

Early Child Contingency Learning Checklist

Carl J. Dunst and Melinda Raab

This checklist includes practices for engaging young children in early learning games where reinforcing responses and interesting consequences from people, toys, and other materials are dependent on a child's behavior or actions. Learning games provide young children opportunities and experiences to learn the connections between what they do and what happens in response. A child's understanding of this behavior-consequence relationship is called contingency awareness and is manifested in terms of child excitement, smiling, laughter, and other social-emotional responses.

The checklist can be used to increase your understanding and use of early contingency learning games with young children with disabilities or developmental delays. It also can be used to plan or help a parent plan how to use early contingency learning games with a child to promote a child's ability to interact with people and materials. Finally, the checklist can be used to do a self-evaluation to examine the extent to which you are able to use the practices or have a colleague or coach provide feedback on your use of the checklist practice indicators.

Practitioner: _____ Child: _____ Date: _____

Which practice characteristics were you able to use?

	YES	NO	Notes
1. Observe the child in three to five everyday activities and record the types and frequency of child behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Query the child's parents and other caregivers about behavior the child manifests most often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. To identify child-specific reinforcers, identify the people, materials, activities, etc., that maintain the child's attention, and the things the child enjoys and prefers to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Develop four to six learning games where child-specific reinforcers (social, nonsocial, or both) are made available in response to a child's behavior or actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Identify at least four to six everyday activities and contexts where the games will be played	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Engage the child in the learning games where each game includes lots of opportunities for a child to use a behavior to produce reinforcing or interesting consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. As part of social learning games, respond promptly and positively to a child's behavior in order to maintain a child's interactive behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. After the child has learned the contingency, maintain child behavior and actions by providing an interesting or reinforcing consequence on an irregular basis rather than each time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	