



The Power of Reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement: is a tool you can incorporate into your child's routine but can also be used to help encourage them to complete academic work at home. Positive reinforcement means giving a reward to your child after they have completed an activity which in turn encourages them to want to do that task again in the future (Alberto & Troutman, 2003).

What Are Reinforcers?

It's simple... anything that your child likes! In turn, your child is motivated to do things to gain access to the item.

...also known as, **REWARDS**

Some examples of reinforcers:

- Praise (e.g. "Good job!")
- High fives
- Favourite toy
- Favourite activity
- Check marks towards a favourite activity or toy

(Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007)

How Do Reinforcers Work?

Giving a reinforcer to your child **after** a desired behaviour will **increase** the likelihood that they do it again (Alberto & Troutman, 2003).

Reinforcement ↑ future behaviour

What to Reinforce?

Simple- anything you want to see **increase!**

E.g: getting dressed, doing school work, cleaning up

Remember

Focus on the **positive!** Remind and praise your child for the positive things you want to see, rather than focusing on the negative.

Where to Begin

1. Identify what task you want your child to do (e.g. chore, academic task)
2. Identify things your child is interested in.
3. Ask them what reward they want.
4. Let them know how they can access their identified reward (e.g., "When you make your bed you can have iPad time").
5. Present the task, but avoid phrasing it as a question (e.g. "Time to make your bed" vs. "Can you make your bed?")
6. When they complete that task, give them their chosen reward and praise them!

See First-Then Handout

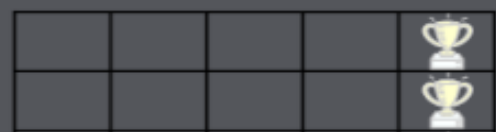
Tips & Tricks

- Your child should ALWAYS choose what they want but you can limit options by giving choice (e.g., do you want the iPad or the TV?)
- Reinforcer must be given immediately
- Limit your child's access to their reinforcers outside of reinforcement to keep it motivating

Some Ideas

- Add a pasta noodle every time you see a positive behaviour and once the noodles reach a line on the jar they get a special activity
- Add a sticker for all positive behaviour to a piece of paper, 10 stickers earns a reward
- Once your child does their daily chore they get a special treat

5 Sticker Chart
5 stickers = Reward



References:

Alberto, A.A., & Troutman, A.C. (2003). *Applied behavior analysis for teachers*. (6th ed.). NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). *Applied behavior analysis* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

