

Consequences to Behavior: Reinforcement vs Punishment



Reinforcement: Increases Behavior

When I do _____ (x behavior), I get something I like: attention/reactions, food, toys, time away from a task I don't like, time alone, etc.

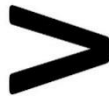


Punishment: Decreases Behavior

When I do _____ (x behavior), something I don't like happens: People stop paying attention to me, I have to do more work, the TV goes off, I don't get to play with my favorite toy, etc.

Reinforcement is more effective at changing behavior and maintaining that change *over time*. (Punishment may seem more effective in the moment, but if you want to see long term changes, focus on reinforcement.) *Note: challenging behavior will almost always get worse before it gets better. This is a good sign, it means you found the right function!

Reinforcement



Punishment



So, we always want to TEACH and REINFORCE positive behavior.

What can my child do to get what they want right now?

Function: My child wants...

Access to a toy, food, sensory input	PROMPTING: Help the child to appropriately request the desired item or activity (pointing to a choice, saying a word, handing an item over for help, making a gesture etc.). REINFORCE this new skill by immediately delivering the item.
Attention	MINIMIZE ATTENTION: Avoid talking to the child, talking about the behavior, or making eye contact/facial expressions while keeping everyone safe. Model appropriate behavior or an alternate way they can communicate for your attention (requesting a game, tapping you on the shoulder, etc.). REINFORCE by providing attention when they engage in appropriate behavior.
Escape: to get out of doing something or get away from a situation	RE-DIRECTION: Block efforts to escape and redirect back to task. Prompt completion of task and REINFORCE by providing praise and attention for participating or let them take a break/access preferred activity after the task is complete.