

# Top Ten Mistakes in Behavior Management: A Rationale for Positive Reinforcement

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# Reinforcement

- Positive Reinforcement
  - Anything that happens to a behavior that increases the likelihood of the behavior's occurrence in the future.
- Negative Reinforcement
  - An aversive event or stimulus whose termination increases the frequency of the preceding response
- Punishment
  - Presentation of an aversive event or removal of a positive event contingent upon a response that decreases behavior.

# Positive Reinforcement

- It must be immediate & frequent.
  - Do not expect a child with behavioral difficulties to wait until the end of the week or even the end of a day to receive a reinforcer.
- Create opportunities for the student to earn reinforcement.
- Make it contingent upon their appropriate behavior.
- Try to use natural reinforcers such as verbal praise, first in line, play a game, time on the computer.
- Material reinforcers such as stickers, pencils, or coloring books work as well.
- [Big Bang](#)

# Punishment- Behavior Reduction

- Purpose is to decrease or stop an undesirable behavior.
- Examples include:
  - Teacher reprimand
  - Extinction
  - Time out
  - Parental contact
  - Revocation of privileges
  - Detention
  - Isolation
  - Principles office

# Punishment Effectiveness

- Classroom with high reward/positive reinforcement rates.
- Use the most potent reduction technique so that there is a rapid behavior change.
- Start early in the chain of events. Don't wait for strike three.
- Acknowledge peers with attention for appropriate behaviors.
- Don't not over-rely on punitive strategies (e.g., time out).
- Whatever strategy you use, just make sure it reduces the behavior.

# Create a reinforcing classroom!!!

- Expectations and rules are based on desirable behaviors.
- Classroom expectations and assignments must be strategically based on reinforcing desirable behaviors, rather than punishing inappropriate behaviors.
  - Avoid all or nothing scenarios.
    - Behavioral contracting
- Have consistent expectations, but know when to individualize.

- Reinforcement not provided immediately
  - To be most effective, reinforcement must be prompt and delivered after the targeted behavior is displayed.
  - Kids with attention seeking behavior cannot wait until the end of class or end of the day to receive reinforcement.
- A reinforcer without instruction is meaningless.
  - Reinforcement must be presented in coordination with instruction.
- Reinforcers that are not meaningful to the student.
  - “Colt cash” may be part of the schoolwide approach, but if the student does not value it, it is not a reinforcer.

- Taking points away
  - Have the student “earn” points. Be reinforcing.
- Over-reliance on IEP goals for reducing negative behaviors (punitive approach).
  - Write IEP goals to increase pro-social behaviors.
- Not considering “antecedent” interventions
- Trying to implement a new BIP over the course of a “whole” day.
  - Start small, the build on successes.



- Not collecting accurate data, or using point cards rated at the end of the class period.
  - Use an accurate data collection method paired with a strategy for collecting the data so its accurate and meaningful.
- Misunderstanding of “time out”.
- Trying “calm down” strategies instead of figuring out what was frustrating the student in the first place.
  - Consider antecedents that might be prompting the negative behavior

# So I have a student who displays a persistent problem behavior.....

1. Determine what the desirable behavior is that you want the student to perform or display.
  - Hand raising
  - On-task (stay in seat; complete work)
2. Directly instruct the student on how to perform the desired/expected behavior.
3. Develop a strategy to help facilitate the student performing the desired behavior.
  - Token reinforcement
  - Self-monitoring

# So I have a student who displays a persistent problem behavior...

1. Consider what happens before the behavior?
  - What could you do differently before the behavior is displayed?
    - Consider: re-teach the skill, remind them of expectations, provide them with an accommodation, such as notes, or calculator, move them to a different seat, encourage them.
2. Consider some strategies you can develop to help the student.
  - Self-monitoring strategies.
  - List of tasks for the student during cooperative learning activities.
  - Individualize some expectations.
3. Consider what happens after the behavior?
  - What could you do differently after the behavior is displayed?
    - Remind and redirect. Restate expectations.
    - Provide positive reinforcement when they meet expectations.

# Remember

- The best teachers are authoritative.
  - They demand a lot and praise a lot.
- If a child will not listen to what your saying, then change what YOU are saying.
  - You have to change your behavior before a child will change their behavior.

# Resources

- Rhode, G., Jenson, W. R., & Reavis, H. K. (2010). *The Tough Kid Book 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Pacific Northwest Publishing; Eugene, OR.
- Sayeski, K. L., & Brown, M. R. (2011). Developing a classroom management plan using a tiered approach. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 44*, 8-17.
- Kazdin, A. E. (2013). *Behavior Modification in Applied Settings 7th Edition*. Waveland Press.