

## **CONTINGENCY CONTRACTS TO REDUCE DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS**

**Develop the contract through mutual negotiation between you (the teacher) and the student.**

**Determine who else will be responsible for the development and implementation of the contract.** Possible people to include besides the teacher and student(s) are: school counselors, school psychologists, support teachers, “specials” teachers, and parents.

**Select a behavior** that is easily identified and serves to be functionally and socially important to the students and the classroom atmosphere.

**When writing the contracts remember to maintain their clarity, honesty, fairness, and positive nature.**

**Identify the rewards associated with successful completion and include them in the contract.** Rewards should be easily obtainable and at no cost to the teacher. Allow students to participate in the selection of their own rewards to ensure that rewards are something of value to the student. A reward will not work if the student does not perceive it as a positive outcome. Be sure to consider the student’s interests and preferences.

**Decide how much, how often, and by whom rewards will be given.** Be specific in identifying necessary criteria to obtain a reward. Remember to reward for small approximations when beginning a contingency contract.

**Include any mild punishment** (e.g., loss of a privilege, time-out, etc.) **that may apply as a consequence of inappropriate behavior.** Be specific about the behavior and consequences.

**Establish timelines for the contracts.** Remember that because each student is different and works on a different personalized goal, each student will work on his/her own timeline.

**Finally, have all involved sign the contracts and be sure that each person receives a copy of the contracts for his/her own use and monitoring of progress.** When appropriate, be sure to involve the student’s parents.

**Maintain participant accountability by establishing a record keeping system for the contracts.** One suggestion for doing this is to place a checklist inside of each student’s folder, with a space available to denote points earned. The teacher or aide can award points as they are merited, initialing the checklist for verification.

**Rewards should be distributed immediately when possible.** When employing contingency contracts with an entire class, another helpful method of reward distribution is to set aside a specific time each day to distribute rewards to all students who have earned them. This provides an additional incentive for the students to fulfill their individual contracts by having a peer group working for similar rewards.

**Remember to pair teacher praise and attention with the distribution of the rewards, as well as explaining the reason for the token when it is given.** This will increase the student's association of the behavior with positive outcomes, as well as decrease the likelihood of confusion about why a reward is or is not received.

**Emphasizing that one goal of the contract is for the student to attain responsibility for his or her own behavior stresses the *student's* benefits from the contract.**

**Implement the contract and monitor, review, and revise it as needed.** As the contract is successfully completed, remember to develop new contracts and maintain the consistency and systematic implementation of contracts in the classroom throughout the year.

**Allow for re-negotiation of the contract,** especially after the review of data.

**When the duration of the contract has come to an end, withdraw the contingency in a systematic and gradual manner,** if the desired outcome has been achieved, and the student's conduct is stable.

### **Additional Resources:**

Cavalier, A.R. & Bear, G.G. (in press). Behavior replacement techniques for correcting misbehavior. In G.G. Bear, Developing self-discipline and preventing and correcting misbehavior. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Jackson, L. (2002). *Positive behavioral support in the classroom*. Baltimore, MD: P.H. Brookes.

Kerr, M. (2002). *Strategies for addressing behavior problems in the classroom*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

[www.med.ufl.edu/mdtp/resources/contingencycontracts.htm](http://www.med.ufl.edu/mdtp/resources/contingencycontracts.htm): Contingency Contracts.  
[www.slc.sevier.org/behavmgt.htm](http://www.slc.sevier.org/behavmgt.htm): Behavior Management.

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