



A SAMPLE LEVELS PROGRAM

This program is designed for students for whom the normal classroom token economy is not sufficiently effective in controlling inappropriate behavior. In these cases, for a period of time (usually a week or two), they are placed in a more controlling system that regulates access to the classroom. The rationale is that the classroom is where all positive activities take place and inappropriate behavior on the part of the student, loses for them the privilege of being in the classroom. This privilege must be "earned back" by the student.

First identify the target behaviors that significantly interfere with learning:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The student works on a level system in class that gives him/her more privilege as s/he becomes a more responsible student. ANY occurrence of the above behaviors "sends" the student to Level III, regardless of the level s/he is on. In order to get to Level I the student must go through Level II. Therefore if s/he is on Level III, s/he then goes to Level II before Level I. The time s/he spends in Levels III and II is decided in advance based on the child's perceived ability to work in a sustained fashion when truly motivated to work. We have historically used two hours for fifth and sixth graders but have used as little as 15 minutes for some students with significant special needs.

Location, Location, Location:

Level III: In the out-of-classroom time-out area

Level II: In the in-classroom time-out area or outside of the classroom (e.g., in the hallway) with restricted privileges

Level I: In the classroom, with all normal privileges

LEVEL III:

- student does his regular assignments by himself; if s/he has a question, s/he must raise his hand without talking or turning around. When regular assignments are completed, s/he is to do dictionary or reference work.
- gets ten minutes for lunch, then does dictionary or reference work for the rest of lunch period.
- any violation of these rules or refusal to work adds minutes to time on Level III.
- for any violation of the target behaviors listed above, the clock starts over for two hours. This carries over to the next day. This time limit is decided on in advance and can be adjusted to fit the developmental level of the child. It is meant to be onerous but not impossible to reach.

STAFF MUST NOT TALK TO OR INTERACT WITH THE STUDENT EXCEPT TO GIVE BRIEF INSTRUCTIONS.

LEVEL II:

- does his regular assignments by himself - no group academic activities.
- when assignments are finished, student may do an independent (alone) activity of his choice for free time.
- gets 15 minutes of lunch time with the kids, then must return to time out area in class.

STAFF DO NOT APPROACH THE STUDENT OR TALK UNLESS THEY ARE ASSIGNED FOR THAT SUBJECT

LEVEL I:

- does his regular assignments with rewards of class available,
- free time with class available
- regular lunch privileges
- all rights and privileges of a typical student

For a levels program to work it is vital to keep it going for several days. We recommend no less than two weeks. The point of a levels program is to generate self-control on the part of the child. It is fundamentally a learning process and therefore it will not work until the child has been Asent back@ to Level 3 numerous times. Do not be discouraged if this happens, it is a necessary part of the learning process.

Levels programs are intensive and require both staff and space. For this reason many schools and programs do not consider them as feasible. However one should consider the amount of time and energy that is already being devoted to managing (ineffectively) the child=s behavior. Ineffective behavior management takes time and effort as well and often it is more economical to concentrate one=s resources within a small time-frame so as to be able to get control over the behavior(s). In the long-run this approach saves time and resources for all. Most of all, however, the child=s life is enhanced because he or she is now learning and taking advantage of their education.