



# Behavior Solutions for Children and Families, LLC

Got Behavior? We've got solutions.

## Tips for Effective Reward Systems

- **Reward positive behaviors**, do not reward the absence of negative behaviors
- **Decide on what behaviors you want to reward** - you can choose to focus on rewarding one specific behavior (or set of behaviors, like being kind to your sibling or staying in your bed at night), or you can create an overarching system to motivate many different behaviors
- **Ensure your child has the skills** to engage in the behaviors you want to see - If your child needs skills, they should be explicitly taught by you or by a therapist (tip: this is an excellent way to motivate a child to practice skills learned in therapy)
- **Be specific in describing your standards** for meeting expectations
  - What does cleaning their room entail?
  - What does doing well in school require?
  - What does being “respectful” look like?
- **Decide on what rewards you want to offer**, and make sure you have these in place BEFORE you start your rewards system
  - Points (marbles, poker chips) are better than primary rewards
  - Rewards need to be **rewarding** (i.e. highly desirable)
  - Rewards need to be **frequent** enough (the more frequent the better)
  - Rewards need to be **worth the effort**
- **Tangible** and **visible** is always better (i.e. marbles in a jar), a list or contract posted on the wall
- **Give the reward (or points) as soon as possible** following the behavior you want to see, and give behavior-specific praise (i.e. “Great job being *responsible* picking up your toys!”) to build your child’s self-concept that he or she is responsible, or has self control, or is respectful, etc.  
SELF-CONCEPT = BEHAVIOR
- If you are implementing an overarching points system to reward many different positive behaviors - decide if you also want a **response cost system**, where you take points away for negative behaviors (this is an excellent discipline strategy that can eliminate the “need” for yelling or scolding)
- When implementing an overarching points system, **allow your child to cash in for rewards whenever they want**, provided this works with your schedule (i.e. it isn’t dinner time, bedtime, or time to get out the door to go somewhere)
- **Consistent parental follow through is essential** or your system will fail

Reward systems can be tricky to try to implement on your own. If you need help, contact me at [Drterib@gmail.com](mailto:Drterib@gmail.com). Learn more at [www.behaviorsolutionsvt.com](http://www.behaviorsolutionsvt.com).