

## Topic Summary:

Reinforcement is essential when using Positive Behavioral Supports in a classroom or school. It is a phrase that sometimes evokes powerful reactions from school personnel. The thought of “rewarding” someone that is causing trouble or underperforming often creates a negative reaction from the adults in the environment. Educators must think of reinforcement as a stimulus that “strengthens” or builds up the probability of the desired response occurring and not as a reward for undesired behaviors. Identifying a desired behavior and strengthening the chances of it reoccurring is the foundation of good education practice. This summary focuses on two types of reinforcements, **positive** and **negative** reinforcers. Positive reinforcers add something to the environment in order to strengthen the likelihood of getting the desired response. Negative reinforcers take away something “negative” in order to increase the occurrence of a desired response. Negative reinforcers don't take away something positive/desired as a punishment. Both of these types of reinforcers are positive in design; they are never intended as punishments.

## Implementation Checklist:

1. Have student complete a reinforce survey to identify items that would increase the likelihood that they will attend to or complete required task.
2. Introduce the concept of working for a goal (reinforcer).
3. Make sure the goal is easily obtainable at first. High rate of reinforcement initially.
4. Be sure to reward immediately after required task is complete. Rewards that are delayed are not effective especially early on.

## Resources:

Behavior Assessment Guide (1993), IABA, Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Preference & Reinforcer Assessment – Autism & Special Education by Touch Autism –iTunes