



Preference & Reinforcement Assessments

DEFINITION

A preference assessment is a systematic tool or assessment used to determine which foods or items are preferred by the learner in order to determine which are likely to work as positive reinforcers.

A reinforcer assessment is a direct, systematic, test designed to show how effective/powerful a stimulus is at increasing behaviors that it follows

The difference is preference assessments identify things the child likes. A reinforcer assessment identifies how much work a learner is willing to do for the item/activity/food and if the stimulus increases the behavior in the future.

Preference Assessment
INVENTORY CHECKLIST

SENSORY	MATERIAL
PUTTY	CLAP HANDS
IDGET SPINNER	FAN
SWING CHAIR	SENSORY ROOM
WEIGHTED VEST	
SENSORY BOTTLE	
MUSIC	
BOUNCING BALL	
SQUEEZE BALL	
PLAY DOUGH	
TURN LIGHTS OFF	
EDIBLES	Activities
CHEERIOS	CARROT STICKS
CHOCOLATE CHIPS	APPLE SLICES
GOLDFISH	WATER
FRUIT SNACKS	JUICE
CHIPS	
CEREAL	
POPCORN	
YO YO	READ PLAY
BUBBLE WRAP	PUPPET
STICKERS	WIKI STIX
BALLOON	
MIRROR	
PUZZLE	
BODY PILLOW	
BLOCKS	
TOY CAR	
TRAINS	
STUFFY	
TRAMPOLINE	RIDE BIKE
WATER TABLE	SCOOTER BOARD
SAND BIN	WAGON RIDE
BUBBLES	
PAINTING	
DRAWING	
PICTURES	
CON TONS	

CONDUCTING A TRIAL-BASED PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

OBJECTIVE
• Comparing preference for potential reinforcers

STIMULI TO BE INCLUDED
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TRIAL BASED ASSESSMENTS
• **Single Stimulus**
One stimulus presented at a time
• **Paired Stimulus**
Two stimuli presented together, repeat all combinations
• **Multiple Stimulus w/ Replacement**
Replace selected stimulus with identical stimulus
• **Multiple Stimulus w/o Replacement**
Do not replace selected stimulus, results in hierarchy

SAMPLE OF TRIALS FOR EACH PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

	Trial #1	Trial #2	Trial #3	Trial #4	Trial #5
Single Stimulus	●	◆	★	◆	◆
Paired Stimulus	● ◆	◆ ●	◆ ★	◆ ★	◆ ◆
Multiple Stimulus w/ Replacement	● ◆ ★ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ● ★ ◆	◆ ◆ ● ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ● ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ● ◆ ◆
Multiple Stimulus w/o Replacement	● ◆ ★ ◆ ◆	★ ◆ ◆ ● ◆	◆ ◆ ● ◆ ◆	● ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆	● ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

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PREFERENCE ASSESSMENTS

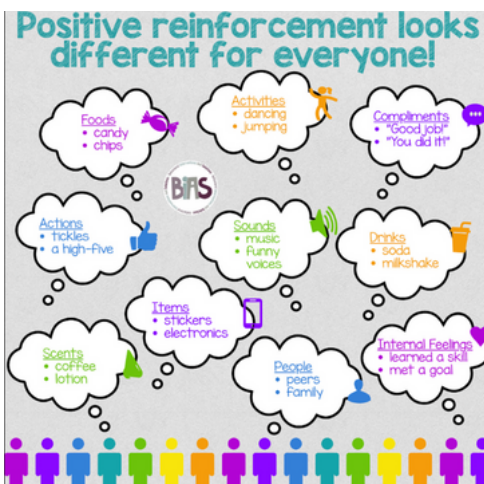
In the classroom, we typically use preference assessments to identify possible reinforcers. This does not mean the child will be willing to work for that reinforcer. So, if you do not see the behavior increasing, try a different reinforcer!!

Click on the types below to watch a youtube video!

- Multiple Stimulus without replacement
- Paired Stimulus
- Single Stimulus
- Free-operant
- Surveys/questionnaires

WHY DO WE NEED PREFERENCE ASSESSMENTS?

Watch this short clip where "How to ABA" explains preference Assessments



DO WE REALLY NEED FORMAL PREFERENCE ASSESSMENTS?

NO! We do not always need to use formal preference assessments, the idea is just to be intuned to our kids and what they want!

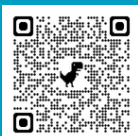


THE BIG IDEA!

- We are trying to find out what motivates our students! We want to figure out what they like!
- Think about all of the different functions of behavior
 - Escape
 - Attention
 - Tangibles/Food
 - Sensory
- Get creative! Silly activities, silly noises, para and teacher interactions, can be soooo motivating for our students!
- Just because the student likes something, let's say candy, that does not mean they would be willing to do work for that item. For example, if someone asked me to run up 1,000 flights of stairs for a piece of candy, I would say "Heck no!" But if they asked me to run up 1,000 flights of stairs for \$100,000 I would say "Heck yes!" because \$100,000 is a more powerful reinforcer for me than a piece of candy, or really any amount of candy for that matter!
- It's okay to check in to see where your student is at and what is motivating to them multiple times throughout the day! Think about after they just come back from lunch, they may not be interested in earning a snack, however, they may be more interested in some chill time or a game with the teacher.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Free Preference Assessments on TPT](#)
- [Autism Minute about reinforcement](#)
- [Autism Minute about Token Charts](#)



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