

Program-Wide Incentives

Research indicates that incentives and rewards, rather than punishments, are more effective in bringing about desired behavior changes and that incentives are especially effective with adolescents (but also produce positive results with adults). All justice system programs serving youth are encouraged to use a program of incentives and sanctions to help youthful offenders engage in pro-social behavior and desist from engaging in anti-social behavior. A goal for any program seeking to bring about behavior change when using a combination of incentives and sanctions is to promote a ratio of 4 incentives to every 1 sanction (4:1). To create many opportunities for “success” with behavior change (youth engaging in desired behavior and being recognized and rewarded for it), program staff are encouraged to be creative in identifying a wide range of behaviors that are desired (from “small” – such as a youth using polite language like “thank you,” to large, like earning a high school diploma) and in using a great variety of rewards (from points to gift cards, certificates, and early release from the program) to reinforce desired behavior

One approach to creating and administering an incentives program is to create “program-wide incentives.” These are positive consequences that youths/families receive for desired behavior but are necessarily individualized, (i.e., not tied to what a specific youth or families has identified as constituting a reward) but may be something that youths or families in general value and find motivating, for example, receiving a gas card or movie passes. This type of “program-wide” incentive can be granted on a lottery basis with everyone who has exhibited some desired behavior having a chance at winning. Program-wide incentives help motivate youth and families to engage in your program, help youth advance through your program, and promote a strength-based atmosphere for youth and families. This approach to incentives (especially when it includes a lottery or drawing) can also help stretch a program’s incentives dollars.

Juvenile Drug Courts (JDCs) use a variety of program-wide incentives to promote a positive environment for behavior change. Examples include a fishbowl drawing for parents in which parents put their name on a “ticket” and place it in a fishbowl when they exhibit specific behavior – e.g., arrive to court on time. At a specified time interval (e.g., every two weeks or every three weeks), a drawing of one parent’s ticket from the fishbowl occurs and the parent receives a reward of some kind (gas card, gift card etc.). Another use of the fishbowl drawing is for program staff to put a caregiver’s or youth’s name on ticket for “being caught doing something good” (with the “something good” described on the ticket) and place the ticket in the fishbowl. At a specific time interval, a drawing of one parent’s or one youth’s ticket from the fishbowl occurs and the individual receives a reward of some kind. A third program-wide incentive is the “3 to Score” incentive, where all program youths are asked to complete 3 specified behaviors (e.g., come to court on time, bring to court their prepared weekly report, *and* bring to court their folder). Each youth who completes all three of these behaviors places his or her name on a ticket that goes into the fishbowl. As in the other examples, at a specified interval, there is a drawing. A variant on this is to leverage peer pressure in a positive way to make the reward a *group incentive*. The peer-pressure incentive uses marbles and a mason jar. Every week in which *all* youth complete their three behaviors, a marble goes into a mason jar. When the mason jar is full of marbles, the youth receive a *group prize* – like a pizza party or an outing of some kind.

Build Your Own “3 to Score”

“3 to Score”¹

“3 to Score” helps JDC teams define a component of their incentives and sanctions and craft a systematic, consistent, fair, and attainable way of administering incentives to youth and families. It also creates avenues of communication between the judge and each individual participant, as well as family members. “3 to Score” uses the Fish Bowl and a drawing.

PROGRAM BASICS

Each time the youth appears before the judge during JDC, the judge will ask the youth if he/she has his/her “3 to Score.” The “3 to Score” are requirements and/or tasks that each youth must bring, pass, or complete between each court appearance. The tasks should be determined by the JDC team and clearly explained to each participant and family. Below is a sample that has been used by other courts:

1. Did you pass all of your UAs since your last appearance in court?
2. Did you bring your JDC folder with planner and JDC participant handbook (the planner would be an excellent place to keep weekly behavior contracts)?
3. Did you make the minimum number of face-to-face contacts since your last court appearance (or were you excused by your case worker)?

Be sure to let youth know in advance what is in the reward bowl, so youths know what they could win if they work hard. Every time the participant has accomplished all three tasks, he or she puts a card with his or her name on it in a bowl. A drawing is then held once per month (i.e., the first Wednesday of each month); depending on what day of the week court is held. Whatever youth’s name is drawn wins the prize for that month. It is suggested to have two bowls, one for the youth names to be drawn and one for the reward items to be drawn.

TIPS

- Have youth fill out a form (or complete with staff) that indicates what types of incentives/rewards he or she would like to have a chance to draw for.
- Make sure each participant has an opportunity to participate (i.e., don’t select tasks that only a few JDC participants are engaged in – like getting/having a job)
- Incorporate a way for youth to be able to add extra cards for more chances to win (e.g., for increased school attendance, helping out at home, or finding employment). Determine in advance which team members can do this and for what. Will you allow parents to add additional cards (may be a way to get some buy-in from the parents)?
- Don’t put a limit on the amount of cards the youth may be able to earn each week.
- Make sure the items in the reward bowl have significant value for the youth and their families.
- This is a component of an incentive program. Be sure to work with youth and families to develop other individualized incentives and sanctions that connect with individual behavior goals (visit NCJFCJ’s website to download examples of weekly behavior contracts at www.NCJFCJ.org).
- As a team, complete the Community Partnership Mapping form to help fill up the reward bowl (visit NCJFCJ’s website to download a Community Map at www.NCJFCJ.org).
- The judge is encouraged to engage the youth during this process. Ask the youth how the process worked this week? Was it easier or harder? Why? Is there something in the bowl that you really have your eye on? How can we help you get your “3 to Score” every time?
- Consider having a separate bowl and requirements for the parents.

¹ NCJFCJ would like to thank the St. Croix County, Wisconsin Juvenile Treatment Court team for use of this Reward Program Template, as it is based off the program developed for their treatment court program.

Build Your Own “3 to Score”

1. The Monthly “3 to Score” drawing will be held on _____ day of the month, every month. Participants do not have to be present to win.

2. _____ is responsible for obtaining from program youth a list of rewards that youths are interested in drawing for.

3. _____ is responsible for obtaining the rewards (and will use the Community Partnership Mapping aids to assist with obtaining rewards) and for keeping track of when rewards need to be replenished.

4. _____ is responsible for creating/obtaining the drawing card/ticket to be completed with the youth’s name and for creating/obtaining the rewards card/ticket for the reward bowl.

5. _____ is responsible for creating a written explanation of “3 to Score” that will be given to youth and parents (and be included in the Clark County JDC Program’s Policies and Procedures Manual).

6. _____ is responsible for drawing the youth winner out of the bowl.

7. What three tasks do the youth need to accomplish between court appearances? (The three tasks can be the same regardless of the phase the youth is in, or be different depending on the phase)

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

8. How will task completion be verified?

9. Who can hand out extra cards and for what? When and how should this happen?

| 3 to Score | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Team Member or Parent | Youth Behavior or Accomplishment | How verified | When & How |
| Example: PO | No school tardies for a week. | School official calls PO. | PO calls youth to let him/her know that he/she achieved 1 of the “3 to Score” behaviors . |
| 1. | 1. | 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. | 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. | 3. | 3. |

(Note: consider giving extra cards as an incentive on weekly behavior contracts)

“THREE TO SCORE” EXAMPLE FOR FISHBOWL DRAWING

“3 TO SCORE”



1. Pass all UAs



2. Bring JTDC Notebook



3. Make all appointments/ contacts with case manager

Sample County JDC

Name: Jane B.

Date: 3.26.15

Completed all “3 to Score” tasks this week.
Well done!



ACTION PLAN

Topic/Practice: _____

| TASK | LEAD PERSON | RESOURCES OR INFORMATION NEEDED | TARGET COMPLETION DATE |
|------|-------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | |
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