

# **PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE**

**1. REINFORCEMENT FOLLOWS THE BEHAVIOR AND IS CONTINGENT ON IT.**

Performance produces the reinforcement.

**2. SEEK AND REINFORCE POSITIVE OR APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR, AND IF POSSIBLE, IGNORE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS.**

Much of student behavior (appropriate and inappropriate) is reinforced by the attention received from others.

**3. REINFORCEMENT SHOULD BE IMMEDIATE.**

Immediate reinforcement has the greatest strengthening effect on behavior. If the reinforcer is delayed, it will probably influence some behavior other than the one specified.

**4. REINFORCEMENT SHOULD BE CONTINGENT ON ACCOMPLISHMENT RATHER THAN OBEDIENCE.**

Wording is very important. When you reinforce accomplishment, you help the student to build independence. Rewards for obedience lead to continued dependence.

**5. REINFORCE SMALL APPROXIMATIONS TO THE GOAL.**

Make initial requirements easy to achieve-not too difficult, too long, too precise, or too complex. Establish early success. Then increase requirements until the ultimate goal is reached.

**6. REINFORCE FREQUENTLY WITH SMALL AMOUNTS.**

Small, but frequent reinforcements are more effective than a few big ones. This is especially true in the early stages of learning any new skill or behavior pattern.

**7. START WITH THE ACT CLOSEST TO THE REINFORCER TO BUILD A CHAIN OF CONNECTED BEHAVIORS.**

This means start with the last act of the chain and build by adding elements backward which are increasingly further from the reinforcement.

**8. BE CONSISTENT.**

Follow through every time with the plan you develop.

**9. MONITOR PERFORMANCE, EVALUATE AND ADJUST PLANS.**

Keep a chart of the behavior change and share it with the student. Change the plan when a goal is achieved or when the current plan is clearly not working satisfactorily.

**10. BE PATIENT.**