

# What to Expect from the Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Families (PTR-F) Process

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Many families experience a lot of emotions when their child's behavior is unexpected or seems more severe than that of other children. It can be especially challenging when these behaviors happen more than for other families, last a long time, or cause you more stress than you feel like you can manage. Please know that your child's behaviors are not a sign of "bad parenting." When young children have behaviors that are frequent or intense, it is often a sign that they need more support to communicate their experiences, emotions, wants, and needs; understand what is expected; and feel connected and successful in family routines.

When families need help addressing their child's challenging behavior, our program uses the Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families (PTR-F)<sup>1</sup> process to partner with them to understand the child's behavior and develop a plan to support them at home and in the community.



## What is PTR-F?

PTR-F is a research-based approach that has helped families and shown positive results across multiple intervention studies. It is a team-based process that helps us understand why your child's behaviors occur, so we can plan practical ways to help your child learn new skills to communicate their experiences, emotions, wants, and needs, participate in family routines and interactions, and make daily life easier for everyone.

- **Prevent** refers to identifying and using strategies that reduce the chances of challenging behavior happening in the first place. This includes making changes to routines, environments, expectations, and interactions so situations are less likely to be difficult for your child.
- **Teach** refers to identifying the specific skills you want to teach your child to use instead of challenging behavior. These skills give your child another way to communicate, participate, or respond when something feels hard.
- **Reinforce** involves developing a plan to encourage the behaviors and skills you want your child to continue using. What works best will depend on your child and what they like.

<sup>1</sup> Dunlap, G., Strain, P.S., Lee, J. K., Joseph, J. D., Vatland, C. & Fox, L. (2017). *Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families. A Model of Individualized Positive Behavior Support for Home and Community*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

## Who is on the team?

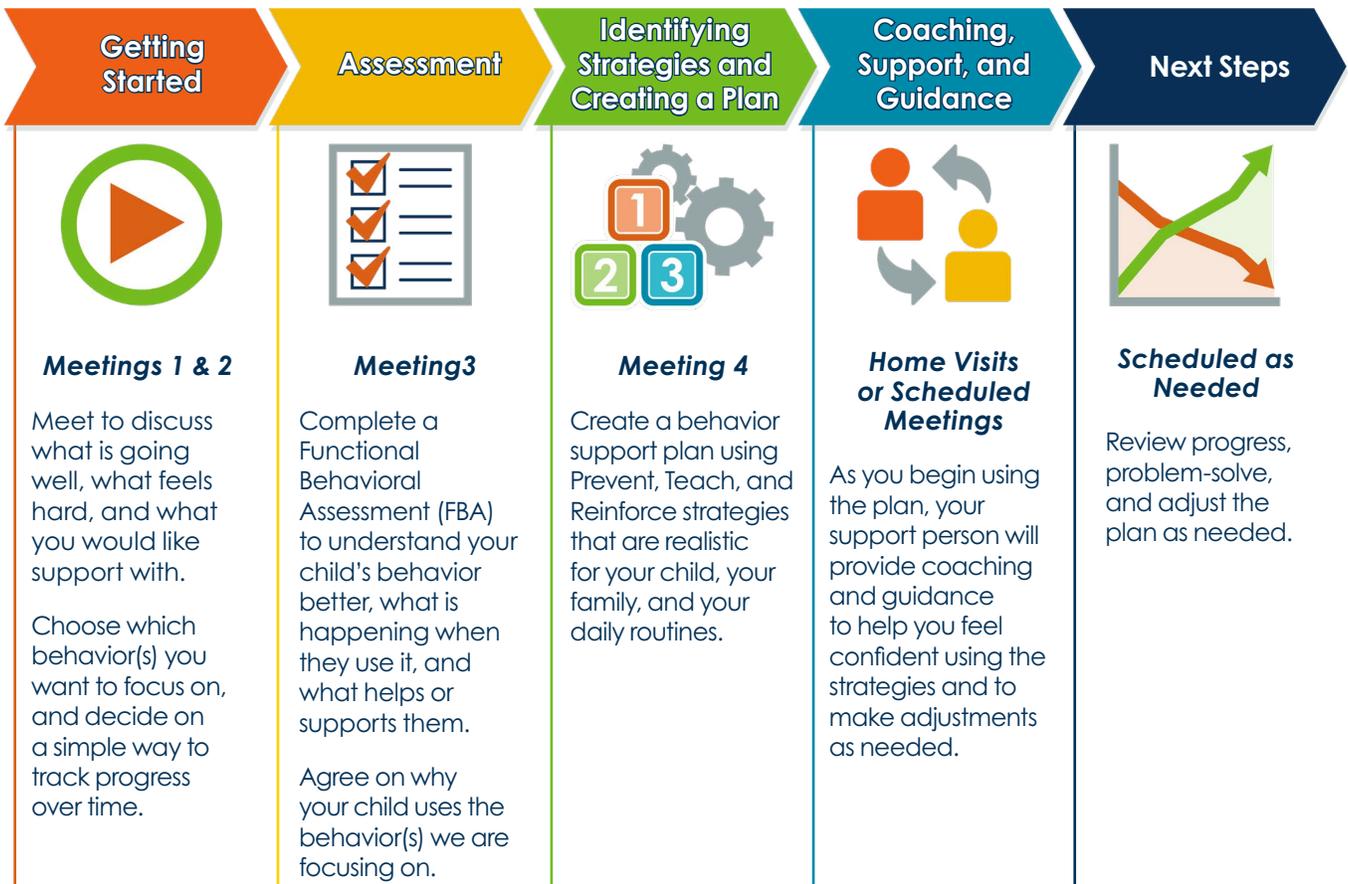
The most important member of the team is you! You know your child well, and you have the information needed to develop a plan that is the best fit for your family. You might also want another family member or adult who spends time with your child (e.g., babysitter) to participate. In addition, someone from the program will guide the PTR-F process and the development of the behavior support plan. Your child’s teacher or early interventionist will also be involved. If your child receives any related services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy) in or outside of the program, those therapists can be invited to participate if you wish.

## How long does the process take?

The pace will be set by what works for you, your child, and your family. For most families, the process usually takes several weeks, including time to meet, working together to develop a plan, trying strategies from the plan, and making adjustments together.

## What will we do during each part of the process?

The process begins with a few meetings, usually three or four. If your child receives early intervention services at home, these meetings can occur during your existing visits, so nothing extra is added. Once a plan is developed, you will spend additional time using the strategies. During this time, a member of our team will support you, offer guidance when helpful, and work with you to make adjustments based on what works best for your child and family. Here is a visual graphic of the PTR-F process.



## How will PTR-F help my child?

The plan will include strategies to help your child learn communication, emotional regulation, and social skills and how to participate in daily routines. As your child learns new skills, challenging behaviors tend to occur less often and are easier to respond to and prevent.

## What will I do?

The program wants to partner with you throughout the process. During planning meetings, you will share what you know about your child and help choose strategies that fit your family's routines and values. Once you are ready, you will try out the strategies during everyday moments, with support.

## Support for You and Your Family

The goal of PTR-F is to develop a behavior plan that works for your child and your family and for the family to feel supported, heard, and never alone.