

## Guidelines for Using Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior (DRO)

### DEFINITION & GOAL

- DRO is a **consequent strategy** that involves providing the student with a reinforcer following the absence of problem behavior for a specified length of time.
- Given that a DRO **does not** teach or reinforce an appropriate behavior, it is often **paired with** other procedures in which an alternative behavior is also reinforced.

### MATERIALS FOR IMPLEMENTING DRO

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

DRO (FIXED-INTERVAL) PROCEDURES	
<b>1</b>	Identify potential reinforcers. These can be a functional reinforcer or something arbitrary that has been identified as preferred (see examples below). If arbitrary reinforcers are used, student preferences should be assessed frequently to ensure they are still preferred. A token system may be used for some students, that can be cashed in at the end of the DRO intervention session for earning a preferred item or activity.
<b>2</b>	Establish an interval of time in which the student must refrain from engaging in problem behavior. This determined by the student's baseline data (see steps below to determine). It is optimal to use a silent timer that cannot be heard or detected by the student or their peers (e.g., iPhone set to vibration mode).
<b>3</b>	At the beginning of the session state the rule for the student. For example, "If you keep safe hands and use nice words you can earn computer time".
<b>4</b>	Start the timer.
<b>5</b>	If the student does not engage in problem behavior for the duration of the DRO interval: (a) deliver behavior specific praise (e.g., "Awesome job keeping safe hands and using nice words! You earned Thomas time!"), (b) provide access to the reinforcer for a specified interval of time, and (c) reset and start the timer for the next interval.
<b>6</b>	If the student engages in problem behavior: (a) immediately stop and reset the timer, (b) wait until the student stops engaging in the problem behavior, (c) in a neutral voice, remind the student of what they need to do to earn the reinforcer and (d) start the timer.
<b>7</b>	Continue this process for the duration of the targeted activity, routine, or intervention session.

### HOW TO DETERMINE THE INITIAL DRO INTERVAL

<b>1</b>	Divide the total duration of all baseline sessions (in seconds) by the total number of occurrences of problem behavior.	<b>2</b>	Set the initial DRO interval at or less than that number.
<b>EXAMPLE:</b> $\frac{2,700 \text{ seconds (3-15 min observations)}}{30} = 90 \text{ s. intervals}$		<b>EXAMPLE:</b> 80-90 s. intervals	

## CRITERIA FOR CHANGING THE DRO INTERVALS

- Criteria to **increase** DRO interval: 3 consecutive sessions with target problem behavior at an 80% or greater reduction from baseline
- Criteria to **decrease** DRO interval: 3 consecutive sessions with target problem behavior at or above mean baseline levels

## HOW TO INCREASE OR DECREASE THE DRO INTERVAL

This can be done by implementing a constant time change (e.g., increasing or decreasing the interval by a specified period-of-time; 5 s.) or a proportional time change (e.g., increasing or decreasing the interval by a specified proportion of time; 5%).

## EXAMPLES OF FUNCTION-BASED REINFORCERS

ATTENTION	ESCAPE	TANGIBLE
Social interaction with staff	Brief break from work or activity	iPad
Reading a book together	Going for a walk	Computer
Playing a game together	Time in a tent	Ball game

## EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR-SPECIFIC PRAISE

BEHAVIORS	SAMPLE STATEMENTS
Hands to self	I like that you are keeping your hands to yourself, let's play!
Independent work	Great focusing on your work, let's go for a walk.
Listening	Thanks for listening, here is your iPad.
Using nice words	Great job using nice words, here is your token.
Sitting	Good sitting, here is your token.