



A reinforcer is something the child enjoys which will increase the likelihood that he / she will repeat a behaviour.

Types of reinforcers

Discuss with parents / caregivers and other people which reinforcers may be useful with the individual and which ones can be used in the particular child's setting.

Social i.e. smile, praise, attention

Sensory e.g. hug, touch, music, swing, particular toy, activity child likes

Edible i.e. food or drink (wherever possible, try 1 and 2 first)

Try to use a wide a range as possible.

When to give reinforcers

Initially when you are teaching a new skill give the reinforcer 100% of the time i.e. every time and immediately after the child attempts or performs the desired behaviour.

Once the behaviour / skill appears established **and** the child understands what the reinforcer is for **gradually** reduce e.g. give reinforcer every 2nd attempt.

The final aim is for random or intermittent reinforcement so that the child keeps performing the skill knowing that at some time he will be reinforced.

How to reinforce

Give the reinforcer immediately the behaviour occurs. Only use a small amount.

Always use social reinforcer e.g. praise, with any other type. The eventual aim is to maintain behaviour using only social reinforcement and to reduce and/or eliminate edible reinforcers, if these were needed.

Always say what you are rewarding e.g. "good sitting", "great looking" rather than "good boy" which tells the child very little about what the reward is for.