

# LEARNING TOGETHER



## Specialized Services At Your Fingertips

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## REMINDER

Wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap

Keep your mask on at work

Use gloves only when needed for personal care

COMMUNITY LIVING  
Toronto

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## Introduction



Welcome Back Everyone!

Starting in September, the Learning Together Newsletter will be moving from bi-weekly issues to monthly issues. If there are any topics you would like us to discuss send us your ideas at: [specservicesnewsletter@cltoronto.ca](mailto:specservicesnewsletter@cltoronto.ca)

In this week's addition of Learning Together we will be continuing our discussion on differential reinforcement!

In the last edition we covered differential reinforcement, outlining what it is, how to use it, and things to consider when implementing. In case you missed that issue, click the link [here](#) to view it.

This week's edition will cover various differential reinforcement procedures while providing examples on how to use differential reinforcement. We will discuss more practical things to consider when implementing and delivering differential reinforcement, as well as when to use the various procedures.

We can't forget to mention we have some more great activities you can do while at home!

In previous additions we've discussed reinforcement at length. If you would like more information on reinforcement please check out the [2nd edition](#) and [7th edition](#) of Learning Together.



## Activities at Home

Keep cool during the summer by making homemade ice cream in a bag. Find the delicious [recipe here](#).

Stretch out, relax, and follow along to these awesome free online yoga videos for kids on the YouTube channel [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#).

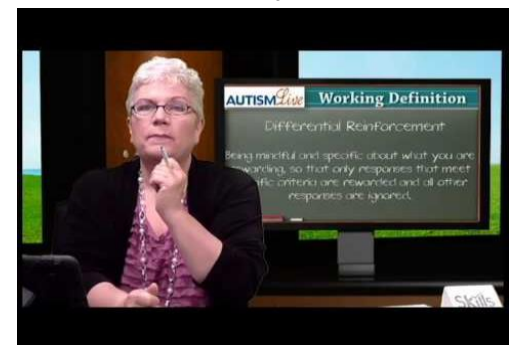
Click the link [here](#) to see a list of 10 kids' movies and shows that are coming to Netflix Canada in July 2020.

Looking for virtual summer camps but not sure where to start? Click the [link](#) to get a list of 15 options all worth considering.

## Differential Reinforcement (DR) Procedures

Before diving into the various procedures of differential reinforcement, the Learning Together newsletter would like to invite you to join us for a live webinar on differential reinforcement. The webinar will be on July 23rd, 2020 at 11:00am. Links will be distributed at a later date, or you can email us directly at [specservicesnewsletter@cltoronto.ca](mailto:specservicesnewsletter@cltoronto.ca).

To review from last edition, differential reinforcement involves reinforcing appropriate behaviours, while withholding attention from the problem/target behaviour. When differential reinforcement is used consistently, behaviors that are reinforced will increase and behaviors that are not reinforced will decrease or be eliminated entirely.



# TYPES OF DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT

## DRO

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviour refers to delivering reinforcement whenever the target behaviour does not occur during a predetermined amount of time.



## DRA

Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviour refers to reinforcing a behaviour that serves as an alternative to the target behaviour, but is not necessarily incompatible with the target behaviour.



## DRI

Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behaviour refers to reinforcing behaviours that are incompatible with the target behaviour, while withholding reinforcement from the target behaviour. The incompatible behaviour cannot occur simultaneously with the target behaviour.



## DRL

Differential Reinforcement of Low Rates of Behaviour refers to reinforcing a target behaviour that you do not want to eliminate completely. This usually includes behaviours that are socially acceptable but may occur too often.



## Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behaviour (DRI):

This procedure selects an incompatible behaviour to be reinforced while withholding reinforcement for the problem behaviour. The incompatible behaviour cannot occur simultaneously to the problem behaviour.

*For example:* Lucy pinches her arms while she is watching TV, so staff tell her to “stop pinching”. The pinching behaviour is reinforced by the staff’s attention, so they begin to withhold attention when she pinches her arms. At the same time, staff teach Lucy to keep her fingers intertwined while she watches TV. Lucy receives verbal praise for instances when she keeps her hands intertwined.

## Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviour (DRO):

This procedure withholds reinforcement for the problem behaviour and reinforcement is only provided when there has been an absence of the problem behaviour for a predetermined amount of time.

*For example:* Julie pulls strands of hair out of her head when she is completing independent work. Her behaviour therapist decides to use DRO in order to reinforce the absence of pulling her hair. Using this procedure, the teacher sets a timer for three minutes on Julie’s desk. If Julie does not pull her hair for the entire three minutes, then she is reinforced. If Julie does pull her hair, she is not reinforced, and the timer is reset.

## Differential Reinforcement of Low Rates of Behaviour (DRL):

This procedure is used to reduce the frequency of a behavior but will not eliminate it from the learner’s repertoire entirely. This is typically reserved for behaviors that are socially acceptable but may occur too often. Reinforcement is delivered if a behavior occurs below a predetermined criterion.

*For example:* Ross is a very curious adult that enjoys learning new things. He asks his peers questions about their day and their interests however he asks questions repeatedly and does not know when to stop. Ross’s staff do not want to completely eliminate Ross’ question asking because it is an important skill, but they do want him to ask less questions. Staff tell Ross that he will receive extra time with his video games if he asks his peers or staff 5 questions or less in a 5-minute period. If Ross asks more than 5 questions in that time-period, he will not receive extra time playing video games.

## Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviour (DRA):

This procedure selects an alternative desirable behaviour to be reinforced instead of the problem behaviour. Reinforcement is provided immediately after the selected alternative behaviour occurs, and reinforcement is withheld when the problem behaviour occurs. It is important to select an alternative behaviour that serves the same function as the problem behaviour.

*For example:* Donny runs out of his bedroom whenever he is asked to tidy it. Running out of his bedroom serves an escape function, as his parents allow him to leave without tidying his room. The next time Donny is asked to tidy his room, parents block the doorway and prompt him to say, “I want a break”. When Donny repeats “I want a break”, parents provide him with verbal praise and allow him to leave the room to take a break.

## Practical Things to Consider When Delivering Differential Reinforcement

### Don't Tell Them:

When withholding attention from the individual, don't be tempted to tell them that you are. Any form of attention, even telling them they are being 'bad' or 'scolding' them, can inadvertently reinforce problem behaviours. For example, Jason is crying because his mom turned off the TV for dinner. Jason begins throwing toys and his mom tells him "stop throwing, I don't like that". Jason then begins throwing more toys because he is receiving attention through reprimands.

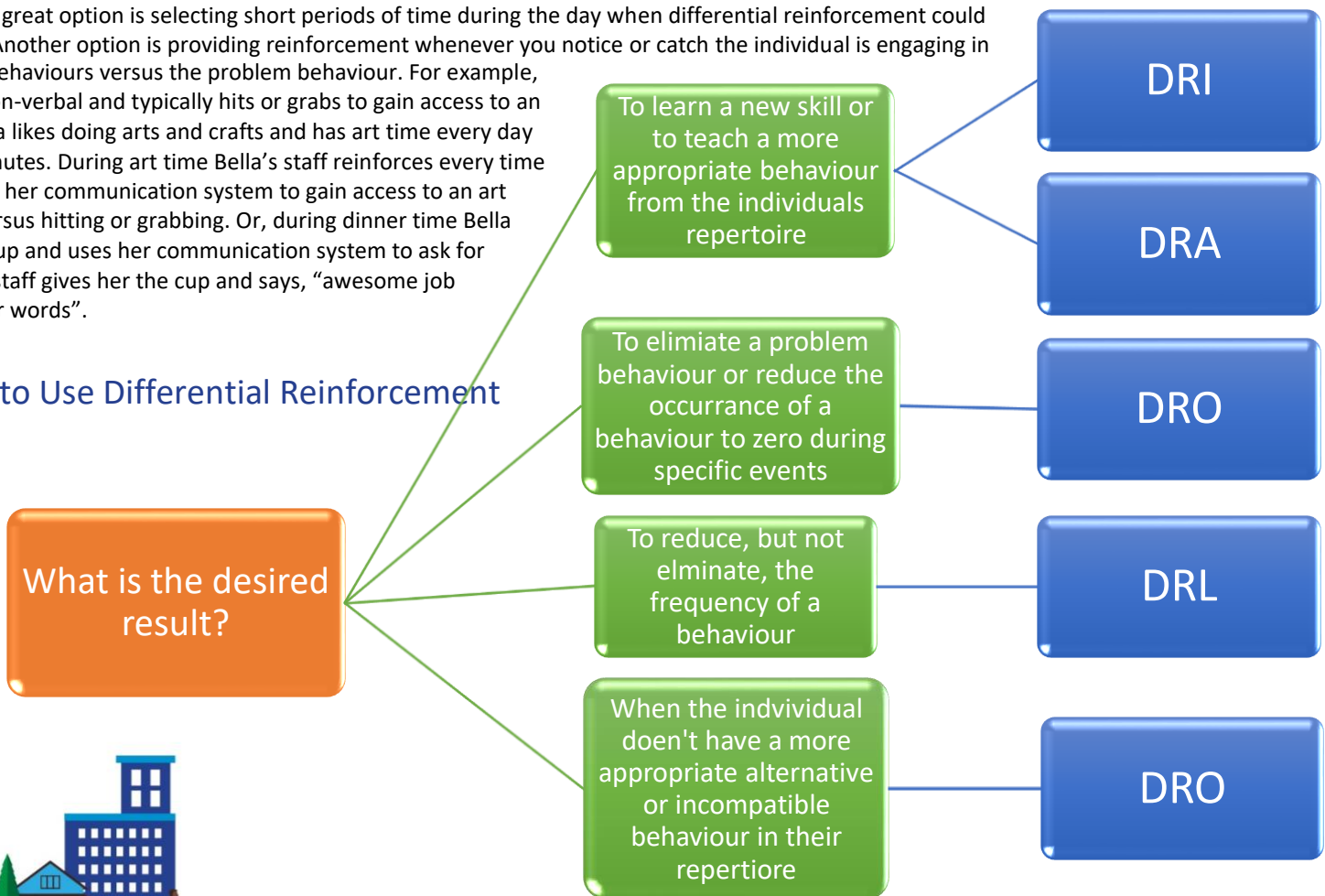
### Withholding Attention ≠ Ignoring:

When using differential reinforcement remember that you're withholding attention from the problem behaviour, not the person themselves. It is important to monitor the individual and be aware of their care and safety while not attending to their behaviours. For example, Anna typically yells to get staff's attention. This time when it happens, the staff turn their backs to Anna and open a book. Anna continues yelling to get the staff's attention, which doesn't work. Anna begins pulling her hair, so staff attempt to block the hair pulling to prevent injury. Staff continue to withhold attention to yelling and hair pulling but provide the necessary care to ensure Anna's safety.

### Short Sessions:

It is not always possible to implement differential reinforcement for long periods of time as it requires the individual to be closely attended to. Instead, a great option is selecting short periods of time during the day when differential reinforcement could be used. Another option is providing reinforcement whenever you notice or catch the individual is engaging in positive behaviours versus the problem behaviour. For example, Bella is non-verbal and typically hits or grabs to gain access to an item. Bella likes doing arts and crafts and has art time every day for 20 minutes. During art time Bella's staff reinforces every time Bella uses her communication system to gain access to an art supply versus hitting or grabbing. Or, during dinner time Bella needs a cup and uses her communication system to ask for one. Her staff gives her the cup and says, "awesome job using your words".

## When to Use Differential Reinforcement



For feedback or questions please email us at: [specservicesnewsletter@cltoronto.ca](mailto:specservicesnewsletter@cltoronto.ca)



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