

Reinforcer Assessments

Child's preferences

Interview parents, care givers, teachers, etc. to explore possible reinforcers and items to which a child gravitates. You want to have a rich menu of reinforcers.

Non-Contingent Assessment

The first step in assessing reinforcers is to give a child access to a number of items that young children would find appealing. Try to include items that the parent or caregiver has already indicated is a preferred item. It is call "non contingent" because access to the reinforcer is not contingent on the child's behavior.

Questions to Consider:

1. To what items does the child gravitate? Note anything that the child picks up to access again.
2. Note any themes: is there a preference for musical toys, for specific characters?
3. Does the child use cars or other toys appropriately?
4. How does the child play with the toys?
5. Does the child choose self-stimulation instead of toys?
6. Can you engage the child in play with any of the toys?

Once you have seen the child in the presence of the toys, you can list preferred items and eliminate those that they have shown little interest.

Structured Assessment – (Finding your most powerful reinforcers)

You have completed interviews and conducted a non-contingent assessment to determine a child's preferences. Now, you will need to determine the child's most powerful reinforcers.

Concurrent Schedule Reinforcer Assessment:

1. Allow a child to sample each of 6 items for 30 seconds before beginning the preference assessment.
2. Present the two-item pairs listed on the data sheet and tell the child to "pick one".
3. Indicate the selected item by circling the corresponding number. Allow the child to play with the item for 15 seconds before removing the item and presenting the next pair.
4. If the child does not select an item, say, "pick one". If the child still does not select an item, draw a line through the pair and proceed to the next pair.

Six Item Preference Assessment

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Instructions:

1. Allow the child to sample each of 6 items for 30 seconds before beginning the preference assessment.
2. Present the two-item pairs listed on the data sheet and tell the child to "pick one".
3. Indicate the selected item by circling the corresponding number. Allow the child to play with the item for 15 seconds before removing the item and presenting the next pair.
4. If the child does not select an item, say, "pick one". If the child still does not select an item, draw a line through the pair and proceed to the next pair.

Item 1: _____

Item 2: _____

Item 3: _____

Item 4: _____

Item 5: _____

Item 6: _____

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 v 2						
2 v 4						
4 v 5						
3 v 6						
2 v 3						
5 v 6						
1 v 3						
3 v 4						
1 v 5						
1 v 6						
2 v 5						
2 v 6						
3 v 5						
4 v 6						
1 v 4						
Total						
%						
Rank						

Adapted from University of Iowa Children's Hospital, Univ. of Iowa Health Care