

Charting Positive Behavior

Some parents and children ages 2 and older find it helpful to post a chart that serves to praise and reinforce desired behaviors.

- Make a short list of the behaviors you want to promote, and share it with your child.
- Make a large chart with your child, using simple words or pictures to represent the behaviors you want to promote.
- Place a mark or a sticker on the chart each time your child engages in a desired behavior, while thanking her or telling her what you like about that behavior.
- Give marks for whatever period each day you can watch your child closely. Anything from 15 minutes to all day will work. At the end of the period, add up the marks and give a small reward (e.g., read your child an extra book, give her a special sticker, give her a penny).
- Give extra marks or special stickers for especially good behaviors such as spontaneous helpful actions, even if they are not on the list.
- If your child asks for a mark for something he did, give him one. His request reflects his understanding and his pride in cooperating.
- Siblings may want to participate by receiving marks themselves. This method also works well in a class or child care group.
- Continue this method for several weeks until praise alone is enough to maintain your child's positive behaviors. You can begin using the chart again if your child's behavior slips.

Here is an example of what a positive-behavior chart might look like.

| Behavior | Stars |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Picking up toys | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ |
| Saying thank you | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ |

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