TECHNICAL NOTE

*AN INEXPENSIVE AUDITORY STIMULUS
DEVICE FOR USE WITH CHILDREN¹*

Operant research with sub-human subjects has demonstrated that conditioning proceeds more rapidly and efficiently if reinforcement is accompanied by a clearly discriminable conditioned reinforcer, such as a tone or a light. With animals in an enclosed environment such as a Skinner box, a speaker or a light source may easily be attached to the experimental chamber, and thus presents no technical problem. In work with children, especially in a free-operant setting in which the child may go from room to room, a portable auditory stimulus that the experimenter may carry with him is most advantageous. At the Kennedy Institute, we have used a commercially available auditory stimulus device that is small, inexpensive, lightweight, and convenient (see Figure 1). The size of the device is 2.375 by 3.25 by 1.375 in. (8 by 6 by 3.5 cm), about the size of a pack of cigarettes. It is powered by a "C" battery and with battery, weighs only 6 oz. With routine daily usage of the device, battery life is in excess of three months. The device emits a pleasant "buzz" when activated by the push-button switch. The sound level of the tone in an untreated room is 75 dB at 16 ft and 83 dB at 3 ft.

The duration of the tone is controlled by the length of time the switch is depressed. The intensity of the tone may be muted by placing a piece of tape over the vibrator opening. This device is called "Personal and Burglar Alarm," an L-Sterling Product, No. 748-BX, and may be purchased for 98 cents from the Pep Boys Supply Store, 32nd Street and Allegheny Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19132.

PHILIP W. DRASH
J. F. Kennedy Institute, Baltimore

Fig. 1. A portable auditory stimulus device.

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