



TIPS SHEET: MOTIVATING YOUR CHILD

Getting your child to do work can be challenging and sometimes even painful. Using reinforcement (also called rewards) can help increase work production and the chance that a desired behavior will occur in the future. When a system to earn rewards is in place children will be more motivated to complete work and stay on task.

USING REWARD SYSTEMS

- Include your child in choosing which rewards to use in your reward system. Set a goal with your child for what they must do in order to earn their reward (e.g. complete math assignments for the week to earn video game time).
- Don't over think rewards! Keep it simple and use activities that your child already has access to. Words of praise, high fives, playing video games, skipping a chore, special snacks, and special activities with parents are all great rewards!
- Over time requirements for earning rewards can change as your child is able to work for longer amounts of time and complete more tasks.

FLEXIBILITY

- Consider frequency: Does your child need a reward after every activity or the end of the day?
- Provide options of rewards (e.g., skipping a chore, playing a game together, or a special privilege). Allow your child to change their mind.
- Celebrate small improvements and reward your student's effort.
- If you try a system for a few days and it isn't helping, try adjusting the available rewards or how often your child is able to earn.



PRESENTATION

- There are many different reward systems.
 - Points – a targeted goal to earn a reward. Have set criteria for earning a point (e.g. one point per completed assignment).
 - Levels – a larger amount of reward is earned based on performance (e.g. more work completed means more TV time).
 - Tokens – An object to help visualize progress towards a reward. This is great for younger students.
 - First/Then – Easy system when your child struggles with only one or two activities (e.g. first complete science, then we can go outside).
- Visuals don't need to be complicated! Use what you have at home (e.g. post its, white board, calendar, jar, or puzzle). This allows your child to see progress towards their goal.
- Use behavior specific praise so the child understands why they are earning. Instead of "good job" say "Great job completing all the steps for your assignment, you've earned a point." or "Great job working hard and staying on task, you need 3 more tokens to earn Lego time."

AGE CONSIDERATIONS

- Depending on their age and development, your child may need rewards more or less often (e.g., at the end of each activity, day, or week).
- Ask your child what types of things they want to work for. Make sure that you can provide any rewards that you offer.
- Ensure that the expectations you have for your children are appropriate for their age and are aligned with their current abilities. Remember to reward effort!

Have additional questions?
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