

# Rewards/Incentivize Positive Behavior

**What:** Using low-cost, free incentives to reward or thank children for positive behavior. Figuring out the best practical rewards and HOW to give them in a way that increases positive behavior.

**Why?** When children have behavior problems, it can be difficult to get them to START/increase the frequency of positive behavior. Rewards are a more motivating, positive way to change behavior (compared to negative consequences).

**Tell about Rewards;** Use an **adult example** to explain **WHY** rewards are helpful. Work: asked to do an extra task—bonus (if do it) or pay cut (if don't)? Which more excited about?

**Identify one behavior to work on.** Best NOT to pick most challenging behavior FIRST. SHOULD pick the positive opposite of a problem behavior... **Identify possible rewards.** Should be small (so can be given frequently), free or low-cost. OK to get child's input (but caregiver decides which to use). **Be Creative!** (Ride in front seat, choose dinner, later bedtime, game with caregiver, get out of chore, phone/t.v./computer time)

**PLAN to set up rewards:** Choose reward. Set reward Interval (if want behavior to happen MORE than 1x a day). *How often does the problem behavior happen NOW? Can the child get the reward or a token for the reward, as soon as possible AFTER the positive behavior?* Pair reward with Praise.

**Model It** (Therapist as caregiver; caregiver as child); Pretend child DID desired behavior (up out of your chair!). **Discuss it:** *What did caregiver think? How would child respond? Any expected problems?*

**CAREGIVER PRACTICES IT!** (Therapist as child); Pretend child DID desired behavior (up out of your chair!) **Discuss it. Role play expected problems.**

**PRAISE EFFORT. GIVE FEEDBACK/COACH RE: DOING IT EFFECTIVELY. PROBLEM SOLVE ANY DIFFICULTIES THAT COME UP.**

**Discuss and Assign Weekly Practice.** *How can you make sure you monitor if the child DOES the behavior? What problems can you predict?* **Report back!**

**Points to Remember:**

- Sometimes the “positive behavior” is the negative behavior NOT happening (no hitting). So rewards need to be for no hitting during a particular interval.
- Rewards should be things caregivers CAN and WILL follow through on AND have control over.
- May not see changes in child behavior right away...child may pretend to not care about reward (wait about 2 weeks to switch it up). Stick with the plan for awhile to see if it works.