

BRIBES VS REWARDS

When parenting, although it may seem like **rewards** and **bribes** are identical twins there are ways to tell the difference, and it's an important distinction.

1. Rewards are earned for good behavior, bribes are offered to avoid or stop bad behavior.

Regardless of the size of the incentive (from an ice cream cone to an iPod) if it's offered to encourage behavior that you'd like to see as part of your child's character, like studying hard, or being a good pet owner, those are rewards. If the same offer is made for not doing certain things, like not throwing a tantrum or not being rude to a grandparent then it is a bribe.

2. Rewards can be surprises, bribes are overt.

A surprise trip to the gift shop before you leave a museum for good behavior during a visit is a reward. An unplanned stop at the gift shop to put an end to moping or whining is a bribe.

3. How do you feel when making the offer?

If it's desperation then it's a bribe.

4. Rewards make your child proud, bribes make your child powerful.

Rewards are not negotiated. They are your decision. So when you say "If you keep your room clean then..." it's a reward. If a child says "If I clean my room then I want..." it's a bribe. What your child is doing is extorting compensation for something they should do in the first place.

5. Rewards are a good parenting tool, bribes are not.

Once you start down the path of bribing then it will be hard to break the cycle. Children very quickly will come to expect a "this for that" arrangement. You will forever be finding yourself at the bargaining table whereas even as adults we are motivated by rewards in the form of promotions, raises and the pride that comes with a job well done.

What Is The Difference Between a Bribe and a Reward?

A **bribe** is something offered before the task in order to get your child to do what you want him to do.

A **reward** is something that happens after the event.

