

How to Establish a School-Home Daily Report Card

An important part of all our school interventions with ADHD children is a school-home Daily Report Card (DRC). The DRC serves as a means of identifying, monitoring, and changing the child's classroom problems at the same time as it is a way for the parents and the teacher to regularly communicate. DRCs are highly motivating to the children if parents have selected the right rewards to give the child at home for reaching his daily goals. DRCs are always used in the context of other behavioral components (commands, praise, class rules). The following steps offer a guide for establishing a successful DRC.

Why use a DRC?

- Many studies have shown that DRCs are effective in changing ADHD children's behavior at school
- DRCs cost little and take little teacher time
- DRCs provide for daily communication between teachers and parents, which is critical
- DRCs provide positive reinforcement for a child who has already been singled out by other children
- DRCs reduce the need for notes home and phone calls to parents about discipline problems
- Once they are set up, DRCs reduce the amount of time that teachers must spend dealing with the child's problematic behaviors
- DRCs provide a tool for ongoing monitoring of the child's progress
- DRCs can be used to titrate the appropriate dose of medication, if medication is part of a child's treatment
- Daily, rather than weekly, reports are necessary because children with ADHD need specific feedback and rewards/consequences for their behavior more frequently than once per week

1. Select the Areas for Improvement:

- Involve all school staff who work with the child in a discussion of the child's behavior.
- Determine the child's greatest areas of impairment - areas that, if changed, would improve the child's major problems in daily life functioning and, if left unchanged, would have long-term negative consequences.
- Key domains: Improving peer relations (particularly decreasing aggression and other negative interactions), improving academic work (task completion and accuracy), and improving classroom rule-following and relationships with adults (e.g., compliance with adult commands/requests).
- Define the goals toward which the child should be working in terms of these areas of impairment.

2. Determine How the Goals will be Defined:

- Identify specific behaviors that can be changed to facilitate progress towards the goals. These will be called "target behaviors" (see attached list of Sample School-Home Daily Report Card Targets)
- When establishing target behaviors, remember:
 - As with general goals, target behaviors must be meaningful behaviors that will help the child reach his goals.
 - Target behaviors must be very clearly defined in a way that the child, teacher, and parents all understand.
 - Target behaviors must be able to be observed and counted by the teacher and child.
 - A good DRC will contain between 3 and 5 target behaviors, depending on the child's age and ability.
- Examples of target behaviors in the domain of improving peer relationships:

- does not interrupt other children during their work time
- does not tease other children
- plays without fighting at recess
- Examples of target behaviors in the domain of improving academic work:
 - has materials and assignments necessary to do tasks
 - completes assigned academic tasks
 - is accurate on assigned tasks
 - completes and returns homework
- Examples of target behaviors in the domain of improving classroom rule following and relationships with adults:
 - obeys the teacher when commands are given
 - does not talk back to the teacher
 - follows classroom rules
- Additional target behaviors are listed in the attached sheet, Sample School-Home Report Card Targets. Appropriate target behaviors may be selected from the list. If the child's problems are not listed on the sheet, then they should be defined in a similar manner to those on the list.

3. Decide on Behaviors and Criteria for the Daily Report Card:

- Estimate about how often a child is doing the target behaviors (e.g., how often a child typically disobeys, how often the child turns in homework, how many assignments are completed).
 - Use existing records if available (e.g., assignment books, grades on assignments)
 - If a good estimate cannot be made, use information from intake and last year's teacher if child is new to the classroom.
- Use these estimates or records to determine which behaviors need to be included on the report and to determine the initial criteria that will be used to define success on the report.
- Don't include too many behaviors—3 to 5 are good to start, depending on the child's age and abilities.
- Target behaviors need to be evaluated at several intervals throughout the day (e.g., after each class, see sample DRC below) to give the child frequent behavioral feedback and multiple chances to earn yeses throughout the day.
- Frequent feedback is especially important for younger children.
- Feedback on the DRC at natural break times (e.g., activity or class changes) is best for teachers and children (see sample DRC).
- Within the intervals on the DRC, children should receive feedback immediately when the behavior occurs.
- Only include targets that are significant to the child's improvement – if records show that the child does not interrupt as often as you thought, do not include interruption of other children as a target behavior.
- Set a reasonable criterion for each target behavior. A criterion is a target level the child will have to meet in order to be receive a positive mark for that behavior.
 - A good criterion is one that the child can earn between 80% to 90% of the time.
 - Set initial criteria at a rate slightly better than what the child is doing now to encourage improvement (e.g., 20% improvement).
 - Remember that the goals need to be feasible and within reach as perceived by both the child and the teacher.
 - Set criteria to be met for each part of the day, not the overall day (e.g., "interrupts fewer than 2 times in each class period" rather than "interrupts fewer than 12 times per day").
- Use the attached blank "Daily Report Card" to make the DRC.

4. Explain the Daily Report Card to the Child:

- Meet with teacher, parents and child (can be separate meetings).
- Explain all aspects of the DRC to the child in a positive manner.
 - Explain that the DRC will be used to help him focus on the important things during the day that are giving him problems and to learn how to overcome those problems.
 - Explain that he will be earning rewards for his behavior and performance at school to help him learn, and that he will be working with his parents to choose rewards.
 - Explain the procedure that will be used with the report card.

5. Establish a Home-Based Reward System: The rewards provide the motivation for the child to work towards a good DRC, and they are thus a necessary component of the program.

- Consult with the child's parents to ensure that the child's parents have an effective reward system established at home to reinforce the child for positive performance reflected in the DRC.
- Rewards must be selected by the child (in consultation with the parents).
- Rewards should be natural (that is, not artificially added),
 - For example, a child's access to television, which was previously "free" or noncontingent, can be made contingent on receiving a positive DRC.
- Rewards should be arranged such that fewer or less preferred rewards can be earned for fewer positive marks, and more or more desired rewards are earned for better performance (see sample DRC Parent Reward List):
 - Larger rewards can be achieved by giving the child more of the same reward: e.g., the child could earn 15 minutes of video game time for each behavior on which he reached criterion on the DRC, up to a full hour.
 - A bonus could be included for having reached criterion on all applicable behaviors.
- To ensure variety and maintain motivation, the child should be given a menu of rewards at each level from which he can select—e.g., 15 minutes of television or comparable periods of video games or bicycle riding, or choice of dessert (see attached "Sample Child Reward Form" and blank copy).
- Make an individualized menu of rewards starting with the list on the "Sample Home Rewards" sheet.
- Give the different levels of the system child-appropriate names (e.g., One Star Day, Two Star Day, Three Star Day).
- Establish both daily rewards and weekly rewards for cumulative performance.
- Use the attached Weekly Daily Report Card Chart to track performance over the week.
- Long-term rewards in addition to daily and weekly rewards are a good idea. For example, if the parent plans to buy the child something of large monetary value (e.g., a new bicycle), that could be used as a long-term reward. A picture of the bicycle could be cut into pieces and the child could earn a piece of the picture each week, with the purchase being made when the picture puzzle is complete.
- Finally, some (especially young) children need rewards more immediately than end-of-the-day rewards at home. In that case, if trouble-shooting supports it (see below), in-school rewards can be employed as necessary periodically throughout the school day (see attached "Sample Classroom Based Rewards").

6. Monitor and Modify the Program:

- Keep daily records of how often the child is receiving Yeses on each target.
- Gradually shape the child into increasingly appropriate behavior by making his criteria harder once he has begun to meet the criterion regularly (e.g., if he is able to meet a target of "3 or fewer rule violations per period" 90% of the time over 5 days, reduce the number to 2 or fewer rule violations per period), or if child regularly fails to meet criteria, make his criteria easier.
- Remember to combine the report with appropriate social reinforcement:

- Praise the child sincerely for good days and good efforts.
- Respond matter-of-factly (not negatively) to missed targets with an encouraging statement about the next day.
- Once the criterion for a target is at an acceptable level (i.e., that of typical children in the classroom) and the child is consistently reaching it (>90% of the time), drop that target behavior from the report. Tell the child he is doing so well that he doesn't need to have the target any longer.
- Replace it with another target if there are other areas of impairment that need intervention.
- If a child consistently fails to meet a criterion (<67%), and the monitoring clinician determines that the criterion was set at too difficult a level based on teacher impairment ratings, the criterion may be made easier one time after the initial establishment and calibration of a target.

7. Trouble-shooting a Daily Report Card: If the system is not working to change the child's behavior, examine the program and make changes where appropriate. The attached table entitled "Trouble Shooting a DRC" lists a number of possible problems and appropriate solutions for those problems.

8. Consider Other Treatments: If, even after trouble-shooting and modification, the DRC is not sufficient to result in maximal improvement, consider additional behavioral components (e.g., more frequent praise, time out) and/or more powerful or intensive behavioral procedures (e.g., a point system). If classroom resources make more potent behavioral interventions prohibitive and parental preferences allow it, adjunctive stimulant medication can be considered.

Sample School-Home Daily Report Card Targets

Academic Productivity

- Completes X assignments within the specified time
- Completes X assignments with X% accuracy
- Starts work with X or fewer reminders
- Leaves appropriate spaces between words X% of the time or assignment
- Writes legibly/uses 1 line crossouts instead of scribbles/writes on the lines of the paper
- Corrects assignments appropriately*
- Turns in assignments appropriately*

Following Classroom Rules

- Follows class/school rules with X or fewer violations
- Interrupts class less than X times per period/works quietly with X or fewer reminders/Makes X or fewer inappropriate noises
- Follows directions with X or fewer repetitions
- Stays on task with X or fewer reminders
- Sits appropriately* in assigned area with X or fewer reminders
- Raises hand to speak with X or fewer reminders
- Uses materials or possessions appropriately*
- Has XX or fewer instances of stealing
- Has XX or fewer instances of cursing
- Has X or fewer instances of complaining/crying/whining
- Has XX or fewer instances of lying
- Has XX or fewer instances of destroying property

Peer Relationships

- Shares/helps peers when appropriate with X or fewer reminders
- Ignores negative behavior of others/Child shows no observable response to negative behavior of others
- Teases peers X or fewer times per period
- Fewer than X fights with peers
- Speaks clearly (fewer than X prompts for mumbling)
- Contributes to discussion (answers X questions orally)
- Contributes to discussion (at least X unprompted, relevant, nonredundant contributions)
- Fewer than X negative self comments
- Minds own business with XX or fewer reminders
- Needs XX or fewer reminders to stop bossing peers
- Does not bother other children during seatwork (fewer than X complaints from others)

Teacher Relationships

- Accepts feedback appropriately* (no more than X arguments/X% of arguments) following feedback
- Appropriately* asks an adult for help when needed
- Maintains appropriate eye contact when talking to an adult with X/fewer than X prompts to maintain eye contact
- Respects Adults (talks back fewer than X times per period)
- Complies with X% of teacher commands/requests/Fewer than X noncompliances per period

Behavior Outside the Classroom

- Follows rules at lunch/recess/free time/gym/specials/assemblies/bathroom/in hallway with X or fewer rule violations
- Walks in line appropriately*/Follows transition rules with X or fewer violations
- Follows rules of the bus with X or fewer violations
- Needs XX or fewer warnings for exhibiting bad table manners (e.g., playing with food, chewing with mouth open, throwing trash on the floor)
- Changes into gym clothes/school clothes within X:XX minutes.

Time Out Behavior

- Serves time outs appropriately*
- Child serves a time out without engaging in inappropriate behaviors
- While serving a timeout, the child exhibits no more than X instances of negative behavior

Responsibility for Belongings

- Brings DRC to teacher for feedback before leaving for the next class/activity
- Responsible for own belongings (has belongings at appropriate* times according to checklist/chart**)
- Has materials necessary for class/subject area
- Organizes materials and possessions according to checklist/chart**
- Morning routine completed according to checklist/chart**
- End of day routine completed appropriately according to checklist/chart**
- Brings supplies to class with xx or fewer reminders/brings supplies to class according to checklist/chart**
- Hangs up jacket/backpack with XX or fewer reminders
- Takes lunchtime pill with X or fewer reminders
- Has only materials needed for the assignment on desk.

Homework

- Brings completed homework to class
- Writes homework in assignment book with X or fewer reminders
- DRC is returned signed the next day by parent
- Has all needed materials for homework in backpack at the end of the day

**Appropriately* must always be defined by teacher for child

**Checklist/chart must accompany target behavior and be displayed for child

Sample Home Rewards

Daily Rewards

Snacks
Dessert after dinner
Staying up X minutes beyond bedtime
Having a bedtime story/Reading with a parent for X minutes
Choosing radio station in car
Extra bathtub time for X minutes
Educational games on computer for X minutes
Choosing family T.V. show
Talking on phone to friend (local call)
Video game time for X minutes
Playing outside for X minutes
Television time for X minutes
Listening to radio/stereo for X minutes
Other as suggested by child

Daily or Weekly Rewards

Going over to a friend's house to play
Having a friend come over to play
Allowance
Bike riding/skating/scooter/skateboarding (in neighborhood for daily reward; longer trip with family or at bike trail/skatepark for weekly reward)
Special activity with mom or dad
Special time with mom or dad for X minutes
Earn day off from chores
Game of choice with parent/family
Other as suggested by child

Weekly Rewards

Making a long distance call to relatives or friends
Going to the video arcade at the mall
Going fishing
Going shopping/going to the mall
Going to the movies
Going to the park
Getting ice cream
Bowling, miniature golf
Selecting something special at the store
Making popcorn
Having friend over to spend night
Going to friend's to spend night
Choosing family movie
Renting movie video
Going to a fast-food restaurant with parent and/or family
Watching taped T.V. shows
Other as suggested by child

Notes: Older children could save over weeks to get a monthly (or longer) reward as long as visuals (e.g., pieces of picture of activity) are used; e.g., camping trip with parent, trip to baseball game, purchase of a videogame cartridge. Rewards for an individual child need to be established as a menu. Children may make multiple choices from the menu for higher levels of reward, or may choose a longer period of time for a given reward.

Sample School Rewards

The following rewards can be added to the home-based reward system. It may sometimes be necessary to provide school-based rewards when the child is not responding appropriately to the home-based system (see "Troubleshooting a Daily Report Card" sheet), particularly for younger children who require more immediate rewards. Such rewards can bridge the gap between meeting behavioral criteria during the day and the rewards that the child earns at home. Remember that these items are usually reinforcing to most children. However, what is reinforcing to one child may not be reinforcing to another. Teachers need to make sure that a child wants one of these potential reinforcers and will work for it before the reinforcer is used. Children should be given a menu of rewards from which to choose.

1. Free time for X minutes
2. Talk to best friend
3. Listen to tape player (with headphones)
4. Read a book
5. Help clean up classroom
6. Clean the erasers
7. Wash the chalkboard
8. Be teacher's helper
9. Eat lunch outside on a nice day
10. Extra time at recess
11. Write on chalk board
12. Use magic markers
13. Draw a picture
14. Choose book to read to the class
15. Read to a friend
16. Read with a friend
17. Care for class animals
18. Play "teacher"
19. See a movie/filmstrip
20. Decorate bulletin board
21. Be messenger for office
22. Grade papers
23. Have treats
24. Earn class party
25. Class field trip
26. Student of the Day/Month
27. Pop popcorn
28. Be a line leader
29. Visit the janitor
30. Use the computer
31. Make ice cream sundaes
32. Teach a classmate
33. Choose stickers
34. Take a good note home
35. Receive a positive phone call
36. Give lots of praise
37. Hide a special note in desk
38. Choose seat for specific time
39. Playing card games
40. Receive award certificate
41. Take Polaroid pictures
42. Draw from "grab bag"
43. Eat at special table
44. Visit the principal

Sample Child Reward Form

Child's Name: Johnny S.

Date: 9/18/2006

Daily Rewards:

Level 3 (50-74% positive marks): Choose 1 thing from daily menu

Level 2 (75-89% positive marks): Choose 2 things from daily menu

Level 1 (90-100% positive marks): Choose 3 things from daily menu

Weekly Rewards

Level 3 (50-74% positive marks): Choose 1 thing from weekly menu

Level 2 (75-89% positive marks): Choose 2 things from weekly menu

Level 1 (90-100% positive marks): Choose 3 things from weekly menu

Trouble-shooting a Daily Report Card

Problem	Solution
Is the child taking the report card home?	<p>Ensure that the child has a backpack or special folder in which to carry DRC.</p> <p>Have the teacher for last class of the day prompt the child to take DRC home.</p> <p>Assume the child received a negative report if he or she does not have DRC.</p> <p>Implement positive consequences for bringing home DRC.</p>
<p>Are the target behaviors appropriate?</p> <p>Are the target behaviors clearly defined for the child?</p> <p>Are the target behaviors meaningful/socially valid?</p> <p>Can the target behaviors be reasonably attained in the classroom context?</p>	<p>Redefine the target behaviors for the child.</p> <p>Change the target behaviors.</p> <p>Modify the target behaviors or class context (e.g., "gets along with peers" should not be a target if the class structure does not provide the opportunity for peer interactions).</p>
Does the child remember the target behaviors throughout the day?	Implement a system of visual prompts (e.g., put task sheet on desk).
Are the criteria for success realistic (e.g., not too high or too low relative to baseline)?	Make the criteria easier or harder for the child as necessary based on performance.
Is something interfering with the child reaching the criteria (e.g., child does not complete assignments due to messy, disorganized desk)?	Work on removing the impediment (e.g., work on improving organizational skills, modify class schedule or structure).
<p>Does the child understand the system?</p> <p>Can the child accurately describe the target behaviors and criteria for positive evaluations?</p> <p>Can the child accurately describe the relationship between the criteria and the rewards?</p>	<p>Implement a system of visual prompts, if necessary. Review system with child until child can accurately describe system. Increase frequency of reviewing if child continues to have difficulty.</p> <p>Explain the DRC system to the child again. Simplify the DRC system if necessary.</p>
<p>Is the monitoring system working properly?</p> <p>Have the target behaviors been sufficiently clearly defined that the teacher can monitor and evaluate them?</p> <p>Is the monitoring and recording process sufficiently efficient that the teacher is doing it accurately and consistently?</p>	<p>Clarify the definitions of the target behaviors.</p> <p>Provide visual or auditory prompts for recording. Simplify the monitoring and recording process.</p>
Can the child accurately monitor his or her progress throughout the day?	Design and implement a monitoring system that includes a recording form for the child (may include visual or auditory prompts).
Is the child receiving sufficient feedback so that he or she knows where he or she stands regarding the criteria?	Modify teacher's procedures for providing feedback to the child (e.g., provide visual prompts, increase immediacy, frequency, or contingent nature of feedback).
<p>Is the home-based reward system working properly?</p> <p>Are the home-based rewards motivating for the child?</p> <p>Has it been ensured the child does not receive the reward noncontingently?</p> <p>Are the parents delivering the rewards reliably?</p> <p>Can the child delay gratification long enough for home-based rewards to be effective?</p>	<p>Change the home-based rewards (e.g., increase the number of choices on menu, change the hierarchy of rewards).</p> <p>Review reward procedures with parents again and ensure that reward is provided only when child has earned it.</p> <p>Modify the procedures for delivering the home-based rewards (e.g., visual prompts) or the nature of the home-based rewards.</p> <p>Design and implement procedures for providing school-based rewards.</p>