



Reinforcement and Redirection

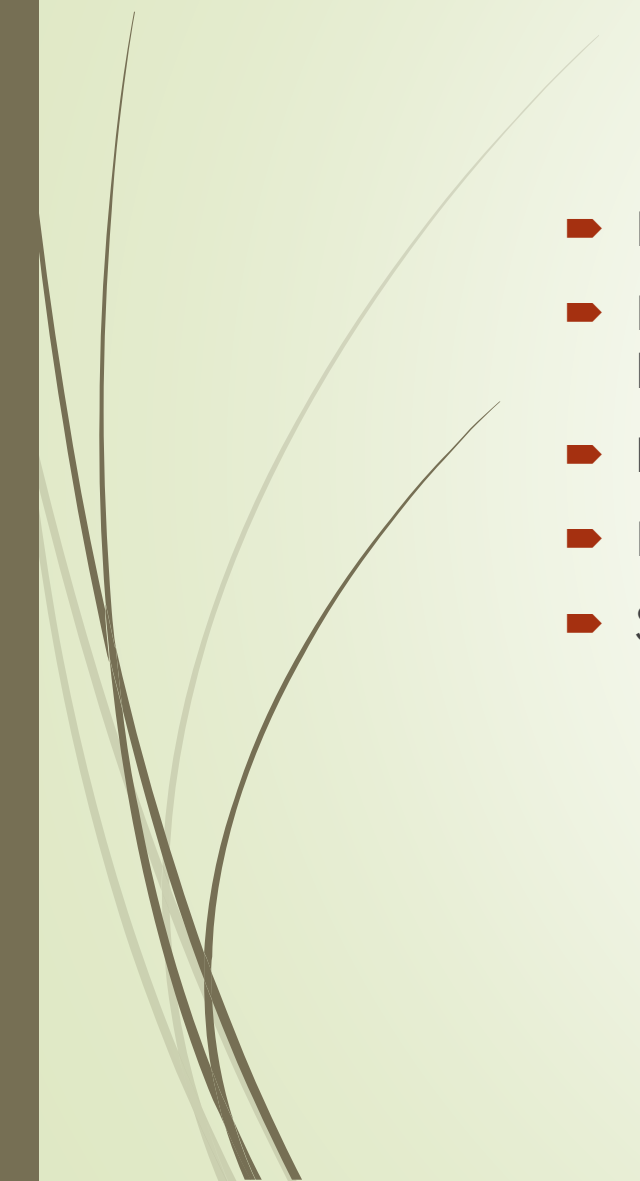
Successful Solutions Training in Child Development

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Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to...

- Explain how positive reinforcement is used
 - Demonstrate the correct usage of positive reinforcement to shape behavior when working with children
 - Interpret the difference between bribing and positive reinforcement
 - Discuss effective redirection techniques with peers
 - State some reasons why positive reinforcement is a useful technique
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Poll

- How many of you know what positive reinforcement is?
 - Know a lot? Know
- How many of you know what redirection is?



What is Positive Reinforcement?

- Positive reinforcement describes anything that occurs directly after a behavior and increases the likelihood of that behavior repeating itself. In its simplest form, this means that if you ask a child to pick up their toys and then give them a high five when they are finished, you just used positive reinforcement. This method of shaping behavior can be used by both parents and child care professionals.
- The goal for positive reinforcement is to help create an intrinsic 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.



Benefits of Positive Reinforcement

- An increase in desired behaviors that are long-lasting if intermittent reinforcement is maintained. The child will be rewarded for good behavior which can make the good behavior more appealing.
- Positive reinforcement is often quick to administer and can be highly effective.
- It gives children an understanding of what positive behavior looks like and what others expect from them.
- It has been heavily researched and developed into a recognized technique for behavior management in both children with or without disabilities.



Methods of Reinforcement

- When you are using reinforcement, it is important to remember what will actually be reinforcing to each specific child. Being aware of what interests individual students will help in identifying reinforcers that are reinforcing to them. Varying the reinforcement that is given can help to maintain the child's motivation and interest.
- Five different methods: Praise, Tangible Reinforcement, Token Economy, Attention from Adults, and Special Privileges/Activities



Method 1: Praise

- Praise can take many forms including “great job!”, “you are so smart!”, or any other relevant phrases. Praise that targets the specific behavior can help the student to understand what exactly they did correctly. An example of this is when a child cleans up their food after lunch and the teacher replies, “I like how you cleaned up after yourself”.



Method 2: Tangible Reinforcement

- These are any physical items that are given to the child directly following a behavior. Snacks, toys, and candy are popular tangible reinforcers. Edible items should be used sparingly, temporarily, or if the child does not respond to other reinforcers. An example of this is giving a treat after a child uses the toilet when you are teaching them to use the toilet.



Method 3: 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. It is important to let the child know what they are working for and to make sure it is reinforcing to them.
- Example: At circle time all of the children can earn stars next to their name on a whiteboard for good behavior. Children who receive 10 stars during circle time are awarded a prize/activity once circle time is over. Award skills such as sitting quietly, answering questions, or raising their hand, etc.



Method 4: Attention from Adults

- Children often seek attention and acceptance from adults which makes this method quite motivating to most children. The attention can be verbal praise or action related. An example would be when a child does something you asked them to do and then giving them tickles or a silly game as reinforcement.



Method 5: Special Privileges/Activities

- These generally include board games, playground games, sports, art activities, etc. There are countless options for this category of reinforcement and having the child understand what they are working towards if the task is difficult will help to increase motivation.



Positive Reinforcement in the Classroom

Positive Reinforcement Facts

- 1 - Positive reinforcement can be used with any child, with or without disabilities, to help shape problem behavior into productive behavior.
- 2 - Positive reinforcement avoids any aversive techniques of behavior management that can damage self-esteem and social and emotional development.
- 3 - The study and development of positive reinforcement was created by leading psychologists including B.F. Skinner, Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, and Edward L. Thorndike.
- 4 - Practicing positive reinforcement can help strengthen the relationship between child and educator.
- 5 - Reinforcing desired behavior can help to create an intrinsic motivation for the child to want to succeed.
- 6 - Positive reinforcement will aide in preventing future problem behaviors or tantrums.
- 7 - It is easy to use and implement in classrooms or at home.



Discussion

- Share an example of how you use positive reinforcement in the classroom to promote desired behavior.
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What is Mistaken Behavior?

- ▶ A new way to think about “***misbehavior***” is “***mistaken behavior***.” Just knowing about this concept is likely to make you feel a lot better about guiding a child through difficult situations. Everyone makes mistakes, and the important thing to do is learn from them. The concept of mistaken behavior provides a different perspective of children’s behavior. Children are at the beginning of a lifelong learning process and making mistakes is part of the process. Taking the perspective of mistaken behavior requires recognizing that children are learning how to interact and adapt to the world. Part of the early childhood teacher’s responsibility is to guide children’s learning and behavior.



Mistaken Behavior Chart


Just as children make mistakes in learning activities, they will make mistakes in interacting with other children, following rules, or making decisions; it is the teacher's role to guide the child in learning to choose acceptable behaviors and make thoughtful decisions. The concept of mistaken behavior is compatible with the emphasis of positive guidance methods that include problem solving, natural and logical consequences, and redirection.

Misbehavior

- Implies willful wrong doing for which a child must be disciplined or punished.
- Children can internalize the negative label of the behavior and will start to feel negative about themselves.

Mistaken behavior reminds us:

- Children are just at the beginning of a lifelong learning process. (in the process of learning we all make mistakes)



The following should act as guidance when working through mistaken behaviors:

- ***Assess why the problem behavior may be happening.*** If the child did not get a good night of sleep, is hungry, or is feeling sick, then these outside factors can influence their behavior temporarily. Communicating at drop-off with parents about these factors can help you make more informed decisions throughout the day.
- ***Consider the activity levels of children.*** A very active, high-energy child may need more activities that involve movement throughout their day in order to avoid problem behavior from boredom.
- ***Once you have identified the mistaken behavior and ruled out any outside factors, start to strategize about what you want to reinforce.*** If a child yells a lot, reinforce when they are having a nice, indoor voice. Decide what behavior you would like to see and reinforce it when it's observed.
- ***Heavily reinforce the desired behavior at first by using as many different types of reinforcement as necessary.*** Variety can prevent certain reinforcers from becoming ineffective or meaningless to the child.

As the child learns the desired behavior and the mistaken behavior tapers off, you can begin to reinforce less and less often.

Make sure to maintain the desired behavior by reinforcing occasionally.



Managing Mistaken Behavior

- ▶ Providing children with positive reinforcement does not have to be a complicated process and often just involves assessment and action. It is important to give children praise periodically for desired behavior, but there are instances when a particular behavior is repeatedly presented. Examples of this includes a child that has a hard time sharing, throws tantrums, does not raise their hand to speak during circle time, or another form of mistaken behavior. These are the instances when it is important to assess the situation and act accordingly.

Age Appropriate Child Guidance

- Below is a resource table from the American Academy of Family Physicians that offers suggested reference for age appropriate child guidance. Note: According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, positive reinforcement and redirecting guidance techniques can be applied for infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children.

Age-Appropriate Techniques for Childhood Discipline				
INTERVENTION	INFANT	TODDLER	SCHOOL-AGE	ADOLESCENT
Positive reinforcement	+	+	+	+
Redirecting	+	+	+	0
Verbal instruction/explanation	0	Ltd	+	+
Time-out	0	+	+	0
Establishment of rules	0	0	+	+
Grounding	0	0	+	+
Withholding privileges	0	0	+	+



Difference Between Reinforcement and Bribes


► Bribes

Reinforcing a desired behavior can often be misunderstood as bribing a child. Bribing is described as offering a reward before a behavior occurs. An example of this would be when a child asks for candy at the supermarket and his mother says “no, it will spoil your dinner”. If the child complains and then the mother replies, “Alright you can have the candy, but do you promise to eat your dinner later?” this would be considered a bribe.

► Positive Reinforcement

In order for a reward to be considered reinforcement it needs to occur after the behavior does, thereby reinforcing that behavior. An example of this would be when a child helps their younger sibling put toys away and the mom says, “You helped your brother clean up the yard. Thank you! That was very helpful.” In this instance, the reinforcement followed the behavior instead of rewarding it before it happens.

The problem with bribing is that the reward and behavior will happen too far apart, causing the child to miss the association between what they did correctly with receiving reinforcement. Another more serious downfall is that the child may be rewarded for something they have no intention of doing or refuse to do later on. This can actually increase the likelihood of future problem behavior and defiance.



Positive Reinforcement Scenarios

(Print - groups - discuss)

- Sarah is a very shy child in your classroom. She just stood up in front of the class and shared her favorite toy during show and tell. How would you respond using positive reinforcement to increase this behavior?
- Ryan is an active child and does not like to sit still during circle time. He tends to stand up in the middle of circle time and this distracts the other children. What positive reinforcement technique would you recommend to combat this behavior and how would you implement it?
- You see two children helping each other clean up the toys they were playing with. How would you use positive reinforcement to encourage this behavior in the future?
- Cooper is typically the child to run the opposite direction when it is time to line up to go back in the classroom. On Wednesday, he came over and lined up right away. What could you say using positive reinforcement to increase this behavior?



What is Redirection?

- The problem with bribing is that the reward and behavior will happen too far apart, causing the child to miss the association between what they did correctly with receiving reinforcement. Another more serious downfall is that the child may be rewarded for something they have no intention of doing or refuse to do later on. This can actually increase the likelihood of future problem behavior and defiance.
- Redirection is taking less desirable behaviors and emotions and trying to turn them into a positive situation. The goal is to redirect an upset child's attention onto something that is not upsetting to them in order to calm them down. Using redirection will avoid giving into what the child wants or rewarding undesirable behavior, and instead bring their attention to another activity or item. In order to successfully redirect it is important to use a game, activity, toy, or video that the child will find engaging and enjoy. Be sure to take into account each child's different interests when redirecting.



Redirection Examples

➤ *Example:*

Alex is building a garage with blocks for his cars and he is crying because he accidentally knocked over his blocks for the third time. Each time it fell over Alex became upset and tried building it again. He is getting more and more frustrated and angry. Alex's teacher recognizes that he is about to have a tantrum and quickly asks him what they could build that is flat and cars drive on. Alex's teacher successfully redirects him to building a road for his cars using the blocks flat on the floor.

Redirection works well when the new activity, game, or toy is similar to the one that caused the initial frustration. This way the child can learn a more productive way to interact with their environment and has the opportunity to still feel successful. Redirection can take many forms, and there are multiple ways to calm a child down when they are escalating. Other ways of calming a child include having them talk about their anger, teaching breathing techniques, or any other useful techniques you have pre-practiced in the classroom.



Discussion

- Share an example of how you use redirection with the children in your care.



Redirection Scenarios

(Print - groups – discuss)

- When lunch comes out, Gretchen runs over and puts her fingers in the bowls of food. What could you do or say to redirect her?
- Owen and Matthew are fighting over the red toy truck. How could you use redirection for this situation?
- Bailey is running around the classroom. What could you or say to redirect her?
- Clark gets upset when his mother drops him off in the morning. How could you use redirection for this situation?

References

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- 50 Calm-Down Techniques to Try with Kids, By Renee Jain, MAPP, <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/stress-better/2016/09/50-calm-down-techniques-to-try-withkids/>