

## **Reinforcements (tangible and intangible):**

- Be first in Line to anything
- Choose an activity or game for the class
- Extra PE, recess, or break time
- Pass out paper
- Run Errands
- Sharpen class pencils
- Sit at the teachers desk for a specified amount of time
- Sit by a friend
- Time with a favorite adult or peer
- Visit the principal (prearranged)
- Visit the school library (individual or group)
- Art supplies
- Ball
- Bean Bags
- Book
- Bookmarks
- Chalk
- Play dough
- Colored paper
- Coloring books
- Comics
- Crayons
- Erasers
- Games
- Key Chains
- Magic Markers
- Miniature Cars
- Pencils
- Play money
- Positive note home
- Posters
- Puzzles
- Real money (pennies, nickels, dimes)
- School Supplies
- Self-stick tattoos
- Stickers
- Stuffed animals
- Surprise treats or rewards (random)

### **Rules of Thumb about Selecting Reinforcers:**

- It is a mistake to automatically assume you know what will be reinforcing for a student (let them decide)
- If behavior increases then it is reinforcement
- If behavior did not actually increase then there was actually no positive reinforcement
- Watch and try-observe what the student likes to play with
- Ask them what they may want to earn
- Offer a reinforce checklist-if student cannot read than teacher reads it to them
- Offer a reinforce menu (list checklist but pictures)-for students who have difficulty communicating their needs and wants
- Follow the GOLDREN RULE OF REINFORCERS: they should not cost a lot of money, should not take a lot of staff time, and should be natural, whenever possible
- **Never take away a reinforcer that a student has earned!!!**

### **RULES:**

- **Immediately:** The longer the teacher waits to reinforce the student the less effective the reinforce will be, this is particularly true for younger students.
- **Frequently:** It is especially important to reinforce a student frequently when they are learning a new behavior or skill. If reinforcers are not given frequently enough, the student may not produce enough of the behavior for it to become well established. (The standard rule is four to five positive reinforcers for every negative consequence, including verbal comments, the teacher delivers). In the beginning when there is still a lot of negative behavior, positive reinforcement and recognition of appropriate behavior must be increased accordingly to maintain the 4-5 for every negative. The reinforce can be as simple as, "Good job, you finished your math assignment."
- **Enthusiasm:** It is easy to simply hand an edible reinforcer to a student; it takes more effort to pair it with an enthusiastic comment. Modulation in voice and excitement with a congratulatory air conveys that the student has done something important. Seems artificial at first, but makes a difference in the end.
- **Eye Contact:** It is also important for the teacher to look the student in the eyes when delivering the reinforcement, even if the student is not looking at him/her. Like enthusiasm, eye contact suggests that the student has done something special and deserves the teacher's undivided attention.
- **Describe the Behavior:** The younger the student is the more important it is to describe the appropriate behavior that is being reinforced. Teachers often assume the student knows what they did to earn the reinforcement, but that is often not the case. Describing the behavior highlights and emphasizes the behavior the teacher wants to see. Also, if the behavior has multiple steps it allows time to review all of the steps that were completed and what the specific expectations are for the student. Example, getting dressed.

- **Anticipation:** Building excitement and anticipation for the earning of the reinforce can motivate students to do their very best. The more “hype” the teacher uses, the more excited the students become to earn the reinforce.
- **Variety:** Just like adults, students get tired of the same things. A certain reinforce may be highly desired, but after repeated exposure, it loses its effectiveness. It is easy to get caught up in giving the students the same reinforcers time and time again. However, variety is the spice of life for everyone, including challenging student. When teachers are asked why they do not carry their reinforcers, they indicate that it worked very well once. It is **necessary to change reinforcers frequently to make the reinforcement more effective.**

### Options to Schedule Reinforcers:

- **Continuous Reinforcement:** When a student is first learning a behavior, continuous reinforcement is best. After every correct response, a reinforce is given. Likewise, when a student is learning a complex task, it is important to reinforce him/her after every correct step.
- **Intermittent Reinforcement:** Once the student has learned the correct behavior or steps, it is preferable to move to intermittent reinforcement. Using this reinforcement schedule, the teacher may reinforce every third (or some other number) math problem completed or direction followed.
- **Variable Schedule of Reinforcement:** Using the variable schedule, the teacher reinforces on average every third response (or some other number); however, the term here that is important is *average*. Sometimes the teacher may reinforce after seven correct responses, then three, then four, then ten responses, then one response. The student can never be sure, when he/she will not be reinforced immediately after given the correct response, because the response requirement is random and only the average is fixed. Because of this uncertainty, variable reinforcement is usually very effective for challenging students.

### A Unique Delivery System for Positive Reinforcement:

- **Chart Moves:** **1.)** Use a dot to dot picture or chart, which is posted so the student can see his/her progress and which determines when the reinforcement will be delivered. **2.)** Each time reinforcement is earned, the student is allowed to connect another dot on the chart. **3.)** He/she earns the pre-specified reward each time the special reward dot is reached. The reward dots are colored or circled to indicate that the student will receive the reinforcement when he/she has earned enough moves to reach the special dot. **4.)** The first or last chart move each day may be dated, so that the student’s daily progress is automatically recorded as the chart is used. **5.)** The distance (or number of chart moves) between the special reward dots will vary depending on the frequency with which the teacher believes the students needs to be reinforced. It is expected that the student will require fewer chart moves initially to reach the reward dot when he/she is first learning a new behavior. Reward dots are spaced further apart (requiring more move charts) as the student, behavior improves.