The Benefits of Implementing a Reward System

by BRENDA VANTA

Influence of a Reward System

Nobel Prize winner Dr. Ivan Pavlov helped us better understand the importance of the reward system on how we learn and condition our minds. His experiment is simple: initially, he struck a bell when the dogs were fed. If the bell rings were closely associated with the meal, the dogs learned to correlate the bell with food. After some time, just the bell ring alone made the dogs drool even without seeing the food.

Pavlov's Experiment Applied in Humans

Although humans enjoy far more complex processes of the mind, they will respond in similarly to Pavlov's dog. If you associate a certain task with pleasure, you will look forward to experiencing similar feelings again and complete that task more often (the opposite is also true). Parents know that creating a reward system when the child with ADHD has good behavior will help them because they will try again to behave properly to achieve the same reward again. If, however, the parents complain about how the child performs at school, losing attention when doing homework or being agitated, the child will not be happy and likely not be motivated to correct the problem.

Raising a child with ADHD can be challenging. As a parent, you need lots of patience, practice and love. Their symptoms impair the ability to think clearly, focus and control their emotions. Keep Pavlov's experiment in mind and add more fun, rewarding things to your child's life.

With or without ADHD, a child needs to have fun and be engaged in interesting activities. Focusing solely on how to learn better or improve behavior will increase the child's boredom, which can further aggravate the symptoms.

Make daily plans and include fun activities. KidPoints, for example, is a company that uses different tools for both children and parents to create a fun, engaging environment. Children learn new skills and better behaviors and are rewarded with interesting activities when they complete certain tasks. The result is obvious: children will repeat the same behavior to be rewarded again and again. Beyond creating the Pavlovian reflex, children will feel self-empowered when receiving rewards and supportive comments. This is very helpful for them, as many have low self-esteem and feel unworthy. Here are some tips for parents:

1. **Be specific and clear when you set up boundaries and rules:** The child needs to know what is expected every day and how to behave. The routine has to be consistent, but the daily activities should include some variety.
2. **Avoid criticism:** Focus on the positive things the child does, and use the reward system to motivate the child to repeat good behaviors or activities.
3. **Make the child's activities more interesting and engaging:** For example, get the child involved in various sports like tennis, swimming or soccer. The creative side can be developed by learning how to play an instrument, listening to music or drawing.
4. **Social life is important:** A child with ADHD will do much better when he has support and is involved in

various activities with family and friends.

5. **Regular visits to a psychotherapist or psychologist are important:** Healthcare professionals use the reward system to engage the child to feel better and improve the symptoms.