

Book Review

Title: *Incentives for Change: Motivating People with Autism Spectrum Disorders to Learn and Gain Independence*

Author: Demolito, L., & Harris, S. L.

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Paper, ISBN: 1-890627-60-7, 145 pp.

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Reviewer: Landry Fukunaga

Incentives for Change: Motivating People with Autism Spectrum Disorders to Learn and Gain Independence summarizes a few of the practices currently used to create motivational systems for people with autism. This book is written clearly and concisely so it becomes an easy reference guide for parents and educators, especially those just beginning to implement an incentive system into the daily routine of a child with autism. *Incentives for Change* is an introduction to some typical ways of increasing motivation to learn and/or make behavioral changes. The book may act as a stepping point for interested parents and teachers who need some simple techniques for an incentive program that can become more complex as individual needs change.

Perhaps the most valuable aspects of this book are the detailed descriptions of how these techniques were implemented successfully and how they helped to bring about positive change for the individual and their family. For Max, a young child with autism, and his family, identifying and utilizing an activity he enjoyed as motivation to learn functional communication skills helped to reduce tantrum behaviors both in the home and at school. For example, Max found swinging to be naturally rewarding. Max's parents were able to get him to initiate social interaction with a functional word that worked well ("pu" for "push"), and Max received the reinforcement of being pushed for a short period of time. As Max became more adept at using his new language skills, his reinforcement schedule became more complex to continually challenge him and help him grow. The authors keep in mind that intervention plans need to constantly evolve to suit the changing individual and they give valuable tips as to how to keep an incentive system both challenging and rewarding as a child matures.

This book is not accessible for people who have vision impairments or for those who have limited reading comprehension, however, it is relatively inexpensive and can be a useful guide for increasing the independence of individuals with autism. I recommend this book to parents and educators as an introduction to motivational systems and reinforcement techniques.