - Expectations are defined in terms of academic behavior
 - Students earn bonus points for being prepared and having assignments complete at the start of each day
 - Students earn points for completing the assignment tracker accurately
- The assignment tracker is on the back of the point card and is completed by students during each academic class. The teacher signs the assignment tracker to indicate that it is accurate

Afternoon Check-out

- The student meets again with the ABC coordinator. Together they review points earned throughout the day and the home note is completed
- The homework/assignment tracker is reviewed to be sure the student knows what to work on that evening. The coordinator works with the student to develop a plan for where and when assignments will be done

Home Component

- You will have the opportunity to participate in a brief training meeting before your child begins ABC
- Each evening you will review the point card with your child
 - If your child did not meet expectations that day you can provide neutral feedback and talk about how your child could have a better day the next school day. Negative consequences are not part of ABC so you will not be asked to identify consequences such as loss of privileges; in fact, ABC may work best when there are no specific consequences at home
 - If your child met expectations at school you can praise your child. It is okay to occasionally have special treats (e.g., movie night) if your child has a good day but you don't need to do this a lot.
- You also will review the homework tracker with your child. This will help you understand the amount of homework your child has
 - You can problem-solve with your child how best to complete the homework. This could include where work will be completed and about how long it will take
 - You are not expected to help your child with the homework or complete the work for your child
 - If your child refuses to complete the work or does not know how to do the work simply note this on the ABC card. If this is a continuing problem then the ABC coordinator will work with you and your child to identify a more appropriate intervention
- After homework is completed parents indicate on the ABC card whether the assignments are complete or not and signs the card

Helping Your Child with Homework

The following material was adapted from Clark and Clark (1989).

Homework completion can be stressful for children and for their parents. It can be difficult to figure out when homework will be completed—especially in the lives of today’s busy families! Below are some tried and true strategies that may be helpful for your family. The ABC coordinator can work with you to figure out how to use any or all of these tips to make homework time better for your child and you.

Establish a routine

- a. Having a set time and location for completing homework results in fewer arguments, fewer late nights (completing the work), and better work quality
- b. Work with your child to figure out the best place for completing homework. A good location is free from distractions (e.g., away from the television) and is one where materials such as pencils and paper are readily accessible
- c. You and your child can review your family schedule to figure out the best time for homework. If your child has an activity that occurs once or twice per week you may end up having a couple of different times for homework—this is okay so long as the overall schedule is consistent. For example, your child might complete homework after dinner, at about 7:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Sundays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays your child completes homework right after school because she has soccer practice from 6:00 to 7:00

Planning for projects

As your child gets older many assignments become longer-term projects. These projects may have small portions due “along the way” or the entire project may be due a few days or weeks away. When your child has a project you can help your child plan ahead by:

- a. Helping your child decide on a topic that is interesting to them, that meets the criteria established by the teacher and that will not be overwhelming. It is a good idea to pick the topic as soon as the project is assigned
- b. Help your child make a list of the steps required to complete the project and estimate how long each step will take
- c. Work backward from the due date to make a timeline for completing each step of the project. Allow a few extra days at the end in case any step takes more time than your child has allotted
- d. Make a list of the materials that will be needed for each step of the project
- e. Keep the timeline in your child’s homework location and be sure to check in with your child frequently—using the timeline—to be sure your child is on track for meeting the due date

Organization

Developing organizational skills is one of the most important—and difficult—tasks of adolescence. You can help your child develop organizational skills by:

- a. Using notebooks for school that use a binder or another system to secure papers. A good notebook is one that nothing falls out of when shaken. Help your child develop a routine of putting materials into the notebook each evening in an organized way. This may include punching holes into worksheets and other papers without holes so that they stay in the notebook
- b. Either use separate notebooks for each subject areas or use dividers to separate subject areas. For each subject area your child's notebook should have a pocket to insert items that, when handed out, do not have holes for the binder (your child can punch holes that evening). Items should not stay in this pocket for more than a day—they will be quickly transferred to the binder portion of the notebook
- c. Have a set place for keeping school materials in your house. This will minimize the last minute (and often frantic) searches for materials as you are trying to leave the house in the morning
- d. Consider helping your child use a calendar to schedule due dates for assignments and school-related activities. This can be a dry erase board that hangs in your child's homework area or a calendar/datebook your child carries to and from school