



Behavior Plan Caregiver Worksheet

Our Plan to Change Behavior

Start with just one behavior, so you and your child can really focus on it and be successful. Later you can use behavior change plans to tackle other behaviors if needed.

The Problem. Write here the problem at home you are trying to solve (e.g., always late for the bus, won't complete chores, fighting with sister):

The Positive Behavior. Write here the positive behavior you WANT to see, that if your child was doing, there wouldn't be a problem (e.g., on time for the bus, completes chores, solves disagreements with sister using words):

Optional: Building Skills. Here are the TWO likely reasons your child isn't already doing the positive behavior. 1) It doesn't work out as well for the child as the current problem behaviors do. 2) Your child doesn't have the all the skills yet to do the positive behavior. If you think it could be because he or she doesn't have the skills, consider trying one of these strategies in your plan:

- Make your expectations really clear (You need to be outside the front door, *with* your shoes on and everything you need, by 7:25am)
- Use "shaping" (this means starting with smaller steps, or easier behaviors for now)
- Provide extra support (just until they don't need it anymore), like:
 - Reminders
 - Picture schedules, written steps
 - Doing it together
- Practice it (actually show them how it is done, have them try it in a practice run)
- Ask them, or brainstorm together, what else might help them succeed

⇒ List any skill-building strategies you could try:

The Rewards. Figure out something your child can have for succeeding at the positive behavior. Consider:

- Is the reward something your child cares about and will work for? (You may need to involve your child to know for sure)
- Is the reward something NEW (a bonus item or activity) or is it an activity your child already gets to do that you will make an EARNED PRIVILEGE that they get for succeeding? (TIP: Your child will feel better about earned privileges if they end up with a little above and beyond what they get normally.)
- Do you CONTROL this reward? (If taking away this privilege, or withholding the reward, would involve a wrestling match, maybe choose something else...)
- Is it the right size? (For behaviors that need to be rewarded daily, you need smaller/ideally free rewards...)

⇒ Reward ideas:

Possible Consequences. It may be necessary to provide a consequence if the behavior is serious enough. (E.g., breaking of one of the house rules) Consider:

- Do you have control over the consequence? Is the consequence something you can follow through with?
- Does the consequence make sense given the behavior? (time away from the activity, car keys taken away, less screen time)
- Is the length of time for the consequence reasonable?

⇒ Consequence ideas:

The Timing. Figure out how often you will give the reward, or how much (e.g., steps) of the positive behavior is needed to get the reward. Best rewards happen SOON after the behavior, and often. *Example: On days without hitting kicking or name calling between siblings they get 20 minutes of screen time after dinner. After 4 days in a row they get a trip to bowling and ice cream.* (TIP: Avoid the “nothing to lose blues” by having privileges or rewards that can be earned daily.)

⇒ Your timing:

Setting the Bar. Set your goals low enough so that your child has to work a little but is likely to earn the reward right away. You can raise the bar over time. If you start too high, your child may give up. (TIP: You can have “bonus” rewards for higher performance if you want.)

⇒ What does your child need to do to earn a reward (at first)?

The Challenges. Think about EVERYTHING that could go wrong. Are there days you might not be able to deliver the reward or privilege? How will this be handled? What about misbehavior that happens AFTER the reward is earned? (TIP: Don't take it away!) What if your child acts like they don't care about the reward? For teens, immediate rewards are hard, because they care about different things (curfew, weekend privileges); daily money towards weekly allowance can be effective, as can combining a mix of immediate and weekend rewards. Kids push our buttons—how will you stay calm if there are arguments about the plan?

⇒ What challenges might come up, and how could you handle them?

Here are some examples of plans that are simple or more complex. What will work for you?

The Contract.

EXAMPLE 1: Catching the Bus (11 y.o.)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
<i>Did it?</i>	_Yes X No	X Yes _No	X Yes _No	X Yes _No	Yes X No
<i>Reward</i>		Screen time	Screen time	Screen time	
<i>Notes</i>					Woke up late-bad mood

EXAMPLE 2: Making Curfew (15 y.o.)

Usual curfew: 6 PM School nights; 9 PM Sat and Sun

For each school night on time, earns 15 min the next night. Late on a school night->no curfew extension the next night. Late on a weekend night, loses 30 minutes the following weekend night. 3 school nights on time during week-> gets 30 minutes EXTRA Friday night. On time Friday night (either 9 or 9:30 depending on the week), gets 30 minutes extra Saturday night.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<i>On Time?</i>	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	
<i>Earns</i>	15 min Tues		15 min Thurs	30 min. Fri.		15 min Sun.	
<i>Notes</i>							

⇒ What do you want to track for yourself and your child? Sketch it out here:

Remember: For the plan to work, you will need to deliver the rewards as promised! If your child learns you might not hold up your end of the bargain, they will not put in the effort either. So, if you aren't totally sure you can follow through on the plan, change it until it is doable!