# Behavior Contracts

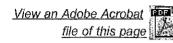


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### Good Behavior Game



The Good Behavior Game is an approach to the management of classrooms behaviors that rewards children for displaying appropriate on-task behaviors during instructional times. The

Jim's Hints for Using... **Good Behavior Game** 

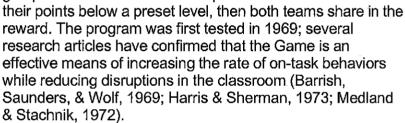


The Good Behavior Game is an effective strategy for managing a classroom-but don't overdo it! Allow

breaks from the Game during the school day. A caution should be kept in mind when involving your students in the Good Behavior Game: Generally, the Game should be scheduled for a maximum of 1-2 hours per day in any classroom. After all, students will need some time to relax, socialize, and "be kids."

Of course, minimum standards of acceptable classroom conduct remain in place whether the Game is in effect or not.

class is divided into two teams and a point is given to a team for any inappropriate behavior displayed by one of its members. The team with the fewest number of points at the Game's conclusion each day wins a group reward. If both teams keep



The process of introducing the Good Behavior Game into a classroom is a relatively simple procedure. There are five steps involved in putting the Game into practice.

### Steps in Implementing This Intervention

Step 1: Decide when to schedule the Game. The teacher first decides during what period(s) of the school day the Game will be played. As a rule of thumb, instructors should

pick those times when the entire class is expected to show appropriate academic behaviors. Blocks of time devoted to reading, math, content instruction, and independent seatwork would be most appropriate for putting the Game into effect.

Step 2: Step 2: Clearly define the negative behaviors that will be scored during the Game. Teachers who have used the Good behavior Game typically define three types of negative behavior that will be scored whenever they appear during the Game. Those behaviors are:

- leaving one's seat,
- talking out, and

### · engaging in disruptive behavior.

**Out-of-seat behavior** is defined as any incident in which a student leaves his or her seat without first getting permission from the teacher. Related behaviors, such as "scootching" one's seat toward another desk are usually scored as out-of-seat. Instructors often build in certain exceptions to this rule. For example, in some classrooms, children can take a pass to the bathroom, approach the teacher's desk for additional help, or move from one work site to another in the room without permission as long as these movements are conducted quietly and are a part of the accepted classroom routine. Children who leave their seats intending to complete an allowed activity but find that they cannot (e.g., walking toward the teacher's desk and then noticing that another student is already there) are not scored as being out of their seat if they quickly and quietly return to their desk.

**Talking-out behavior** is defined as any incident of talking out loud without the permission of the instructor. Permission is gained by raising one's hand and first being recognized by the teacher before speaking. Any type of unauthorized vocalization within the hearing of the instructor is scored as talking out, including shouts, nonsense noises (e.g., growling, howling, whistling), whispers, and talking while one's hand is raised.

**Disruptive behavior** consists of any movement or act that is judged by the teacher to be disruptive of classroom instruction. For example, knocking on a table, looking around the room, tearing up paper, passing notes, or playing with toys at one's desk would all be scored as disruptive behaviors. A good rule of thumb would be to regard as disruptive behavior any action that does not fall under another category but is perceived by the teacher as annoying or distracting.

### Step 3: Decide upon suitable daily and (perhaps) weekly rewards for teams winning the Game.

Teachers will need to choose rewards that they feel will effectively motivate students to take part in the Game. Most often, instructors use free time as a daily reward, since children often find it motivating. To cite a single example, one teacher's reward system included giving her daily 4th-grade Game winners the privilege of wearing a "victory tag," putting a star next to their names on a "Winner's Chart," lining up first for lunch, and getting 30 minutes of time at the end of the day to work on fun, educationally related topics.

When choosing rewards, instructors are advised to consider using reinforcers that fit naturally into the context and mission of a classroom. For example, allowing winners to play quietly together at the end of the school day may help to promote social skills, but dispensing material rewards (e.g., comic books) to winners would probably be less likely to contribute directly to educational and social goals. Of course, if both teams win on a given day or a given week, the members of those teams all receive the same rewards.

### Step 4: Introduce the Game to the class.

Once behaviors have been selected and clearly defined by the teacher, the next step is to

introduce the Game to the class. Ideally, time should be set aside for an initial group discussion. The teacher mentions that the class will be playing a game and presents a schedule clearly setting forth the instructional times during which the game will be in effect.

The teacher next divides the classroom into two teams. For ease of recording, it is usually recommended that the instructor divide the class down the center of the room into roughly equal halves. Some teachers have used three teams successfully as well. To build a sense of team spirit, students may be encouraged to name their groups.

The children are informed that certain types of behavior (i.e., leaving one's seat or talking without permission, and engaging in disruptive behaviors) will earn points for the team to which they belong. Students are also told that both teams can win if they earn no more than a certain number of points (e.g., 4 points maximum per day). If both teams happen to exceed 4 points, then the team with the lowest total at the end of the day is the winner. In case of a tie, both teams earn the reward. The instructor is the final judge of whether a behavior is to be scored. (As an option, students can also be told that the team with the fewest number of points at the end of the week will win an additional reward.)

It is a good idea when introducing the Game to students to clearly review examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. After all, it is important that all children know the rules before the Game begins. To more effectively illustrate those rules, children may be recruited to demonstrate acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, or the teacher may describe a number of behaviors and ask the class to decide with a show of hands whether such behaviors are to be scored or not.

### Step 5: Put the Game into effect.

The instructor is now ready to start the Game. During those times that the game is in effect in the classroom, the teacher continues to carry out his or her usual instructional practices. The only alteration in the routine is that the instructor is also noting and publicly recording any negative points incurred by either team. Instructors might want to post scores on the blackboard or on a large piece of paper visible to everyone in the room. If working with children in a small group, the instructor can record negative behaviors on a small note pad and later transfer them to the blackboard. Teachers can also choose to publicly announce when another point has been earned as a reminder to the class about acceptable behavior. It is helpful to keep a weekly tally of points for each team, especially if teams are competing for weekly as well as daily rewards.

Care should be taken to be as consistent as possible in scoring negative behaviors. Winning teams should be praised as well as rewarded for their efforts, with that praise tied when possible to specifically observed behaviors. Instructors may want to alter the Game somewhat as necessary (e.g., changing rewards or more carefully defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviors with students). Obviously, any alteration of the Game, no matter how small, should be shared with the classroom before being put into effect.

Troubleshooting: How to Deal With Common Problems in Using the 'Good Behavior Game'

Q: What should I do if a small number of students try to sabotage the game for other children by deliberately acting out and earning penalty points for their team?

If a small number of students are earning a large number of points during the Game, consider forming them into a separate team. While not the norm, occasionally a single student or small group of children may be tempted to undermine the Game by deliberately incurring a large number of penalty points for their teams. (Such children may find the resulting negative social attention of other members of their team to be its own reward!) A simple remedy for this problem is to modify the Game by making those disruptive students into a separate team. The Game will continue unchanged, except that your room will now have three teams rather than two competing for rewards.

Q: I have used the Good Behavior Game for a while and have found it to be effective. But lately it doesn't seem to have the same impact on my students. What do you recommend?

If the Good Behavior Game appears to be losing effectiveness over time, be sure that you are consistently noting and assigning team points for inappropriate behaviors and that you are avoiding verbal arguments with students. It is very important that points be assigned consistently when you witness inappropriate behavior; otherwise, the Game may not bring about the expected behavioral improvement among your students. Teachers using the Game sometimes find it helpful to have another adult familiar with the Good Behavior Game observe them and offer feedback about their consistency in assigning points and success in avoiding negative verbal exchanges with students.

### References

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### Behavior Contracts

The behavior contract is a simple positive-reinforcement intervention that is widely used by teachers to change student behavior. The behavior contract spells out in detail the expectations

### <u>Jim's</u> Hints for Using... **Behavior Contracts**

Behavior contracts can be useful when the student has



behavioral
problems in school
locations other than
the classroom (e.g.,
art room,
cafeteria). Once a

behavior contract has proven effective in the classroom, the instructor can meet with the student to extend the terms of the contract across multiple settings. Adults in these other school locations would then be responsible for rating the student's behaviors during the time that the student is with them.

For example, a goal may be stated in the contract that a student "will participate in class activities, raising his hand, and being recognized by the classroom or specials teacher before offering an answer or comment." Art, gym, or library instructors would then rate the student's behaviors in these out-of-class settings and share these ratings with the classroom teacher.

of student and teacher (and sometimes parents) in carrying out the intervention plan, making it a useful planning document. Also, because the student usually has input into the conditions that are established within the contract for earning rewards, the student is more likely to be motivated to abide by the terms of the behavior contract than if those terms had been imposed by someone else.

### Steps in Implementing This Intervention

The teacher decides which specific behaviors to select for the behavior contract. When possible, teachers should define behavior targets for the contract in the form of positive, pro-academic or pro-social behaviors. For example, an instructor may be concerned that a student frequently calls out answers during lecture periods without first getting permission from the teacher to speak. For the contract, the teacher's concern that the student talks out may be restated positively as "The student will participate in class lecture and discussion, raising his hand and being recognized by the teacher before offering an answer or comment." In many instances, the student can take part in selecting positive goals to increase the child's involvement in, and motivation toward, the behavioral contract.

The teacher meets with the student to draw up a behavior contract. (If appropriate, other school staff members and perhaps the student's parent(s) are invited to participate as well.) The teacher next meets with the student to draw up a behavior contract. The contract should include:

a listing of student behaviors that are to be reduced or increased. As stated above, the student's behavioral goals should usually be stated in positive, goal-oriented terms. Also, behavioral definitions should be described in sufficient detail to prevent disagreement about student compliance.

The teacher should also select target behaviors that are easy to observe and verify. For instance completion of class assignments is a behavioral goal that can be readily evaluated. If the teacher selects the goal that a child "will not steal pens from other students", though, this goal will be very difficult to observe and confirm.

a statement or section that explains the minimum conditions under which the student will

earn a point, sticker, or other token for showing appropriate behaviors. For example, a contract may state that "Johnny will add a point to his Good Behavior Chart each time he arrives at school on time and hands in his completed homework assignment to the teacher."

- the conditions under which the student will be able to redeem collected stickers, points, or other tokens to redeem for specific rewards. A contract may state, for instance, that "When Johnny has earned 5 points on his Good Behavior Chart, he may select a friend, choose a game from the play-materials shelf, and spend 10 minutes during free time at the end of the day playing the game."
- bonus and penalty clauses (optional). Although not required, bonus and penalty clauses
  can provide extra incentives for the student to follow the contract. A bonus clause usually
  offers the student some type of additional 'pay-off' for consistently reaching behavioral
  targets. A penalty clause may prescribe a penalty for serious problem behaviors; e.g., the
  student disrupts the class or endanger the safety of self or of others.
- areas for signature. The behavior contract should include spaces for both teacher and student signatures, as a sign that both parties agree to adhere to their responsibilities in the contract. Additionally, the instructor may want to include signature blocks for other staff members (e.g., a school administrator) and/or the student's parent(s).

# Troubleshooting: How to Deal With Common Problems in Using Behavior Contracts

Q: What do I do if I find that the behavior contract fails to work?

There may be several possible explanations why a behavior contract is ineffective:

- Students may not be invested in abiding by the terms of the contract because they did not have a significant role in its creation. If this is the case, students should be consulted and their input should be incorporated into a revised contract.
- The rewards that can be earned through the contract may not sufficiently motivate students to cause them to change their behavior. The teacher should review the list of rewards with students, note those rewards that students indicate they would find most appealing, and revise the reward list to include choices selected by the students.
- Points and rewards may not be awarded frequently enough to motivate the student. Each person reacts in his or her own way to reward systems such as behavior contracts; some must have rewards delivered at a frequent rate in order for those rewards to have power sufficient to shape these students' behavior. The instructor can try altering the contract to increase the rate at which points and rewards are given to see if these changes increase student motivation to follow the behavior contract. (NOTE: Once the behavior contract proves effective, the teacher can gradually cut back the rate of rewards to a level that is

more easily managed.)

Q: How do I respond if the student starts to argue with me about the terms of the contract?

It is not unusual--especially when a behavior contract is first introduced--for the teacher and student to have honest disagreements about the interpretation of its terms. If this occurs, the teacher will probably want to have a conference with the student to clarify the contract's language and meaning. Occasionally, though, students may continue to argue with the instructor about alleged unfairness in how the teacher enforces the contract--even after the teacher has attempted to clarify the contract's terms. If the student becomes overly antagonistic, the teacher may simply decide to suspend the contract because it is not improving the student's behavior. Or the instructor may instead add a behavioral goal or penalty clause to the contract that the student will not argue with the teacher about the terms or enforcement of the contract.

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### About: Elementary Educators

### **How to Create a Behavior Contract**

From Beth Lewis,

Your Guide to Elementary Educators.

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You know the kids I'm talking about. Every teacher has at least one challenging child in her class, a student who needs extra structure and incentive to change bad behavior habits. These aren't bad kids, just children who need a little extra love and support. Perhaps they come from rough home environments, maybe no one's ever <i>really</i> loved them before. Whatever the problem, such students can disrupt learning in your classroom, putting thoughts of early retirement into your head on a daily basis!

One way to get this problem under control is through a behavior contract. A behavior contract is an agreement between the teacher, student, and the student's parents that sets limits for student behavior, rewards good choices, and outlines consequences for bad choices. This type of program sends a clear message to the child that "This behavior can not continue. Here is what we need to see from you and here is what you will see in response to your choices in the classroom,"

First, make a plan for change. Use this <u>Behavior Contract form</u> as a guide for the meeting you will soon have with the student and his/her parents. Tailor the form to your particular situation, taking into consideration the personality and preferences of the child you are helping.

Next, hold a meeting with the involved parties. Perhaps your school has an assistant principal in charge of discipline; if so, invite this person, too. The student and his/her parents should attend as well.

Focus on 1-2 particular behaviors that you would like to see change. Don't try to change everything at once. Take baby steps toward major improvement so that it feels more "do-able" to the child. Also, the parents will feel less defensive towards you if you make it seem like there's only a little "fine-tuning" to be done. Make it clear that you called this meeting because you care about this child and want to see him/her improve in school this year. Emphasize that the parent, student, and teacher are all part of the same team. Convey that "I can't do it without you. We're all in this together."

Define the tracking method to be used on a daily basis for monitoring student behavior. Describe the rewards and consequences that correlate with behavior choices. Be very specific and clear in this area. Use quantitative numbers wherever possible. Involve the parents in providing the rewards and consequences, taking much of the pressure of enforcement out of your hands. Constant school-to-home communication will go a long way towards significant progress with this child. Make sure that the chosen consequences are truly important to this particular child; you can even ask the child for input which will make him/her buy into the process even further. Have all involved parties sign the agreement and end the meeting on a positive note.

Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss progress and make adjustments to the plan as needed. The follow-up meeting should be in 2-6 weeks, depending upon your assessment of the situation. Let the child know that the group will be meeting again soon to discuss progress.

In the meantime, be very consistent with this child in the classroom. Stick to the wording of the behavior contract agreement to a "t." When the child makes good behavior choices, heap sincere praise upon him/her. When the child makes not so good choices, do not be apologetic; if needed, pull out the contract and review the terms that were agreed upon. Emphasize the positives that come along with good behavior choices and help the child to get used to new habits of good behavior.

Most of all, be patient. Do not give up on this child. While you may feel like pulling your hair out right now, as you see the child grow and develop, you may find this relationship to be one of the most rewarding of your teaching career. Such children often need extra love and positive attention so don't let your frustrations get the best of you.

You might be surprised at the huge feeling of relief that all involved parties feel just by having an agreed-upon plan. Now that you all know how to proceed, a happy ending is in sight. Use your teacher's intuition to start yourself on a more peaceful and

# Steps for Implementing a Contract

- 1. Set a time to meet with the student individually.
- 2. Define the terms of the contract (what is required before an exchange of reinforcement for the behavior is given)
- 3. Select the reinforcers.
- contract is not working, if child is unmotivated, if child gets work 4. Determine if a penalty or bonus clause is needed (penalty only if done but very slowly, etc.).
- 5. Put it in writing!

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Name:	
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Signatures:	1 400

A Company

### **Lunchroom Contract**

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	Sign here		Date
		(Teacher)	Date

Lunchroom Record:	"+" = Criteria Met, "-" = Criteria Not Met
Monday Tuesday	Wednesday Thursday Friday

### Reward





See page 67 for suggestions for use.

# Class Lunchroom Contract

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	(Teacher S	ignature)	Date

See page 69 for suggestions for use.

# Homework Contract

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# Amazing Turtles Leaping Hurdles

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# Achiever Beaver Contract

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See page 67 for suggestions for use.



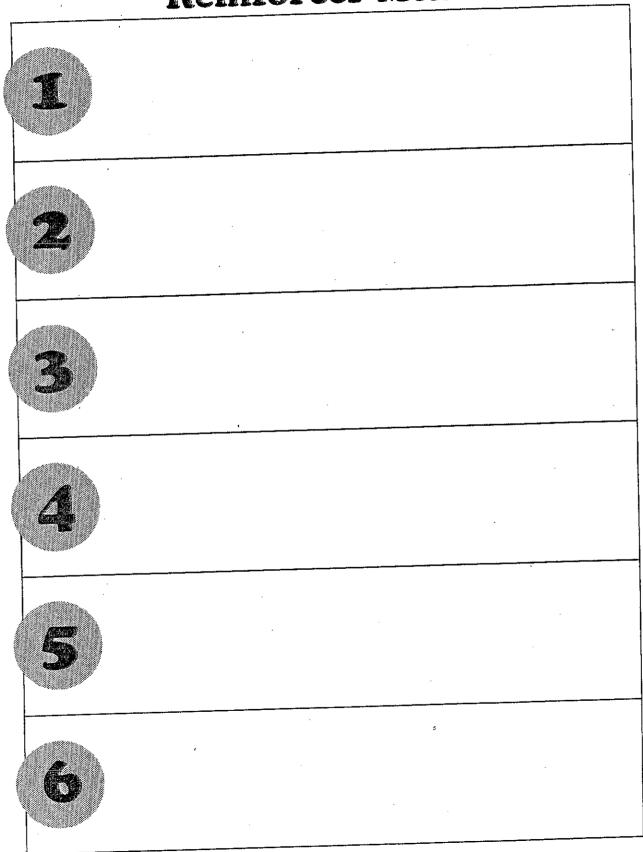
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l agree to:		
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If I meet these conditions by		
privilege(s):	(date)	
Contract default penalties:		
Perfect score/exceptional work bonus:		
Signed:	Witness:	
Parent:	Today's Date:	
	Witness:	



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# Reinforcer Menu



See page 119 for suggestions for use.

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### Contract

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See page 68 for suggestions for use.

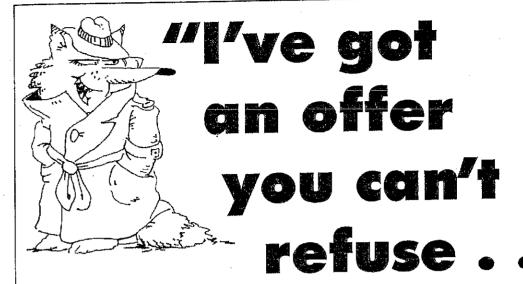
### Daily Contract

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On-Task	0 3 5	0 3 5	0 3 5	0 3 5	0 3 5	0 3 5
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Finished assigned work	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

0=3 or more warnings 3= 2 w Yes=5 points No=0 points	arnings	5=1 or no warnings	
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Perfect score/exceptional work bonus:	
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Parent:	Today's Date:



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# Recess Contract

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Lunch Recess:				
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Afternoon Recess:				
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T. P.VOOHOU				

See page 67 for suggestions for use.

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# Amazing Turtles Leaping Hurdles

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Student	
Teacher	
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See page 67 for suggestions for use.

# Achiever Beaver Contract

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See page 67 for suggestions for use.

### **Lunchroom Contract**

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See page 67 for suggestions for use.

### Class Lunchroom Contract

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Student Sign	atures:		
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The teacher agre	ees to see that the reward is	carried out.	
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		Signature)	Date

See page 69 for suggestions for use.

# Homework Contract

I,		, agree to complete	the
homework assignment(s) for the		:	
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with at least		% accuracy in	(#)
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# Recess Contract

Who		Date	
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or better ratings during			,
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Morning Recess:    Excellent  Lunch Recess:	☐ Good	OK.	□ Poor
□ Excellent	☐ Good	OK.	☐ Poor
Afternoon Recess:   Excellent	☐ Good	□ OK	Poor

See page 67 for suggestions for use.

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### Uses for Yes/No and Smiley/Frowny Tickets

- 1. Copy tickets and give to recess/prep time/office/cafeteria staff to help them monitor specific students. The student should be given a careful explanation that they will be observed during the out of home class activity and that they should go to the staff member to collect their ticket at the end of the period. The staff member should mark the ticket, briefly explain why the student got the rating they did, sign their name, and give the ticket to the student. The student takes the ticket to his/her teacher and receives the pre-determined consequence.
- 2. Teachers give the tickets to individual students frequently throughout the day. The student could have an envelope on their desk or a special box in their desk. At the end of the day, if the student has more "yes" marks or more "smileys" than "no" tickets or "frowns," the student earns a reinforcer (treasure box, grab bag, spinner, 5 minutes free time, stickers, extra points, etc.). The student could bring the tickets home daily to show their parents. If the student will struggle to manage the tickets, the envelope or box could be kept under the management of the teacher or a peer.
- 3. Principals carry the tickets in their pockets daily and hand out the tickets to student's who are either doing something really good or may need a little reminder. The principal simply comments on the behavior and signs the ticket. Though there is no secondary reinforcer, the attention and feedback from the principal is helpful for the students.
- 4. Teachers laminate the tickets and cut out in rows of 4. Tape the ticket row to a student desk. Mark off each ticket when a behavior is noted throughout the day. When all four are marked, the student shows the teacher and gets a pre-determined reinforcer if there are more positive marks, and gets a clean row of tickets if there are more negative marks (to try again). Mark the tickets frequently and remind the student that you are looking for certain positive behaviors. Use dry erase markers so you can re-use the tickets.

Yes/No Tickets

Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
ame:		Name:		Name:		Name:	
Yes	No	Tes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Jame:		Name:		Name:		Name:	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	. No
Name:		Name:		Name:		Name:	
Yes	. No	Yes	No	Tes	No	Yes	No
Name:	e e	Name:		Name:		Name:	

# Smiley/Frowny Tickets

5M1	GALLEA A	A 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11	
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name: