INTERVENTIONS FOR BEHAVIOR
Critters!: Rewarding Positive Behaviors

Purpose:
This intervention rewards students for positive behaviors. It can be used with small groups or your entire class.

Description:
Critters provides children with prize slips that they can redeem with the instructor for classroom privileges. This strategy uses the element of surprise and imaginatively designed reward slips as additional student motivators.

Materials/Preparation:
- Critter Prize Slips Sheet
- *Define a set of classroom behavioral expectations.* With input from your students, define a set of up to five expectations for appropriate conduct. These expectations should be stated in positive terms (as do rather than don't statements). It is a good idea to select a mix of academic (e.g., Come to class on time, prepared, and ready to learn) and behavioral (e.g., When passing through the hall, walk in single file with hands and feet to self) goals. Define these expectations in terms that your students can easily understand and post them around the classroom so that students can review them as needed.
- *Generate list of classroom privileges for which Critter Slips can be redeemed.* Decide what classroom privileges a student can earn with Critter Slips. On a sheet or poster, list each privilege and note next to it the number of Critter Slips a student must redeem to earn the privilege. For example, you may choose to let students use one Critter Slip to purchase 5 additional minutes of free time or redeem 5 Critter Slips for the privilege of avoiding a grade-penalty for a late homework assignment. (If you are stuck for ideas, ask your students what privileges they might like to see included on your reward list.)

Procedures:

Step 1: *Introduce Critter Slips.* Reserve 10 minutes of class time to inform students about the Critter Slips intervention:

- Announce to the class that every day you will select a different behavioral expectation to reward from the posted list. (Take a moment to review these expectations briefly with the students.)
- Tell students that-throughout the day-you will randomly reward children who engage in the day's target behavioral expectation with a Critter Slip.
- Show students the list of privileges that you have assembled for which they can redeem Critter Slips. Explain to them your terms for when and how frequently they can redeem slips (e.g., at the end of each day; just before lunch period on Fridays).
- Emphasize that-as the classroom teacher-you are the sole and final judge of how many Critter Slips are handed out daily and when and how they can be redeemed.

Step 2: *Start the Intervention.* On a daily basis:
- Select a behavioral expectation from the posted list. Announce to students that you will be 'secretly watching' for examples of this positive behavior. Tell students that, maybe, when they least expect it, they could earn a Critter Slip!

- Put a predetermined number (e.g., 10) of Critter Slips into your pocket. During the day, make a point to hand out all of the slips to students displaying the target behavior. Be impartial: Avoid favoring any group of students when giving out slips! Each student receiving a slip should write his or her name on it and store it in a safe place until he or she is ready to redeem it.
- At whatever time interval you have set with the class, give students the chance to redeem their Critter Slips for privileges or rewards. (Some teachers are comfortable letting students redeem slips whenever they choose while other instructors prefer the structure of a pre-set ' slips redemption time'.)

Step 3: *Fade Critter Slips Intervention.*
- Once you have found the Critter Slips program to be effective and stable for several weeks, you can begin to 'fade' it. Begin by handing out successively fewer slips each day. (For example, over a three-week period, you might gradually reduce the number of slips rewarded to the class from 10 to 4 per day.)

- Next, you can randomly pick days (e.g., once per week) when the intervention is not used. Slowly taper the program off until you are implementing it only occasionally (e.g., once every two-three weeks). If student behaviors begin to worsen during the fading period, put the program back into effect at full strength until behaviors improve. Then repeat the fading process, this time at a somewhat slower pace.

Troubleshooting:

Students hoard their slips instead of redeeming them. In general, don't worry too much if children in your room refuse to spend the reward slips they have collected. So long as the slips themselves motivate these students to model good behaviors, your intervention will probably achieve its desired effect. Perhaps you are concerned that students are hoarding slips in order to eventually cash them in for an unusually large prize that might be difficult to accommodate (e.g., 45 minutes of continuous free time). To prevent such an occurrence, you might place modest restrictions on students' redeeming of slips. For example, you might announce that students can redeem no more than 10 slips on any one day.

Students argue about the terms for redeeming reward slips. Generally, you can expect Critter Slips to go off without a hitch as a classroom behavioral strategy. Of course, you should not be surprised if initially students engage in a bit of 'testing' behavior--pleading, negotiating, and complaining--when they redeem reward slips. If you are firm, consistent, and fair in implementing the program, this testing behavior should vanish quickly. Once in a while, though, you may encounter a chronically oppositional student who regularly argues with you about the conditions for cashing in his or her reward slips. In this case, you can inform the student that you will fine him / her a reward slip for each time that he or she argues with you.

Extensions and Adaptations:

Give Critter Slips Out to Other Staff to Distribute to Your Students. Here is a strategy to use if you want your students to show the daily positive behavior in settings other than your classroom (e.g., in art, gym, music, lunch). Give the staff responsible for supervising students in these settings a handful of Critter Slips. Tell them the target positive behavior and, throughout the class or activity period, encourage these staff members to hand out slips randomly to students engaging in that behavior.

Have a 'Mystery Behavior Day'. Tell students at the start of the day that you will be handing out Critter Slips as usual, but that you are keeping secret the positive behavior that you are rewarding. When handing out slips, say to the receiving students something like: "Nice job. Here is a Critter Slip. Think about why you received it!" At the end of the day, ask students who had received Critter Slips to guess the positive behavior that you had selected as the theme for that day.

Evaluation of Effectiveness:
Compare the student's behavioral skills before and after implementation of this intervention.

Critters!	Critters!	Critters!	Critters!
_____Date	_____Date	_____Date	_____Date
Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior
critter!	critter!	critter!	critter!
Critters!	Critters!	Critters!	Critters!
_____Date	_____Date	_____Date	_____Date
Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior
critter!	critter!	critter!	critter!
Critters!	Critters!	Critters!	Critters!
_____Date	_____Date	_____Date	_____Date
Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior
critter!	critter!	critter!	critter!
Critters!	Critters!	Critters!	Critters!
_____Date	_____Date	_____Date	_____Date
Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior	Good Behavior
critter!	critter!	critter!	critter!