

Promise Reinforcer

WHAT IS IT? Involves showing the learner a preferred item prior to presenting the instruction. The Promise Reinforcer establishes motivation to comply with the requested transition. This will ensure that the value of problem behavior does not come to strength.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



- To increase compliance during transitions.
- To reduce frustration when giving up highly preferred activities.
- Pairing non-preferred areas with reinforcement to reduce escape or avoidance behaviors.

When it is time to transition to a less preferred activity or area. It is used with individuals that frequently display patterns of problem behavior (i.e., crying, dropping to the ground, running away, refusal) during transitions or when giving up highly preferred activities.



WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

HOW TO IMPLEMENT?

1. Determine a reinforcer that the student will want at that moment. (Example: The student just had a salty snack and likes to have a drink).
2. Hold the reinforcer so the student can see it but do not make it too obvious. (Don't wave it around and say, "Look what I have", etc.)
3. Give the instruction (Example: "It's time to _____", or "Come here we're going _____").
4. If student follows the direction, deliver the reinforcer. If using an activity/material reinforcer, a timer or some other cue will need to be used to indicate when the activity is over.
5. If the student doesn't follow through the first time the direction is given, he/she does not get the reinforcer, but the direction needs to be followed. Prompt the student as needed to complete activity.
6. Initially practice short distances frequently throughout the day. For example, position chairs a few feet away and practice moving from one chair to the other chair. Lengthen the distance over time when the student is successful.
7. Fade the promise reinforcer once the student masters transition criteria set by the instructor.
8. When giving up a preferred activity/object, the promise reinforcer can be used to increase compliance. To be effective, the promise reinforcer should match the value of the current reinforcer. For example, hold up small edible and say, "Give me car." If the car is given after the first directive, deliver the reinforcer. It is recommended to begin this procedure with a less valued reinforcer and move towards higher valued reinforcers over time. It is less effort to give up items of less value. When compliance is paired with reinforcement, desirable behavior will increase.

REFERENCES

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