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Do you have kiddos in your classroom that just can't seem to follow the rules no matter how many warnings you give them? Do they just seem to goof off at every opportunity? They may just need a bit more frequent feedback than the rest of your students. Behavior charts have been a great tool in my classroom. I've used behavior charts for years, but recently have made a few adjustments to them that have been the golden ticket! First off, let's get into the details of when and why to use them. When to Use a Behavior Chart I use behavior charts on and off throughout the year. It depends on the student and his or her need at that time in the classroom. I tend to use a chart with students who seem to be pushing all my buttons all day long. I find that I'm just getting more and more frustrated with the student and the warnings and loss of privileges just isn't working anymore. In reality, I gauge a student's behavior based on my feelings and reaction to it. If I'm able to go with the flow, I let it go, but if I'm feeling put out by the behavior then I address it. In comes a chart. It's for my sanity as much as theirs. Why to Use a Behavior Chart The behavior chart helps me focus on a certain student's behavior for a shorter chunk of time. Rather than an impression of a student over the course of a day, I can stop and think about the student's behavior within a 30-60 minute period. It is a shorter amount of time for both my reflection and for the student to focus. If a student has to "be good" all day long, it's really hard to do, but if they can focus on their behavior during certain increments of time, it's much more manageable. How to Use a Behavior Chart I've made some modifications to my behavior chart over the years, but this year, I feel like I've made the most significant changes. One thing a behavior chart needs to have is increments of time on it. I use our natural transition times between activities. I have a strip for each day, as our daily schedule is slightly different. Each new period of the day is another chance to do well. You also need a place for a parent signature. Ideally, you'd meet with the parent and set up some sort of reward system for the child so that if they achieved their goal, the child would receive something at home. This type of communication is integral to the success of the child. I add a signature so that I can be sure the parent has seen the chart. Are you looking for an easy way to improve your kids' behavior? Are you fed up with their bad behavior? You've come to the right place! These free printable behavior charts can improve your child's behavior overnight. All of our charts are free! No registration required to download or print. Free Behavior Chart Maker Create a DIY behavior chart for kids that you can customize online before you print. Change the background and the theme. Add clipart with various themes such as princesses, superheroes, space, and many more. Edit the text and add additional text. Add your child's photo. Select a daily, weekly, or monthly layout or a number of steps. Designs for all ages. See a toddler behavior chart, pre-k and preschool behavior chart, and charts for older kids. There are some behavior chart examples below but there are hundreds of options available and they are all free! Open Behavior Chart Maker Each behavior chart template is available in three formats: daily, weekly or monthly. Behavior Chart Template You can use this generic behavior chart for many different purposes. | Customizable Chart | PDF Version - Sunday Start | PDF Version - Monday Start | Free Printable Behavior Charts What are behavior charts? Behavior charts track a child's behavior and reward positive desirable behavior. The reward can either be the sticker on the behavior chart or a treat that children receive when they earn enough stars. Decide on the required number of stars ahead of time and let the child know. The amount depends on the child's age. Charts with only ten steps usually work best for kids age 3 to 5, while older kids typically need around 20 steps. We offer a variety of free behavior charts that you can download and print. Why do behavior charts work? Positive reinforcement is the best way to encourage and maintain good behavior. Children love to be praised and encouraged. A good behavior sticker chart ensures that we praise desirable behavior, which we otherwise might not have recognized. How do you use these charts? Show your children our selection of printable charts and let them choose one. Download and print the chart of their choice. Define "good behavior" and discuss it with your children. Make sure they understand how you would like them to behave and what kind of behavior you will reward with a star or sticker. For example, if your children come into your bed during the night, then explain to them that each night that they stay in their bed throughout the night, they will get a star. When the chart is complete, acknowledge their achievement with a reward. Make the process fun and enjoyable! How do you customize the editable behavior charts? If you have selected an editable behavior chart, then you can edit the text and add your own image. Click on the editable behavior chart to open the chart maker. You can make any color chart for kids since every element can be edited. You can make a weekly schedule, chore chart, sticker chart, etc. Edit the text and add more text if you have anything else to add. Add a photo. Download your printable chart to your PC and print. If the child has specific needs, then use the search bar to search for specific solutions such as an ODD behavior chart for kids with oppositional defiant disorder. For what ages can these charts be used to promote moral behavior? Behavior charts can be very efficient from age 3 until about age 7 or 8. The age of the child will determine the number of stars or steps on the chart. For younger kids up to age 5, we recommend a chart with 10 steps. Kids, ages 5 - 8, can cope with 20 steps. How to develop and use a reward program There are six steps: Step 1: Decide what specific behaviors you want to reward Pick a few specific actions that your child will clearly understand. For example, don't write "behave well," but rather "no hitting." Only choose responses that your children are capable of and are suitable for their age. Step 2: Decide on the reward The reward should be something your child wants to earn and will enjoy. It doesn't have to cost money. Getting the stickers on the chart can be the reward. If that will not work for your children, then decide on a reward when they earn a certain number of stickers such as going out for ice cream. Step 3: Create a behavior chart Select a behavior chart from this site. You can add pictures to any chart. Click on "add photo" and add a photo if your child cannot read yet. For example, instead of writing "tidy your room" add a photo of your child's room when it is tidy. Step 4: Explain the reward program to your child Your children need to understand what they have to do to get a sticker on their behavior chart. Step 5: Use the reward program Remember to give them a sticker on their chart immediately after the behavior. This will ensure that they know exactly what they did to earn the reward. Step 6: Slowly change the selected behavior or phase out the reward program Reward your children often when you use the behavior chart. Over time, you will notice a change in their behavior. Once this new behavior has become a habit, you can either stop using the sticker chart template or start a new chart with new goals. Should you take off stickers for bad behavior? No. Never take away rewards your children have earned. Rewards that they have earned are theirs, and you should not take them away for misbehaving. Behavior charts are wonderful tools to encourage positive behavior and have fun at the same time. Behavior charts and reward charts can be used to track difficult behaviors, chores, daily routines, homework, potty training and much more! Help support your kids or students by encouraging positive behavior! For more tips, read our article on How to Use Behavior Charts. And if you don't see a behavior chart or resource that your need, contact us, and we'll try our best to make it for free! By Traci Esposito Sorry Johnny, but you're going to have to move your color to red. That's no recess for you. Mia, if you don't clean your plate you won't get your sticker for tonight. Ryker, you are going to lose all your points today if you don't clean up right now! Do any of those sound familiar? If you have children at home, of any age, it is a safe bet to say that you have encountered some type of behavior management system, whether through trial and error in the home, or something your kids' teachers implemented. There are many varieties out there, but we will group them into a common term known as a behavior chart. What is a Behavior Chart? At its core, a behavior chart is a chart that tracks behavior and is meant to create rewards and punishments based on said behavior. Seems simple enough, and it's probably been used on you and/or by you at some point. Let's review some common types of behavior charts: Color-coded behavior charts These can be a stoplight system or a rainbow of colors. Typically, kiddos start at green, or a neutral color in the middle of the chart, and their "marker" (a magnet or clothespin that holds their name) is moved up or down to track their behavior throughout the day. Sticker behavior charts A grid-like chart that holds space for stickers to track desirable choices leading up to an earned reward after so many stickers, similar to a potty incentive chart. Point-based behavior charts This is a step up from a sticker chart and tracks points for desirable (or undesirable) behavior. Points can be turned into rewards, or in some cases, allowance. Many teachers find success using some sort of behavior chart as a tracking system for all students, and parents typically appreciate this as it's a quick and easy way to communicate about the day by posing the question, "What color were you today?" or "Did you earn your sticker today?" Some teachers have probably figured out excellent ways to use this type of tracking system with discretion, caution, and empathy. Unfortunately, all too often, that is not the case. Many behavior chart systems are well intended, and have external benefits that lure adults towards using them because: They guide children towards firm and clear boundaries. They set up clear expectations. They offer a sense of order and discipline. They give caretakers the idea of control. They create a visual tracker. But, internally, behavior charts are not capable of creating a lasting behavioral change. Students who are often "on red" switch from one type of "red" behavior to another. Others find success in sticking to the expectations of one classroom and one teacher, but it does not directly transfer to another - they are learning to fit the parameters of an adult to avoid punishment rather than amending the internal cause of the misbehavior. Long-term, something just doesn't add up. Why a Behavior Chart Does Not Work Behavior charts are rooted in both positive and negative reinforcement, tracking behaviors in order to ultimately shift them (although it doesn't always work that way). Sticker or incentive charts might be used to track positive choices in order to earn a reward or a positive consequence. Color-coded charts track both desired and undesired behaviors and therefore assign positive and/or negative consequences. "Good" colors end up with positive remarks, praise, and sometimes rewards while "bad" colors end up with scolding, and sometimes, actual punishment. It's a bit like training a dog - "good dogs" who sit and settle when told to get praise and treats, while "bad dogs" who bark or mark get scolded. Essentially, parenting and managing classrooms with behavior charts reduce humans to the level of a trainee. It devalues their emotional needs and underestimates their abilities. Children need a lot more than "good job" or "bad job" in order to navigate their behaviors, emotions, and their place in a family or classroom setting. And certainly, we want more for them than to simply comply with a command. Behavior charts set the expectation that mistakes are closely tracked and punished rather than communicating that mistakes help us learn and grow. And this is unfortunate because, the truth is, none of us are perfect, and our missteps do not define us. Because behavior charts focus on the child being either "good" or "bad" or behaving desirably or not, they rob children of the information needed to modify and learn from their behavior. Behavior charts take those chances away. What to use instead of a Behavior Chart For some teachers, it might be really hard to imagine a world where you don't use some sort of tracking system for behavior management. In fact, some administrators require it. We hear you, and understand the value of tracking behavior in order to communicate with parents and document disruptive behavior. At the same time, the tracking of this behavior does not need to be done with a very public, and more often than not, humiliating visual system. A teachers-eyes-only notebook to track mild behaviors versus unsafe disruptions would allow teachers to see which students are acting out as well as how, when, and why. Trends might become evident and that is helpful data when students are being evaluated for special services or when parents want more information. The positive parenting approach does not mean all behavior is desirable and without consequences. It also does not leave children free to repeat mistakes that are harmful, hurtful, and/or disruptive. Instead, it creates a system of connection and safety to hold space for these perfectly imperfect humans who are still finding their way. Our job is to guide them along their path, not steer them into the safety zone without a chance to grow into their place in the world.

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