

PEACE POWER TOOLS

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Principal Lotteries

Summary:

A principal lottery is a token or symbolic reward system where a school principal or other authority figure issues rewards to youth for positive behavior using a lottery system. Here, a teacher or other adult systematically monitors and tallies youth positive behaviors, tasks, or activities and then randomly selects two or more youth that exhibit a target number of behaviors daily. The principal or other authority figure then follows up with a reward or incentive, such as a positive phone call home, which is to be issued to the selected youths every day. Because this reward system results in positive behaviors among youth, principals may also be positively reinforced by the feedback received from teachers, parents, and the students themselves.

Resources Needed:

- Targeted positive behaviors, tasks, or activities
- Blank space on chalk-board (or some other charting mechanism) listing each student's name
- Established lottery system for random drawing and plan for principal recognition.

Implementation Steps:

- Identify and explain positive targeted behaviors, tasks, or activities to youth;
- Upon identification and explanation of positive targeted behaviors, tasks or activities, explain the lottery system to the youth;
- Teacher or other adult systematically tracks student performance of targeted behaviors;
- Every day, the teacher or other adult selects two youth from the list of eligible youth based on performance;
- That same day the principal then calls the selected youths' parents or guardians to report their positive behavior, task or activity. (If the youth are engaged in tasks or activities requiring grades, it may be necessary for the principal to make calls the following day.)

Variations:

- One variation relies on rating student behavior at random moments, as follows:
 - an audiotape with 6 pre-recorded variously spaced beeps can be used;
 - whenever the audio tape beeps, each student exhibiting on task behavior receives a tally mark next to their name;
 - on a daily basis, any youth that receives 5-6 tally marks is eligible to participate in the lottery;
- Random rewards or tangible incentives associated with the lottery may be appropriate in some cases; best are tangibles that are in some way symbolic (e.g., pens for writing progress).
- A variation of the principal lottery system is a reward system where the principal offers token rewards or brief contingent attention to all youth who exhibit positive behavior.

Rationale and Evidence Base:

There is evidence that principal attention contingent upon positive behavior can be very effective in increasing academic achievement while reducing disruptive behaviors and aggression. The effects may be enhanced if principal lotteries are combined with mild group consequences for off-task behavior.

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