

# Positive Reinforcement Parenting

Positive reinforcement is a parenting tool that focuses on the good behaviors that children show. This is done by rewarding and encouraging them to repeat these behaviors. After a child shows good behavior (Example: eating vegetables, helping with clean up), the adult/caregiver rewards the child with positive reinforcement such as something the child wants or makes them feel good. This reward helps children understand what kind of behavior their caregiver wants to see. Your child will then probably want to repeat it.

The reward should not be too big and does not always have to be a physical item. Here are some tips and examples:

- Offer nice words (“You’re awesome!”) or tell them they did a good job
- Tell another adult how proud you are of your child’s behavior while your child is listening
- Give extra privileges (allow them to do something special like stay awake a little later than usual)
- Use a sticker reward chart to work toward a small gift or experience (a trip to the park)
  - Choose the reward with your child and set a goal for how many times per day or week the behavior should happen.

## Steps for Parents/caregivers




1. Choose the positive behavior you want to see your child do and make it specific. It is helpful to choose something that can be measured (Example: sit at the table for 15 minutes)
2. Decide on a reward that will motivate your child to show the behavior.
3. Offer the reward as soon as possible after your child shows the wanted behavior. If you cannot give a reward right away, make sure your child is clear on when they will receive it (Example: “You can play with bubbles outside this afternoon if you finish this morning”).
4. In the beginning, offer small and frequent rewards. As your child makes progress, the goals can be more difficult.

## Example

Dad wants Lucy to clean up her toys after she is done playing with them. Lucy loves when her dad claps for her and gives her high fives. When she puts one toy away Dad happily claps his hands for Lucy and gives her a high five after each toy.

**Plans for the future: the reward happens less often, but positive behavior is still rewarded.** Once Lucy puts her toys away more often, Dad will clap and give her high fives after every two or three toys she puts away. Eventually, Dad will clap and give Lucy a high-five when she puts all of her toys away.

What are we working on? \_\_\_\_\_

  
GETTING WARMER  
  


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