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RIP

RESOURCE PACKET:

REINFORCEMENT: INTRODUCTION & PRACTICE

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OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

REINFORCEMENT: INTRODUCTION & PRACTICE

WHAT IS REINFORCEMENT?

Reinforcement is a foundational practice often used in combination with other evidence-based practices (such as prompting, visual supports) that applies a consequence following a learner's use of a response or skills that increases the likelihood that the learner will use the response/skills in the future.

Reinforcement can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of reinforcement for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, adaptive, vocational, and academic.

Positive reinforcement is using reinforcers to increase the chances a learner will use a skill or behavior.

Token economy is a specific type of positive reinforcement system in which after a learner has successfully completed the target skill or behavior, a token is provided. After earning a certain number of tokens, the learner earns a more desirable reinforcer after earning a predetermined number of tokens. Examples of tokens are checks on a checklist, play money, cards, stickers, tickets, etc..... After earning tokens, the learner gets 5 minutes of iPad time, drawing, playing with Legos, etc....

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TARGET SKILL EXAMPLES

Reinforcement can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of reinforcement for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, motor, adaptive, and academic. Below are examples of possible target skills or behaviors that can be used for reinforcement.

Academic

- Increase reading fluency
- Use a visual reminder to check off the steps of the editing process during English Language Arts (ELA)
- Writing several sentences about a topic
- Memorizing math facts
- Accurately answering reading comprehension questions
- Counting objects or up to 10/20/100

Behavior

- Follow calm down routine
- Keep hands to self
- Follow teacher request
- Remain in assigned area during morning meeting

Adaptive

- Washing hands
- Using the bathroom (toileting)
- Opening items at snack/lunch (e.g., milk carton, lunch box, chip bag, etc.)
- Putting on jacket
- Putting on or tying shoes

Cognitive

- Follow a calm down routine when stressed
- Follow a calm down routine when stressed
- Identifying a peer's perspective
- Choosing a positive solution to a problem

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Communication

- Ask for help when help is needed
- Request a preferred item
- Ask peers questions during group work

Play

- Initiating play with peers
- Engaging in cooperative play with peers
- Participating in games

Joint attention

- Points and/or shows at an item to share interest
- Responds to an adult's bid for joint attention (e.g., 'Look at this picture!')

School-readiness

- Follow classroom morning routine (unpack bookbag, start morning work, etc.)
- Go through the cafeteria line independently
- Complete class assignment in amount of time provided
- Record homework in agenda
- Raise hand to participate in class discussion
- Walk in line in the hallway
- Writing name on paper

Motor

- Running for 10 minutes
- Completing a puzzle
- Catching and throwing a ball
- Tracing letters and shapes
- Cutting on a line

Social

- Take turns when playing a game
- Initiate/Continue conversation with a peer
- Initiate/Respond to adult/peer greetings

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PLANNING GUIDE

General Planning:

WHO:

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME:

WHERE:

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):

HOW TO USE:

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

Select reinforcers that will increase the student's use of the target skill or behavior in the future.

Know the Reinforcement Schedule:

☐ Continuous   **OR**   ☐ Intermittent

How to Measure:

Use the area below for data collection or use a provided form in AFIRM Resources.

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PLANNING GUIDE: CALEB

General Planning:

WHO
Caleb

WHEN
DATE 10/10/19
TIME 11:00AM

WHERE
Reading class

WHAT (TARGET SKILL)
Raising hand to speak

HOW TO USE
Positive reinforcement

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- Social praise
- High-five
- Fist bump
- Pat on the back

Know the Reinforcement Schedule:

☑ Continuous

Every time Caleb raises his hand to speak

OR

☐ Intermittent

How to Measure:

Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10/10	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓				
10/11	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓		
10/12	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓		
10/13	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

PLANNING GUIDE: DEXTER

General Planning:

WHO
Dexter

WHEN
DATE 10/10/19
TIME 11:00AM

WHERE
English Language Arts (ELA)

WHAT (TARGET SKILL)
Write 6 sentences with ELA writing prompt

HOW TO USE
Positive reinforcement

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- Social praise
- High-five
- Lego piece

Know the Reinforcement Schedule:

☑ Continuous

Provide reinforcement for each sentence that Dexter writes

OR

☐ Intermittent

How to Measure:

Sentences	1	2	3	4	5	6
10/10	✓	✓				
10/11	✓	✓				
10/12	✓	✓	✓			
10/13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10/14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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PLANNING GUIDE: JACK

General Planning:

WHO
Jack

WHEN
DATE 2/25/19
TIME 1:00PM

WHERE
Science class

WHAT (TARGET SKILL)
Stay in seat

HOW TO USE
Token economy

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

If Jack earns 10 check marks, he gets one of the following reinforcers at the end of class
- Sitting in bean bag chair for independent work
- 5 minutes on CoolMathGames.com
- 5 minutes iPad

Know the Reinforcement Schedule:

☐ Continuous

OR

☑ Intermittent

Every 30 seconds, if Jack is sitting in his seat, provide check mark.

How to Measure:

Trials	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Reinforcer?
2/25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Bean bag
2/26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✘
2/27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✘
2/28	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	iPad

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PLANNING GUIDE: MADISON

General Planning:

WHO
Madison

WHEN
DATE 1/28/19
TIME 1:00PM

WHERE
Adapted Curriculum class

WHAT (TARGET SKILL)
Buttoning

HOW TO USE
Positive reinforcement

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High-fives
- Social praise
- Bubbles
- Stickers

Know the Reinforcement Schedule:

☑Continuous   OR   ☐Intermittent
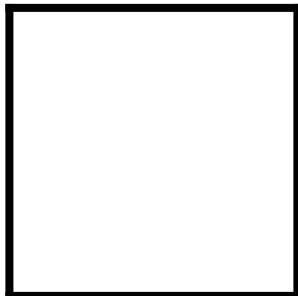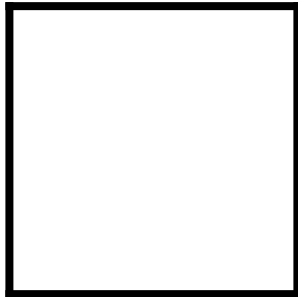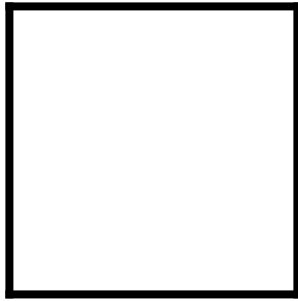
Provide reinforcement after every button Madison buttons

How to Measure:

Trials	1	2	3	4	5	6	Reinforcer?
1/28	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Bubbles
1/29	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	High-fives
1/30	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	Stickers
1/31	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Bubbles
2/1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Social praise

CLASSROOM PLANNING GUIDE

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT	HOW TO USE	SCHEDULE	REINFORCERS	NOTES
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		
				☐ Positive ☐ Token	☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent		

TOKEN ECONOMY: 3 TOKENS

I am working for…

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TOKEN ECONOMY: 5 TOKENS

I am working for...

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TOKEN ECONOMY: 5 TOKENS MULTIPLE

I am working for…

TOKEN ECONOMY: 10 TOKENS

I am working for...

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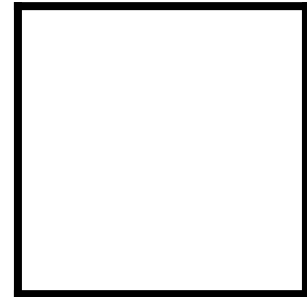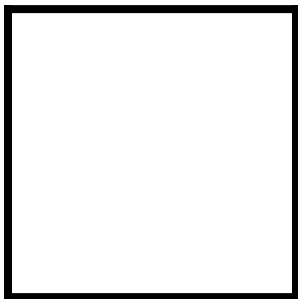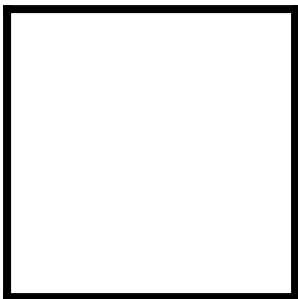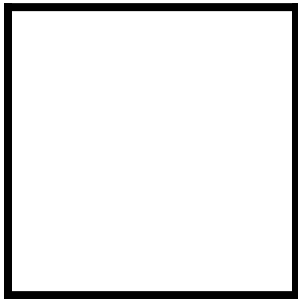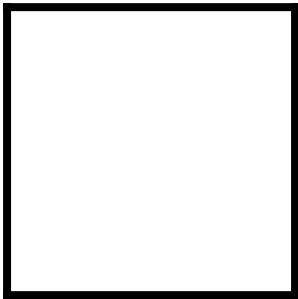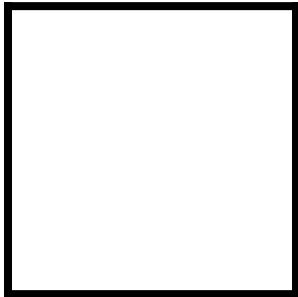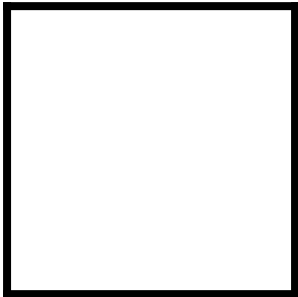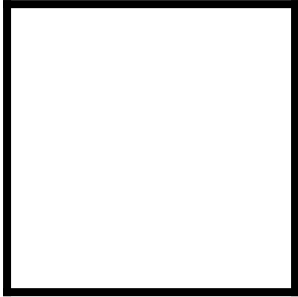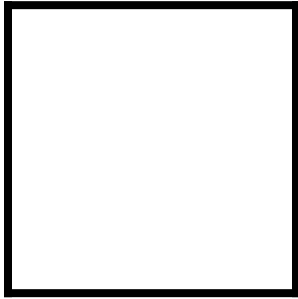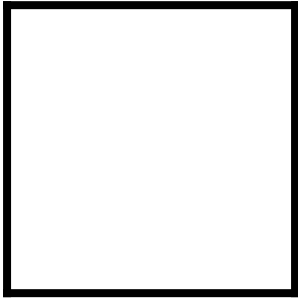
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This step-by-step practice guide outlines how to plan for, use, and monitor Reinforcement.

Reinforcement can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of reinforcement for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, adaptive, vocational, and academic.

PLAN

1. **Know what reinforcers to use with the student**
   - Review the planning guide for the specific items, activities, or actions that will be used as reinforcers. Be sure to add new things to this list during the school year.
   - Think about ways to match the reinforcer to the activity whenever possible to make sure it is a good fit. For example, if a student has a lunch time goal the reinforcers need to be things that can be delivered in that setting.
   - Be sure to add new reinforcers that seem to be motivating for your student to the planning guide during the school year.
   - If there are multiple reinforcer options, consider using a reinforcer menu or asking the student what they enjoy and/or would like to work for today.
2. **Know the reinforcement schedule**
   - Review the planning guide. Will the student be reinforced on a continuous schedule or intermittent schedule?
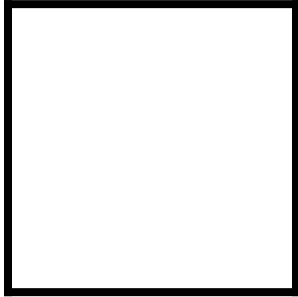   - **Continuous reinforcement schedule:** Provide reinforcement every time a student uses the target skill or behavior
     - **Intermittent reinforcement schedule:** Provide reinforcement after a certain amount of time of correct responses or after a certain amount of time; can be a constant interval of time or correct responses or it can be a variable amount of time or correct responses
   - Think about tools you will need to deliver the reinforcer on the schedule that was identified. For example, a timer, a clicker, or tally system.
3. **Know what data to collect**
   - Review the planning guide to see what data you should collect.
   - Be sure to select your data sheet and have it with you when it is time for the student to use the behavior or target skill. Sample data sheets are in the resources section that can be personalized for data collection.
   - Remember to focus on collecting the data of the target skill that is identified on the student's planning guide.
   - If you have any additional questions about data collection, be sure to ask your supervising teacher.

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USE

1. **Have needed materials ready (reinforcers)**
   - Remember that the reinforcer needs to be delivered as soon as the student completes the target behavior or skill identified. It is important that the reinforcers are available and ready for the whole activity or instructional session.
   - If the target behavior takes place in a location other than the classroom think about what you might need to have with you so that are prepared to deliver the reinforcer in that setting. If the student needs a variety of reinforcers even within an activity, consider having a basket of reinforcers that are easy to grab on the go.
   - Remember to have the materials for the task or activity ready too.
2. **Give direction to student to use target skill/behavior (if needed)**
   - Make note of the direction you will provide to the student (if needed).
   - Think about the format of the directions and what materials, if any, are needed.
3. **Help student use target behavior/skill (if needed)**
   - Provide the student with support if they are having difficulty using the target behavior or skill.
   - You can often provide reinforcement even when you have to help the student use the target behavior or skill – check on the planning guide or with your supervising teacher.
4. **Give student the reinforcer soon after doing the target behavior/skill**
   - One of the rules is to provide reinforcement immediately so that the student begins to understand the link between the target behavior or skill and the reinforcer.
   - Make sure to use a reinforcer that works well with the activity and setting.
5. **Pair reinforcer with a description of the behavior (may not always be appropriate)**
   - Instead of saying "Good job" try including specific feedback that identifies the key behavior. For example, "Great job completing all of your math problems" or "I like how you were taking turns playing the game at PE."
   - Make a note or cheat sheet about specific verbal praise you can give your student.
   - Overall, it is best to pair the reinforcer with a description as much as possible, but there are times when it may be too intrusive or disruptive. For example, if you are trying to support the student from a further distance to help the student be more independent, you may just give a thumbs up from a distance as long as the student understands the thumbs up is the reinforcer you are using for the target behavior.
6. **Follow the reinforcement schedule**
   - Use the continuous or intermittent reinforcement as planned.
   - If you are having trouble remembering to use the schedule, find a tool to support you – an app*, a timer, a clipboard for your data, etc. (*If you are interested in using an app, look for free interval timers designed for exercise programs.)
7. **Vary the reinforcers used with the student.**
   - Remember to have a variety of reinforcers available and to vary the reinforcers used with each student.
   - Vary the verbal reinforcement that you pair with any tangible reinforcers.
   - Talk to your supervising teacher if you think you need a larger variety of reinforcers.

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8. **Use reinforcers consistently across activities and/or settings**
   - Using reinforcers consistently can help the student to master the behavior and generalize it to other activities or settings.
   - It can be hard to be consistent with reinforcement – make sure to figure out what works as a good reminder for you to use reinforcement across activities and settings (data sheet, timer app, reinforcer cheat sheet).

MONITOR

1. **Take data on target behavior/skill**
   - Remember to collect data on the target skill during the session.
   - Find a data collection system that works well with the activity and for you – it may be post-it notes for a table task, but a clicker or app during a more active task like PE.
   - Make notes about anything that is going well or not going well.
2. **Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly.**
   - Plan a time to check in with your teacher each week – it can be a quick discussion, but make sure you have a plan for when to make it happen.
   - Discuss your progress using the practice (refer to the reinforcement checklist).
   - Review the data on the student's progress.
   - Make necessary adjustments to the planning guide as needed.

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IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

General Planning:

WHO:

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME:

WHERE:

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):

HOW TO USE:

HOW TO MEASURE:

		Date:	
		Observer's Initials:	
PLAN			
1.1	Know what reinforcers to use with student		
1.2	Know the reinforcement schedule		
1.3	Know what data to collect		
USE			
2.1	Have needed materials ready (reinforcers)		
2.2	Give direction to student to use target skill/behavior (if needed)		
2.3	Help student use target skill/behavior (if needed)		
2.4	Give student the reinforcer soon after doing the target skill/behavior		
2.5	Pair reinforcer with a description of the behavior (Note: This may not always be appropriate)		
2.6	Follow the reinforcement schedule		
2.7	Vary the reinforcers used with student		
2.8	Use reinforcers consistently across activities and/or settings		
MONITOR			
3.1	Collect data on target skill/behavior		
3.2	Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly		

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST: MULTI-USE

	Observation:	1	2	3	4	5
	Date:					
	Observer's Initials:					
PLAN						
1.1	Know what reinforcers to use with student					
1.2	Know the reinforcement schedule					
1.3	Know what data to collect					
USE						
2.1	Have needed materials ready (reinforcers)					
2.2	Give direction to student to use target skill/behavior (if needed)					
2.3	Help student use target skill/behavior (if needed)					
2.4	Give student the reinforcer soon after doing the target skill/behavior					
2.5	Pair reinforcer with a description of the behavior (Note: This may not always be appropriate)					
2.6	Follow the reinforcement schedule					
2.7	Vary the reinforcers used with student					
2.8	Use reinforcers consistently across activities and/or settings					
MONITOR						
3.1	Collect data on target skill/behavior					
3.2	Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly					

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COMPANION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Reinforcement is used to increase a desired behavior or skill by giving a child a reward after the desired behavior or skill is used.

Positive reinforcement: When rewards are used to increase a desired skill or behavior.

Token economy: A type of positive reinforcement system in which a child receives a token as a reward each time they use the target skill or behavior. After earning a certain number of tokens, the child earns a reward that they really like (e.g., time on iPad, a favorite show, time with Legos). Tokens can be anything – stickers, check marks, cards, blocks.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR USING REINFORCEMENT?

1. **Identify the behavior or task**
   - Choose the behavior that you will focus on while using reinforcement with your child. Think about what you want the child to do, how you would like them to demonstrate the behavior, and when this behavior or task would be performed.

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
Completing chores	Choosing a chore from a list (washing dishes, putting toys away, making bed, laundry)	At least 1 time per day
Playing quietly	With several favorite activities in their room	While I am working at home
Finishing homework	At the table with help from family if needed	Late afternoons
Getting dressed	Pick clothes from closet	Each morning
Feeding a pet	Provide food and water to pet (may need a visual or list of steps)	Each morning
Exercise	Select an exercise activity from a list (walking outside, jumping on trampoline, playing tag, virtual workout)	Each afternoon

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2. **Choose the rewards**
   - Choose rewards that will be motivating to your child. These can be a variety of things such as a specific item, time to do a preferred activity, or special praise from you and/or other members of your household.

| Social	Activities/Items
• Tickles • Hugs • Praise ("Good job finishing homework," "I love how you helped your sister clear the table") • High-fives • Clapping • Cheering • Tight squeezes	• Computer game • Time to play outside • Favorite game • Pokémon© cards • Legos • Drawing • Movie • Swinging on a swing • Preferred snack • Tokens for token reinforcer

- **TIP:** For rewards that are activities/items, try to avoid using rewards that your child can use at any time.
- **EXAMPLE:** If you have chosen "watching videos on the iPad" as a reward for finishing homework, your child may not be very motivated to complete the homework assignment if they can use the iPad at other times during the day without having to do any tasks.
- **TIP:** If possible, ask your child for ideas about what they would like to work for. Getting your child's input may help with buy-in.
- **TIP:** Have multiple rewards available. Children can get bored with having the same reward all the time.
- **TIP:** Try to match the value of the reward to the difficulty of the task. If your child is cleaning their room, a fun activity (watching a favorite show) may be a better choice as a reward than a high five, which may not be motivating enough for a big task. A social reward, such as praise or a high five, may be a better match for smaller tasks such as putting a dish in the dishwasher or hanging up their coat.

3. **Have the materials ready**
   - Be sure to have all the materials you need before working on the target skill with your child. For positive reinforcement, have the rewards ready to give right after your child performs the skill or behavior.
   - For a token economy, decide what type of tokens to use and how many tokens your child will need to earn to get the final reward. Remember to have the final reward available once your child has earned a specific number of tokens.

Share with your sister
⭐⭐☐ = ★
★ = Pick from the surprise box
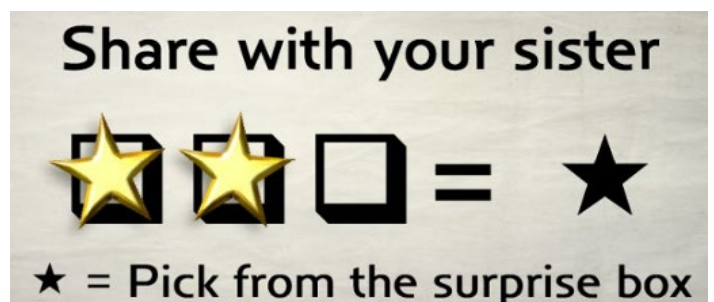
- **TIP:** Consider using a box or container for keeping rewards all in one place.

4. **Explain the reinforcement system to your child**
   - Be specific about what you want your child to do and how and when the rewards will be given. Remember to use language that your child will be able to easily understand.

> **Examples of Tokens**
> - Check marks
> - Stickers
> - Magnets
> - Plastic chips
> - Play money

   - **TIP:** It is a good idea to explain to your child why the behavior or skill is important, such as "Putting your toys away keeps the floor clear so everyone can be safe when they are walking around".
   - **TIP:** Use written or picture reminders if you think it will be hard for your child to remember or understand your verbal directions.

5. **Give reinforcement each time your child shows the desired behavior**
   - Each time your child uses the behavior or skill, remember to give the reward.
   - **TIP:** Be consistent – if your child sees that you are not following through with the reward, then they may not be motivated do what is expected.

WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN USING REINFORCEMENT?

1. **Start small**
   - Choose one task, activity, or behavior to focus on when starting with reinforcement. Wait until your child has shown success with that behavior before using reinforcement with other activities or tasks.

2. **Be patient**
   - Remember learning a skill or changing a behavior takes time. Once you start using reinforcement, it may take time to see the changes. Keep trying and stay consistent and you should see your child use the expected behavior more often.

3. **Be positive**
   - Try to offer the reward at the start of the task by letting your child know what they will get if they complete the task rather than what will happen if they don't complete the task. For example, saying, "We can read two books together after you put your pajamas on" focuses on the positive rather than "If you don't put your pajamas on, I am not going to read with you".

4. **Avoid accidental reinforcement**
   - Try not to reinforce your child when they display unwanted behaviors or do not complete a task. For example – if your child is whining about wanting to do something and you allow them to do it, then you have reinforced the behavior of whining. Sometimes ignoring an unwanted behavior is more effective.

5. **Use social praise even if you are using other types of rewards**
   - It is always a good idea to use social praise at the same time you are giving other rewards. You want to build some intrinsic motivation (internal desire to do what is expected) as you are working on new skills and behaviors.

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6. **Time to fade**
   - Fading means providing less frequent and less powerful reinforcement over time. At the beginning, it is usually important to provide rewards often, but you should think about helping your child be more independent. As your child begins to become more independent with the task or activity, then you can begin to gradually decrease how often you give the reward. Also, try using more social praise over time.

WHAT ARE COMMON CHALLENGES WHEN USING REINFORCEMENT?

Below are examples of what you can do if reinforcement is not working exactly the way you expected

Your child is not doing the task the way you expect, so the reward is not being earned.

A. **Your child does not know exactly how the task is to be done.** You can start by doing the task together and giving praise as the child is helping you with the task.

B. **The task is too big.** If you want your child to clean the room, maybe start out by giving the child specific steps. You can then reinforce the child for each of the steps. For example, instead of the task of "cleaning your room," break it down into steps such as:
   1. Make your bed;
   2. Put all dirty clothes in the hamper;
   3. Put all toys in toy box/on shelf;
   4. Vacuum or sweep the floor.

For the first few days, your child was doing the task to earn the reward, but now they have stopped.

A. **Change rewards.** Your child may no longer be motivated by the reward(s) being offered. Try adding new rewards. If your child can communicate, try asking them what they would like to have as a reward. If they are not able to communicate, try a reward survey by putting different items in front of them and seeing which items they like.

B. **Give choices.** Giving your child a choice of rewards can help to avoid boredom. For example, after your child has washed the dishes, you can say "Thank you for washing the dishes without being asked – would you like to select a family movie or play a video game for 20 minutes." If your child has limited communication skills, you could also show them specific items (or pictures of those items) and let them choose what they would like as a reward for completing the desired task.

Your child's behavior is not changing when you use only use social rewards such as "Great job" and "Good work."

A. **Be specific.** For spoken reinforcement to be effective, the words need to be specific to the task. For example – "Great job making up your bed. It looks very neat." Or "I like how you shared your toy with your sister. That was very nice of you."

B. **Pair the reinforcement.** Some children need a little more than just verbal praise. You can try pairing your specific praise with a hug, high five, or time to do something special.

Your child is not willing to stop the reinforcement activity when it is time to continue working on task or start a new task.

A. **Give a clear beginning and end time to the reward.** Some children need to know how long they can do an activity. For example – "After you finish your homework, you can use the iPad for 15 minutes" or "You can watch one episode of [name of TV show] after you get dress, then it is time to eat breakfast."

B. **Use a timer.** Some children need a visual or an alarm to let them know when their time is up with the reinforcement activity. You can use a timer on a cell phone or tablet or a kitchen timer to give a sound at the end of the time limit.

C. **Give a stopping point.** If needed, use rewards that have a clear stopping point or allow you to share control. For example, if you are playing catch or blowing bubbles you may be involved in the activity, and it can be easier to end the reward time. Or, if your child likes to put stickers on paper, you can limit the number of stickers provided for the reward. If it is a game on the iPad, try to choose a game that has a clear endpoint.

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GLOSSARY

Constant interval: The same interval of time or correct answers is used each time to determine if a reinforcement is given or not. For example, every 5 seconds or after 3 correct responses.

Fidelity: How well and how often the implementation steps for an evidence-based practice are followed.

Implementation checklist: The specific steps needed to accurately follow an evidence-based practice.

Intermittent reinforcement schedule: Providing reinforcement after a certain number of correct responses or after a certain amount of time. Can be a constant interval of time or correct responses or it can be a variable amount of time or correct responses.

Positive reinforcement: Using reinforcers to increase the chances a learner will use a skill or behavior.

Reinforcement: Feedback provided to the learner in response to the appropriate demonstration of the target skill/behavior to encourage continued use of the target skill/behavior.

Reinforcement schedules: Determines when to provide reinforcement; can be continuous or intermittent.

Reinforcer: Motivating attention, activity, or material provided to a learner immediately after completing the target skill/behavior to increase the likelihood the target skill/behavior will be used again in the future. Must be age-appropriate and meaningful to the learner.

Social praise: Words used as a reinforce for a learner's skills or behavior. Examples include, "Nice job!" "You did it!" Always follow with a specific description of the behavior you are praising.

Token economy: A specific type of positive reinforcement system in which after a learner has successfully completed the target skill or behavior, a token is provided. After earning a certain number of tokens, the learner earns a more desirable reinforcer after earning a predetermined number of tokens. Examples of tokens are checks on a checklist, play money, cards, stickers, tickets, etc..... After earning tokens, the learner gets 5 minutes of iPad time, drawing, playing with Legos, etc....

Variable interval: Various amounts of time or correct responses are used each time to determine if a reinforcement is given or not. For example, after 5 seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds.