

# Positive Reinforcement

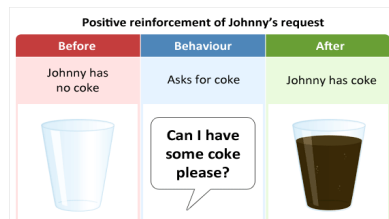
**WHAT IS IT?** If you engage in a certain behavior, and this behavior gets you something that you wanted, then you are more likely to engage in that same behavior again when you want the same outcome in the future. (<http://www.educateautism.com/behavioural-principles/positive-reinforcement.html>)

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Motivates individuals to keep them working.
- Builds confidence and helps individuals have a more pleasurable experience while avoiding the negative side effects such as frustration, anger, anxiety and depression.
- Is the most effective behavior management strategy in dealing with challenging behaviors and It can be used to learn new behaviors.

## WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

- Use Positive Reinforcement just after the behavior that you want to increase.
- Johnny's request for a drink of coke is positively reinforced by him being given some (coke is added). (<http://www.educateautism.com/behavioural-principles/positive-reinforcement.html>)



## HOW TO IMPLEMENT?

- Observe the individual (What do they like?), present them with a list of choices and ask what they would prefer to earn through good behavior.
- Be consistent when delivering reinforcement. Reinforce immediately—within 3 seconds—to make the strongest connection between the behavior and the reward.
- Make sure to reinforce improvement, not just perfection.
- Ensure that the reinforcement is contingent on the student's behavior alone; do not provide reinforcement because you feel sorry for him or her.
- Pair reinforcement with social reinforcement whenever possible. Provide verbal reinforcement to give the reward a social aspect or allow the child/student to pick another child/student to share in the reward activity. Keep social reinforcers sincere, clear, and unambiguous.
- Pick reinforcers that are age-appropriate. For example, using stickers to reinforce behavior in elementary students may be effective, but it may be insulting in high school.
- When satiation sets in (i.e., the reinforcer starts to lose its effectiveness), move from primary reinforcers (the original, high-value reward) to secondary reinforcers (new reinforcers more appropriate at this time) as soon as possible.