

Struggling with Homework

Parents, this is a guide to help when your child is struggling with homework.

1. Write down assignments. (See sample assignment sheets.)

Student: Have your child write down his/her assignments every day.

Teacher/Peer: If they are not able to do this, a teacher (or peer) may need to assist them.

Parent & Teacher: This assignment sheet or book needs to be checked by both the parent and teacher daily.

Parents: keep in contact with the teacher about using your child's assignment book/sheet.

2. Have a pocket folder with "To Do" written on one pocket, and "Turn in Done" on the other pocket. All of your child's assignments can go in this folder. If it is an older child, s/he may wish to have a binder with a folder for each class.

3. In the folder write the teacher's telephone number and the phone number of a few classmates that a student can call if they don't know an assignment or understand directions to an assignment.

4. Write a homework contract with your child. Start small (see example). A child will be more motivated when they are successful. If a child is only completing 2 questions on a page, then have that be their starting goal.

Once your child has fulfilled his/her contract, make it harder. Start with work completion. After work is completed, then move on to a greater goal, for example, completing with legible handwriting, or completing with a passing grade.

If the contract is to complete homework, then that is how a child fulfills the contract. Remember getting good grades is not the contract, doing chores is not the contract, and doing what your parents tell you is not the contract. Don't say a contract will not be met for anything other than the specific behavior – completing homework.

5. Chart your child's success. Using a chart (examples of beaver for small children, or star chart for older children), have your child put a sticker on, or color in the chart each time they fulfill their contract. For example, if their contract is to do 2 problems, then they get a sticker every time they complete 2 problems.

Make a reward menu for the child to choose from when s/he has filled the entire chart with stickers. Think of things your child likes, and let them help think of items for the menu too. See ideas on attached sheet with "rewards".

6. In order to help your child be successful, during homework time:

- Be available to help

- Have a place to do homework

- Give a lot of "good job" and "that a boy/girl" for even the smallest things (like picking up the pencil!)

- Turn off the TV, have total silence, or have music on the child likes – however your child works best. Some children need music to focus or drown out other noises.

- Be positive and non judgmental. Give verbal rewards such as "Great!" "I'm so proud of you". Don't say things like "you could have done more", or "you better reach your goal".

7. If it takes your child 'all night' to complete homework, have a goal for the day such as do 2 math problems in 5 minutes and then get a 5-minute break. Repeat until the homework is complete. Use a timer to keep track of the 5 minutes.

It may be necessary to set a limit on the amount of time a child does homework each day in order for them to reach their goal. If a child is doing hours of homework each day, it may be helpful to allow an age appropriate amount of time to complete homework. This can reduce frustration and allow a child to be more successful. A guideline for homework is 10 minutes per grade level, for example 1st grade 10 minutes, 2nd grade 20 minutes, etc.

8. Sometime the problem with homework is really due to organization. Children that are disorganized need help in planning to be organized. Then they need to be monitored by teachers and parents to support and teach

them to be organized. One system of organization is to carry all school supplies in a binder. A plastic pouch inside can hold all needed supplies such as pencils, pens, eraser, ruler, colored pencils, protractor, compass, sticky notes, erasable highlighter, mini stapler, paperclips, etc. Have a different colored folder for each subject in the binder, and loose leaf paper. Some children need paper inside each subject folder to stay organized. Frequently used resources may need to be handy as well. Items such as a multiplication table, math facts, map of the US, list of commonly misspelled words, etc can be kept in the binder next to the folder of the subject it is used in. The assignment book/sheet can be kept inside the front of the binder.

9. Stick with it! If this plan starts off working well, that means that the rewards are working. If progress seems to drop off, don't give up – stick with the plan. This is normal, even with a plan that works for your child.

Start Small

BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

Britney AGREES TO
read her take home story

EXPECTATION: EVERY TIME she does
read her whole home story,

Britney WILL EARN 1 POINT.

REINFORCEMENT: WHEN Britney
EARNS 1 POINTS HE WILL BE ABLE
TO CHOOSE A REWARD FROM THE REWARD
MENU.

The "Behavior Contract" is one of the most individualized, personalized, and direct strategies designed to increase appropriate behavior and decrease inappropriate behavior.

The "Behavior Contract" should specify:

- Who is involved in the contract
- What behavior is expected (e.g., chores, homework, etc.)
- The amount of behavior that is expected
- How reinforcement is earned
- When reinforcement is earned
- What reinforcement is available

Increase goal with success

BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

Britney AGREES TO
read her home story

EXPECTATION: EVERY TIME she reads
her whole home story,

Britney WILL EARN 1 POINT.

REINFORCEMENT: WHEN Britney

EARNs 2 POINTS HE WILL BE ABLE

TO CHOOSE A REWARD FROM THE REWARD

MENU.

The "Behavior Contract" is one of the most individualized, personalized, and direct strategies designed to increase appropriate behavior and decrease inappropriate behavior.

The "Behavior Contract" should specify:

- Who is involved in the contract
- What behavior is expected (e.g., chores, homework, etc.)
- The amount of behavior that is expected
- How reinforcement is earned
- When reinforcement is earned
- What reinforcement is available

Older child - Start Small

Contract

I, Jane, agree to do the following behaviors:

1. I will do 2 math problems
2. I will bring my science study guide home
3. _____

When: After School

How Well: Untill I'm done

If I am successful, I will receive 1 choice from reward list given by mom, on completing goal.

Bonus Clause If I do this every day until my star chart is full, I earn 1 choice from the special reward list.

Penalty Clause ~~_____~~



Jane
(Student Signature)

Aug. 18, 20xx
Date

Mom
(Teacher Signature)
Parent

Aug. 18, 20xx
Date

Older child - increase goal with success

Contract

I, Jane, agree to do the following behaviors:

1. Do 5 math problems
2. Bring my science study guide home
3. Read science study guide once a week

When: After school

How Well: Until complete

If I am successful, I will receive 1 sticker on star chart, given by Dad, on completing behaviors.

Bonus Clause When I get 3 stars I earn one choice from my reward list.

Penalty Clause ~~_____~~



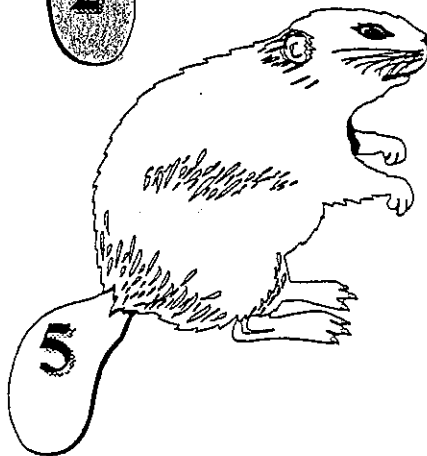
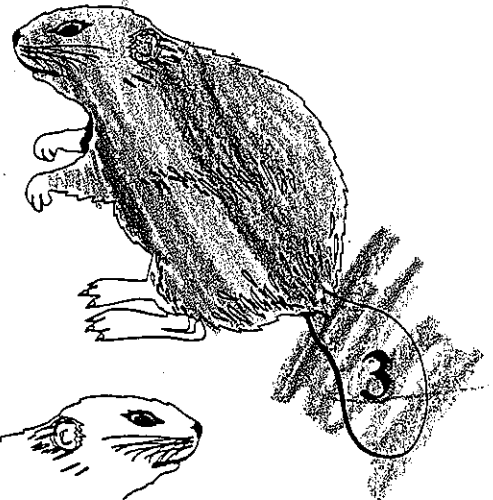
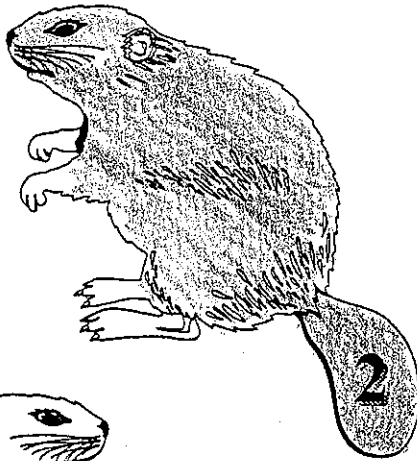
Jane _____ Sept. 7, 20XX
(Student Signature) Date

Dad _____ Sept. 7, 20XX
(Teacher Signature) Date
Parent

Achiever Beaver Contract

I, John, agree to do 2 math problems during after school time. If I do this, I may color in a beaver. When all five of the beavers are colored in, I will receive 1 choice from reward list, to be provided by mom.

Date August, 18, 20xx
Student John
~~Teacher~~ Parent Mom



Increase Goal with success

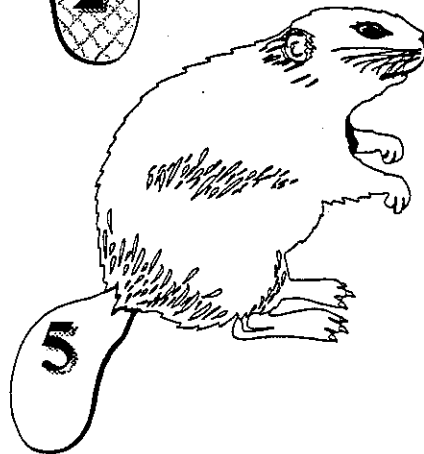
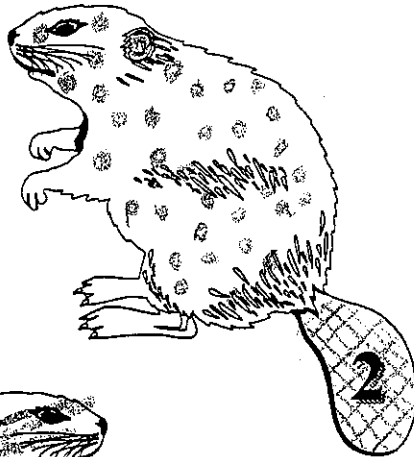
The Tough Kid Tool Box: Section 4

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Achiever Beaver Contract

I, John, agree to do 3 math problems during after school time. If I do this, I may color in a beaver. When all five of the beavers are colored in, I will receive 1 choice from reward list, to be provided by Dad.

Date Sept. 07, 20XX
Student John
~~Teacher~~ Dad
~~Parent~~



See page 67 for suggestions for use.

Rewards

1. Spend 30 minutes alone with parent doing activity of choice
2. Listen to the radio
3. Free Time
4. Watch favorite program on TV
5. Talk to best friend
6. Listen to favorite records
7. Read a book/magazine/newspaper
8. Candy, especially chocolate
9. Play sports – baseball, kickball, soccer
10. Ride a bike
11. Use the computer
12. Visit library
13. Have best friend visit/sleep over
14. Do something fun with best friend
15. Build a model plane or car
16. Go to the arcade and play video game
17. Camping trip
18. Stay up later one night
19. Help cook meal
20. Bake favorite cookies with parent
21. Choose menu for a meal
22. Have special dessert
23. Back rub/foot rub
24. Go to park
25. Play with pets
26. Go out for pizza
27. Pop popcorn
28. Go to a movie
29. Play outside
30. Play a game
31. Use a camera (roll of film & developing)
32. Run errands
33. Help an adult with a chore (ie. Clean up)
34. Play with puppets
35. Play with dolls/dollhouse
36. Ice cream
37. Cookies
38. Go to grocery store
39. Tacos

Rewards cont.

- 40. Hamburgers and French fries
- 41. Pizza
- 42. Money
- 43. Make a button
- 44. Party
- 45. Eat outside
- 46. Soda
- 47. Work on a puzzle
- 48. Be read to
- 49. Go fishing
- 50. Gumball machine
- 51. Race cars
- 52. Use magic markers
- 53. Rollerskate
- 54. Character toy (example: Disney, Pokeyman)
- 55. Water slide
- 56. Miniature golf or bowling
- 57. Go fishing
- 58. Stickers
- 59. Pencils
- 60. Fly model airplane
- 61. Choose what your family has for dinner or dessert
- 62. Rent a movie
- 63. A McDonald's gift certificate
- 64. Iron on decal
- 65. Temporary tattoo
- 66. Add item to collection
- 67. _____
- 68. _____
- 69. _____
- 70. _____
- 71. _____
- 72. _____
- 73. _____
- 74. _____
- 75. _____
- 76. _____
- 77. _____
- 78. _____