

The practice of using rewards may be used for children with or without mental illness. Giving a child a reward for good behavior makes them want to continue that behavior in the future. You can use one of three different kinds of rewards: physical, unlabeled verbal and labeled verbal. The examples below demonstrate each of these types of rewards.

How does this practice work?

- Decide on what behavior/s will be rewarded.
- Decide on what kind of rewards would work for a child (parent and child do this together).
- Make rewards easily available to a child (playing a game).
- Make rewards small for easy behaviors and large for difficult behaviors.
- Give the rewards right after the good behavior.
- Give rewards **ONLY** after the targeted behavior has occurred.
- Provide a reward after each and every instance of the targeted behavior.

Example:

Physical reward Fatuma runs around the house yelling at everyone when she is unhappy. She will run right into someone and start hitting them. Her caregivers have been working with her to stop this behavior. One night just before dinner time, Fatuma's brother teases her about her hair. This time she does not start yelling and running. She tells her brother to stop teasing her. Her caregiver gives her a big smile and a pat on the back.

Unlabeled reward Zack hits his little brother Owen when he doesn't get his way. Zack's guardians have been working with him to stop hitting his brother. One day Zack was just about to hit Owen and she stopped himself. His caregiver saw him do this, they say "Terrific." And "Great choice!"

Labeled reward Ali comes home from school and dumps her backpack and shoes on the floor in the kitchen. She is so moody snaps on everyone. Ali's caretakers have been working with her to stop snapping and pick up her belongings. One day Ali came home from school, dropped her backpack on the kitchen floor, but remembered she wasn't supposed to and picked it up and brought the backpack to her bedroom. She asked for time alone because she was feeling crabby. Her caregiver says, "Ali, I like it when you ask for what you need and way to go for picking up your backpack."

