



Response Cost Lottery

Description: Designed to be time effective for teachers, this strategy can be used with individual students or small groups.

Materials:

- Index card, tape
- Colored slips of paper (different color for each student)

Preparation:

- Develop a reward menu for each student targeted for this intervention. (NOTE: For suggestions on how to create a reward menu, see *Creating Reward Menus that Motivate: Tips for Teachers*.)
- Select 1-3 behaviors that you wish to reduce in the targeted student(s) and write out concrete definitions for each.
- Decide on a time period during the instructional day that the Response Cost Lottery program will be in effect (e.g., 30 minutes during math class). NOTE: You may want to limit the length of the monitoring period at the start of the intervention, to increase the odds of student success. As the intervention proves successful, you can extend the monitoring period.
- Decide how many points (i.e., paper slips) you will award to students at the outset of each monitoring period. (NOTE: For short monitoring periods, you may want to start with 4-5 points/paper slips.)
- Prepare the lottery tickets. Use a different color paper for each student's tickets, so that you can tell them apart from one another. Or type blanks on student tickets onto which the recipient can write in his or her name and the date that the ticket was awarded.
- Choose how frequently you will hold lottery-ticket prize drawings. NOTE: Many teachers find that once per week is sufficiently motivating to make the intervention effective. For students with more intense or severe levels of misbehavior, however, you may want initially to hold prize drawings more frequently (e.g., daily) and –as students' behaviors improve—gradually extend intervals between drawings

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce the Response Cost Lottery program to targeted students:

- Explain that students will have the chance to earn rewards for good behavior.
 - Review with students the negative behaviors that you would like them to reduce. Use demonstration and modeling to ensure that students clearly know (a) the negative behavior(s) that should be avoided and (b) positive behavior(s) that they can engage in instead. Post the definitions that you have written for behaviors that are to be reduced.
 - Tape an index card on three sides onto the top of each student's desk. Under the untapped corner of the index card, slip the pieces of paper assigned to that student—so that about half the slip is visible.
 - Tell students that the slips of paper represent 'behavior points'. Let them know that every time that they show a negative behavior during the monitoring period, you will remove one of the slips of paper from their desk. At the end of the monitoring period, any slips that *remain* will be placed into a lottery ticket container.
 - Inform student that at the end of each week, you will hold a drawing for one or more prizes. Emphasize that students who hold onto *more* tickets through the week stand a *greater* chance of winning prizes.
2. Start the Response Cost Lottery intervention. Consider reminding students at the start of each day's monitoring period of your positive behavioral expectations (e.g., "*We are going to start our lottery game now. Be sure to give me your best attention, raise you hand to get permission to speak, and do your best work!*"). If you must remove a student's lottery slip because of misbehavior, do so quietly and without drawing undue attention to him or her. If the student does not appear to understand why you are removing a slip, provide a brief explanation in a neutral voice and move on.
 3. At the end of each week (or alternative time interval that you have selected), hold a lottery-ticket drawing and permit students whose colored slips were drawn to select a prize from their reward menu. Empty the tickets from the lottery-ticket container and start over.

Tips:

Use Bonus Tickets. You can increase motivation by telling students that they can earn an extra 'bonus ticket' each day that they manage to hold onto *all* of their allocated slips throughout the entire observation period. These bonus tickets are placed in the lottery-ticket container along with the student's other earned tickets.

Troubleshooting:

The student attempts to cheat. If you discover that a student participating in the Response Cost Lottery program attempts to 'cheat the system' (e.g., or trying to stuff the lottery-ticket container with additional tickets that the student has not earned), you can

suspend the student for one or more days from the game. Then hold a conference with the student, secure his or her promise to follow the rules of the program, and reinstate the student.

References:

Witt, J. C., & Elliott, S.N. (1982). The response cost lottery: A time efficient and effective classroom intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 20, 155-161.