R
for
Toddlers

EBP Brief Packet:
Reinforcement for Toddlers

UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules for Toddlers
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The National Professional Development Center on Autism

The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice
NCAEP • BRIDGING PRACTICE AND SCIENCE

UNC FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Overview of Content

REINFORCEMENT

WHAT IS R FOR TODDLERS?

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 toddler's use of a response or skills that increases the likelihood that the toddler will use the response/skills in the future.

Positive reinforcement is the delivery of a reinforcer (primary, such as food, or secondary, such as verbal praise or toys) after the learner uses a target skill or behavior.

- Use first when teaching new skills.
- Increases appropriate behaviors.[3]

A **token economy** program is a type of positive reinforcement where learners earn tokens which can be used to acquire desired reinforcers (known as backup reinforcers).

- Help learners acquire target skills.
- Tokens do not interrupt activities or lessons.
- Tokens can maintain interest of learner over long periods of time.
- Tokens can be used by multiple learners at once.[14]

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TYPES OF REINFORCERS

WHAT IS A REINFORCER:

A reinforcer is given to the toddler after they demonstrate a target/behavior/skill in order to increase the likelihood that the toddler will use target skill/behavior again in the future.

MATERIAL/ACTIVITY REINFORCER:

Motivating to toddler, but team members should vary these reinforcers with other reinforcers, so toddler does not grow tired of them.

- Play activities
- Computer access
- Stickers

NATURAL REINFORCER:

Occur naturally as a result of using the target behavior or skill.

- Receiving a good grade after studying
- Receiving water after signing for more

SENSORY REINFORCER:

Motivating for toddler. Only use when 1) adult can control access to reinforcer, 2) the reinforcer is acceptable and appropriate for the setting, and 3) no other reinforcer is as motivating.

- Rocking in rocking chair
- Rubbing hand lotion on hands

SOCIAL REINFORCER:

Found in any setting but might need to be taught to toddlers if these reinforcers are not inherently reinforcing.

- Facial expressions (smiles)
- Proximity (sitting beside teacher)
- Words and phrases (“Good job!” "Awesome work!”)

TANGIBLE REINFORCER:

Objects that a toddler can acquire.

- Toys
- Candy

EVIDENCE-BASE

The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice has adopted the following criteria to determine if a practice is evidence-based. The 2020 EBP report (Steinbrenner et al., 2020) provides more information about the systematic review process.

Efficacy must be established through high-quality, peer-reviewed research in scientific journals using:

- At least 2 randomized or quasi-experimental group design studies, or
- At least 5 single subject/case design studies, or a
- Combination of evidence of 1 randomized or quasi-experimental group design study and 3 single subject/case design studies

OVERVIEW:

Based upon the 2020 systematic review conducted by the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice (NCAEP), Reinforcement is a foundational intervention that meets evidence-based practice criteria with 44 single case design and 2 group design studies. Reinforcement has been effective for early intervention (0-2) and preschoolers (3-5 years) on the spectrum. Studies included in the 2020 EBP report (Steinbrenner et al., 2020) detail how Reinforcement can be used to effectively address the following outcomes for a target skill/goal/behavior: academic, adaptive/self-help, behavior, communication, joint attention, motor, play, school readiness, and social.

In the table below, the instructional outcomes identified by the evidence base are shown by age of participants.

Age	Academic	Adaptive	Behavior	Communication	Joint Attention	Motor	Play	School readiness	Social
0-2		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
3-5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*The NCAEP review classified practices into domains for an age range of 0-22. The focus of early intervention should be on pre-academic skills and the social and emotional well-being of children. AFIRM for Toddlers does not recommend working on academic goals/outcomes with children in early intervention.

Note: New studies since 2011 (2012 till 2017) are denoted in **bold**

EARLY INTERVENTION (0-2 YEARS):

Bui, L. T. D., Moore, D. W., & Anderson, A. (2014). Using escape extinction and Reinforcement to increase eating in a young child with autism. *Behaviour Change, 30*(1), 48-55. https://doi.org/10.1017/bec.2013.5

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PRESCHOOL (3-5 YEARS):

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Gena, A. (2006). The effects of prompting and social Reinforcement on establishing social interactions with peers during the inclusion of four children with autism in preschool. *International Journal of Psychology*, *41*(6), 541-554. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207590500492658

***Gilley, C., & Ringdahl, J. E. (2014). The effects of item preference and token Reinforcement on sharing behavior exhibited by children with autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 8*(11), 1425-1433. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2014.07.010**

Greenberg, J. H., Lau, W., & Lau, S. (2016). Teaching appropriate play to replace stereotypy using a treatment package with students having autism. *Global Education Review, 3*(3), 94-104.

Groskreutz, M. P., Groskreutz, N. C., & Higbee, T. S. (2011). Response competition and stimulus preference in the treatment of automatically reinforced behavior: A comparison. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *44*(1), 211-215. https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.2011.44-211

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Hudson, R F., Sanders, E. A., Greenway, R , Xie, S., Smith, M., Gasamis, C., Martini, J., Schwartz, I., & Hackett, J. (2017). Effects of emergent literacy interventions for preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder. *Exceptional Children, 84*(1), 55-75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402917705855

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IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST: FOR EI PROVIDER

	Observation:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Date:					
	Observer's initials:					
STEP 1: JOINT PLANNING FOR REINFORCEMENT						
1.1	Select target skill/behavior for toddler with autism with caregiver (e.g., family member, early care and education provider)					
1.2	Collect baseline on target skill/behavior with caregiver					
1.3	Discuss reinforcement basics and using steps with caregiver					
1.4	Select reinforcers					
1.5	Select activity that reinforcement will be used with					
1.6	Determine supports that may be needed for toddler to use target skill/behavior					
1.7	Have materials ready and available					
STEP 2: COACHING USE OF REINFORCEMENT						
2.1	Model using reinforcement for the caregiver (Live and/or video):					
2.1a	Introduce the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to the caregiver					
2.1b	Set up the activity for the toddler to accomplish the target skill/behavior					
2.1c	Transition the toddler into the activity					
2.1d	If needed, support the toddler to use the target skill/behavior (e.g., prompting, modeling, etc.)					
2.1e	Provide the reinforcer immediately after the toddler exhibits the skill /behavior					
2.2	Answer caregiver's questions, if needed					
2.3	Support caregiver's use of Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to practice using reinforcement					
2.4	Facilitate caregiver reflection and provide feedback following their practice use of reinforcement					
2.5	Discuss with the caregiver how the reinforcer will be thinned (reduced) once the toddler is regularly accomplishing the target skill/behavior					
2.6	Discuss with the caregiver use of reinforcement in daily routines and activities					
STEP 3: MONITORING USE OF REINFORCEMENT						
3.1	Plan for and support caregiver's data collection on the toddler's progress toward the target skill/behavior					
3.2	Monitor caregiver fidelity using the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist					
3.3	Review data collected on the toddler's target skill/behavior					
3.4	Support use of reinforcement for other skills/behaviors					
3.5	Collaborate with caregiver about next steps					

Implementation Checklist: For Caregiver

JOINT PLANNING

- ❑ Discuss reinforcement with your provider:
  - ❑ Select activity to use reinforcement
  - ❑ Select rewards (reinforcers)
- ❑ View models (live and/or video) of reinforcement (rewards)
- ❑ Practice using reinforcement with reflection, support, and feedback from your provider

WHILE USING REINFORCEMENT

- ❑ Have materials ready and available
- ❑ Prepare the toddler for the activity to target the skill/behavior
- ❑ Transition into the activity
- ❑ Let the toddler know what is going to happen
- ❑ Engage the toddler in the activity
- ❑ If needed, support and help the toddler to accomplish the target skill/behavior
- ❑ Provide selected reward immediately after toddler uses (displays) skill/behavior (depending on your individualized plan)
- ❑ Provide social praise (if applicable; cheering, clapping, etc.)
- ❑ Record what happened by collecting data during use of reinforcement to share with provider at next session
- ❑ As toddler regularly exhibits target skill/behavior, gradually reduce reward amount

CHECK-INS WITH YOUR PROVIDER

- ❑ Share what happened using reinforcement (successes, challenges, concerns, etc.)
- ❑ Discuss and problem solve with your provider
- ❑ Determine next steps based on the toddler's progress

SELECT A TARGET GOAL

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Use this form to select a target behavior that is measurable and observable by addressing the when, what, and how in collaboration with the caregiver.

DETERMINE GOAL:

1. In our service evaluation, you said your top concern(s) about the toddler was/is _____. Is that still true? What is your biggest goal or priority for the toddler right now?

2. Tell me more about the toddler. What is the toddler really good at doing? What are their favorite things to play with and what does that play look like? How does it go when you join in the toddler's play with their favorite things?

3. Tell me about the best interaction you had with the toddler recently. Where were you and what were you doing that made it go well?

4. I want to hear about times things do not go well between you and the toddler. Does this happen at a certain time of day or during particular activities? What do you and the toddler do when this happens?

5. When you really need the toddler to do something, how do you get them to do it? What are things that motivate the toddler?

6. In three months, what do you hope will have changed as a result of our early intervention sessions?

CREATE A MEASURABLE AND OBSERVABLE GOAL:

1. **WHAT** is the target goal/behavior/skill?

2. **WHEN** and **WHERE** should the target goal/behavior/skill occur?

3. **HOW** will team members/observers know the target goal/behavior/skill has been mastered?

GOAL:

DATA COLLECTION: BASELINE

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Use this sheet to collect baseline data on the toddler's and caregiver's behaviors on the target behavior/goal/skill across daily routines and settings.

Setting/ Routine	Caregiver Behavior	Toddler Behavior	Notes

REINFORCER SAMPLING & CHECKLIST

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Goal/Behavior/Skill: _____
Directions: Use this worksheet and checklist to identify and select reinforcers/rewards based on the toddler's preferred items, interests, and activities for **Positive Reinforcement** and **Token Economy**.

CONDUCT A REINFORCER SAMPLING:

1. Sit in front of the toddler and hold up two items. Ask the toddler to "Pick one."
2. Wait 10 seconds for the toddler to indicate selection in manner that is appropriate for the toddler (e.g., verbalization, pointing, using an augmentative communication device).
3. Place the selected object in a container for toddler's selection and non-selected item in the not selected container.
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 until half of the objects presented are selected.

Item 1	Selected?	Item 2	Selected?
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No

LIST SELECTED REINFORCERS:

LIST POTENTIAL REINFORCERS:

AGE APPROPRIATE?

1. What natural reinforcers could be used?

   Yes No

2. What activities, objects, and/or foods does the toddler select independently?

   Yes No

3. What phrases or gestures seem to produce a pleasant response from the toddler?

   Yes No

4. What does the toddler say they would like to work for (if appropriate)?

   Yes No

5. What reinforcers were identified by parents/family members and/or team members as being successful in the past?

   Yes No

6. Does the toddler require additional adaptations/ modifications/supports? Such as visual supports or a communication device?

   Yes No

7. Have reinforcers/rewards for the toddler been identified based on the toddler's interests/preferred items and/or activities?

   Yes No

8. Are additional materials and/or resources for using Functional Behavior Assessment ready and available?

   Yes No

FOODS FOR SNACKS/MEALTIME ROUTINES:

- ❑ Cheese
- ❑ Chicken Nuggets
- ❑ Chips
- ❑ French Fries
- ❑ Fruit
- ❑ Goldfish
- ❑ Ice Cream
- ❑ Pizza
- ❑ Pretzels
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:

GAMES FOR PLAY/RECESS ROUTINES:

- ❑ Burrito games with a blanket
- ❑ Chase
- ❑ Pat-a-Cake
- ❑ Peek-a-Boo
- ❑ Tickles
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:

TOYS FOR PLAY/RECESS ROUTINES:

- ❑ Books
- ❑ Cars/Trains/Trucks
- ❑ Computer
- ❑ Doll house
- ❑ Legos
- ❑ Noisy toys
- ❑ Phones
- ❑ Puzzles
- ❑ Remote controlled toys
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:

SPECIAL INTERESTS FOR ACTIVITIES/ROUTINES:

- ❑ Book Character:
- ❑ Book:
- ❑ Cars, Trains, Trucks
- ❑ Computers/Technology
- ❑ Dinosaurs
- ❑ Letters
- ❑ Movie Character:
- ❑ Movie:
- ❑ Music
- ❑ Numbers
- ❑ Real-Life Person:
- ❑ TV Show Character:
- ❑ TV Show:
- ❑ Video Game:
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:
- ❑ Other:

FAMILY DAILY ROUTINES/ACTIVITIES PLAN

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Goal/Behavior/Skill: _____
Directions: Use this form as a guide support the family member using reinforcement for toddlers in daily routines and activities.

Morning Routine/ Activity	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Waking up	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Getting dressed	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Eating breakfast	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Brushing teeth	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

Afternoon Routine/ Activity	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Napping	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Playing	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Eating lunch/ snack	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Brushing teeth	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

Evening Routine/ Activity	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Going to sleep	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Changing clothes	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Reading story	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Eating dinner	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Brushing teeth	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Bathing	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

Other Routines	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Playdates/ Playgroups	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
School/ Childcare	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Playing Outside	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

Outings	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Playground /Park	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Store	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Church	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Pool	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Restaurant	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Doctor	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Family	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

CENTER-BASED ROUTINES/ACTIVITIES PLAN

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Goal/Behavior/Skill: _____
Directions: Use this form as a guide support the caregiver using reinforcement for toddlers in center-based daily routines and activities.

Self-care	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Mealtime	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Snack time	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Diapering/ Potty	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Handwashing	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Napping	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

Activities	Enjoyment Level	Barriers/ Struggles	Transitions	Good fit for EBP?
Group time	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Story time	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Free play	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Center play	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Outdoor play	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Table time	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Drop off/ Pickup	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No
Other	☹ 😐 ☺		Into: NA rough so-so smooth Out: NA rough so-so smooth	❑ Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No

PLANNING CHECKLIST

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Complete this checklist to determine if this is an appropriate practice to use with the toddler on the spectrum as well as if R for toddlers is ready to be implemented.

PLANNING:

- ❑ Has the target goal/behavior/skill been identified?
- ❑ Has baseline data and/or a functional behavior assessment been collected through direct observation of the toddler?
- ❑ Is the target goal/behavior/skill measurable and observable? Does it clearly state **what** the target goal/behavior/skill is, **when** it will occur, and **how** team members/observers will know it has been mastered?
- ❑ Is Reinforcement appropriate for the toddler's target goal/behavior/skill?
- ❑ Does the toddler have needed prerequisite skills/abilities?
- ❑ Does the toddler require additional adaptations/modifications/supports? Such as visual supports or a communication device?
- ❑ Have reinforcers/rewards for the toddler been identified based on the toddler's interests/preferred items and/or activities?
- ❑ Are additional materials and/or resources for using Reinforcement ready and available?

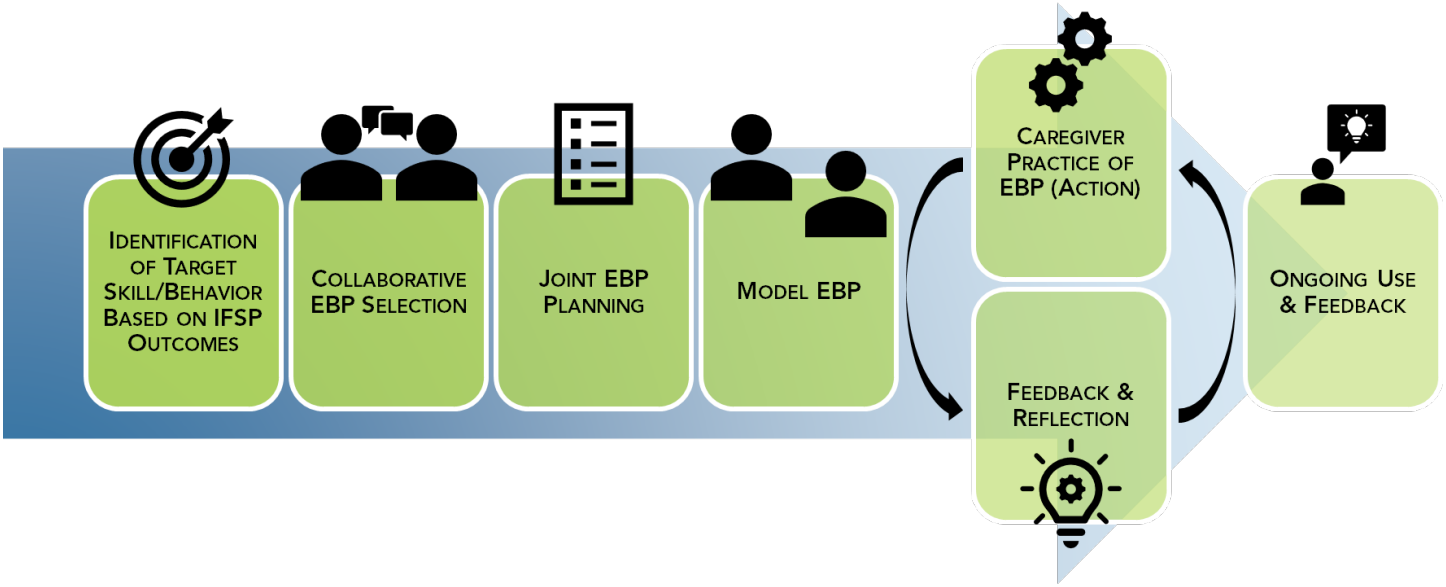
SELECT REINFORCEMENT PROCEDURE:

- ❑ Positive
- ❑ Token Economy

SELECT ADDITIONAL EBPS:

- ❑ Prompting
- ❑ Modeling
- ❑ Visual Supports
- ❑ Other: _____

COACHING GUIDE



MODEL: Model use of reinforcement for the caregiver. Have the caregiver note any questions or observations that they have as you model.

- Introduce the Caregiver Implementation Checklist to the caregiver.
- Mode use of reinforcement with the toddler while the caregiver observes you.
- Have the caregiver complete the Caregiver Implementation Checklist.

CAREGIVER PRACTICE: Coach the caregiver as they practice using reinforcement, using the Caregiver Implementation Checklist as a guide. Video record them if they are comfortable.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION: Watch the video of the caregiver practicing reinforcement with the caregiver. Ask the caregiver to reflect on their own use of reinforcement and offer feedback for the next time they use it.

REPEAT CYCLE: Repeat the cycle of caregiver practice and reflection until the caregiver has mastered implementation of that EBP in that setting. Monitor the caregiver's on-going use of reinforcement while also monitoring the toddler's progress toward the target skill/behavior.

ON-GOING USE AND FEEDBACK: Re-assess once the caregiver has mastered reinforcement in one routine/activity and with one target skill, consider other routines and activities where reinforcement could be used or other goals that may be targeted by that EBP. Discuss with the caregiver if they would like to target another goal and begin evidence-based practice selection and collaborative planning cycle again.

FAQ Guide

What is an evidence-based practice? What makes reinforcement an evidence-based practice?

An evidence-based practice is an instructional/intervention procedure or set of procedures for which researchers have provided an acceptable level of research that shows the practice produces positive outcomes (NPDC, n.d.). Based upon the 2020 systematic review conducted by the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice (NCAEP), reinforcement for toddlers is a focused intervention that meets the evidence-based practice criteria (Steinbrenner et al., 2020).

Why is reinforcement important? Why should I use it with toddlers? What will it help toddlers with?

Reinforcement is important because it can help toddlers learn new skills and increase positive behaviors. Through the process of reinforcing behaviors or skills, toddlers learn to recognize the relationship between what they do and what follows (i.e., the consequence). When toddlers make the connection that they are positively reinforced for a behavior or skill, reinforcement works when the behavior or skill then increases.

What steps are involved with using reinforcement?

Using reinforcement involves working together to determine when and what to do related to reinforcement. We will collaborate to determine the toddler target skill/behavior, the reinforcer to use, and the routines/activities during which to use reinforcement. In providing the reinforcer, I will coach and support you to set up the activity, transition the toddler into the activity, support the toddler to display the skill/behavior (if needed) then immediately provide the reinforcer after the toddler displays the skill.

Are there different kinds of reinforcement?

There are different kinds of reinforcement. In EI, we will primarily be using positive reinforcement on an individual basis (motivating reinforcer provided immediately after the display of a target skill/behavior) or through a token economy (where smaller tokens collected immediately after the display of a target skill/behavior and leads to a larger reward once a certain number of tokens are collected).

Are there any challenges to using reinforcement for toddlers?

We will work together to monitor the use of reinforcement. We will plan for and collect data on the toddler's progress in a way that works best for you. Together we will look at the data to determine if the strategies are working for you and the toddler. There may be some challenges using reinforcement with toddlers particularly if a toddler becomes less motivated by a particular reinforcer. So, it is important to track toddler progress on the target skill/behavior and response to the reinforcer in case a change needs to be made.

How/When will I know it is working?

We will work together to monitor using reinforcement. You will know reinforcement is working when you see an increase in the toddler's target skill/behavior after using reinforcement. When we do see the toddler regularly using the target skill/behavior we will begin to thin the reinforcement so that the toddler does not become dependent upon the reinforcer in order to display the skill.

Where can I learn more?

The Tip Sheet for Caregivers provides an overview of this practice for caregivers. The Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist outlines the steps of using reinforcement in your setting. In addition, I will be supporting your use of reinforcement and can answer any questions you have.

Can I use this practice in other routines?

Yes, reinforcement can be used in many routines and activities. It is cost effective and easy to use in a variety of routines. In fact, reinforcement works best when naturally occurring as part of a routine or activity and it can be used in just about any routine.

What if it does not go well?

Interactions between caregivers and toddlers rarely go perfectly. It is important to keep practicing. If reinforcement does not go well, re-visit the chosen reinforcer. It could be that the reinforcer has become less motivating to the toddler, and you need to choose another reinforcer. You may also need to adapt the target skill/behavior and/or adjust the support provided to help the toddler accomplish the skill/behavior prior to receiving the reinforcer. You also may need to change the activity or routine during which reinforcement is used if it is not going well.

What if I do the steps wrong?

It is completely ok to mess up some steps while you are learning reinforcement. Keep your implementation checklist close by when you use reinforcement to remind you of each of the implementation steps. Reflect on what happened after you use it and use the checklists to see if steps were missed or in the incorrect order. Then give it another try. I am here if you have any questions.

What if I cannot remember all the steps?

If you can't remember the reinforcement steps, keeping your implementation checklist close by can be very helpful. You can print these out or pull them up on a device such as your phone. It is ok and even expected that you will forget steps from time to time. Just keep trying.

REFLECTION GUIDE

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Use this as a guide to facilitate the caregiver's reflection on their use of reinforcement with their toddler.

REFLECTION:

1. How do you think that went?

2. Did you encounter any challenges implementing reinforcement with the toddler?

3. At which points did you see reinforcement working for the toddler?

4. What could you have done differently?

5. Did you feel comfortable implementing reinforcement with the toddler?

6. Did the toddler respond positively to reinforcement?

7. Did the toddler enjoy the activity?

END OF SESSION REFLECTION:

1. How are you feeling about what we practiced today?

2. Does this target skill/behavior still feel important for us to work on?

3. Does the reinforcement we selected feel like it could be helpful?

4. Does the routine we selected seem like a good fit for this practice?

5. How do you feel about doing this with the toddler this week without me here?

6. How do you think the toddler will respond to using this practice during the week?

7. Do you anticipate any issues with using this practice?

8. How do you think other caregivers will respond to learning about this practice?

DATA COLLECTION: CAREGIVER LOG

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Use this sheet to collect data on using reinforcement with the toddler.

Date: _____ Setting/ Routine	**Implementer**	**Additional EBPs Used?**	**Successful?**
❑ Mealtime ❑ Outing ❑ Dressing ❑ Sleep/Naptime ❑ Playtime ❑ Bath time ❑ Toothbrushing ❑ Handwashing ❑ Storytime ❑ Other	❑ Family ❑ Parent ❑ Child Care Provider ❑ Other	❑ Prompting ❑ Modeling ❑ Visual Supports ❑ Video Modeling ❑ Other:	❑ Yes ❑ No
What was happening before?	**What happened while using EBP? Did toddler display target skill?**	**What happened after? Impact on target skill?**	**Results/Outcomes**

Date: _____ Setting/ Routine	**Implementer**	**Additional EBPs Used?**	**Successful?**
❑ Mealtime ❑ Outing ❑ Dressing ❑ Sleep/Naptime ❑ Playtime ❑ Bath time ❑ Toothbrushing ❑ Handwashing ❑ Storytime ❑ Other	❑ Family ❑ Parent ❑ Child Care Provider ❑ Other	❑ Prompting ❑ Modeling ❑ Visual Supports ❑ Video Modeling ❑ Other:	❑ Yes ❑ No
What was happening before?	**What happened while using EBP? Did toddler display target skill?**	**What happened after? Impact on target skill?**	**Results/Outcomes**

1. Overall impression to discuss with EI Provider (What is going well? What is difficult?):

2. Questions to ask EI Provider:

DATA COLLECTION: TIME SAMPLING

Learner's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Collect data on the frequency of the learner demonstrating the target goal/behavior/skill at time intervals (light green cells) to determine if the learner is making progress.

	Time Intervals (generally every 5 minutes)						
Date						**Total**	**Before, During, OR After R**

ANECDOTAL NOTES:

DATA COLLECTION: EVENT SAMPLING

Learner's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Collect data on the frequency of the toddler demonstrating a behavior that is interfering with their learning.

Date	Tally (each occurrence of the interfering behavior)	Total Tally

ANECDOTAL NOTES:

DATA COLLECTION: DURATION

Learner's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Goal/Behavior/Skill: _____
Directions: Collect data on the duration of the learner demonstrating the target goal/behavior/skill to determine if the toddler is making progress.

Date	Start Time	Stop Time	Total Time (min)	Prompts Needed	Before, During, or After Reinforcement
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After
					❑ Before ❑ During ❑ After

Prompt Key: VB = Verbal; VS = Visual; G = Gestural; M = Model; P = Physical; I = No prompts needed/Independent

MONITORING PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: Complete this checklist to determine if the toddler is making progress with using Reinforcement.

MONITORING PROGRESS:

- ❑ Has the toddler achieved the target goal/behavior/skill?
- ❑ Is the target goal/behavior/skill measurable and observable? Does it clearly state what the target goal/behavior/skill is, when it will occur, and how team members/observers will know it has been mastered?
- ❑ Is the target goal/behavior/skill too difficult/complex? Does it need to be broken down into smaller steps?
- ❑ Has enough time been devoted to using reinforcement for toddlers (frequency, intensity, and/or duration)?
- ❑ Has the caregiver implemented reinforcement for toddlers with fidelity?
- ❑ Does the toddler require additional adaptations/modifications/supports? Such as visual supports or a communication device?
- ❑ Are the selected reinforcers preferred items/activities for the toddler?
- ❑ Has monitoring data been collected?
- ❑ Has using reinforcement been reflected on?

ANECDOTAL NOTES:

GENERALIZATION PLAN

Toddler's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____
Observer(s): _____
Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____
Directions: se this form to plan for supporting generalization of the toddler's skills across settings.

Time	Activity	Setting	Notes

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR EI PROVIDER

This step-by-step practice guide outlines how to plan for, coach use, and monitor reinforcement for toddlers so that you can be sure this selected evidence-based practice is likely to be used by the caregiver to address the target goal/behavior/skill of the toddler.

STEP 1: PLANNING FOR REINFORCEMENT

The planning step details the initial steps and considerations involved to prepare the caregiver for using reinforcement with a toddler.

- Use the EI Provider Implementation Checklist to coach caregivers to use reinforcement.
- Give the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to caregivers for them to use to follow the steps of using reinforcement with the toddler.

1. **Select target skill/behavior for toddler with caregiver (e.g., family member, childcare provider)**
   - Invite the caregiver's expert input on the toddler's needs, culture, and priorities
   - Work together to determine the most appropriate toddler skill/behavior to target with reinforcement.
   - Use the Selecting a Target Goal form as a guide to select a target skill/behavior with the caregiver.

2. **Collect baseline on target goal with caregiver**
   Observe the toddler in their natural environment interacting with the caregiver.
   - Use the Data Collection: Baseline with the caregiver to collect data on the toddler.

3. **Discuss reinforcement basics and using steps with caregiver**
   Effective discussions about reinforcement include both informing caregivers about how to use reinforcement and also empowering them as the expert about the toddler.
   - Review baseline data with the caregiver.
   - Introduce the main principles of reinforcement and discuss how using reinforcement can be used to address the toddler's target skill/behavior.
   - Ask the caregiver if they have any questions about using reinforcement.
   - End with a discussion of caregiver strengths and how those can enhance their use of reinforcement to address the toddler's target skill/behavior.
   - Use the Tip Sheet for Childcare Providers to provide basic information about the practice to professionals working with the toddler.
   - Use the Family Guide to provide basic information about the practice to caregivers or family members about the practice they are using with their child.
   - Use the Reinforcement FAQ Guide to answer any questions the caregiver has about reinforcement.

4. **Select reinforcers**
   Talk with the caregiver about things that are motivating to the toddler and decide together what object/food/activity makes the most sense to use as a positive reinforcer for the toddler.
   - Use the Reinforcement Checklist & Sampling Form to select reinforcers/rewards based on the toddler's preferences.

5. **Select activity that this reinforcement will be used with**
   When discussing activities in which to use reinforcement refer to the target skill/behavior discussion and the baseline data you collected with the caregiver. Consider the family or center schedule and caregivers' preferences for when to target the skill/behavior with reinforcement.
   - Use the Family Daily/Activities Plan when selecting activities/setting for using reinforcement.
   - Use the Routines Determination: Center-Based when selecting activities/setting for using reinforcement.

6. **Determine supports that may be needed for toddler to use target skill/behavior**
   Consider using other EBPs to support the toddler's skill/behavior within the chosen routine. Foundational EBPs that are commonly used with reinforcement include:
   - Prompting
   - Visual Supports
   - Modeling

7. **Have materials ready and available**
   Be sure that the selected reinforcer and materials necessary for the toddler to use the target/skill behavior are nearby before you begin coaching and using reinforcement.
   - Use the Planning Checklist to determine if ready to implement reinforcement

STEP 2: COACHING USE OF REINFORCEMENT

The coaching step details the using steps and considerations involved to prepare the caregiver for using reinforcement for toddlers with a toddler.
- Use the Coaching Guide when coaching the caregiver to use reinforcement during daily routines with the toddler.

1. **Model using the evidence-based practice for the caregiver:**
   a. Introduce the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist
   Review the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist with the caregiver, explaining the steps of using reinforcement and how it will be used within the selected routines or activities.
   - Provide this Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to the caregiver to support their use of reinforcement

b. Set up the Activity for the toddler to accomplish the target skill/behavior.
Make sure the activity is set up with the reinforcer and any supports needed for the toddler to display the target skill/behavior.

c. Transition the toddler into the activity
Let the toddler know the activity is coming for them to display the target skill/behavior and then receive the reinforcer.

d. If needed, support the toddler to display the target skill/behavior
As determined with the caregiver, provide supports to help the toddler accomplish the target skill/behavior.

e. Provide the reinforcer immediately after toddler exhibits skill/behavior
Immediately after you see the toddler display the target skill/behavior, provide the positive reinforcer.

2. **Answer caregiver's questions, if needed**
   Take a moment to allow the caregiver to ask you questions about using reinforcement and respond accordingly.
   - Use the FAQ Guide for Reinforcement to answer any questions the caregiver has about reinforcement

3. **Support caregiver's use of Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to practice using reinforcement for toddlers**
   - Encourage the caregiver to use the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist as a guide as they practice reinforcement while you observe and support them to use it.
   - Prompt and encourage the caregiver as needed.
   - Provide this Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to the caregiver to support their use of reinforcement

4. **Facilitate caregiver reflection and provide feedback following their practice use of reinforcement for toddlers**
   - Using the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist, ask the caregiver to reflect on their use of reinforcement with their toddler.
   - Use caregiver responses to guide a discussion.
   - Modify the plan for using reinforcement based on caregiver feedback.
   - Use the Facilitate Reflection on Reinforcement Use form to facilitate the caregiver's reflection on their use of reinforcement.

5. **Discuss with the caregiver how reinforcement will be thinned once the toddler regularly exhibits the target skill/behavior**
   Talk with the caregiver about how once you are regularly seeing the toddler display the target skill/behavior, the provision of reinforcement will be thinned so that the toddler does not become dependent upon the reinforcer.

6. **Discuss with the caregiver when they will use reinforcement for toddlers in daily routines and activities**
   - Discuss times of day or routines/activities during which caregivers will use reinforcement with their toddler.
   - Start small with one routine and gradually add to this.
   - Praise small successes of the caregiver

   Provide this Caregiver Log & Data Collection Form to the caregiver to support their collection of monitoring data on the toddler.

STEP 3: MONITORING USE OF REINFORCEMENT

The monitoring use step details how to monitor the caregiver's use of reinforcement for toddlers with a toddler and how to determine next steps based on the data.

1. **Plan for and support caregiver's data collection on toddler's progress towards the target skill/behavior**
   - Ask the caregiver to track their toddler's progress using the Data Collection Form and Caregiver Log.
   - Continue to collect data both during sessions as you observe the caregiver and from the caregiver's data collected throughout the week.
   - Analyze trends and monitor progress in collaboration with the caregiver.

2. **Collect and analyze fidelity of caregiver's use of reinforcement for toddlers**
   - Encourage the caregiver to keep the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist somewhere easy to reference throughout the week.
   - Monitor caregiver fidelity during sessions using the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist and discuss any questions the caregiver has.

   Use this Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to collect the caregiver's fidelity of using reinforcement

3. **Review data collected on the toddler's target skill/behavior**
   - Review data collected during sessions and by the caregiver during the week.
   - You and the parent should periodically self-reflect on use of reinforcement.

   Use this Monitoring Progress Checklist to guide the reflection discussion.

4. **Support caregiver's use of reinforcement for toddlers for other target skills/behaviors for the toddler**

   Once the target skill/behavior has been mastered during one activity, consider ways to generalize the skill in other activities or routines and with other caregivers.

   Provide this Generalization Plan to caregiver to support use of reinforcement with other target goals for their toddlers across settings.

5. Determine next steps

Collecting data will help caregivers decide about the effectiveness of using reinforcement for toddlers and whether the toddler is making progress. If a toddler is making progress based upon data collected, then the caregiver should continue to use the selected strategies.

If caregivers determine that the toddler is not making progress, consider the following:

- Is the target goal/behavior/skill well defined?
- Is the target goal/behavior/skill measurable and observable?
- Is the target goal/behavior/skill too difficult/complex? Does it need to be broken down into smaller steps?
- Has enough time been devoted to using reinforcement for toddlers (frequency, intensity, and/or duration)?
- Was reinforcement for toddlers implemented with fidelity?
- Does the toddler need additional supports?
- Are the selected reinforcers preferred items/activities for the toddler?

If these issues have been addressed and the toddler continues not to show progress, consider selecting a different evidence-based practice to use with the toddler.

TIP SHEET FOR EI PROVIDER

REINFORCEMENT …

- When a positive consequence is provided to a toddler immediately after displaying a target skill/behavior in order to increase that target skill/behavior.
- Embedded into daily routines and activities.
- Reinforcers can be naturally occurring and should be developmentally appropriate and motivating for the toddler.

TIPS:

- Choose motivating, developmentally appropriate, and naturally occurring reinforcers
- Immediately provide the reinforcement
- Keep track to make sure the reinforcer is motivating and vary reinforcers so that the toddler does not get used to receiving them (and potentially lose some motivation)
- When you do see the behavior regularly, thin the reinforcement delivery

WHY USE WITH TODDLERS ON THE SPECTRUM?

- Reinforcement is a versatile practice that can be used to address a variety of outcomes.
- Reinforcement can increase the likelihood and occurrence of target skills/behaviors.
- Using reinforcement within daily routines and activities allows for successful interactions between caregivers, toddlers, and peers.

INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES:

The evidence-base for Reinforcement supports its use to address the following outcomes, according to age range, in the table below:

Age	Academic	Adaptive	Behavior	Communication	Joint Attention	Motor	Play	School readiness	Social
0-2		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
3-5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*The NCAEP review classified practices into domains for an age range of 0-22. The focus of early intervention should be on pre-academic skills and the social and emotional well-being of children. AFIRM for Toddlers does not recommend working on academic goals/outcomes with children in early intervention.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING:

1. PLAN

- Select target skill/behavior
- Collect baseline on target skill/behavior with caregiver
- Discuss reinforcement basics and using steps with caregiver
- Select reinforcers
- Select activity that reinforcement will be used with
- Determine supports that may be needed for toddler to use target skill/behavior
- Have materials ready and available

2. USE

- Model using reinforcement for the caregiver (live and/or video)
- Answer caregiver's questions, if needed
- Support caregiver's use of Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist to practice using reinforcement
- Facilitate caregiver reflection and provide feedback following their practice use of reinforcement
- Discuss with the caregiver how the reinforcer will be thinned (reduced) once the toddler is regularly accomplishing the target skill/behavior
- Discuss with the caregiver use of reinforcement in daily routines and activities

3. MONITOR

- Plan for and support caregiver's data collection on the toddler's progress toward the target skill/behavior
- Monitor caregiver fidelity using the Caregiver Reinforcement Implementation Checklist
- Review data collected on the toddler's target skill/behavior
- Support use of reinforcement for other skills/behaviors
- Collaborate with caregiver about next steps

Reinforcement
R for Toddlers

This sheet was designed as a supplemental resource to provide basic information about Reinforcement for EI Providers working with toddlers on the spectrum.

For more information about this selected evidence-based practice, please visit https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/.

FAMILY GUIDE

WHAT IS R?

- Reinforcement is when a positive consequence is provided to a toddler immediately after displaying a target skill/behavior in order to increase that target skill/behavior.
- Reinforcement is embedded into daily routines and activities.
- Reinforcers can be naturally occurring and should be developmentally appropriate and motivating for the toddler.

WHY USE THIS R MY TODDLER?

- Reinforcement is a versatile practice that can be used to address a variety of outcomes.
- Reinforcement can increase the likelihood and occurrence of target skills/behaviors.
- Using reinforcement within daily routines and activities allows for successful interactions between caregivers, toddlers, and peers.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO AT HOME?

- Determine what is motivating and developmentally appropriate as a reinforcer for the toddler.
- Positively reinforce the toddler with the preferred item/activity immediately after the toddler displays a target skill/behavior across routines and activities at home.

Reinforcement
R for Toddlers

This parent introduction to R for Toddlers was designed as a supplemental resource to help answer questions about Reinforcement.

To find out more about how this R for Toddlers is being used with your child, please talk with:

_____

For more information about this selected evidence-based practice, please visit https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/.

CEC Standards

INITIAL PRACTICE-BASED STANDARDS FOR EARLY INTERVENTIONISTS/EARLY CHILDHOOD (0-5 YEARS; CEC, 2020)

Standard 1: Child Development & Early Learning

1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the impact that different theories and philosophies of early learning and development have on assessment, curriculum, intervention, and instruction decisions.

1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of characteristics, etiologies, and individual differences within and across the range of abilities, including developmental delays and disabilities, their potential impact on children's early development and learning, and implications for assessment, curriculum, instruction, and intervention.

Standard 6: Using Responsive and Reciprocal Interactions, Interventions, and Instruction

6.3 Engage in ongoing planning and use flexible and embedded instructional and environmental arrangements and appropriate materials to support the use of interactions, interventions, and instruction addressing developmental and academic content domains, which are adapted to meet the needs of each and every child and their family.

6.6 Use responsive interactions, interventions, and instruction with sufficient intensity and types of support across activities, routines, and environments to promote child learning and development and facilitate access, participation, and engagement in natural environments and inclusive settings.

6.7 Plan for, adapt, and improve approaches to interactions, interventions, and instruction based on multiple sources of data across a range of natural environments and inclusive settings.

ADVANCED PRACTICE-BASED STANDARDS (CEC, 2012):

Standard 3: Programs, Services, and Outcomes

3.1 Design and implement evaluation activities to improve programs, supports, and services for individuals with exceptionalities.

3.2 Use understanding of cultural, social, and economic diversity and individual toddler differences to inform the development and improvement of programs, supports, and services for individuals with exceptionalities.

3.3 Apply knowledge of theories, evidence-based practices, and relevant laws to advocate for programs, supports, and services for individuals with exceptionalities.

DEC Recommended Practices

ASSESSMENT:

A2. Practitioners work as a team with the family and other professionals to gather assessment information.
A3. Practitioners use assessment materials and strategies that are appropriate for the child's age and level of development and accommodate the child's sensory, physical, communication, cultural, linguistic, social, and emotional characteristics.
A6. Practitioners use a variety of methods, including observation and interviews, to gather assessment information from multiple sources, including the child's family and other significant individuals in the child's life.
A7. Practitioners obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community.
A9. Practitioners implement systematic ongoing assessment to identify learning targets, plan activities, and monitor the child's progress to revise instruction as needed.

ENVIRONMENT:

E1. Practitioners provide services and supports in natural and inclusive environments during daily routines and activities to promote the child's access to and participation in learning experiences.
E3. Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal environments to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences.

FAMILY:

F1. Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.
F4. Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs.
F5. Practitioners support family functioning promote family confidence and competence and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities.
F6. Practitioners engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge and skills and parenting competence and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family's preferences.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE: INSTRUCTION

INS1. Practitioners, with the family, identify each child's strengths, preferences, and interests to engage the child in active learning.
INS2. Practitioners, with the family, identify skills to target for instruction that help a child become adaptive, competent, socially connected, and engaged and that promote learning in natural and inclusive environments.
INS3. Practitioners gather and use data to inform decisions about individualized instruction.
INS4. Practitioners plan for and provide the level of support, accommodations, and adaptations needed for the child to access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines.
INS5. Practitioners embed instruction within and across routines, activities, and environments to provide contextually relevant learning opportunities.
INS6. Practitioners use systematic instructional strategies with fidelity to teach skills and to promote child engagement and learning.
INS7. Practitioners use explicit feedback and consequences to increase child engagement, play, and skills.
INS9. Practitioners use functional assessment and related prevention, promotion, and intervention strategies across environments to prevent and address challenging behavior.
INS10. Practitioners implement the frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction needed to address the child's phase and pace of learning or the level of support needed by the family to achieve the child's outcomes or goals.
INS13. Practitioners use coaching or consultation strategies with primary caregivers or other adults to facilitate positive adult-child interactions and instruction intentionally designed to promote child learning and development.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE: INTERACTION

INT1. Practitioners promote the child's social-emotional development by observing, interpreting, and responding contingently to the range of the child's emotional expressions.
INT2. Practitioners promote the child's social development by encouraging the child to initiate or sustain positive interactions with other children and adults during routines and activities through modeling, teaching, feedback, or other types of guided support.
INT3. Practitioners promote the child's communication development by observing, interpreting, responding contingently, and providing natural consequences for the child's verbal and non-verbal communication and by using language to label and expand on the child's requests, needs, preferences, or interests.
INT4. Practitioners promote the child's cognitive development by observing, interpreting, and responding intentionally to the child's exploration, play, and social activity by joining in and expanding on the child's focus, actions, and intent.
INT5. Practitioners promote the child's problem-solving behavior by observing, interpreting, and scaffolding in response to the child's growing level of autonomy and self-regulation.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE: TEAMING & COLLABORATION

TC1. Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child and family.

TC3. Practitioners use communication and group facilitation strategies to enhance team functioning and interpersonal relationships with and among team members.

GLOSSARY

Baseline data - information gathered from multiple sources to better understand the target behavior, before using an intervention or practice; data collected on current performance level prior to implementation of intervention

Caregiver - throughout these modules, "caregiver" is used to refer to any of the people who care for a toddler during daily routines, including parents, other family members, and center-based providers or teachers

Duration data - records how long a learner engages in a particular behavior or skill

Fade - to systematically reduce and eventually withdraw the use of stimulus such as a prompt, request, or reinforcer

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

Generalization - the ability to use learned skills in new and different environments

Goal - throughout these modules, "goal" is used to refer to child and family goals and outcomes as indicated on an IFSP

Implementation checklist - the specific steps needed to accurately follow an evidence-based practice

Interfering behavior - a behavior that interferes with the learner's ability to learn

Maintenance - toddlers continued use of a targeted skill or behavior after the reinforcement EBP has been withdrawn

Modeling (MD) - an evidence-based practice that involves the learner observing someone correctly performing a target behavior

Positive reinforcement - is the delivery of a reinforcer (primary, such as food, or secondary, such as verbal praise or toys) after the learner uses a target skill or behavior

Prompting (PP) - an evidence-based practice in which the caregiver provides specific directions or arrangements of the context before the skill/behavior occurs to promote the toddlers use of the skill/behavior; prompts can be verbal, gestural, or physical

Prompting hierarchy - the continuum of prompting used to support a learner in acquiring new skills

Provider - throughout these modules, "provider" is used to refer to any early intervention provider including community-based rehabilitation service providers, early interventionists, developmental therapists, early intervention specialists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists, among others

Reinforcement (R) - an evidence-based practice that provides feedback that increases the use of a strategy or target skill/behavior

Reinforcer - a motivating item/activity/food that serves to reinforce a toddler for displaying a target skill/behavior immediately after displaying the target skill/behavior

Thinning - spreading out the delivery of reinforcers once the toddler is regularly displaying a target behavior/skill

Toddler - throughout these models, "toddler" is used to refer to a child with autism, language disorder, developmental delay, or social communication needs below 36 months of age.

Token Economy - a form of reinforcement where the toddler earns small tokens immediately after displaying a target skill/behavior that leads to a larger reward once a certain number of tokens is received

Visual Supports (VS) - an evidence-based practice that provides concrete cues that are paired with, or used in place of, a verbal cue to provide the learner with information about a routine, activity, behavioral expectation, or skill demonstration

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