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White Paper on Success with Reading, Math and Study Skills

Effective Rewards and Punishments

“Catch kids doing the right thing
and reward immediately.”

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I'm reminded that the smile and positive recognition a kid gets from me might be the only really good thing that happens to that child all day.

What most people want is to be allowed to tell their story without being interrupted or asked helpful questions.

SUMMARY: Kids (perhaps all people) do what they want to do. If they don't *wanna*, they ain't *gonna*. This is why it's so effective to catch them and recognize them for doing the right thing.

What do kids really want? They want to get stuff for free and they want to be recognized socially by peers and adults.

The greatest reward, used extensively to flood kids with success, is the direct experience of success. Put another way, “Achievement appears to be the greatest reward of all.”

EFFECTIVE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

Here is a gigantic clue about behavior: Effective rewards and punishment *increase the behavior you “do want” and decrease the behavior you “don’t want.”*

Examples of “punishment” that change behavior for the better are virtually non-existent. Especially punishment that's dead-end. That is, not allowing a kid to earn his/her way

back in. "Take-aways" are principal ways of locking kids out of success. Here's what I say, "Take away the Take Aways."

The fact is, "punishment" is a very slippery slope that I avoid. Whenever I feel like "punishing" a kid (my own children for instance) I know I'm about to reinforce behavior I don't want. Let's forget punishment for a minute and focus on rewards. They have a far greater payoff.

GREAT REWARDS GET KIDS WHAT THEY WANT - they provide kids with more free time, more freedom to choose, and more resources to pursue what they want to pursue. Smiles and thumbs-up are two of the best rewards because they provide "recognition." (Never use candy - they're already getting enough refined carbohydrates and white sugar.) Achievement is probably the greatest

We have very little idea about what's going on in the lives of kids, but all we have to do is look around and we can easily see too many who are suffering from poor reading, math and study-skills...

Effective rewards increase the behavior we want. Achievement/Success is probably the greatest motivator available. Learning how to flood kids with achievement and success is a great teaching art.

*It's possible that the smile a kid gets from you
is all they're going to get all day.*

Effective rewards are small and immediate. Achievement and Success are two of the greatest rewards. Social recognition is one of the greatest of them all.

A simple smile, eye contact, a thumbs up, a touch on the shoulder, a high-five, a kind word, are examples of effective, quick, simple rewards.

The best rewards are tied **to specific behaviors** and are immediate:

| Don't Note General Behavior | Do Note Specific Behavior |
|------------------------------------|--|
| "Good job." | "Good job speaking in a quiet voice." |
| "Good job speaking." | "Good job speaking in a quiet voice." |
| "Good job starting." | "Good job starting on time." |
| "Good job." | "Good job staying on task." |
| "Good question." | "Good job writing down your question." |

Should the classroom ever become too chaotic or disruptive it's the responsibility of the teacher to calm the group. Stop and return to the beginning, ["Voices off. Eyes on me."](#) Once mastered, you will no longer say a word.

To single out a disruptive student simply point and beckon for the student to join you at your side. Do not say a word. Have the student stand next to you for 15 seconds as you proceed with the lesson and then point for the student to sit back down.

A parallel strategy is to simply write the student's name on the board; second disruption put a check; third disruption pick up the telephone (cell phone) immediately and call mom or dad. Explain that Little Billy is choosing to be disruptive and that they must come take charge immediately. I believe one of the greatest mistakes school teachers and administrators make is to accept the role of police, judge and jury.

Tell the parent that you will be glad to have the child back in class just as soon as all of you have met for a conference. Then it's your job to gain cooperation before additional instruction begins. [Cooperation begins with reading, math and study-skill success.](#)

Get kids on earning contracts. Prepare parents and students for this type of call by sending a letter home to all parents describing your teaching standards. Should parents not agree with your standards explain that the choice is up to them, but since this is your classroom you shall conduct it in the manner you see best. The child is welcomed back to the class just as soon as he/she chooses to cooperate with the classroom. Failure to chose this fundamental behavior flags immediate intervention by a thorough *Positive Discipline* Program including all teachers.

It's very important that kids and parents are made aware of your new classroom standards. They are all too rare and parents and students often have no clear idea what they are. Rules often vary enormously from classroom to classroom, home to home, and moment to moment. Writing down a few rules where everyone can see them reduces a lot of stress.

As parents and teachers, you make it clear, "Your disruption is no longer allowed." [Replace all student and child management with positive discipline for much happier classrooms and families.](#)

Note: Except for "Positive Referrals," don't send kids to the front office. Since teachers experience the problem, teachers must solve the problem in all but the most extreme cases.

Make it very clear, "I am no longer going to warn and warn and warn without following through. You are welcomed when you start on time, stay on task and complete your assignments. When you choose to ignore the rules you are choosing to no longer be part of my class. Thank you." The days of allowing poor behavior to create chaos are over.

Thanks for all you do to flood kids with reading, math and study-skill success. Let me know how I can help,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory', with a stylized, flowing script.

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P.S. Flood kids with reading, math and study-skill success.

This White Paper is one in a series of field-tested skills, tools and solutions that flood parents, teachers and kids with reading, math and study-skill success. Additional skills, tools and solutions are available through [The Brainsarefun White Paper Index](#). Please feel free to distribute them for non-commercial use. Your kids really can succeed with reading, math and study-skills. Thanks.