

REINFORCEMENT

VERSUS

PUNISHMENT

COMPARING THE 2 TYPES OF CONSEQUENCES



Reinforcement:

Behavior increases over time.

Reinforcement does not mean good.

It only means that the behavior increases or happens more.

A child doesn't want to eat. They begin throwing food. So you have them leave the table. In the future throwing food increases so they can leave the table. Throwing food was accidentally reinforced. The behavior increased.

A child is done eating. You prompt them to say, "I'm all done," and let them leave. The child starts asking to leave more and more. You are reinforcing appropriate language for the future!

Punishment:

Behavior decreases over time.

Punishment does not mean bad.

It only means that the behavior decreases or happens less.

You catch your child singing and they become embarrassed. They sing less and less after that. The singing decreases over time, The behavior of singing was accidentally punished.

A child climbs up on a table but accidentally falls off, which scares them. They no longer climb on tables. The behavior happens less. Falling and becoming scared acted as a punishment, so climbing happens less.