

USING REWARDS WITH YOUR CHILD



Many parents try using rewards to change a child's behavior. The good news is that rewards can work great. The bad news is that making a good reward plan can be tricky. Many times when parents get frustrated with a reward plan it's because the plan wasn't quite right. If you're using rewards with your kids, check out the ideas below. Good luck!

BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT BEHAVIORS EARN REWARDS

Telling a child to “clean your room” to get a reward might cause problems because your idea of “clean” probably differs from your child's. Instead, you might tell the child to, “Put away all of your clothes and make your bed.” (You could also make the bed yourself once to show your child exactly what “making the bed” means.)

DON'T TRY TO WORK ON TOO MANY BEHAVIORS AT ONCE

Start by selecting one or two behaviors that concern you the most and focus on these.

LET YOUR CHILD CHOOSE REWARDS

Of course, you decide what rewards are ok, but ask your child for ideas. The key is to find rewards that your child gets excited about. Also think about what your child chooses to do during free time, because those activities might make great rewards. And remember, rewards don't have to cost money. Ask your doctor for the *Great Reward Ideas* handout for some creative suggestions.

EXPLAIN YOUR PLAN TO YOUR CHILD

Before starting, take a few minutes to talk with your child about what behaviors will be rewarded, what rewards are possible, and when the plan will start. Your time will be well spent!

BE CONSISTENT

If you use rewards one day but not the next, or forget to give rewards, the plan might not work. Think of it this way...would you go to work everyday if your boss only paid you sometimes?

DEVELOP NEW REWARDS AS NEEDED

Rewards often lose their power over time. This doesn't mean the plan stopped working, it just means you might need to find some new rewards that will excite your child again.

REMEMBER TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD, TOO! KIDS LOVE PRAISE AND HUGS!