

# Contracting for Success

A contract is a negotiated mutual agreement between two or more individuals. It is an exchange with a goal of progress, not perfection. It is not the imposition of an expectation of the adult upon the student.

Below are hints to use when setting up a contract with a student.

**Be positive** – Rather than saying “No Talking”, say “Talk only with permission.”

**Be specific** – Leave no doubt about your intent. Rather than “Be on time” say “Be in your seat when the bell rings.”

**Build on incentives** – Find something that you can offer which inspires the student to want to complete the contract.

**Establish a time frame** – Be sure that the end is indicated. It should reflect the developmental level of the student (e.g. elementary up to one week, middle school up to two weeks, high school up to one month) and any disability related variables.

**Be sure the desired result is something the student values and sees as helpful** - Be sure s/he understands how performing the behavior will be an improvement.

**Monitor the progress** – Keep the student informed of any progress, and better yet teach self-monitoring strategy. If a failure pattern appears, consider renegotiating the contract.

**Keep it as simple as possible** – Be sure the terms are clear and understandable. Use vocabulary that is appropriate for the student’s reading level.

**Be sure to inform others who should or would want to know** – Parents, other school or agency staff and administrators.

**Remember to celebrate with the student when the contract is completed successfully.**