

# PEACE POWER TOOLS

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## *Beat the Timer*

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### **Summary:**

Beat the Timer or Beat the Buzzer is a strategy developed to reduce that time that an individual (or in some cases members of a group) takes to successfully complete a task. Upon completion of an indicated task, recognition (or in some cases an activity, symbolic or tangible incentive) is given to maintain motivation.

### **Resources Needed:**

- Time clock or kitchen timer
- Activity, social, symbolic or tangible incentives (when indicated)
- Tracking device

### **Implementation Steps:**

- Prior to beginning the beat the timer game:
  - Explain desired tasks or responsibilities to youth one day prior to beginning the beat the timer game.
  - Allow youth to help select reasonable incentives or social rewards for successfully completing tasks or responsibilities (i.e. free time or healthy snack). Such participation by youth strengthens the procedure.
- Set the clock or buzzer, giving ample time to complete tasks or responsibilities.
- If the youth becomes distracted or is delayed for some other reason, remind the youth of the time remaining (up to two reminders). Refrain from using criticism, coercion or threats during the timed period.
- If the tasks or responsibilities are completed before the time period expires, reward the youth. However, if the task or responsibility is not completed, simply state that no reward will be earned.

### **Variations:**

- A variation of beat the timer game involves the use of a portable automated timing device. Set the timer at 2 minute intervals. The timer can then be attached to the youth's belt or belt loop.
- The buzzer can only be stopped by pressing a reset button, which begins the next 2 minute interval. The youth gives her/himself a check mark for on task behavior within each two minute interval.
- For every check mark received, the youth is given an incentive, or points toward an incentive. The teacher or adult will monitor the efficacy of the youth's self reporting of on task behavior.

### **Rational and Evidence Base:**

Evidence shows that the Beat the Timer strategy effectively enhances parent-child interactions and task compliance, and reduces physical abuse and child aggression. Research also shows that Beat the Timer also helps students accurately complete their work. There is also evidence that the timing is highly effective for controlling hyperactivity in children, especially sitting behavior.

Adams, C. D., & Drabman, R. S. (1995). Improving morning interactions: Beat-the-Buzzer with a boy having multiple handicaps. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy, 17*(3), 13-26.

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