

An Educator's Guide to Reinforcement and Redirection

Brittney Andrade, MS Early Childhood Studies & Kimberlee Turner, MS Ed
brittney@cdastars.com & kimberlee@cdastars.com
Successful Solutions Training in Child Development
www.cdastars.com



What is Positive Reinforcement?

Positive reinforcement describes anything that occurs directly after a behavior and increases the likelihood of that behavior repeating itself.

The goal for positive reinforcement is to help create an intrinsic or inside desire for the child's good behaviors. In other words, we want the child to see the joy in good behavior instead of fear of punishment for misbehaving.

Misbehavior vs. Mistaken Behavior

Misbehavior implies willful wrongdoing for which a child must be disciplined or punished.

Mistaken Behavior implies everyone makes mistakes, and the important thing to do is learn from them.

Benefits of Positive Reinforcement

- Increases desired behaviors that are long-lasting *if* reinforcement is maintained
- Often quick to administer and can be highly effective
- Shows children what positive behavior looks like and what others expect from them
- Heavily researched and developed into a recognized technique for behavior management in children of varying abilities

Bribes vs. Reinforcement

Bribing is described as offering a reward **before** a behavior occurs.

In order for a reward to be considered reinforcement it needs to occur **after** the behavior does, thereby reinforcing that behavior.

Methods of Reinforcement

Praise

Praise that targets the *specific behavior* can help the child to understand what exactly they did *appropriately*.

Tangible Reinforcement

These are any *physical items* that are given to the child directly following an *appropriate* behavior.

Token Economy

A token economy is when a teacher provides a child with “tokens” (play coins, check marks, etc.) in exchange for desired behaviors and the child is allowed to redeem a prize (reinforcer) once they have saved up enough tokens.

Attention from Adults

Children often seek attention and acceptance from adults which makes this method quite motivating to most children.

Special Privileges/Activities

These generally include board games, playground games, sports, special jobs, art activities, etc.

Positive Reinforcement in the Classroom

- Can be used with any child of varying abilities to help shape misbehavior into productive behavior
 - Avoids any aversive techniques of behavior management that can damage self-esteem and social and emotional development
 - Help strengthen the relationship between child and educator
- Reinforcing desired behavior can help to create an intrinsic motivation for the child to want to succeed
 - Aide in preventing future problem behaviors or tantrums
- Easy to use and implement in classrooms or at home

What is Redirection?

Redirection is taking less desirable behaviors and emotions and trying to turn them into a positive situation.

Using redirection will avoid giving into what the child wants or rewarding undesirable behavior, and instead bring their attention to another activity or item.