

## Token Economies



In a token system, conditioned reinforcers called *tokens* can be earned for certain behaviors, accumulated, and exchanged for back-up reinforcers.

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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 1. Select the behaviors to be rewarded. The behaviors to be reinforced should be in concert with classroom rules and guidelines.
- ◆ 2. State the desired behaviors in specific and observable terms. Phrase them in a positive manner. Be sure to tell the student what to do, rather than what not to do (e.g., "Raise hand before talking" rather than "No speaking out").

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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 3. Decide how you will measure the behaviors (e.g., percentage correct, number of minutes engaged in proper behavior, number of times student displays appropriate behavior).
- ◆ 4. Decide where to monitor the behaviors (e.g., only in the classroom or also in the lunchroom and on the bus).

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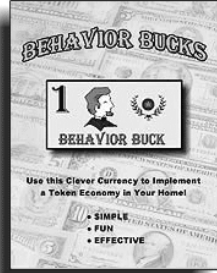
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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 5. Select the initial reinforcer. Use a reinforcer that is easy to administer and convenient to store. Devise a token/item/marking that will inhibit theft or counterfeiting.



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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 5. Consider the token's recipient.
- ◆ For young children and developmentally disabled, be sure it doesn't pose a choking hazard.

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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 5. Some tokens also provide a pictorial cue of the desired behavior.



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### How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 6. Select your back-up reinforcers. Involve your students in the selection to insure that the reinforcers will be perceived as being valuable. (For instance, have the students list things that they would work to obtain, or complete one of the many published reinforcement inventories, or set out possible reinforcers and observe which ones are selected most often.)
- ◆ Be sure that the reinforcers are appropriate.
- ◆ Consider educational value, cost, possible misuse, or danger involved.

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### How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 7. Place a price (in tokens) on your back-up reinforcers.
- ◆ Record the actual price of any purchased items.
- ◆ Higher priced items will demand more tokens.
- ◆ Place a value on back-up reinforcers (the rewards) that are activity-oriented such as free time, listening to music, or painting.
- ◆ Develop a wall chart that lists the number of tokens needed to purchase each back-up reinforcer.

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### How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 8. Place a value on the tokens.
- ◆ To keep students motivated, earning tokens will need to be challenging, but not frustrating.
- ◆ Therefore, give the tokens a value that is worth more now than in the future.
- ◆ As students begin to function more appropriately, tokens will have to be devalued to motivate the kids to improve continually.

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## How to Use Token Economies

- 8. Next, develop a wall chart that lists the number of tokens to be given for each desired behavior, and decide whether inappropriate behavior will result only in a withholding of tokens or whether you will place a fine and take away tokens for that misconduct.
- If the latter is the case, make a wall chart that indicates the amount to be fined for each misbehavior.

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## How to Use Token Economies

- 9. Finalize the details by developing your own monitoring sheet to keep track of awards and fines, and deciding how often and when tokens can be exchanged for back-up reinforcers (e.g., at the end of each day, at the end of each week).



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## How to Use Token Economies

- 9. Develop storage containers and procedures for yourself and the students and devise a method for displaying the back-up reinforcers.

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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 10. Start your program.
- ◆ Use behavior contracting to commit students to the program.



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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 10. Have the materials ready to show to students as you explain the program in language that they can understand.
- ◆ Make your presentation very positive and upbeat.
- ◆ Post the wall charts and review them periodically.
- ◆ Implement the program, providing the tokens as soon as they are earned.
- ◆ Add to your back-up reinforcer menu as necessary.

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## How to Use Token Economies

- ◆ 11. Periodically modify your system to wean your students from the token economy.
- ◆ This change usually involves requiring more positive behavior for a longer period of time in order to obtain a check mark or token.

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