

Behavior Contracts

An Introduction

A behavior contract (or contingency contract) is a written agreement between at least two individuals in which one or both individuals agree to demonstrate certain behavior(s). Behavior contracts specify a contingent relation between the completion of a specified behavior and access to/delivery of, a specified reward for one or more parties (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). There are three core components to most contracts: the behavior, the reward, and the recording sheet. In summation, the contract specifies the person(s) to perform the task(s), the scope and sequence of the task(s), and the circumstances (or criterion) for task completion.

Behavior. When specifying the behavior or task, it is important to include four pieces of information: who, what, when, and how well (Cooper et al., 2007). Who is the person(s) who will perform the behavior(s) and receive the reward. What refers the behavior(s) to be performed. When identifies the time – such as day and time or every school day – by which the behavior must be completed. How well specifies the levels of performance or standards to meet criterion.

Reward. Similarly, equally specific detail is necessary to describe the reward component of the behavior contract. Who is the person(s) who will judge the behavior and control delivery of the reward. What is the reward itself. When identifies the time the person(s) earning the reward can be received by the person who met the specified expectations. How much specifies the amount of reward (e.g., dosage) that can be earned by performing the behavior and meeting criteria.

Recording sheet. The recording sheet is designed to serve as (1) a prompt for all parties to review the contract regularly and (2) a method for recording behavior performance.

Types of Behavior Contracts

Behavior contracts can be between one or more parties. One party contracts can also be referred to as unilateral contracts or self-contracts. In one-person contracts the individual desires to change his or her own behavior, and to assist in the behavior change process, this individual arranges reinforcement or punishment contingencies with a contingency manager. In two or more-party contracts, with each party focusing on a given behavior change. These can be quid pro quo which means, each parties before change is the reinforcement for the other party. Or they can be parallel contracts, in which each person agrees to implement a behavior change desired by the other person in the contract but the specified rewards for their respective behavior change is not contingent upon the other party's performance.

Module Materials

In this module, you will find many resources to help you design, implement and evaluate behavior contracts in your classroom or setting. These materials include an implementation checklist, treatment integrity checklist, behavior contract Tier 2 Grid, sample behavior contracts (e.g., parallel, quid pro quo) and corresponding templates. Additional materials include a tip sheet for teaching children new skills, example function matrices, and an illustration of an elementary teacher developing a behavior contract.

Examples	One-Party Contract	Two-Party Quid Pro Quo Contact	Two-Party Parallel Contract	Three-Party Contract
Definition	The individual desires to change his or her own behavior, and to assist in the behavior change process, this individual arranges reinforcement or punishment contingencies with a contingency manager	The individual desires to change his or her own behavior, and to assist in the behavior change process, this individual arranges reinforcement or punishment contingencies with a contingency manager	The individual desires to change his or her own behavior, and to assist in the behavior change process, this individual arranges reinforcement or punishment contingencies with a contingency manager	The individual desires to change his or her own behavior, and to assist in the behavior change process, this individual arranges reinforcement or punishment contingencies with a contingency manager
Example	<p>Persephone agrees to complete her daily homework assignments each week. She will turn in the completed assignments on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings in the homework basket when she walks in the classroom and before beginning my bell work.</p> <p>If she meets her goal Mr. Buckman, will give her a Best Buck on Friday for being responsible in finishing her homework.</p>	Aiden will be in the truck with his backpack and lunch bag by 7:45 A.M. Monday through Friday. In exchange, his mom, Jamie, agrees to refrain from reminding Aiden to be in the truck on time.	Aiden will be in the truck with his backpack and lunch bag by 7:45 A.M. Monday through Friday. When completed for the whole week, he will choose an outdoor activity for one hour on Saturday. His mom, Jamie, will refrain from reminding Aiden to be in the truck on time. When accomplished for all five school days, she will choose an indoor activity for one hour on Saturday.	<p>Leland, will contribute to class-wide or small-group instructions two times during English language arts (ELA) and attempt all activities. He will receive two Mustang Bucks each day, one for participating in discussions and one for attempting all assignments. If he shares his progress with my parents 4 out of 5 days, he will receive another Mustang Buck.</p> <p>Mrs. Austin will touch base with Leland each day at the beginning of ELA to remind him to contribute to class discussions and attempt all activities. She will mark a yes or no for each goal at the end of ELA then give him one Mustang Buck for each daily goal met. Mr. Stephens, Leland's dad, will ask to see Leland's behavior contract kept in his note book each evening to see how he did with participating during discussion and attempting his ELA assignments. He will sign each evening and praise Leland for meeting goals.</p>