Wait for Permission

<u>Objectives</u>-the student will refrain from grabbing reinforcers without permission and, as a more important side effect, the student will begin to direct his attention to his teacher when reinforcers are in sight. This procedure begins to condition permission words, such as "yes", as reinforcers.

*This program is probably contra-indicated for students who are prompt <u>dependent</u>, in general. For students with deficits in spontaneity, we are generally looking to increase free operant responding, not further restrict responding.

<u>Mastery criteria</u>-the student will refrain from grabbing reinforcers without permission, including reinforcers that are present throughout the day.   There will be at least 3 specific items that a student resists grabbing throughout the day WITHOUT reminders not to take the item.

<u>Basic procedure</u>

1. Place a reinforcer in front of the student and say "wait".
2. After a brief period of good waiting (perhaps as short as 2 seconds), say "Good, you can take it now."
3. Ignore minor signs of agitation while waiting, but do not discontinue that practice opportunity unless agitation increases significantly.
4. Initially, reinforce after a few seconds of relatively calm waiting. Begin to reinforce more consistently when your student visually references you. You may <u>still reinforce some occasions upon which they wait without looking</u>, but more frequently reinforce when they are looking at you.
5. Gradually increase time to 15-20 seconds, but continue to intersperse shorter practice opportunities as well. We do not want your student to try to predict how long he will be waiting.
6. If your student reaches before permission is granted, block access to the reinforcer and remove the reinforcer from the immediate area for at least several seconds. If your student is behaving appropriately several seconds later, you can initiate a new opportunity to practice waiting for permission.
7. Do <u>not</u> physically position yourself in between the student and the reinforcer.
8. Do <u>not</u> count out loud.
9. Do <u>not</u> reinforce mands (requests) while you wait.

10. Loosely, you are teaching the student that the ONLY reason he can grab the reinforcer is that you JUST SAID HE COULD. If he can predict the duration, sees you counting, or if a mand is reinforced, your student might "think" reinforcement came for those reasons, and you may not establish good waiting with social referencing or appreciation of "yes".

Dimensions Grid

Easier	Harder
Short period of waiting	Long period of waiting
Permission granted without requiring social referencing	Permission granted only after the student references his teacher
Reminder to "wait" before beginning a practice opportunity	No reminder. The item is simply present.
Moderately interesting item.	Very interesting item.*

*Sometimes, it is easier to teach "wait for permission" with powerful reinforcers, but waiting is usually more difficult as the value of potential reinforcers increases.

Data-score a "+" each time your student successfully waits for permission to take a reinforcer. Score "-" each time he reaches without permission. Score "pb" (problem behavior) each time agitation increases to the point that a practice opportunity must be discontinued.

Moving forward-after 2-3 consecutive successful waits, introduce increasing challenges using the dimensions grid above. If you're only waiting a few seconds, I'd probably first increase the wait duration.

Moving backward-after 2 consecutive failures, discontinue that practice session. Wait at least several minutes before trying another session. If your student fails in 2 consecutive practice opportunities in the next session, decrease the level of challenge using the dimension grid above. Some students need to initially contact reinforcement within as little as 1.5 seconds of absence of manding, reaching, or protest.