

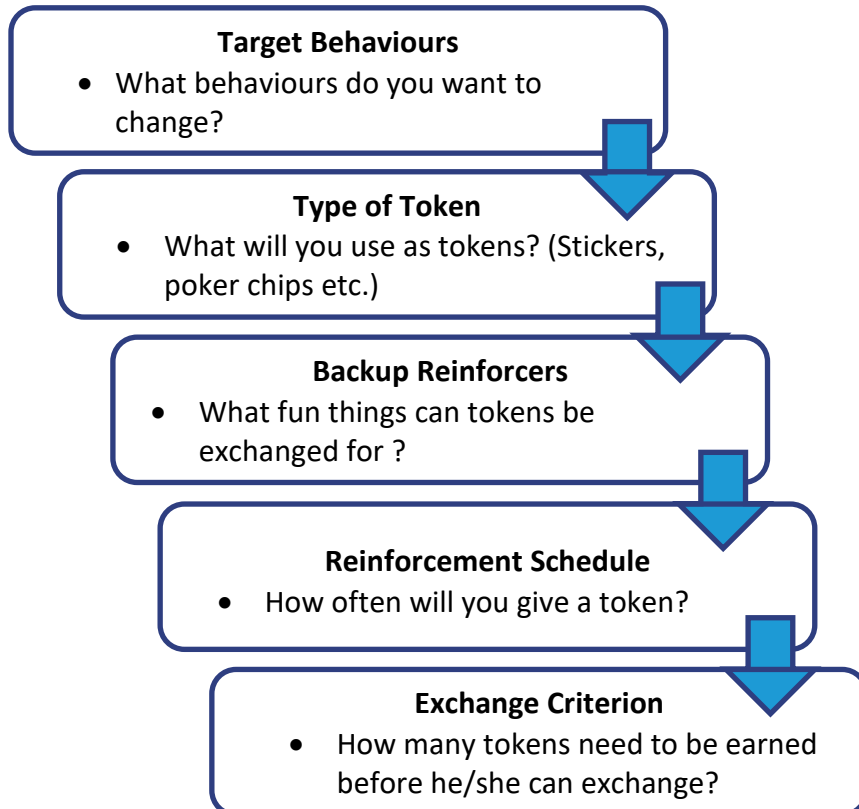
# Using Stickers and Tokens

Token economy: A child/youth earns tokens when he/she does desired behaviours. The child/youth exchanges tokens for activities or items, like games, free-time, or sweets.



## Getting Started

Think through these questions. Read more about each on the next page.



## Target Behaviour

You need to know exactly what behaviours you want to change before starting a token system. Make a list of behaviours you want to see. Start with a small number of behaviours, and things that are relatively easy for the child when you are teaching the token system. You can pick a behaviour you want to see increase (like brushing teeth) or decrease (such as yelling).

### Examples

- Sharing a toy with a sibling
- Making bed in the morning before school
- Putting plate in dishwasher after dinner
- Putting shoes in closet when home from school

## Type of Token



Anything can be a token! Some ideas are stickers, a tick on a sheet of paper, a “ticket”, a laminated picture of a character the child likes, or a bingo chip. You can find things at a dollar store.

## Backup Reinforcers

A “backup reinforcer” is the item or activity the token can be exchanged for. Make sure you choose something the child/youth really likes or wants. If your child/youth is able to communicate, you can ask what they want to earn.

## Reinforcement Schedule

The reinforcement schedule is how often you are giving a token. You should always start with:

### **1 desired behaviour = 1 token**

As you and your child/youth learn the token system, this could increase to:

### **2 desired behaviours = 1 token**

You don't want to go higher than 3-5 desired behaviours for 1 token. If it takes too long to earn a token, the child will lose motivation!

## Exchange Criterion

The exchange criterion is how many tokens need to be earned before he/she can exchange for an item or activity. You should start with:

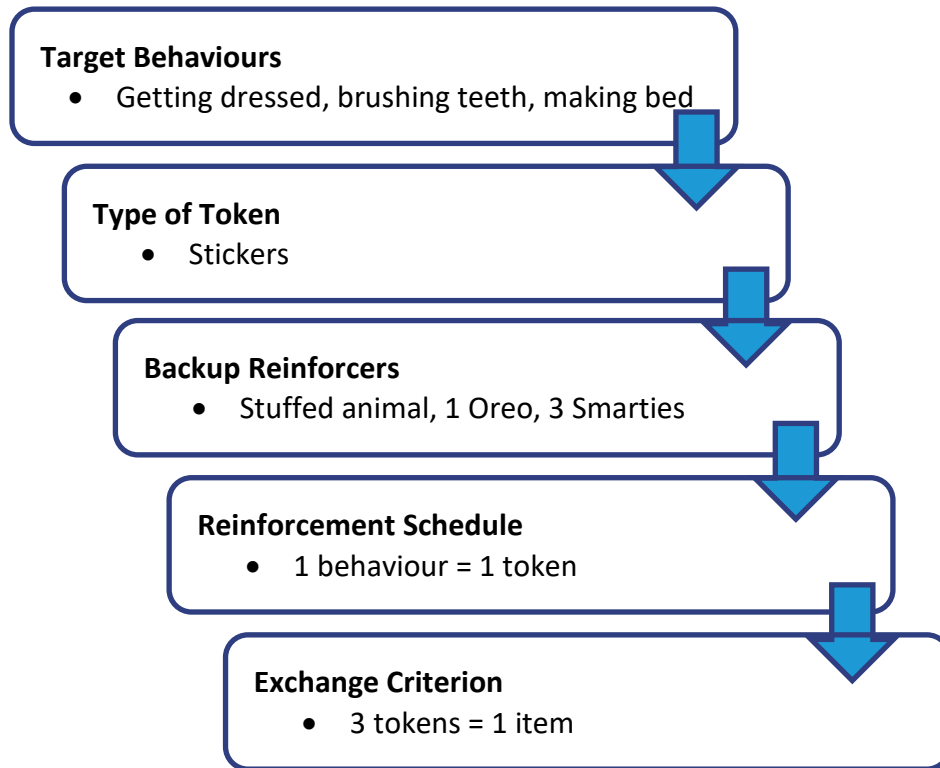
### **1 token = exchange for item/activity**

This will help your child/youth learn the system and understand the token equals something good! This "conditions" the token to be something the child wants to earn.

After a few times of this, increase how many tokens your child needs to earn before cashing in for an item/activity. Most token boards have room for 3-5 tokens.

## Example

In this example, the target behaviours are getting dressed, brushing teeth, and making bed. The child will get 1 sticker for each behaviour. If he gets dressed, he gets a sticker. If he brushes his teeth, he gets a sticker. If he does all 3 behaviours, he would have 3 stickers. This would allow him to exchange for a stuffed animal, 1 Oreo OR 3 Smarties.



## When Token System Is Not Working

- A. First, look at how many behaviours your child has to do before getting a token. Then, look at how many tokens he/she has to earn before exchanging.
  - Imagine your child needs to do 4 behaviours before earning a token, and needs to earn 4 tokens to exchange – that’s 16 desirable behaviours!
  - Try reducing either the reinforcement schedule or exchange criterion.
- B. Your child may not understand the token system. For a while, you may want to go back to:

**1 desired behaviour = 1 token**

and

**1 token = exchange for item/activity**

The backup reinforcers may not be desirable anymore. You will have to switch these up to make sure they stay motivating. See our “Preference Assessment” handout for tips on how to determine reinforcers.

Want to learn more? Call to see how else we can help.  
1-866-590-8822, press 1 to book a meeting today!



Services and supports in partnership with:

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