

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)

Recess Incentive Program

Goal

By continuously moving around the playground, noticing, and acknowledging the positive behaviors of children, children are given the message that the specific ways they interact with others are important and that their behavior matters to their peers and to adults. Target outcomes are an increase in positive behaviors and a decrease in negative behaviors by all children in the classroom.

Principles

Keep it simple

Coordinate efforts

Pay attention to all behaviors of all children

Celebrate the positive

Provide consequences for the negative

Component Overview

Positive Behavior. Children earn armbands for displaying positive behaviors. If the children in a class fill their class jar full of armbands, all children receive a reward.

Negative Behavior. Children are assigned to small groups. Groups lose points when group members display negative behaviors. Groups that retain points receive rewards.

Materials

For each classroom

Poster listing playground rules (on front wall)

Jar for collecting classroom armbands (stored at front of room)

Progress chart for tracking group points (on front wall)

Nametags and stickers

Prizes (plastic animals, bracelets, snacks, coupons for extra recess, etc.)

By access doors to playground

Poster listing playground rules

For each Playground Supervisor

Whistle

Fanny pack

Radio

Nylon armbands (at least 2 armbands per each child present at recess)

Point Sheet for each classroom listing students by groups

Clipboard

Pencil

Playground Supervisors

Playground Supervisors are central to the delivery of the intervention. Supervisors are typically teachers, educational aides or parent volunteers who are trained and supervised. During each recess period, most Supervisors distribute armbands and track negative behaviors. However, one Supervisor is designated to deal with negative behaviors that require a response (e.g., provide a time out, escort a child to the principal's office, write up an incident report). After recess is over, one Supervisor is designated as the Point Sheet scorer for the period.

Procedures

Positive Behaviors. Supervisors continuously move throughout the entire playground and observe child behavior. When a child is observed engaging in positive behavior, Supervisors engage the child, identify the positive behavior, verbally encourage the behavior, and then present him or her with an armband.

Positive behaviors include, but are not limited to:

Following directions

Following the rules of a game

Playing properly on playground equipment

Staying within designated boundaries on the playground

Following any other school rules

Playing nicely with peers

Encouraging peers

Sharing with peers

Lining up quietly

The positive behaviors of most interest to Supervisors change from day to day, depending on the content of the most recent LIFT lesson.

Supervisors should be as specific, but as brief, as possible when identifying the positive behavior, for example:

“Jamie, thanks for waiting patiently for your turn. Good job!”

“Aaron, good following the rules. You really know basketball.”

“Jessie, when Jacob grabbed the ball from you, you showed how you can stay calm even in tough situations. Way to go”

To observe and encourage abundant examples of positive behavior throughout the entire class of students, staff must quickly move around the playground, pay close attention to child behaviors, and distribute armbands when appropriate. Thus, conversations between Supervisors or between Supervisors and children must be brief. Supervisors should strive to distribute as many armbands as possible during a recess period.

When children return to their classrooms after recess, they place the armbands they earned into the classroom jar. When the jar is full, all children in the class receive a predetermined reward. This may be a group reward, such as an extra recess, or individual rewards, such as a chance to choose something from a prize jar or from a class store.

Negative Behavior. Each child is assigned to a group of four to five children and each group is given a simple name (e.g., the Bears, the Ducks, the Lions). Each group is given a set number of points at the beginning of each recess (e.g., 20), and told that at least a certain number of those points (e.g., 14) must remain at the end of recess for their team to succeed. The number of points required to succeed increases as children move through the LIFT program (e.g., first 14, then 15, then 16). While Supervisors are moving around the playground and attending to positive behaviors, they are also noting negative behaviors. A group loses one point for each negative behavior displayed by a group member. Point loss is tracked on a classroom Point Sheet.

Negative behaviors include, but are not limited to:

Not following directions

Teasing

Arguing, Name calling

Leaving the boundary area (including entering the building)

Not including someone

Fighting

Not using equipment properly

Not lining up

If enough group points remain at the end of recess, all children in the group receive an individual sticker, and the group gets a sticker on their progress chart. When a group receives enough stickers to reach a predetermined goal, the group receives a predetermined reward.

Based on school rules, a negative behavior (e.g., kick, hit, punch) that requires a consequence is responded to appropriately by the Supervisor who is not engaged in distributing armbands.

After recess, a designated Supervisor collects all Point Sheets, scores each group, and then informs the LIFT instructor about the results.

Other Details

At the Beginning of the Program and Periodically

The LIFT instructor brainstorms possible rewards with children during a class meeting. Rewards are decided upon and posted.

At the Beginning of the Day

The teacher reminds students of the Recess Incentive Program, playground rules, and any behaviors of particular interest for the day. The teacher should strive to get children interested in and excited about the program.

After Each Recess

Supervisors turn in their Point Sheets to a designated person, who scores each group, and lets each teacher know which groups receive daily rewards. Children return to their classrooms and put their armbands in the classroom jar. The LIFT instructor leads a short class discussion during which students are praised for specific positive behaviors on the playground. Specific incidents of negative behavior are also noted but students should not be referred to individually. For one or two of the incidents, students should be asked how the situation might have been handled in a more positive way. Following this review, rewards are given for the day. When the jar becomes full, the LIFT instructor provides predetermined rewards or tells when they will occur (e.g., an extra recess).

Example:

Playground Rules

Be Safe and Be Respectful

What you say and what you do matters

Show courtesy and respect for the rights of other children and adults on the playground -- be polite and be cooperative.

Including everyone matters

Keep games open to everyone -- invite other children to play, allow other children to play, ask if you can play.

Being fair matters

Follow game rules as taught in P.E.

Being safe matters

Stay within the sight of Recess Supervisors at all times – always ask permission to leave the playground for any reason. Use the playground equipment properly.

Helping others matters

Return equipment to the recess cart at the end of recess. Line up quietly as soon as the recess whistle is blown three times in a row.