

Managing Constipation and Encopresis: Tools for Success

How to Give Your Child Positive Feedback

You can see it in his face, his smile, and his eyes. Children respond to praise. Giving your child positive feedback is a key part to help your child manage constipation and/or soiling.

There are many ways to give positive feedback to children of all ages. Here are some tools that you can use:

Tool: Sticker Chart

A sticker chart is an easy way to reward your child's positive behaviors. A sticker chart can be as simple as a blank piece of paper that you post on the refrigerator door. You and your child may choose to design the sticker chart or use a calendar page. The chart will be used to place stickers that your child earns for things like:

- sitting on the toilet
- taking medication
- pooping on the potty
- not soiling
- letting you know that he has to go to bathroom

Things to keep in mind when using a sticker chart

- be consistent-always give stickers and verbal praise promptly
- focus on the positive, give stickers for positive behaviors
- don't take stickers away once child has earned that sticker
- give verbal praise with each sticker
- set goals-after getting 10-15 stickers provide a reward

Rewards ideas

- healthy snacks
- sugar free gum
- special stickers-flashy, cute, sporty
- cool pencils
- trinkets
- alone time with parents
- go to the park
- play catch
- play board game
- art projects



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Tool: Positive Rewards Game

Cincinnati Children's GI Clinic staff psychologist, Dr. Michael Mellon, has developed a fun, interactive board game. This game allows you and your child to design and choose the rewards in a form of a board game. The basic idea behind the game is that your child moves along the game board by completing his/her bowel management behaviors. As your child moves along the spaces of the game, he/she receives rewards. The goal of the game is to help your child be successful in using the toilet and reduce accidents while having fun.

Getting started

Things that you might need:

- large paper
- poster board
- markers
- crayons
- stickers
- colored pencils
- glue
- work space
- dedicated time to make the game
- Ask your child what theme he/she wants for the board game. (sports, Candy Land®, Legos®, race track, princesses)
- Design the board game so it will last for one month (about 300 spaces)
- Each space on the board game is worth one point
- Every 20-30 spaces is a special place that should look different than the other spaces (this spot will be a special reward space)
- Make a point system with your child. For example,
 - 1 point for:
 - taking medicine
 - toilet sitting
 - clean day
 - 3 points for:
 - Putting poop in the potty where it belongs

Note: Your child's point system could vary as your child may need to work harder on different areas

- Each point that is earned will be filled in with a sticker on that space
- Praise your child with each point earned
- Every time your child reaches the special rewards space, he/she gets to pick something from a list called the "rewards menu".
 - Prizes on the "rewards menu" should be discussed and chosen with your child before the start of the game, but you have the final say as to what goes on the prize menu. Prizes should be free to low cost. When a child is involved in making the prize list, he/she will be more motivated to earn it.

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What is a reward?

A reward is something that you get or an activity you get to do.

- Some ideas include:
 - healthy snacks
 - sugar free gum
 - special stickers-flashy, cute, sporty
 - cool pencils
 - trinkets
 - alone time with parents
 - go to the park
 - play catch
 - play board game
 - art projects

Your child will progress through all the spaces to the finish line at the end of the game. At the end of the game, your child should get a "Grand Prize." This prize, like the prizes on the rewards menu, is discussed and chosen with your child at the beginning of the game. The "Grand Prize" should be a bigger reward but should be affordable for your family. Ideas for the "Grand Prize" might include:

- Allowing your child have a friend visit
- Special night out with family
- Going to a movie
- Letting your child stay up an extra 30 minutes past bedtime



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