

STAR model of observing behaviour

Just as children’s behaviour is related to their development, so it is affected by their environment. The environment can cause children to behave in particular ways and it can stop them doing so. We can use our knowledge of this to help us understand and respond to children’s behaviour.

However, we want to do the least intrusive thing we can, and this model will help us understand how to do this.

The STAR model of observing behaviour

S means **settings** – all those things going on in the environment (in the background if you like) that affect behaviour. These are the stable or relatively stable things in the environment such as:

- places
- time of day
- ‘tension’ in the environment (and weather!)
- people
- hunger

T means **triggers** – the particular things that start or stop particular behaviours. This can include such things as a request to start or stop to doing something, a sudden realisation that there’s no one else there and so on.

A means the **action** itself – what the child actually does as a result of the ‘settings’ and ‘triggers’. Of course, we always describe in clear Portage language, noting and recording what we can see and what we can hear.

R means the **response** to the behaviour – all those things that happen as a result. Remember, the environment often responds just as much as other people do. The noises and sights that are created can have as much impact as what people do in response.

When we want to intervene to change behaviour (the **action**) we can either:

change the **settings** and **triggers** that lead to it

or

change the **responses** to the behaviour, i.e. what happens afterwards

Corresponding models

STAR	ABC
Settings and Triggers	Antecedents
Action	Behaviour
Responses	Consequences