

## How to Design and Implement a Token Economy

### Designing the token economy as a team:

- Develop a few rules / behavior expectations (keep hands to self, listen to teacher, etc.)
- Have appropriate visual supports for these rules / expectations
- At what point will you want to withdraw the token economy?
- Choose tokens that are appropriate to the child's interest, age, level of understanding
- Develop a list of items/activities that the child will have access to in exchange for a predetermined number of tokens. Begin with just a few options and have visual supports representing the child's choices.
- Train the team on when to give tokens and how often, what are available reinforcers, etc.
- Require team to pair delivery of tokens with specific behavioral praise – remember to praise for the rules/behavior expectations you have developed
- Decide how the team will respond if the child does not earn the required number of tokens

### Teaching the token economy:

- It is very important that the child is easily successful at earning the tokens necessary to receive access to a preferred reinforcer
- Provide tokens frequently and begin with a low number of required tokens for reinforcement
- Initially, the child should be allowed to choose his/her reinforcer and receive access to the reinforcer immediately following earning appropriate number of tokens
- As the child becomes more successful, access to the reinforcer can and should begin to be delayed.
- As the child is earning more and more tokens based on appropriate behavior, slowly increase the number of tokens the child is required to earn prior to receiving reinforcement.
- Add more items/activities to the list of reinforcement choices.
- Tokens should never be removed from the child's system for inappropriate behavior.
- Test the token economy system before it is fully implemented and be prepared to modify.

### Fading and withdrawing a token economy:

- Gradually increase the number tokens required to earn reinforcement choices
- Gradually increase the amount of time between receiving tokens
- Gradually decrease the amount of time that the token economy is in effect (all day to partial day, etc)
- Begin to remove items from the list of reinforcers that may not be found or available in a wide range of settings (i.e., that special computer game)
- Fade out the physical evidence of the tokens

