



LOOK Strategies for Families: Reinforcing Behaviors you Want to See

① WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Reinforcing behaviors you want to see involves giving your child something they like or want (**a reinforcer**). This happens *after* they show the behavior you want to see. You can follow your child's action with attention, praise, or another type of reward. This shows that you noticed and liked what they did.

- ◆ **Reinforcers** are based on your child's *likes*. They are *different* for each child.
- ◆ **Examples include** praise, a hug, a smile, attention, thumbs up, a pat on the back, high fives, extra time with you, treats such as helping to cook dinner, visiting a special park, reading an extra book before bed, choosing a song to play in the car, or an item like stickers, stamps, or small toys.

Reinforcing a behavior makes it more likely your child will do it again. This is true for all types of behaviors. Sometimes, we pay more attention to behaviors we don't like. This can accidentally *reinforce* them! For example, we may respond when a child throws toys, but not when they play gently. If the child wants our attention in the future, they are more likely to throw toys. If we notice and give praise when the child is being gentle, this behavior is more likely to happen again.



HOW TO AND TIPS:

Plan for reinforcing behavior:

- ☑ Decide which behaviors you want to happen more.
- ☑ Think about what your child enjoys. Use this information to choose reinforcers.

While reinforcing behavior:

- ☑ Give reinforcement *right after* a behavior. This will help your child make the connection between the behavior and what happens next.
- ☑ Praise should describe the behavior ("Great job picking up your toys," instead of, "Great job.").
- ☑ Your attention is powerful! Think of your attention as a spotlight. Shine your attention on the behaviors you want to increase.
- ☑ Remind yourself to use reinforcement throughout the day. You could put a post-it on the refrigerator or playroom wall.



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Reinforcing Behaviors You Want to See at Home

- ◆ Offer praise when you notice that your child did what you asked them to do. For example, "You brushed your teeth as soon as I asked you to. Why don't you choose if you want an extra book or song before bed tonight!"
- ◆ Point out behaviors that you would like to see more of. For example, if siblings are playing together cooperatively, say, "I really like how you two are sharing the blocks and working together to build!"



LOOK at you: You are the expert on your child. We'd love to hear from you! What behaviors do you want to reinforce at home? What types or reinforcers do you think work well for your child? Let us know what works for your family!