

Exercise 4-3: Identifying Reinforcers

INSTRUCTIONS: In each of the situations below, a behavior is being reinforced. Decide what behavior is being reinforced and what the reinforcer is.

1. Mary (1 year) falls down, looks up at her mother, and then begins to cry. Mary's mother rushes over and comforts Mary.

behavior reinforced: _____

positive reinforcer: _____

2. Annie (2½ years) is building a castle, Peter (9 mo.) crawls over and knocks it down. Annie asks her mother to "make Peter go away." Mother continues to read her book. Peter knocks the blocks down again, and Annie pushes him away forcefully. Mother hears Peter cry and comes rushing over to scold Annie and take Peter away.

behavior reinforced: _____

positive reinforcer: _____

3. Ricky (18 mo.) spills some water, looks at the mess a bit, and then gets a sponge and smears it around. Mother smiles and says, "I'm glad you are wiping up the water you spilled."

behavior reinforced: _____

positive reinforcer: _____

4. Karen (15 mo.) runs to the door in the evening when her father comes home saying, "Hi, dada! Hi, dada!" He picks her up and says pleasantly, "Hi, punkin, how's my girl today?"

behavior reinforced: _____

positive reinforcer: _____

5. Matt (24 mo.) brings a book to his father and asks for it to be read to him. Dad ignores him and continues to read the newspaper. Matt then goes and takes a toy away from his baby brother causing him to cry. Dad stops reading and scolds, "Give that toy back this instant! Bad boy! Bad, bad boy!"

behavior reinforced: _____

positive reinforcer: _____

ANSWERS:

1. Mary was reinforced for crying by attention and comforting.
2. Annie was reinforced for making Peter cry by removal of Peter.
3. Ricky was reinforced for wiping up the spilled water by praise and attention.
4. Karen was reinforced for greeting her father by attention.
5. Matt was reinforced for taking a toy away from his brother by scolding and attention.