

# Incentives versus Bribes

Parents/guardians often have mixed feelings about using incentives and wonder how incentives differ from bribes.

**An incentive is chosen in a calm moment before a behavior takes place.** You and your child talk about – and agree on – the behavior and incentive ahead of time.

**A bribe is given in the middle of bad behavior as an attempt to make it stop.** Your toddler is having a tantrum at the grocery store and you promise to give them what they want if they'll just stop screaming.

Bribes teach children that bad behavior will get them a reward.

Incentives are a powerful way to encourage certain behaviors. Used correctly, they can motivate children to make change and stick with it – to work toward a goal and celebrate their successes.

Strategically using incentives with our Goal Planning & Behavior Tracking Worksheets can be effective and fun for both kids and adults, resulting in strengthening and expanding desired behaviors in self, family, recreation, academic, community, and public settings.

The wonderfully illustrated How To Be Good Gold Star Reward Stickers for over 65+ behaviors should be earned, NOT just given to play with. Incentives shouldn't be used for everything. In addition, once children show they have mastered desired behaviors, you shouldn't need to continue to give incentives for the desired skill.

In this How To Be Good sticker book - there are sample incentive coupons as well as many blank coupons to be defined by you and your child(ren). In addition, the enclosed Goal Planning & Behavior Tracking Worksheets are always available via free downloads on [www.ChildrensBehaviorEducation.com](http://www.ChildrensBehaviorEducation.com)

The stickers, as well as additional How To Be Good materials, are perfect bridging tools for when your children are in the care of other guardians.

- They are portable and easily handed to other guardians.
- Consistent messaging via multiple guardians helps reinforce messaging.
- They are easy for all guardians to quickly understand the desired behaviors being addressed and their role in coaching the behavior. They simply hand out a Gold Star Reward Sticker when they see the child using the proper behavior. They are perfect for parents/step-parents, grandparents/other family members, nannies/babysitters, teachers/educators, counselor/therapists, day care centers and any other guardians.
- They make it easy and help ensure positive reinforcement is being used with your child.

With all How To Be Good materials, encourage the individual behaviors and the REASONS for them:

- “Be good because it is the right thing to do, not because anyone is watching or expecting presents/rewards in return” It's fine to use incentives while the behavior is being learned, until it is mastered.
- “Treat others as you want to be treated”
- and “Just because others act badly is not a reason to act badly in return.”

We live in a social society/civilization. Children with proper social skills and self worth are usually more successful and live a higher quality of life than children without manners, social skills, good citizenship, knowing how to deal with bullying, and other life skills.