

Oklahoma **Autism** Network

Power of Positive Reinforcement

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The Oklahoma Autism Network

- The Oklahoma Autism Network
 - Established in October 2003
 - First step for implementation of the Individuals with Autism and Their Families, Oklahoma Plan.
- Funding by:

The Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Services Division
- Sponsored by:

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, College of Allied Health, Department of Rehabilitation Science, Tolbert Center for Developmental Disabilities



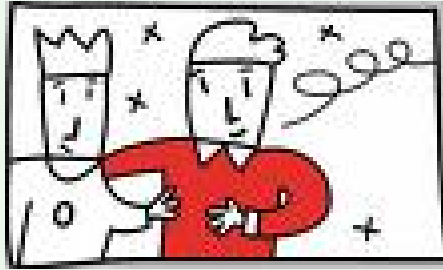
The Oklahoma Autism Network At a Glance

- Coordinate development and implementation of the **Autism Pilot Program**;
- Offer a **toll-free information & referral line** to help link families with services;
- Provide **trainings and technical assistance** for parents, educators, and professionals;
- Coordinate the **Oklahoma City Professional Autism Coalition (OPAC)**;
- Provide **professional resources** for educators and other professionals;
- Provide **information on Oklahoma State Programs and other financial resources**;
- Disseminate **current information about effective interventions**;
- Promote **autism awareness to the general public** through collaboration with support groups, businesses, parents, and citizens;
- Offer a **resource center** that includes a library with books, videos, and access to tools to create low-tech supports, such as visual schedules and picture boards; and
- Collaborate with higher education, state agencies, parent initiatives and other programs to **continually improve systems of services and supports** including workforce development, policies and procedures, funding, and legislation.



Questions to ask yourself.....

- Why do you get up and go to work everyday?
- Why are you here tonight?
- Why do you volunteer at your child's school?
- Why do you go out to dinner with your spouse?
- Why did you go to high school/college?



Answer???????????



Reinforcement



What is positive reinforcement?

“Any pleasant object or activity that is given to a person following a behavior that increases that behavior”

- Increasing a behavior means that the behavior is likely to:
 - Happen more often
 - Happen for a longer period of time
 - Improve in quality



“But, I feel like I am bribing my child....”



Bribery

Definition:

The American Heritage Dictionary defines a bribe as:

"Something, such as money, offered or given to induce or influence a person to act dishonestly."



Bribery vs. Positive Reinforcement

Trip to Wal-Mart:

* Bribery

versus

* Positive Reinforcement



Research on praise....



- Meta-analyses of studies have shown that praise increases the intrinsic interest people have in activities even after praise is no longer forthcoming





How do I know when to use positive reinforcement????

- When in doubt, try it, it works.....
- Some examples:
 - Child trying to learn a new skills: dressing, potty training, going to store, learning to write, learning to read, talking, etc.
 - Behavioral challenges: reinforcing the good behavior.
 - Transitions: going from one desired environment to a less desirable environment.





Examples of positive reinforcers

*** Remember, reinforcers are individual!***

Some examples:

- Social reinforcement
 - Hugs, praise, kisses
- Material reinforcement
 - Favorite toy, special story, stickers
- Food reinforcement
 - Candy, snacks
- Token reinforcement
 - Stars on a calendar, allowance



How do I get started?

1. Decide what behavior you want to either:
 1. Change.
 2. Improve in quality.
 3. Increase occurrence.
2. Decide which reinforcers (child's preferences...)
3. Decide how often the child can earn the reinforcer.
4. Decide on the reinforcement system you are going to use....
5. Think about how you are going to fade the reinforcement system.



1. Picking the targeted behavior to change.

1. Change the behavior:

change.

Examples:

1. child falls on the floor everytime he goes to the cabinet and wants a snack.
2. Child hits another kid anytime the other kid has a toy he/she wants to play with

2. Improve in quality:

Examples:

1. Child tries to clean up his room, but never does it completely.
2. Child will attempt a worksheet, but rushes through it without being accurate.

3. Increase occurrence

Examples:

1. Child will occasionally go the toilet, but not very often.

2. Pick the reinforcers.

- Reinforcers are individual!!!!
- Should be convenient and not disruptive to your daily routines.
- Not lead to disruptive behavior.
- Not be available at other times.
- Be given only when the child has done the behavior.
- Be changed or varied if the child gets bored with it.
- Be given in small amounts.

3. Decide how often the child should get the reinforcer.

- Immediately after the behavior you are trying to increase.
- When you first begin to teach a new behavior, reinforce the behavior every time it happens. This is called continuous reinforcement.
- Although continuous reinforcement is the best way to teach a new behavior, the behavior will quickly stop when the reinforcer is discontinued.
- Once a child's behavior has increased, it is important to gradually fade the amount or type of reinforcement you give.
- When you reinforce occasionally, rather than every time, it is called intermittent reinforcement. It is the best way to strengthen a behavior and have it continue for a long time.



4. Decide on the reinforcement system.

- 1:1 system – every time child does the activity he/she gets the reinforcement.
- Token system.
- Intermittent system.
- Same system used in his/her school.



5. Think about how to fade the system.

- As your child gets older, you don't want to have to get him/her a skittle every time he sits in his seat.
- So, think about how you can gradually mature the system.
- Child will always need some type of reinforcement system (ex: we all do!), however, how can we mature the system and/or make the reinforcers more natural.
- Sometimes when kids learn new activities, the activities themselves become reinforcing – which is our ultimate goal!!!



Token reinforcement

- A way to motivate children to increase good behavior.
- Your child is given a chance to earn “tokens” for good behavior or for completing a task.
- Tokens can be any type of object or symbol.
 - Ex: plastic chips, stars, stamps, points, checkmarks





Step By Step

- Decide what behavior you would like your child to increase.
- Decide what to use for tokens.
- Decide on rewards for which tokens can be exchanged.
- Decide how often and when your child can exchange tokens for rewards.
- Estimate the number of tokens your child could earn in that time period.

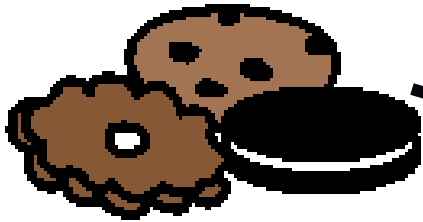
Other guidelines

- Token reinforcement systems should be used only if your child is able to understand the idea of exchanging tokens for rewards.
- Make the token system as visually concrete as possible.
- Explain the token system to your child.
- Gradually fade the token reinforcement system – make it more mature as child gets older.



Reinforcement example

cookies



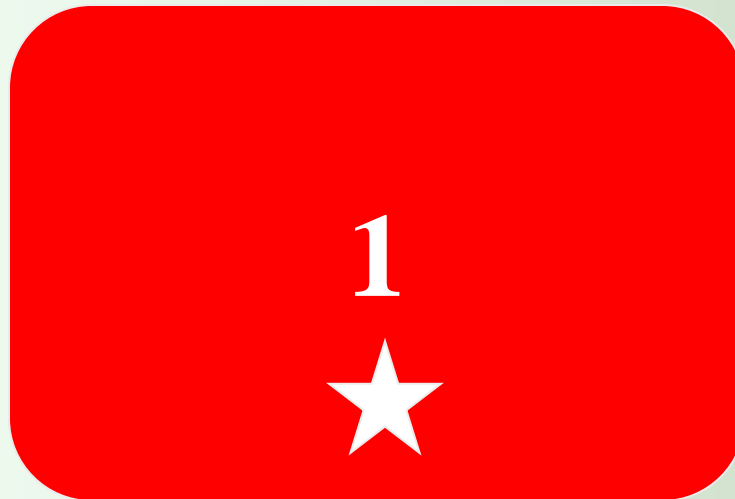
I am working for:

symbol
here

token here



Behavior Support Example





If it's not working.....

re-evaluate

- Can the child do the skill expected or do we need to break it down into smaller steps?
- Are the reinforcers strong enough, do we need to re-evaluate?
- Is the child earning the reinforcers frequently enough?



How do we avoid reinforcing undesirable behaviors?

- Children often continue undesirable behaviors because they are reinforced in some way. Some things that may cause undesirable behaviors to continue are:
 - Attention or rewards
 - Escape from a task
 - Self-reinforcing activities



Three strategies that can be used to reduce undesirable behaviors:

- Interruption and redirection – includes stopping the behavior, directing to a desired behavior, and praising for the desired behavior.
- Ignoring (extinction) – when you stop giving attention to a behavior that has been reinforced in the past.
- Taking away a reinforcer (response cost) – taking away a reinforcing object/privilege when an undesirable behavior occurs.





Questions????



Reinforcer boards

Now, let's get to work!



You should each have:

- Folder with the words:
“I am working for:”
- Sheet of general reinforcers
- Five stars
- 1 foot of velcro



Making the reward board:

1. Cut out the reinforcers your child will like (if we don't have them, you can use www.google.com and go to Images).
2. Decide if you're going to use 3 or 5 stars on the front.
3. Put velcro on the reinforcers and the stars.
4. Put velcro on the folder (inside for storage).



Contact Us

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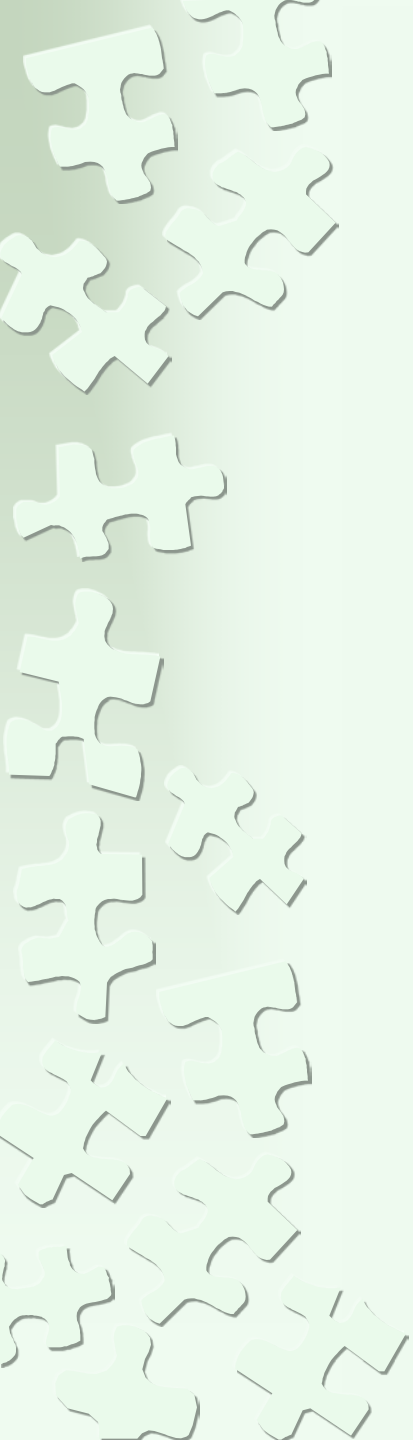
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CONTENT SLIDES



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