

# Incentives for Motivating Children

## Definition

- Incentives are rewards or prizes that are given for desired behaviors.
- The reward must be strongly desired by the child. You can ask your child for ideas.
- Young children often become locked in a control battle with their parents. Incentives are very helpful to overcome a child's resistance in these instances.
- Rewards replace words. They also give a child a reason to end the power struggle.

## Health Information

### Incentive Types to Choose From

#### ***Access to a new toy or favorite toy***

- Trike or bike time
- Electric train set time
- Star Wars set, car and truck set, or dinosaur toys time
- Lego project time
- Remote control dog or car time
- Making jewelry or other craft time
- Art or drawing time
- Baking, cooking or tea party time
- Water pistol or magic sword time
- Reading or library time

#### ***New costume or outfit time***

- Batman, Spiderman, Snow White, Belle, etc.
- Nail Polish
- Special shoes or dress-up clothes (or earning parts of a special outfit)

#### ***Video time***

- New DVDs, pre-recorded favorite TV shows or YouTube favorites
- Computer games or video games
- App game time on touch tablet or smart phone

#### ***Special foods***

- Sweets: candy, ice cream or special cookies
- Favorite foods (such as pizza or strawberries)
- Food from a favorite restaurant

#### ***Small toys that they can keep***

- Rings, bracelets, necklaces
- Animals, dinosaurs, cars
- Parts of a collection

#### ***Money (coins) that they can save to buy something special***

## Care Advice

### 1. **How To Use Big Incentives:**

- For new toys or games, give the child access to it for 30 to 60 minutes. The child's access to the reward needs to be time-limited. That's the only way to maintain the incentive's value.
- The toy reward continues to be owned and controlled by the parent. This is really important for major incentives such as smart devices. That way your child is really earning a privilege and not another possession.
- These conditions allow the parent to deal with regression. For bad behavior, the item should be removed for 24 hours or longer. This needs to be spelled out for the child from the beginning.
- For all incentives, try to give them immediately after the child meets the goal.

### 2. **Tips For Getting Your Child To Do Something For The First Time:**

- Add some surprise to the rewards by making a treasure chest of wrapped prizes. You can also use slips of paper with different incentives written on them.
- You can also reward breakthroughs or reaching big goals with a triple reward. An example would be taking your child to a fast food place. Then have your child pick a movie and stay up late to watch it. Ask your child for some ideas.

### 3. **A Positive Relationship Is Essential For Incentives To Work:**

- Your child has to feel loved. Incentives will not work if you show anger.
- Give lots of hugs and kisses to let your child know he is loved. This works better than words or praise.
- Activities with you are also important. Examples are playing board games or playing catch. Reading, going to the park or on walks are other ideas.
- Building a strong relationship with you is essential for your child's emotional well-being. It also makes your child more willing to follow your rules and requests.

## Call Your Doctor If

- You have other questions or concerns

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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