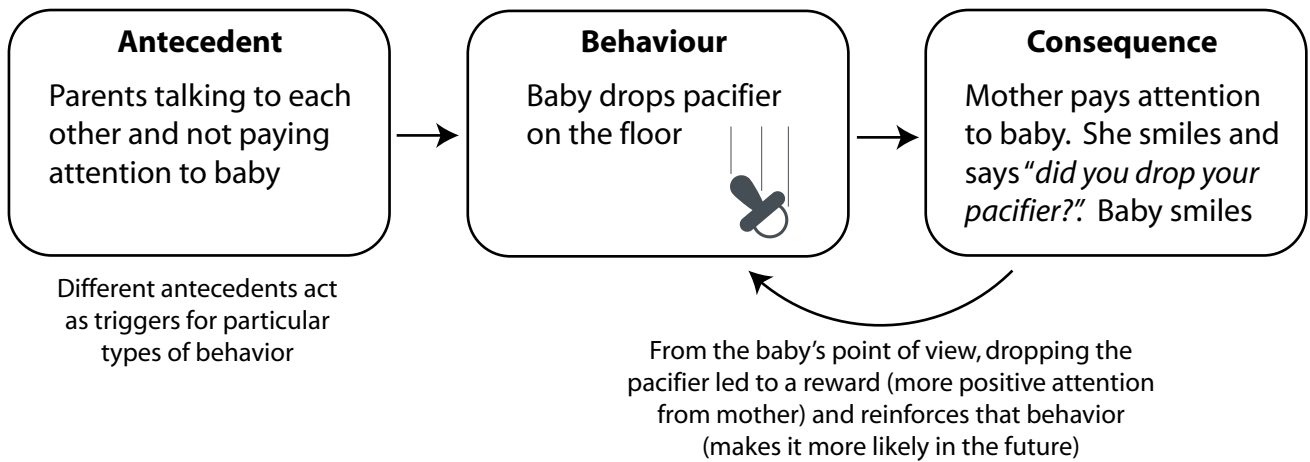




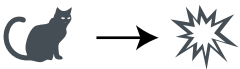

# Operant Conditioning / Instrumental Conditioning

Operant conditioning is a form of learning where behavior is shaped by antecedents (things that come before) and consequences (things that come after).

Imagine a baby sitting in a high chair:



The key principles of operant conditioning are that **reward** and **punishment** change subsequent behaviour.

<p><b>Reinforcement</b> Makes a behavior <i>more likely</i></p>	<p><b>Positive reinforcement</b> Behavior is followed by a reward</p> <p>General example You eat some ice cream, it tastes good and you enjoy it, so you eat some more</p>  <p>Clinical examples Client behaves disruptively and is given more one-to-one attention</p> <p>Child has a reward chart for good behaviour</p>	<p><b>Negative reinforcement</b> Behavior leads to removal of an unwanted stimulus</p> <p>General example The sun has been getting in your eyes and you put sunglasses on. It feels like a relief</p>  <p>Clinical examples Anxious client avoids a situation which makes them anxious, and feels relief</p> <p>Client with an eating disorder vomits deliberately and feels less full</p>
<p><b>Punishment</b> Makes a behavior <i>less likely</i></p>	<p><b>Punishment</b> Behavior is followed by an unpleasant stimulus</p> <p>General example Cat has been going to the toilet in your garden so you make a loud noise to scare it away</p>  <p>Clinical example Punishment is not commonly used in clinical settings. It was called <i>aversion therapy</i> and was widely used in the past. It is now sometimes used to treat alcohol abuse</p>	<p><b>Penalty</b> Behavior is followed by the removal of a desired stimulus</p> <p>General example Child has been naughty and is grounded</p>  <p>Clinical example Whether agreed or unconsciously, therapists may pay more attention to certain behaviors by clients</p>