

HOME REWARDS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Giving children rewards – along with your sincere and enthusiastic praise – is a great way to encourage them to behave appropriately. When using rewards with children, it's important to remember:

- **“Reward” doesn’t have to mean “money.”** Most kids want, more than anything else, to spend time with their parents and to have their parents’ attention.
- **Rewards should be accompanied by specific praise** for the child. For example “I like how you were quiet and stayed with me in the store. Let’s stop at the park on the way home.” This is better than saying “You were good in the store.” Keep the praise focused on the behavior of the child.
- **Don’t give a reward as a bribe.** It should be given after the child has behaved appropriately when told (or on their own) and not offered beforehand. Don’t say things like “If you are good in the store, I will buy you something.” Your child may decide your bribe is not worth behaving for. Remember – you are trying to teach good behavior, not pay off bad behavior.
 - **Keep rewards related to behavior whenever possible.** As often as you can, create a reward that supports what you want the child to learn.
 - **Don’t promise rewards you can’t deliver.** Sometimes we are desperate for good behavior from our kids, and we get ourselves trapped by rewards that we can’t afford, either in time or money. Think through you plan for rewarding good behavior and don’t promise more than you can deliver.
 - **Don’t give rewards if bad behavior occurs with good behavior.** If you ask your child to clean up his toys, for example, and he does, but throws them or swears at you when doing it, don’t reward him. Sometimes parents reward bad behavior because they want to reward progress, even if the child is still misbehaving. Decide ahead of time what behavior you want and how much “less” than that you’ll accept.



Attached is a list of rewards that you may want to try with your young children. Many of them are low or no cost and can be done anywhere. Be sure to think of your own rewards and add them to the list!



Home Reward Possibilities for Preschoolers

Going to the park	Playing with friends	Getting in bed with parents
Making mud pies	Listening to a bedtime story	Playing on a swing set
Spending the night with friends or grandparents	Being lifted into the air	Feeding a pet
Rocking	Playing games	Making noises with rattles, pans, or bells
Picking what clothes they want to wear	Doing a puppet play	Having parents take a photo of child
Talking on the phone	Going out for hamburgers or pizza	Wearing dress-up clothes
Playing with clay or play-dough	Going someplace alone with dad or mom	Helping plan the day's activities
Helping mom or dad with a chore	Having a longer time in the bathtub	Riding on a bicycle with dad or mom
Visiting grandparents	Watching a rainstorm	Playing in the sandbox
Cuddling in a chair with dad or mom	Going to the library	Going for a picnic
Bouncing on the bed	Playing outside	Riding a tricycle
Staying up late	Going on a trip to the zoo	Getting a piggy-back ride
Having a bubble bath or bath toys	Singing songs	A ride on a coin-operated ride
Delaying a nap	Flushing the toilet	Riding on dad's shoulders
Playing flashlight tag	Having a family night	Helping to hold baby sister or brother
Swimming	Reading a story	Mixing cookie dough
Having a special dessert	An ice cream cone	Finger painting
Drawing with crayons	Listening to music	Playing a game with parent(s)
Having breakfast food for supper	Playing video game	Watching a movie at home
Doing a craft project with parents	Picking what to watch on TV	Computer time