



The Role of Rewards in Learning

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As parents, we all know that parenting is a tough job, and sometimes we are tempted to offer our kids a little bit of motivation to do the things we desperately want them to learn. A highly debatable topic, reward systems are often confused with bribery. Sometimes parents, exhausted and in need of a quick fix, turn to “rewards” to get kids to quiet down in the grocery store, or clean up their room in a pinch. While this type of motivation can be highly effective in the short term, such bribes aren’t likely to turn our kids into responsible adults.

A real reward system for kids does not include bribery. If you’re interested in starting an effective and wholesome reward system that can help your child learn and become more responsible, you’ll need the right rewards and tools for the job. Let’s discover how rewards systems done right can help your child reach their potential!



Rewards are not Bribes

Many parents confuse rewards with bribes, but the two aren't one in the same. Bribes are offered to kids to help control behavior so parents can get immediate relief. For example, [if your child has a tantrum](#) in the middle of the grocery store, you might feel tempted to offer a favorite piece of candy to distract your child for a few precious minutes.

Obviously, this is not a reward! Essentially, bribes are offered in the moment, and are usually spontaneous pleas for behavioral control.

A reward system is different. Rewards for kids should be planned, and give your child an incentive to do the right thing. In the adult world, rewards are offered in many arenas, from bonuses awarded by employers, to incentives offered by companies to earn points for savings or merchandise. Rewards are done best over time, and in children, they can be used to teach kids the benefits of planning and reaching goals.

Rewards Help Kids Learn

Reward systems are the most effective if they're also used as tools for learning. By turning the rewards, or the experience of earning them, into a learning experience, kids will learn important life lessons, and build character in addition to accomplishing the goals you set out for them! This will help develop your little learner into a responsible, well-rounded adult, capable of working toward their success.

Ensuring that your reward system is beneficial to your child's learning, you'll need to consider a few factors:

- The type of rewards you offer
- How often your child earns a reward
- How your child will earn each reward
- How to keep track of your child's rewards

Make sure to think each of the above considerations before installing a rewards system in your home, and you'll be one step closer to creating an effective learning tool for your child!



5 Ways to Reward Your Kid

At this point, might be wondering what types of rewards to offer your child. Of course, any reward should be something your child is interested in. Otherwise, there will be no incentive to achieve the goal! Besides this, any reward that carries with it a potential for learning is the best type of reward. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Praise**

Everybody likes to be acknowledged for a job well done, but be sure to praise their hard work and effort, not just their success.

- **Change or money**

Before you scoff at the idea of giving an “allowance”, think about it this way: using money as an incentive can [help your child learn about money](#) management at an early age. Done right, you can teach your child about saving and working towards a goal to get

something that he or she truly wants. Teaching your child to be responsible with money can have life-long benefits.

- Experiences

One way to build intrinsic motivation is to expose your child to experiences that breed both learning and enjoyment. These experiences can be anything your child loves, like visiting the library, nature walks, movie nights at home, cooking, baking, camp outs, sleepovers, and much more!

- More responsibilities

Kids want to feel older and more responsible. Whether it's being in charge of the dog for the weekend, or taking care of a new fish, responsibility can be a wonderful reward that teaches kids invaluable lessons!

- Giving back

Teach kids to give back to their community by volunteering or donating goods. Volunteering and helping others can be a lot of fun, offering kids the opportunity get out of the house and do some good.

Don't be afraid to come up with your own ideas as to the rewards that you plan for your child. As always, the reward systems you decide upon must be right for your child and fit into your family's unique lifestyle. But there's no reason to be afraid of rewards, or think that they will turn your kids into entitled brats. Rewards are not the same as bribes, and when used effectively, you will be teaching your child to grow up with character and responsibility, setting out to achieve their goals!

