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ABSTRACT

A contract and point system were used to decrease the pilfering behavior of an 11-year-old boy. Under the contract system, the boy kept a daily record of his progress and earned points toward a trip to the planetarium. After introduction of the contract the pilfering dropped from at least two times a week to none at all.
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**Decreasing Pilfering Behavior
of an Eleven Year Old Boy**

By

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REFERRAL PROBLEM:

Will was referred by the principal because he was going to expelled because of his pilfering (inappropriate borrowing).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Will was an eleven year old boy who was small for his age. He had been retained in second grade. He lived with his mother, stepfather and five other brothers and sisters. He was next to the oldest. Will had a long history of school problems; he was known as one of the worst behavioral problems in the school. He had been referred to a County Mental Health Association for help but the mother would not allow the service. The principal was on the verge of expelling Will.

SETTING:

Will attended a small rural Vermont school in an economically depressed area. There was a student population of 154 in grades K through 8. The school was very old and overcrowded.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE:

After a meeting with the principal, teacher and the Consulting Teacher, the following terminal objective was established in a contract form. When in the school building, on the school grounds or on the school bus, Will was only to take and use other's property when given permission by the owner. Also, when in the classroom, Will was to ask his teacher's permission before he could take and use any classroom materials,

e.g. paper, books, pencils, etc. This contract was in effect for the remaining five weeks of school.

MEASUREMENT AND TEACHING/LEARNING PROCEDURE:

Since the problem was extremely severe, the baseline data were established by the teacher and principal agreeing on the number of extreme cases of pilfering that had occurred in previous weeks, that is, an occasion that was serious enough to warrant Will being sent to the principal's office for discipline.

When Will had a minor offense for pilfering, the teacher usually reprimanded him by having him miss recess.

At a meeting with the teacher, principal and Consulting Teacher, it was decided that a contract, if Will agreed, between Will and the above mentioned people would be instituted. The contract was set up so that Will, in order to earn his trip, could not pilfer even once. The rules were written down, in contract form, signed by each person, with Will keeping the original and the others getting a Xerox copy.

Will also kept a chart. At the bottom was a rocket ship with the spaces for the remaining days of school leading to the moon. Each day Will could color a space in if he didn't pilfer. His teacher and principal also praised him for his politeness when borrowing and returning materials.

RESULTS: See Graph

During a three week baseline, session 1-3, Will pilfered at least two times a week serious enough to be sent to the principal's office. After the introduction of the contract, sessions 4-8, there was not one even minor case of pilfering.

ANECDOTAL:

The teacher stated " a very great improvement in Will's social behavior also in his ability to keep his hands off other people's property. Since the end of the school year came, the procedure was not faded out. However, several post checks the following school year indicated will was maintaining his appropriate borrowing behavior.

SAMBLE I

I, _____, agree to follow these rules each day:

1. I will only take and use others property when given permission by the owner
 - (a) in school building
 - (b) on school grounds
 - (c) riding school bus.

2. I will ask my teacher's permission before I take and use any classroom materials
 - (a) No more work papers than the teacher designated number
 - (b) Permission to borrow reference books, pencils, erasers, pens, use of stapler or anything else on or in the teacher's desk.

I understand that if I follow these rules, I will earn 50 points each day.

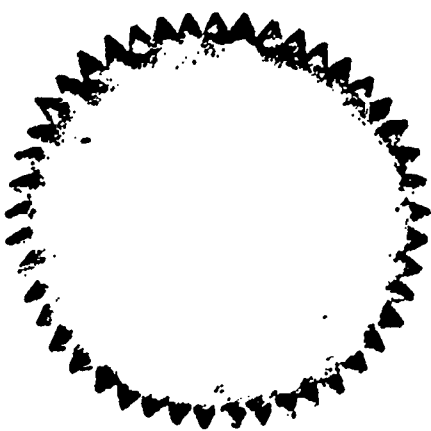
These points may be exchanged for the following items:

Points

1,000

A special trip to the Planetarium including lunch for me with my Teacher _____ and the Consulting Teacher _____.

_____ Date



_____ Student

_____ Teacher

_____ Consulting Teacher

_____ Principal

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