

Behavior Support: Reinforcement System (Sticker System)

One way to motivate your child to stick with positive behaviors is with a reinforcement system. This is also known as the sticker system. This system gives your child an incentive to increase appropriate behavior and decrease problem behaviors.

What you need

- Stickers can be found at party supply stores or by an internet search.
- A book or sheet of paper for your child to keep track of their stickers.
- A list of responsibilities, chores, and positive behaviors that you would like to see increase. As a family, you can come up with a list of rules or guidelines that everyone needs to follow. If this is a new concept in your home, stick with 3 to 5 rules to start. These rules or guidelines should be said in a positive way and make the desired behavior clear. For example, say, “Use kind words.” Do not say, “You should not use bad language.”
- A list of rewards and privileges that your child can earn. Your child can help make this list and help come up with the prices to “buy” the items. Items are bought with stickers. The rewards should be some short-term items that can be earned each day and larger items that your child is able to save stickers to earn.

What to do

- Use this system in all environments, including the home, community, and other family members’ homes. If the school uses a system that works well for your child, use a similar one to be consistent.
- Let your child turn in their stickers at “the store” at least one time per day, up to a few times a day.
- This is a positive plan. Stickers should not be taken away after a child earns them.

- When giving a sticker, tell your child what you liked about their behavior and why they are getting it.
- Put stickers away when not giving them out. Your child should not ask for a sticker. They should not be able to get the stickers themselves.
- Some children may try to barter or argue for an item when they do not have enough stickers to buy it. This often happens when children first start the sticker system. It stops once they can “buy” the things they wanted before. Stay firm in the meantime.
- Start a timer when your child buys time with a favorite item, like the iPad or TV. Before starting the timer, explain that playtime is over when the timer goes off. If this can be done without fighting or getting upset, give your child praise or a sticker for doing a great job with that transition.
- Many children show changes in behavior within the first couple of days of starting the sticker system. Some children may not show changes for a week or more. Keep doing the system no matter how your child responds. If your child is denied rewards for a continued period, there will eventually be a positive behavior change.

Reward and privilege ideas

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| • small toy | • library time | • go on a hike |
| • have a picnic | • go to a sports event | • call a friend |
| • visit the park | • swimming | • extra TV time |
| • sleepover with friend | • dessert with dinner | • make a craft |
| • trip to favorite place | • special snack | • earn a chore free card |
| • see a movie | • bowling | • computer time |
| • visit the zoo | • play a game | • cuddle time |
| • stay up 30 minutes late | • bake or cook | • choose a meal |
| • get new journal | • camp out in yard | • go to a festival |
| • window shop | • skip a chore for a day | • have a friend over |
| • one-on-one time with caregiver | • download new songs/games | • sleep in late on the weekend |

Individual recommendations
