

Matching measurement method to behavior.

Your BCBA picks the method — understanding why helps you run it well.

	Frequency / Rate HOW MANY TIMES	Duration HOW LONG IT LASTS	Latency TIME TO BEGIN	Interval Methods PIR · WIR · MTS	Permanent Product WHAT'S LEFT BEHIND
If the behavior...	Has a clear start and stop, and is easy to count	Occurs in episodes that last	Takes time to begin after a cue	Is high-rate or hard to watch continuously	Leaves a lasting result
Use when	A behavior has a clear start and stop and happens at a countable pace — a learner greeting a peer, activating an icon, raising a hand	The behavior is an episode that lasts — time on task, time engaged with a peer	The question is how quickly the behavior starts after a cue — an instruction is given, and then the learner begins	The behavior happens so often, or the session is so busy, that continuous counting isn't realistic	The behavior reliably leaves something behind — a completed worksheet, an assembled puzzle
Why	Counting works because each instance is distinct and easy to catch as it happens	The interesting number is how long, not how many times	Latency captures the gap between cue and response, which frequency or duration alone can't show	Interval methods trade some precision for practicality — sampling time instead of counting every single instance	The lasting result lets you measure after the fact, without needing to watch the behavior happen in real time
Quick check <i>What shape does this behavior have?</i>	Countable and clear-cut	Lasts a while	Has a "waiting" period before it starts	Too frequent or busy to catch every instance	Leaves physical evidence behind

WHY THIS MATTERS

You won't be choosing the method yourself — your BCBA builds that into the plan. But understanding *why* a method was matched to a behavior turns the procedure from a rule you follow into a tool you genuinely understand.