

General Behavior Strategy Recommendations From the HBIC Behavior Team

Premack Principle: A **low probability behavior** is followed by a **high probability behavior**. This is also known as a **First/Then statement**. Student must **FIRST** complete the non-preferred task or activity **THEN** they get access to a highly preferred item or activity.

Examples:

- **FIRST** finish making your bed, **THEN** you can have a snack
- **FIRST** read, **THEN** iPad
- **FIRST** clean up, **THEN** you can have a cookie

Forced Choice: Presenting the student with multiple options where one of the options is a **highly preferred** and the other options are **non-preferred**, so that the student will chose (or is forced to choose) the **highly preferred** option. This is done to encourage the student to still make a choice, even under frustrating circumstances.

Examples:

- Presenting the student with the option of using playdoh or a pencil as a coping strategy, with the knowledge that the student will choose playdoh because a pencil is ineffective or is never utilized as a coping strategy.

How/When do I offer choices?:

How?: Offer choices by presenting multiple tangible options or by using PECs or a static board/communication device. For coping strategies or breaks, provide the chosen item or activity **immediately** after student makes a choice. For reinforcers, provide the chosen item or activity **only after** student earns enough “tokens” to “cash out” for item or activity. The student also can change their reinforcer whenever they chose to do so. **You cannot take a token away once it has been earned.**

When?: Offer choices throughout the day and whenever an opportunity presents itself. This allows the student to practice many important skills and gives the student a sense of autonomy. They are practicing their communication skills when they make a choice and, by making their preference known, they are more likely to engage in an activity since the reinforcer is highly rewarding.

When a student is engaging in behaviors during a non-preferred task, prompt student to take a break or provide multiple tangible sensory options.

Examples:

- If a student is exhibiting self-injurious behavior during a non-preferred task, provide the student with the choice of sensory options.

- Before the student begins working, provide multiple options of reinforcers to choose from in order to establish motivation.

Priming: Priming helps prepare a student for an upcoming activity or event. It is when you introduce an activity and the materials **before** you engage in the activity. Priming is meant to familiarize a student with the material so they are comfortable with it and more ready to learn. Priming is not meant to teach but instead is meant to get the student to become more familiarized with the material.

Example:

- If a student does not like to read and you are about to do a reading activity, you can **prime** the student by showing the student the book and saying “this is what we will be reading today, let’s look through the pictures first.” Then you would go through the book without reading, just looking at the pictures. This is to familiarize the student with the task of reading and the book itself.

Establish Motivation Using the Token Board: A token board shows the student’s progress toward a reinforcer with tokens earned for behavioral or academic tasks. It is important to establish motivation **before** engaging in a task and that the reinforcer is motivating enough to keep the student engaged without immediate reinforcement.

When giving a student a token for completing a target task, provide **behavior specific praise** (e.g., I like how you sat at your desk). **Behavior specific praise** is a positive statement intended to reinforce a desired behavior of a student that specifically describes the student’s behavior and incorporates a term of praise.

Once token board is filled up, give the student their chosen reinforcer and reset token board.

There is no set criteria or speed you need “cash out” a student and it is entirely depended on the students current level of development or behavior.

Timers: Visual timers are used in a variety of different situations. They give the student a visual of how much time they have remaining on a certain activity or with a certain item, which may help the student stay on task. They can make transitions easier by giving the student time to prepare for a move to a different environment. They can be used to show how much time a student needs to wait for the next activity, such as lunch. There are many situations where the use of a timer is beneficial.

If the timer goes off and the student is not ready to transition to the next task or activity, the student may ask for “more time,” verbally or through verbal approximations, gestures, use of static board, or communication device. Utilize a 5 minute – 3 minute – 1 minute strategy, so that

they get 5 minutes at first, then 3 minutes if they ask for more time, and finally 1 minute if they ask for more time again.