

PARENTING · WORKSHEET

Behavior Chart (Kids)

Build a behavior chart tailored to your child: choose the target behaviors, the days, and the reward, then download a clean printable PDF to put on the fridge.

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What this tool does

A behavior chart is a positive reinforcement tool that makes progress visible to a child. The principle is well established in behavioral science: behaviors that get noticed and rewarded tend to grow. For young children, who live very much in the present, a sticker or check right after the behavior is powerful feedback, often more motivating than the reward at the end of the week.

This builder lets you tailor the chart to your child instead of using a generic template. The most effective charts target one or two specific, doable behaviors phrased as something to do rather than to stop. Got dressed by myself works far better than stop dawdling, because it is concrete, achievable, and easy to celebrate. Starting small keeps the

experience encouraging, which is what keeps a child engaged.

Behavior charts are a teaching tool, not a bribe and not a discipline system for serious problems. The goal is to help a new habit take root, then let the chart gently fade once the behavior comes naturally. Keep rewards small and frequent, pair every mark with genuine praise, and never take away earned marks as punishment, which turns the tool against you.

Fill in the fields below, download your chart, and put it somewhere your child sees it often at their eye level. Everything you type stays in your browser and is never uploaded or stored.

How to use it

- 1 Pick one or two behaviors together**, phrased as something to do: "brush teeth before bed," not "stop fussing at bedtime."
- 2 With your child**, agree a reachable target and a small, soon reward, erring on the easy side so the first week ends in a win.
- 3 Choose the days to track**, add a short note of encouragement, then download and print the chart somewhere visible, like the fridge.
- 4 Mark the chart right after each success**, with warm, specific praise: "you put your shoes on the first time I asked."
- 5 When the reward is earned**, deliver it promptly, then after a week or two raise the bar gently or rotate in a new behavior.

A COMPLETED EXAMPLE

Child's name: *Maya*

Behavior 1: *Brush teeth before bed*

Behavior 2: *Put shoes on when asked*

Days to include: *Monday to Friday*

Marks to earn the reward: *4*

The reward: *Choose the family movie on Friday night*

Encouragement note: *You're doing great, Maya. We love watching you try!*

1 Your child

Child's name (appears on the chart)

2 Target behaviors

Choose one or two specific, positive behaviors. Phrase each as something to do, not to stop.

Behavior 1

Behavior 2 (optional)

Behavior 3 (optional, keep it short)

3 Days to track

Most charts run a week at a time.

Days to include

☐ Mon

☐ Tue

☐ Wed

☐ Thu

☐ Fri

☐ Sat

☐ Sun

4 The reward

Keep it small and soon. Decide it together with your child.

How many marks earn the reward?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

Circle one.

The reward

5 A note of encouragement

Optional. A short line of praise to print at the bottom of the chart.

Encouragement note

Looking back

Which behavior improved fastest, and what does that tell you about how doable your targets were?

How is the marking going in the moment? If it keeps slipping to the end of the day, what would help you catch successes right away?

What is your child saying about the chart? Their enthusiasm, or lack of it, is your best guide to the next reward or target.

Sources

- American Academy of Pediatrics. What's the best way to discipline my child? [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/).
- Kazdin AE. The Kazdin Method for Parenting the Defiant Child. Houghton Mifflin; 2008.

Want a plan that fits your child?

A therapist who works with children and families can help you go beyond a chart. Free to search our directory. Start at psychology.com/therapist.

This chart builder is an educational parenting tool, not therapy or a diagnosis. If your child's behavior is severe, sudden, or causing real distress at home or school, please reach out to a pediatrician or a licensed mental-health professional. In an emergency, call your local emergency number or, in the US, call or text 988.

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