

Common Reason for Social Behavior Failure: Inappropriate behavior removes student from something they do not want to do (negatively reinforced)

Intervention Name: **Behavioral Contracts**

Brief Description:

To lower the incidence of inappropriate behaviors, including escape behaviors, the child, teacher and parent will write a contract of appropriate behavior goals. Reinforcements will be given at different stages according to the contract.

What "Common Problems" Does This Address?

The child engages in inappropriate behaviors during certain tasks. It can also be used with children who engage in escape pattern to avoid certain activities.

Procedures:

1. Define behaviors to be addressed. For students exhibiting escape behaviors, a clause should be added that the student would still be responsible for the activity he/she was trying to escape.
2. Pick a "magic number" or behavioral count. First identify the frequency of the inappropriate behavior (e.g. 5 times during 1 hour). Then use this information to form a "magic number" for the appropriate behavior. Keep in mind that this number should reflect gradual change, and should be a manageable number for the student. The first week, the number should be lower in order for the student to experience success. The "magic number" can increase gradually until the overall goal is met.
3. Pick the Magic Button or Rewards: pick reinforcers for good behavior per day and additional reinforcers if the goals are met for the entire week.
4. The teacher, student and parent (if possible) sign the contract.
5. Allow multiple opportunities for the student to achieve their goal.
6. Reinforce the appropriate behaviors as outlined in the contract.

Critical Components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:

- Involving the student in the creation of the contract is essential, especially in the choice of reinforcers. When the student is involved in the creation of the contract, they have an active role in determining the appropriate behavior, and therefore are more willing to follow through. The expectations are clearly outlined for the student, and they can refer to them as necessary. In addition, the students will help to enforce the contract.
- Have the parents involved in the creation of the contract and have them sign the contract. They can offer additional reinforcers at home. This facilitates communication between home and school.
- Give the students multiple opportunities to be successful. Make sure the "Magic Number" is manageable, and allow the student several chances to meet their goal. Success is reinforcing, so making sure the student can be successful is critical.
- The teacher must follow through with the contract and reinforce the student appropriately.
- If the contract is not effective in changing the behavior, revisit the behavioral definition, adjust the behavioral count or change the reinforcers.

Critical Assumptions/Problem-Solving Questions to be Asked:

There is an assumption that the child understands the appropriate behavior being asked of them. As with all interventions including reinforcers, there is an assumption that the child will work for the reinforcer.

Materials

Typed Contract
Reinforcers

References:

Carns, A. W. & Carns, M. R. (1994). Making behavioral contracts successful. *School Counselor*, 42(2), 155-160.

Sample Behavior Contract

Student: Ricky Jones
Teacher: Mrs. Smith

Date: 10/06/2010
Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Jones

Mrs. Smith will give Ricky a sticker to put on his Behavior Chart each time when he does one of the following:

- Raised his hand to talk.
- Asked Permission to leave his seat
- Stayed on task

If Ricky has reached his Daily Magic Number of 10 stickers he may choose one of the following:

- 10 minutes of extra time on the playground
- 15 minutes of uninterrupted activities with Mrs. Jones or Mr. Jones
- 1 prize from the Surprise Prize Box.

If Ricky has a perfect week (5 days Monday-Friday) by reaching his “Magic Number” each day, he may choose one of the following:

- A prize out of the Special Prize Box
- A special outing with Mr. and Mrs. Jones

The student, Ricky, helped to create this contract, understands it and agrees to the terms of this behavior contract.

Student Signature_____

The teacher, Mrs. Smith, agrees to follow through with her part of this contract.

Teacher Signature:_____

The Parents, Mr. & Mrs. Jones, agree to their part of this contract and will reward Ricky when he earns his Daily Magic Number and when he has a perfect week.

Parents Signature:_____

