Token System - An Overview

Evidence-Based Practice Link	Token boards are an intervention that incorporate **reinforcement**, which is an evidence-based practice for autistic individuals. Reinforcement is defined as "application of consequence that happens after a skill or behavior occurs that increases the learner's use of the skill or behavior in future situation." (Steinbrenner et al., 112). Token boards are based on the principle of positive reinforcement, in which reinforcement is given to an individual or a small group to increase a desired behavior.
When to Use Token Systems	Ideal times to use token systems with autistic children, or other children with or without disabilities, could include, but are not limited to: • completing household chores; • hygiene tasks (using the potty, washing hands, etc.); • following instructions or house rules (staying in bed until a certain time); • transitions; or • behavioral expectations (staying in seat during mealtime).
Why Use Token Systems	• Increase child's comfort with a skill or behavior that may be new or may need to be generalized to a new setting • Increase motivation to demonstrate a skill or behavior that may be challenging • Increase fluency with a skill or behavior they already know
Critical Components of Token Systems	1. Choose and define one to three behavior expectations to focus on at a time. If a token system is a new concept for the child, one expectation is preferable. 2. Develop a list of items or activities that the child will want to work for. The items or activities must be desirable for the token board to work for the student. 3. Determine the number of tokens the child will need to earn to access the item or activity. 4. Provide tokens frequently and begin with a low number of tokens required when first using the token board. 5. Pair tokens with social praise. 6. Provide immediate access to the reinforcing item or activity when child fills the token board. 7. Tokens should never be removed from the token system for inappropriate behavior.

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Token Systems in Action	
Assembly Tips	1. Print and laminate the token board and tokens. 2. Cut out the laminated token symbols. 3. Place hard-sided Velcro on the individual squares within the token board. 4. Place soft-sided Velcro on the back of each of the individual tokens. 5. Consider adding a strip of Velcro or taping an envelope or Ziploc bag to the back of the token board to hold unused tokens. 6. Write the expectations and reinforcers on the token board with a dry erase or wet erase marker. 7. If not able to laminate, draw a token board on paper, making sure to include the behavior you want to see, number of tokens to earn, and what is being earned as a reinforcer.
TRIAD Resources to Learn More	*There are complexities when implementing token systems, depending on individual needs and behaviors chosen to reinforce. Consider watching modules from TRIAD's online learning platform listed below. • Six-part module series about reinforcement systems, available here • Module about the principle of reinforcement, available here • Five-part module series about reinforcement systems for classroom management, available here *Must create a free account to access

Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yücesoy-Özkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team.

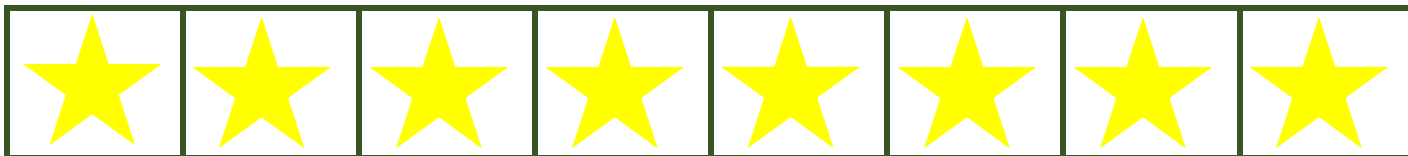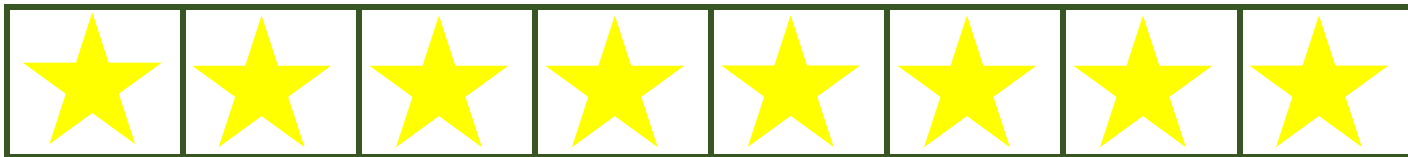https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/sites/ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/documents/EBP%20Report%202020.pdf

Token Board Option 1

Expectations	I am working for:

Token board to print, laminate, and have available for child

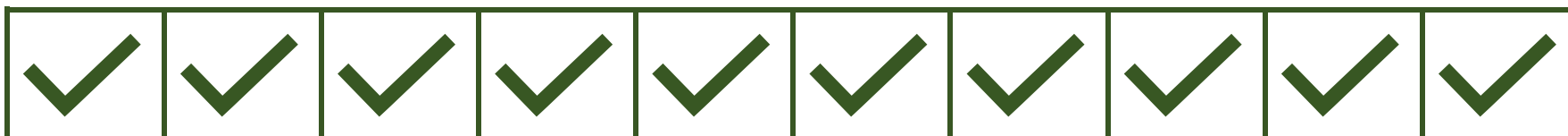Tokens to cut out, laminate, and put Velcro on

Token Board Option 2

Expectations	I am working for:
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	

Token board to print, laminate, and have available for child

Tokens to cut out, laminate, and put Velcro on

Token Board Option 3

I am working for:

Token board to print, laminate, and have available for child

Tokens to cut out, laminate, and put Velcro on

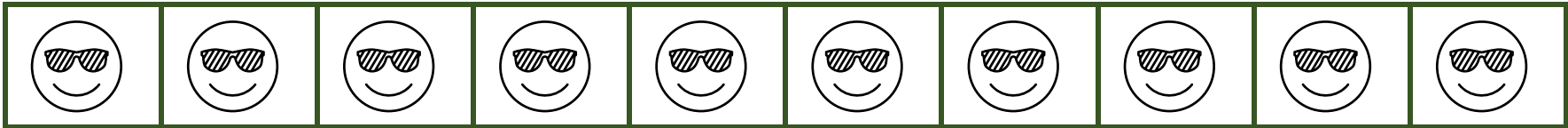Reinforcement choice options, laminate, and put Velcro on

| Break | iPad | Walk | Drawing | Toy time | Game | Video game time |