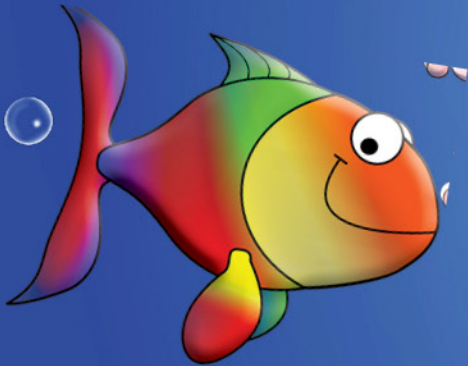


# Behavior Charts to the Rescue!



*Great for all ages*



**Bring out the best in your child with  
our step-by-step advice and helpful  
tips for using behavior charts**



Latitudes.org

# Behavior Charts to the Rescue!

Revised and Updated

## A Guide for Parents

By the [ACN Latitudes](#) Behavior Chart Team  
with special thanks and acknowledgment  
to Mona Wimmer



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## **Introduction**

**Y**ou want what's best for your child and your family, and the good news is that behavior charts can help. But you need to know what common pitfalls to avoid and what positive actions you can take to make them work. This book is your roadmap.

We suggest you take time to read it through rather than skip around. If you see a chapter title that catches your eye, go ahead and check it out, but be sure to come back, since some of the chapters build on others.

It's a good idea to take notes in sections that especially apply to your situation or that have tips you know you will need to refer back to.

### **Different Kids Need Different Approaches**

Some parents who read this book are desperate for help; their child may be disrespectful, fights with a sibling, or won't take part in family activities. Other parents may simply want to help their child develop a new, positive behavior. They might wish to encourage activities such as completing schoolwork, participating in physical therapy sessions, complying with a new diet, or improving organizational skills.

The basics of behavior charts hold true for all these types of issues. Since dealing with negative behavior is often the reason someone turns to using charts, our text will frequently refer to challenging situations. Please know you can receive equal value from behavior charts when you want to *add a positive behavior* to a situation that is already fairly well under control.



These are guidelines, not absolutes. Remember that children's behavior and the causes behind it vary. While most youngsters respond well to behavior charts, it is always important to select a behavior that is attainable, one that is within the child's ability to change.

### **For Parents of Children with Special Needs**

If you are dealing with a problem such as severe anxiety, major symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder, dramatic mood swings, or a profound communication or developmental disorder, you will need to adapt suggestions in this book to meet your needs. It may also be beneficial to seek professional help, to assist in developing goals and incentives or rewards.

## Here Are Some Do's and Don'ts

### Do's



- Do read the book carefully. It's important not to miss key details about using behavior charts.
- Do consider printing this out so you can make notes in the margins and refer to them later.
- Do be sure you feel confident you understand what we've presented before using a chart.
- Do realize you should be congratulated for taking a positive step to help improve the behavior of your child!

### Don'ts



- Don't feel you have to read this book in one sitting.
- Don't forget where you store the book file on your computer!
- Don't start a behavior chart without being sure you understand the right kind of goals and incentives to use.
- Don't think of behavior charts as a crutch. Adults use charts all the time! (Just look at a typical weight loss plan.)
- Don't be discouraged that your son or daughter may not be behaving as well as you'd like right now. Think positively that you're on your way to learning new skills that can help your child!

## Chapter 1

### The Basics of Behavior Charts

**Y**ou know something has to change in how you deal with a situation with your child, or you wouldn't be reading this book. Awareness is one thing, and it's a good start. But if you really want things to change, you need to be ready and willing to take a new approach

There are two common reasons to use behavior charts: 1) to fix a current discipline problem or 2) to encourage a new habit that doesn't involve typical discipline issues. Let's look at both those situations.

#### When You Want to Fix a Discipline Problem

How have you been handling discipline? What has your role been? Have you been the strong and authoritarian parent who doesn't let her kid get away with anything? Or have you been

the laid-back, pushover parent who tends to give in to whatever your child wants—anything to keep him from having a tantrum or getting upset?

Now think about your child's behavior, especially the one thing you'd most like to change. It's probably a pattern of behavior that's pretty strong by now.

Reasonable degrees of both authoritarian and laid-back parenting styles can be effective if done properly. But this book is going to introduce you to a different way of relating to your child that goes beyond old ideas of strong, authoritarian parents and laid-back, pushover parents.

By reading this book you're showing that you're a parent with good intentions, someone who wants his or her home and child to be happy, and that you're ready for change!

Now that you have this guidebook, you have an opportunity to start taking actions that will help you be more effective in transforming your child's negative behaviors into positive ones. So take this opportunity to make up your mind that you're going to give this new way a fair shot. Decide right now that you're willing to swap out the old way for the new way.

You can do this! Since your actions so far have not been giving you the effect you want, it's time to do something different . . . something that really does work.

Now let's look at another type of behavioral goal, when you want help a child simply add a new positive behavior.

### **When You Want to Encourage a New Habit**

Things may be running fairly smoothly at home, yet you want to give some special attention to your son or daughter. Here are some examples of reasons people use behavior charts when typical "behavior problems" aren't the main concern:

- Maybe your child has had to start a restrictive diet, and you want to use an incentive chart to track and encourage his effort. By doing so, you let him know how much his cooperation (and sacrifice!) is appreciated.
- Maybe you've had to restrict the use of video games or TV and you want to acknowledge your child's cooperation.
- Perhaps your child needs a nudge to take his vitamins or other supplements.
- You might want your child to help out with chores around the house or improve in the area of self-care.

These are a few of many situations in which our behavior charts and the tips provided in this book can help point a child in the right direction.