

Parenting Tips

The Credit System

1. Ways to earn points – coming up with points system for example:
 - Following rules for example no name calling or no arguing
 - Positive behaviors for example responsible behavior or being polite and respectful
 - Doing chores for example making the bed or taking the trash out
2. Ways to spend points – coming up with ways to spend point they earned for example:
 - Trip to store to spend earned money
 - Computer time
 - Going to the movie theater

Token Economy

1. Select the behavior to be rewarded – rewarded behaviors can be related to house rules, responsibilities and/or problem behaviors. Start with the main behaviors of interest and new behaviors can be added. Choose a few behaviors at a time.
2. State the behaviors you want in specific and concrete terms – Be as specific as possible to reduce the amount of debate. For example if the child needs to clean his or her room break in down to make the bed, pick up clothes or put toys away. Tell your child what to do rather what not to do.
3. Decide how you will measure the behaviors – Decide if you are going to track good behavior with the amount of time (minutes) they are engaged in the good behavior or the amount of times they the child displays this good behavior. For example you put away 10 toys or you did not break house rules for 2 hours.
4. Decide where to monitor the behaviors – Are you going to monitor behavior only at home or also at school and out in public.
5. Select the token/points – Use a token that is easily accessible such as buttons, paper clips, coins, plastic poker chips. Place in container that is easily seen by your child such as a jar.
6. Select your rewards – Involve the child in choosing rewards so they will be motivated to earn tokens.
7. Place a price on the rewards – develop a wall chart that lists the number of tokens needed to purchase each reward. Place the chart where it is easily viewed by child. Try

to develop different levels of rewards that could be daily, medium (a few days) and large (about a week).

8. Place a value on the tokens – develop a second chart that lists the number of tokens needed to earn each desired behavior for example 10 tokens when the child takes out the trash. Give partial credit when effort has been made but do not give in or allow tokens for unearned behaviors. Provide tokens immediately following good behavior and provide praise.
9. Start your program – Once charts and all decisions have been made sit down with the child and explain the program to them.
10. Switch it up – change rewards as necessary if child gets bored of the initial rewards.
11. Periodically modify your system to wean your child from the token economy – this change usually involves requiring more positive behavior for a longer period of time in order to obtain a token. Be sure to communicate change to the child.

Praise

1. Make it immediate so the child knows their good behavior leads to a positive result
2. Praise specific behaviors and tell them exactly what you liked. “You did a really good job picking up the toys” or “You did a nice job following my instruction the first time”
3. Describe what you feel for example “it makes me so happy when you do your chores”
4. Show them how you feel with a smile, high five or thumbs up
5. Praise should all be positive and no criticism at the end. Instead of “Great job on the homework. Why can’t you do this all the time?” do “Great job on the homework. You worked hard”
6. Praise your child’s positive behaviors as often as you can.
7. Use praise with siblings to show your child what behaviors you want to see.

Giving Good Commands

Clear commands and constant follow up are keys to helping your child learn. Practice helps children listen better. Before giving a command make sure you have your child’s attention and focus. Ways to increase your child understands commands:

1. Make commands direct – pick up the block or sit down on the chair.
2. Tell, don’t ask – Use your walking feet instead of will you use your walking feet?

3. Make commands simple and small – Brush your teeth not brush your teeth, put on pjs and get into bed.
4. Tell kids what to do – use your inside voice not don't yell.
5. Make commands clear – Walk next to the cart not be good in the store.
6. Use a neutral tone of voice – please come sit here next to me instead of come here now.
7. Be polite – put your plate in the sink please.
8. Limit telling why & time them well – If you tell them why you are giving the command, do it before the command.
9. Give your kid 5 seconds to follow the command – count to 5 before giving another prompt.
10. Always praise your child – thanks so much for listening the first time. You are a great helper.

Recommended Resources

- Books:
 - Zero to Five: 70 Essential Parenting Tips Based on Science
 - First the broccoli, then the ice cream: A parenting guide to deliberate discipline
- Websites:
 - www.infoaboutkids.org
 - www.apa.org/topics/parenting/
 - www.healthychildren.org
- Phone Parenting Apps:
 - Bright parenting
 - Parenting2go
 - HelloJoey
 - Family5 best of parenting