

Parents: Simple rules to follow when using rewards

Rule 1: Reward good habits instead of good outcomes. For example, reward your child if they study for an hour each night, instead of rewarding them for an “A” in a test. Use rewards to teach your child **habits** that will eventually lead to the **ultimate goal**.

Rule 2: Praise behaviours instead of traits. For example, if your child gets a good grade, praise their **hard work**, not their **intelligence**.

Rule 3: Set achievable goals. If your child doesn’t believe they can achieve their goal, they won’t even try.

Rule 4: Rewards must be desirable. Whether they admit it or not, most children want the attention of their parents. Never underestimate the power of time alone with your child, for example sharing a memory alone on an “ice cream date”!

Rule 5: Be clear about rewards and how to earn them. Specify what exactly the rewards will be. For example, rather than “extra TV”, say “30 minutes of extra TV”. When your child needs to do something, instead of saying “clean your room”, say “hang up your clothes, put away your toys and vacuum the floor.”

Rule 6: Always follow through. If you promise a reward, but do not follow through, your child may not take you seriously. However, every time you do follow through, your promises gain credibility.

Rule 7: Catch your child being good. Let them know you notice. Try to catch your child being good - no matter how small or minor - at least 3 times a day. **The best way to end a bad behaviour is to reward the opposite good behaviour.**

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