



## School-Home Notes: Enlisting the Teacher, Parent, and Student to Improve Behavior

Schools seek effective but workable classroom interventions to address the problem behaviors of younger students. School-home notes are one strategy that holds promise for the primary classroom: the teacher sends home a daily note rating the student's school behaviors (Jurbergs, Palcic, & Kelley, 2007). Based on the teacher report, the parent provides or withholds a home reward. School-home notes have the advantages of both strengthening communication between teacher and parents and including the parent in the intervention as dispenser of praise and home rewards.

**Preparation.** Here are the steps to setting up a school-home note:

1. *Select target behaviors.* The teacher and parent decide on 2-4 behaviors to track through the school-home note. Behaviors listed on the note should be phrased as desired 'replacement' behaviors (that is, positive behaviors to replace the student's current challenging behaviors). For example, a behavior target for a non-compliant child might be "The *student followed teacher requests.*"
2. *Design a school-home note.* The teacher and parent design a note incorporating target behaviors. While any rating format may be used, a simple version may be best--e.g., Yes (2 pts)...So-So (1 pt).....No (0 pts). See the attached school-home note for a generic example. A free application is also available on Intervention Central to create Behavior Report Cards, which can be used as school-home notes: <http://www.interventioncentral.org/teacher-resources/behavior-rating-scales-report-card-maker>
3. *Decide on the cut-point for an acceptable daily school-home note rating.* The parent and teacher decide on the minimum daily points that the child must earn on the school-home note to be eligible to earn a reward. For example, a teacher and parent create a school-home note that has 4 behavior-rating items, with a maximum of 2 points to be earned per item. The maximum points that can be earned per day on the school-home note therefore is 8 (4 items times 2 points per item). The teacher and parent initially decide that the student must earn a minimum of 5 points to earn a daily reward.
4. *Develop a reinforcer menu.* Based on a knowledge of the child, the parent develops a reinforcer ('reward') menu containing 4-8 reward choices. Whenever the student attains a positive rating on the school-home note, he or she can select a reward from this menu.

**Implementation.** Here are the daily steps for using school-home notes:

1. *Rate the student's school behavior.* At the conclusion of the school day, the teacher rates the student's behavior on the school-home note. The teacher meets briefly with the student to share feedback about the ratings and offers praise (if the ratings are positive) or encouragement (if the ratings are below expectations).
2. *Send the completed school-home note to the parent.* The teacher communicates the school-home note results with the parent in a manner agreed upon in advance, e.g., in the student's backpack, via email or a voicemail report.
3. *Provide the home reward.* The parent reviews the most recent school-home note with the child. If the child attained the minimum rating, the parent provides praise and allows the student to select a reward from the reinforcer menu. If the student failed to reach the rating goal, the parent withholds the reward but offers encouragement.



**Maintenance.** These are two items that are periodically updated to maintain the school-home note program:

1. *Refresh the reinforcer menu.* Every 2 to 3 weeks, the parent should update the reinforcer menu with the child to ensure that the reward choices continue to motivate.
2. *Raise the school-home note goal.* Whenever the student has attained success on the school-home note on most or all days for a full 2 weeks, the teacher and parent should consider raising the student point goal incrementally.

## Reference

Jurbergs, N., Palcic, J., & Kelley, M. L. (2007). School-home notes with and without response cost: Increasing attention and academic performance in low-income children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *School Psychology Quarterly, 22*, 358-379.



# School-Home Note

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____					
Person Completing This Note: _____					
<b>Student Behaviors</b>	<b>MON</b>	<b>TUES</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THURS</b>	<b>FRI</b>
	___/___/___	___/___/___	___/___/___	___/___/___	___/___/___
<i>The student completed classwork in a satisfactory manner</i>					
Yes            So-So            No					
<b>2                    1                    0</b>					
<i>The student used class time well.</i>					
Yes            So-So            No					
<b>2                    1                    0</b>					
<i>The student got along well with peers.</i>					
Yes            So-So            No					
<b>2                    1                    0</b>					
<i>The student followed teacher requests.</i>					
Yes            So-So            No					
<b>2                    1                    0</b>					
(Optional Behavior)					
_____					
_____					
Yes            So-So            No					
<b>2                    1                    0</b>					
Comments [Optional]: _____					
_____					
_____					

**Parent Sign-Off (Optional):** I have reviewed this School-Home Note and discussed it with my child.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_