Guidelines for Using Differential Reinforcement of an Alternative (DRA) and Incompatible Behavior (DRI)

DEFINITION & GOAL

- DRA involves the reinforcement of an alternative or desirable behavior that the team would like to see the student use instead and withholding reinforcement for instances of problem behavior. The alternative behavior should provide the student with the same reinforcement they were obtaining for problem behavior as identified during a functional behavior assessment.
- DRI involves reinforcing a desirable behavior that is incompatible with problem behavior (e.g., cannot simultaneously occur with) and withholding reinforcement for instances of problem behavior. The goal of DRI is to increase an incompatible behavior and decrease a targeted problem behavior.

MATERIALS FOR IMPLEMENTING DRA & DRI

Data sheet, timer, potential reinforcers (functional or arbitrary)

DRA/DRI PROCEDURES	
1	Identify an alternative/incompatible behavior to reinforce. Ideally, this is a behavior that the student can demonstrate independently and does not require more effort than problem behavior.
2	Identify potential reinforcers that will be provided when the student engages in the alternative/incompatible behavior. This can be a functional reinforcer (e.g., access to attention or a preferred item/activity, escape from a task or activity) or an arbitrary reinforcer (e.g., items or activities that have been identified as preferred). A token system can be used for some students in which a token is provided each time the student demonstrates the alternative/incompatible behavior. Tokens can be cashed in at the end of the training session for a reinforcer.
3	Determine the duration of the session and set the timer for the identified length of time.
4	At the beginning of the session explain the rules to the student and model the alternative/incompatible behavior. Have the student practice the alternative/incompatible behavior before starting the intervention session and provide the reinforcer for engaging in the behavior. If the student needs assistance with engaging in the behavior identify a system of prompts to teach the student to independently engage in the behavior.
5	Start the timer.
6	Initially, a reinforcer should be provided immediately following each occurrence of the alternative/incompatible behaviour. A specific amount of time should be determined for providing the student access to the reinforcer.
7	Over time, the schedule of reinforcement should be thinned, and reinforcement should be provided after a set number of times the student engages in the behaviour (e.g. after every 2, 3, 4, occurrences etc.).
8	If problem behaviour occurs, reinforcement should be withheld for 15 to 30 seconds after the behaviour occurs or until the student stops engaging in the behaviour.
9	Continue this process for the duration of the targeted activity, routine, or session.

STAR®
Autism Support

CRITERIA FOR INCREASING THE RATIO OF REINFORCEMENT

*3 consecutive sessions with target problem behaviour at an 80% or greater reduction from baseline

EXAMPLES OF INCOMPATIBLE BEHAVIORS:

BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN	INCOMPATIBLE BEHAVIORS
Yelling	Talk nicely
Hand flapping	Hands on lap
Being off-task	Any on-task behaviour e.g. looking at book, writing, looking at teacher etc...
Ripping worksheets	Writing on worksheets
Noncompliance	Following directions within x seconds

EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS:

FUNCTION OF BEHAVIOR	ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS
Avoidance and Escape	Asking for a break
Access to Attention	Asking for help Raising hand
Access to Preferred Items and Activities	Asking for iPad time Asking for a turn