Using reinforcement

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Some assumptions

- We are all doing the best we can!
- Good enough is good enough...perfection is overrated
- We aren’t school or homeschool

Perfect is not only the enemy of the good; it’s also the enemy of the realistic, the possible, and the fun.

Rebecca Solnit
The number one rule of intervention

BE CONSISTENT! (But not perfect)
Why use reinforcement? What does it do?

• Strengthen appropriate behavior

• Helps decrease problem behavior
What would you do with this table?
What kinds of reinforcers are out there?
What other kinds?
Common categories of reinforcers

- Access to attention (no publicity is bad publicity)
- Access to items
- Avoiding, delaying, or getting out of activities or situations
- Biological reasons
My personal reinforcers...
One thing to remember:

You can’t decide what is a reinforcer for your child and expect it to work.
How do I determine reinforcers?

- **Watch your child**
  - What are their favorite toys?
  - What are their favorite foods?
  - How do they play with items?
  - How long do they interact with you?
  - Does they like physical play or to be left alone?
How do I determine reinforcers?

• Pair new items with items that have been reinforcing in the past
• Try to determine a variety of reinforcers
• Expose your child to new things
• Change things up often!
Using reinforcement effectively

- Given only upon responding – CONTINGENT (no freebies!)
- Don’t wait – present the reinforcer immediately after the behavior occurs
- More preferred the item, the stronger the reinforcement
- More is not necessarily better
- Taper reinforcement as soon as behavior is consistent
  - Unpredictable schedules work best
General Rules of Reinforcement

• For some kids, a contract helps set the tone for reinforcement
• Visuals will help to remind the child of appropriate behavior
• Begin by reinforcing every appropriate response, and then begin to taper off
  • But, you can’t always get what you want!
• Make the reinforcement fit the behavior
• Change up how you present the reinforcer (don’t just “good job” the kid to death)
• Are you sure it’s reinforcing?
• Is it something you can sustain?
  • Do I need to worry about intrinsic motivation being reduced?
Student Behavior Contract

Name___________________________________________

Dates of Contract:  From_________________________ to ________________________

The inappropriate behavior I will work on is:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I will change my behavior by:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

The person I am going to practice controlling misbehavior with is:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

The reward I want to receive for controlling my behavior is:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Sample visuals

My choice board

- bubbles
- running
- ball walls
- Colouring
- bean bag
- free choice
Premack Principle

Premack Principle occurs when a preferred activity is used as reinforcement for a non-preferred activity.

**First**
- LOW-probability behavior
- OR
- Something that the child NEEDS to do.

**Then**
- HIGH-probability behavior
- OR
- Something the child LIKES to do.

The use of Premack Principle or "first/then" language increases motivation and establishes the contingency that reinforcement is available following engagement in a non-preferred activity.

"First eat your veggies, then you can have a cupcake."

NOTE: Ensure that the high-probability (preferred) behavior remains reinforcing by restricting access to the item or activity.