



# Positive Outcomes, LLC Outreach

A newsletter for parents, providers, and the community

## This Month:

### For our families

It seems like only yesterday we were asking about summer plans, and now it is already time to talk about the back-to-school transition. If you have not already, please communicate with your BCBA supervisor about any changes to availability that will come with the start of the school year.

### In the community

Looking for a great way to celebrate back to school and beat the heat? The Pikes Peak Library district is hosting a free ice cream social -first come, first served while supplies last. Contact the library district for more information:

**8/10/24** Old Colorado City Library from 1-2pm and Ute Pass Library from 2:30-4:30pm

**8/16/24** High Prairie Library from 2-4pm

## Encouraging Success in Learners

Do you remember a time when you were eager to learn something new? Maybe it was something from when you were younger like learning to ride a bike. You may have been motivated to learn that skill because of the social connection with family and friends, the possibilities of adventure, and because it was fun! Think of learning to ride a bike for a moment. You likely didn't get on the bike and have success on your very first try. Like most people learning to ride a bike, you probably fell but you got back on your bike and were able to pedal a short distance. Over time when you fell and got back on the bike; you were able to pedal a bit farther. Yes, you fell, and that may have felt like "failure" but you experienced success as the distance you rode increased. That success continued to strengthen your motivation to persevere until you learned to ride a bike. This is an example of how motivation is influenced by our past learning experiences. Now imagine if the very first time you got on a bike when you tried to pedal, the pedals wouldn't move. If you experienced this every time you attempted to ride any bike, would you be motivated to continue to try and learn? Probably not. Learners are drawn to tasks and activities which they can associate with success. On the other hand, if a learner continuously receives feedback that they are doing something wrong or fail at every attempt of a task or activity, it can result in avoidance and feelings of frustration, failure, or overwhelm. Definitely not something you or anyone would want to experience in the learning process.

Understanding what motivates and reinforces behavior allows us to create an environment for learners that encourages continued success. Of course there will be moments learners experience challenges, as with falling off a bike, but how we provide supports and reinforcement can impact how our learners respond to challenges. So, what are some things you can do to motivate and encourage success in neurodivergent learners who have a variety of interests, needs and developmental challenges; particularly when presented with non-preferred tasks?

First, we must know what is interesting to the learner and what their strengths are. When we know what interests a person and the areas where they are successful, we can use this information to potentially motivate them and expand their skill repertoire. For example, if a learner loves to build with Legos but has difficulty with a basic addition worksheet, groups of different colored Legos can be used as a support tool to complete the homework.

Second, we need to provide encouragement. When adults provide tasks to learners, there is an outcome in mind. Unfortunately, feedback from adults is all too often on the final product and not the process. Yes, if your child is working on addition, there is only one correct sum for the equation but what are all the steps and successes your child experienced along the way to their mistaken answer? Is there genuine effort, persistence, and appropriate requests for help to acknowledge? Is this a task your child typically avoids and today they sat down without protesting? Celebrating small successes during the learning process can build intrinsic motivation and feelings of pride as well as confidence to keep trying.

Finally, try including positive reinforcement, an evidence-based practice, in the learning experience. Adding positive reinforcement after a specific behavior, such as the learner being able to add a piece to a Lego structure after completing a math problem, can increase the likelihood that your learner will repeat the behavior in the future under similar circumstances. See The Word Bird below for more examples on positive reinforcement. You can also connect with your supervising BCBA to have any of your questions answered on how to effectively provide positive reinforcement.



### Our featured team member: Skye Thomas

Who enjoys playing simulation video games in her free time where she can keep building her expansive farm with friends and raise virtual chickens.

One of Skye's favorite quotes: "You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." Winnie the Pooh

**What is your role with Positive Outcomes, LLC?** I am an RBT

**What do you enjoy most about being an RBT?** What I like most about being an RBT is teaching and playing with the kiddos as I am a big kid at heart!!



**What is the most rewarding part of your position?** Witnessing the progress the kiddos make and feedback from parents and caregivers are what I find most rewarding about being an RBT.

## The Word Bird



### **Positive Reinforcement**

This is when a stimulus is added to the environment immediately following a specific behavioral response. When the stimulus is added in the presence of the targeted behavior, it increases the likelihood of the targeted behavior occurring again in the

the future under similar conditions.

### **Examples:**

- A child is given the task to take out the garbage. They are given \$1 for the completion of the chore. The dollar is added immediately after the garbage is taken outside thus positively reinforcing the behavior.
- A learner requests an item from the adult instead of grabbing it out of the adults' hand and is given the item. The item is added immediately after the behavior of verbal requesting thereby positively reinforcing the behavior.
- A child begins to clean up their toys after instructed without protesting. The parent positively reinforces the behavior by giving specific verbal praise "great job cleaning up when I asked".



### **Connection Center**

*\*Resources are listed in alphabetical order and are not an endorsement or referral by Positive Outcomes, LLC but are provided as general information.*

The **American Autism Association** though in person services are for FL and NY residents, they offer online information kits and virtual workshop recordings. You can learn more on their website at

<https://www.myautism.org>

The **ARC of the Pikes Peak Region** offers social programs, advocacy support, guardianship programs, and succeeding in school and life programs. You can learn more on their website under their program tab.

<https://www.thearcpr.org/school-life/>

The **Autism Society of Colorado** offers online support groups for adults with autism, parents/caregivers of autistic children, autistic LGBTQ community, and for spouses/partners of autistic adults. They also offer social gathering opportunities for autistic teens and adults. You can learn more on their website under their program tab and events calendar.

<https://www.autismcolorado.org>

The **Autism Vision of Colorado** offers support groups for men, moms, teens, artists and gamers. Support groups have recurring dates. You can learn more on their website on the events calendar tab.

<https://www.autismvisionco.org>

The **Colorado Springs Down Syndrome Association** offers social groups and groups for dads, teens, young adults, new parents, and school age children. They also offer resources for families. You can learn more on their website under their program and resource tabs.

<https://csdsa.org>

The **Peak Parent Center** offers parent/family advocacy supports, educational supports, local and national disability specific organization information, and webinars/trainings. You can learn more on their website.

<https://www.peakparent.org>

[New to our organization or researching options and ready to learn more?](#)

For more information visit our website at [www.positiveoutcomesllc.com](http://www.positiveoutcomesllc.com)

Or call our office at: 719-344-8756 Monday-Friday 8am-6pm

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