

Reinforcement Tip Sheet

What is Reinforcement?

Reinforcement occurs when something is added to or taken away from the environment after a behavior that increases the future frequency of that behavior.

Why Does it Matter?

Reinforcement is one of the most used principles in Applied Behavior Analysis because it plays an important role in how quickly a behavior is learned. This process can help with decreasing problem behavior and teaching appropriate behavior.

Tip #1 - Identify preferred reinforcers

- A reinforcer checklist can be used to identify a child's preferred
- activities, items or people they prefer to interact with.

Tip #2 - Define the behavior to reinforce in observable, measureable, terms

- What does the behavior look like?
- The behavior needs to be observable and measurable (e.g. when given 3 tasks on her visual schedule, the student completes each of the tasks in 15 minutes).

Tip #3 - Create a schedule of reinforcement

- How often does the behavior need to happen (every one time, every five times) in order to access the reinforcement?
- If using a token board, how many tokens will the student need to earn to access the reinforcer?
- Will the student be given the reinforcer for working for a certain number of minutes or for a specific task such as unloading the dishwasher?

(Tip #4) - Is it working?

- If the desired behavior doesn't increase, the reinforcement isn't working.
- Is this because the behavior needs to be taught more thoroughly?
- Consider if it is not working because the reinforcer is not powerful enough?
- Students can become satiated with too much of a reinforcer. Be sure to have some options and to keep things fresh if they need to be updated.