# 3. Encouraging Expected Behaviour

## Definition

A continuum or menu of techniques to acknowledge, encourage and reinforce.

Specific positive feedback is the process of recognising when students demonstrate the expected behaviour.

## Rationale

### Feedback:

* has been supported as among one of the most empirically sound teacher competencies (Moore et al., 2019).
* promotes learning and supports engagement and motivation
* helps students to know what they are doing well, establish next learning steps, and select techniques that will help them to solve problems and achieve goals
* helps build quality teacher-student relationships.

## Guidelines

* Use preferred adult behaviours to strengthen and maintain teacher-student relationships.
* Use specific positive feedback:
* Contingent on expected behaviour
* Immediate
* Frequently to build behaviour
* Intermittently to maintain behaviour
* Ratio of at least 4:1 positive to corrective feedback.
* Connect classroom system to the school-wide system.
* Use free and frequent, Intermittent, and long-term occasional recognition.
* Identify collective goals for group reinforcers.
* Everyone is included in group celebrations.
* Once earned, reinforcers are not taken away.
* Start small and refine your system as you collect data.
* Develop a classroom reinforcement system to build relatedness, competence and autonomy.

## Getting started

### Step 1:

#### Teach behaviour expectations and routines

Teach the behaviour expectations and routines and provide time for all students to understand and practise the necessary skills.

### Step 2:

#### Preventative prompts/pre-correction

Remind students of the expected behaviour to increase the probability they will demonstrate the skills.

### Step 3:

#### Non-contingent positive attention

### Step 4:

#### Preferred adult behaviours

Strengthen quality teacher-student relationships by communicating privately, listening, using eye contact, pleasant voice tone, smiles and appropriate professional touch.

### Step 5:

#### Specific positive feedback

Provide contingent attention through specific positive feedback when students demonstrate the expected behaviour.

### Step 6:

#### Consider implementing a classroom acknowledgment system

Develop a class wide system with a menu/continuum of reinforcers that includes social attention, activities and tangible items.

## Examples

### Examples of frequent, intermittent and occasional reinforcers:

#### Frequent

* Specific positive feedback
* Ticket/tangible item

Positive notes home

#### Intermittent

* Positive phone calls home
* Post cards home
* Special privileges

Extra time doing a preferred activity.

#### Occasional

* Special projects
* Recognition from the principal

Student of the week.

## Attention types

**There are two types of adult attention**

* Non-contingent attention – provided regardless of performance and includes greetings, proximity, smiles, and conversations.
* Contingent attention – provided based on student performance of an identified expectation or behaviour. The most common example of this is providing specific positive feedback.

## Trauma lens

* Students who have experienced trauma may need a higher ratio (9:1) of positive to corrective feedback. (Caldarella et al., 2023)
* This can help counterbalance the negative interactions and experiences students may have had.

**Footnotes:**

Caldarella, P., Larsen, R. A., Williams, L., & Wills, H. P. (2023). Effects of middle school teachers’ praise-to-reprimand ratios on students’ classroom behavior. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 25(1), 28-40.

Moore, T. C., Maggin, D. M., Thompson, K. M., Gordon, J. R., Daniels, S., & Lang, L. E. (2019). Evidence review for teacher praise to improve students’ classroom behavior. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 21(1), 3-18.

Scott, Terrance M.; Hirn, Regina; Cooper, Justin, 2017. Teacher and Student Behaviors (p. 80). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

“The purpose of providing students with positive feedback after behaviour is to make it more likely that they’ll do it again.”

Scott, Hirn & Cooper, 2017