



## Behavioral Interventions and Strategies Series:

### *Mystery Motivator*

Use the Mystery Motivator technique to provide random rewards and reinforcers for appropriate behavior. By randomizing reinforcement, students are unaware whether or not they will receive a reward for appropriate behavior and, therefore, are more likely to display appropriate behavior in case they will be rewarded.

#### *Prior to Implementation*

- Create a rewards menu using student input and gather all materials you will need to deliver rewards including a large envelope with question marks drawn on it to hold one piece of paper listing a single reward or an envelope or jar with multiple pieces of paper with a reward written on each to randomly select rewards
- Create weekly or monthly charts to denote which days will be reward days (invisible ink pens, post-it notes covering each day so students can't see which days are mystery reward days, an envelope for each day, etc.)
- Objectively and specifically define the behavior you want your students to increase or decrease
- Determine goals for earning a chance at a reward
- Teach students about the Mystery Motivator

#### *Implementation*

- Announce what behaviors are being observed for during the day or specific time and what the goal for earning a chance at a reward will be
- Record when students engage in inappropriate behavior (behavior decrease) or appropriate behavior (behavior increase)
- At the end of the day or specific time period, look to see if that day is a mystery reward day. If a mystery reward is noted on the calendar, provide reward to all students or teams that earned the reward. If there is no mystery reward for that day/time, praise all students who met the goal and provide encouragement for the next day/period.

#### *Keep in Mind*

- Begin using the Mystery Motivator with at least 3 days with a mystery reward each week and gradually decrease the number of days without a reward. Occasionally place reward days back-to-back.
- Provide frequent praise for appropriate behaviors
- Use a Bonus Square or Day as additional incentive—each week has a bonus number, at the end of the week all students who met the goal for a specific number of days that week will get an extra reward.
- Make it fun!

#### **References:**

Jensen, W. R., Rhode, G., & Reavis, H. K. (2009). *The Tough Kid Book*. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing.  
Rhode, G., Jensen, W. R., & Reavis, H. K. (2010). *The Tough Kid Book*. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing.