

Why Parents Should Give Kids Incentive to Do Well in School

Giving Kids Incentive Encourages them to Make Good Grades

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While hugs, kisses, and verbal praise should always go hand in hand with children's school progress, incentives such as gifts, special trips, and cold hard cash could teach children that good grades can lead to other types of rewards. Teaching children that good grades could lead to other rewards can prove motivational for kids who fail to complete assignments. Likewise, incentives could encourage children who complete their work on time to continue doing so.

Although children, in general, already have mindsets in which they want to please their parents, receiving incentives for jobs well done could motivate them to strive even harder.

When parents offer incentives for kids to do well in school, they reiterate the fact that they are thrilled with their children's efforts.

Incentives can serve as extra pats on the backs for just about any child whether they are struggling or whether schoolwork comes easy. Thus, children who tend to keep grades up "anyway" can still benefit from incentives.

Sometimes, children making good grades begin to falter when they think no one cares about their successes. Incentives can reassure children that someone is paying attention and that someone does care.

Although proponents such as Ayele Shakur, Ed.M. believe incentives are good for children, adversaries such as Alfie Kohn, author of *Punished by Rewards*, believe incentives are counter productive and thus, children should not receive them. Some adversaries say children should perform well in school simply for knowledge that they have done so, and that material awards gives children incorrect messages about educating themselves.

Despite the fact that naysayers see incentives for grades as bribes for grades, however, there are other walks of life in which children are "bribed" to perform. For instance, children playing sports are encouraged to win games so they can have pizza parties. Child actors are encouraged to remember their lines so they can get new toys. Even teachers offer their students opportunities to earn awards such as candy bars, pencils, certificates, and parties when they display good behavior and complete work on time.

The fact is that most children tend to respond to incentive awards, whether monetary or some other physical thing. They seem to enjoy that which they can see and hold in their hands. Although hugs, and kisses, and pats on the back are nice, if inspiring more children to strive at the tops of their games means bribing them with incentive awards, then perhaps they should be bribed. After all, and once again, when considering other accomplishments for which childhood successes are rewarded, it makes no sense to avoid rewarding kids for making good grades. And if motivational incentives make the difference between children getting an "A's" rather than a "C's" for any and all of their subjects, this author says, "Bribe Away!"