

Application of Positive Reinforcement for Improving Mealtime Eating of a Child in Home Setting: A Case Study

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The present study was conducted to determine whether the child's eating at mealtime could be improved with the application of Positive Reinforcement in the form of rewards. It was done by attempting to determine the functions of the target behavior and decrease the behavioral avoidance and increase the behavior of eating at meal times from 3 bites to at least 6 bites per meal. The study was conducted with a 3- year old girl in a home setting. The study was divided into three phases; baseline, pre intervention and post intervention pursued by follow up observations. The total duration of the study was 45 days with 60 minutes observation during mealtime (dinnertime) per day. Results indicated noticeable improvement in eating behavior of the subject during the intervention phase from 2.3 bites (baseline) per hour to 6.7 bites per hour. During the post-intervention phase the behavior decreased slightly; from 6.7 bites (intervention) to an average of 6.1 bites in an hour. This was still significantly high compared to the baseline phase. During the three follow-ups, the behavior was displayed on an average of 7 bites per hour. Thus the study's results showed significant improvement of the mealtime eating of a child with the positive reinforcement principle based on applied behavior analysis.

Keywords: Positive reinforcement, mealtime, applied behaviour