

Why Conduct Preference Assessment?

- Children and youth with developmental disabilities may have difficulty communicating about likes and dislikes or may show limited interests.
 - **Preference assessment (PA)** helps us learn about likes and dislikes, without the requirement of communication.
 - PA may identify new preferred items/activities.
- When we are clear on likes, we know what rewards to give for good behavior and what to avoid giving after problem behavior.
 - Some preferred items/activities that are given after a behavior increase the likelihood that the behavior will happen again in the future. These are known as **reinforcers**.
- When we are clear on dislikes, we know what might trigger problem behavior. Triggers for behavior are known as **antecedents**.
- Because likes change over time, continued PA is important. Anytime your child seems bored with items, it may be time for a new PA.

How Preference Assessments Are Conducted.

- During our interview, we conducted an informal preference assessment when I asked you to tell me about your child's preferences.
- At home, you can learn a lot about preferences by observing what your child interacts with or chooses to do, as well as what your child refuses.
- In a future appointment, we will conduct a formal preference assessment that will involve presenting items/activities and carefully observing behavior.
 - We may observe what items are selected, as well as how much interaction or behavior is associated with each item.

How Preference Assessment Relates to Treatment.

- Assessment of preferences is a **first step** in development of an effective behavior management plan.
- Conducting a preference assessment is a good opportunity to establish rapport with your child and allow your child to become comfortable in this clinical setting.
- We may need to **limit access** to certain items so that these can be used to motivate positive behavior. If your child can access the item freely across the day, it will not serve as a good motivator.
- The **best motivators are small**. For example, a bite of preferred food or a 2-minute break with a preferred toy or video may be good motivators.