

## Reaching for the Stars at Home

Reach for the Stars is a school-wide, Positive Behavior Intervention Support program that encourages positive behaviors. Students have the opportunity to receive rewards (both intrinsic and extrinsic) by demonstrating expected behaviors. At school, we teach the expectations and as students are “caught reaching for the stars” by the adults at school, they’ll be able to punch stars into their “REACH Cards” which are kept in their classroom. When they gain 25 or more stars, they’ll be eligible to choose from many reward choices. Examples include: Extra Recess Club, Extra Computer time, Lunch Buddy Club, Having lunch with a special adult, they can earn prizes from a Treasure Box or choose a “Mystery Motivator”. Along with Reach for the Stars, we will also continue our “High 5 Program” just as we have done it in the past years. If you’d like more details about how the program works at school, please see your Parent Handbook.

The Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Team is also happy to answer any questions. You may contact: Lori Blatnick, Renee Castro, Bobbi Harper, Kim Kieffer or Brenda Zabel.

The core of our program is the Teaching Matrix. We believe, “If we expect it, we have to teach it.” The Teaching Matrix is also in your Parent Handbook. We will teach the 5 expected behaviors, we call them REACH. It’s an acronym for Respect, Effort, Attitude, Citizenship and Honesty. All students will be taught how to show these behaviors in the many areas of the school. These areas include: the Classroom, the Hallway, the Restroom, in the Cafeteria, on the Playground, in the Office and at Arrival/Dismissal. The expected behaviors will be taught on August. Please be sure to ask your child about REACH !

We would like to encourage you to use REACH at home too. It’s pretty easy to incorporate into whatever discipline or reward system you already use. That’s what we all like about PBIS/Reach for the Stars; it isn’t that different from what we’ve already been doing at AEES. It has provided us with more structure and school-wide consistency. We also like the positive emphasis.

A good way to start is to sit down with your children and say, “We heard about what you are doing at school and we’d like to try REACH at home. Let’s think of ways we can show our REACH behaviors here at home. Begin brainstorming how you show respect at home, for example, “I listen. I talk out problems with my sister. I use nice words. I clean up my toys.” Then move on to Effort, “I do my chores. I do my best. I take care of my belongings. I behave safely.” Next, Attitude, “I am cooperative. I’m polite and kind. I listen the first time.” Finally, continue with Citizenship (good manners, following rules, cleaning up after yourself, being helpful and caring, etc) and Honesty. You can create a chart similar to what we use at school and post it in a place where family members can see it. Yours will likely have one column – “Home” for each of the REACH behaviors unless you want to get detailed (for example, car rides, dinner table, bathroom, playroom, etc.) Please see the sample charts at the end of this article for ideas. If you’d like a blank matrix, contact me and I’ll send you one.

The next step is to decide on rewards with your children. What can they earn when you catch them reaching for the stars at home? It’s a good idea to focus on rewards that emphasize positive relationships and don’t cost money. However, sometimes children do benefit from material rewards too. Think about what is best for your family and decide together. Some

reward ideas include: going on a family walk, going to the playground, play a game with Mom or Dad, brush the dog, earn some money to save up for something, a lollipop, play with playdough, choose a CD (or radio station) for the family to listen to in the car...be creative!

To keep track of positive behavior, you can create a sticker chart, you can decorate cans (one per child) and the children can earn Popsicle sticks or chips that are collected in their cans. At my house, I keep a "Smiley Chart" on the refrigerator. When I catch my child being respectful or honest, if he shows good effort, he earns smiley faces. We reward daily, often younger children need more frequent rewards (my child is almost 5). Older children can earn weekly or when they've reached an agreed on larger amount (like 20). If my son earns 6 smileys each day (3 on school days since he's not home all day), he chooses a reward. We like to choose what to work for the night before but you'll want to find a structure that works for your family. Some children like to decide at the time they made their goal and some like "Mystery Motivators". To take the "mystery" approach, have a can, an envelope or a box and put the written options in it and your child can draw a choice when they make their goal.

When families and school team up and work on the same goals, wonderful things happen! Once you've been "Reaching for the Stars" consistently, you will notice that the need to discipline your children will decrease significantly. Your children will also be learning important life skills—Respect, Honesty, Good Citizenship, Effort and Positive Attitude. These are skills that will help your children become successful adults and successful workers.

Be sure to really emphasize the positive. Try to keep your positive interactions high. We recommended that there be 5 positives to 1 negative, whenever possible. If you'd like ideas, support, or have questions about how to make "Reach for the Stars" work at home, give Kim Kieffer a call or e-mail at [kimberly.kieffer@asd20.org](mailto:kimberly.kieffer@asd20.org). I am always happy to talk about the parenting journey!

**SAMPLE CHARTS:** one to outline expectations, one to track progress

**Star Behaviors**

Respect

Effort

Attitude

Citizenship

Honesty

**How I Reach for the Stars at home.**

I listen, I talk out problems, I use nice words, I clean up my toys

I do my chores, I do my best work, I take care of my belongings, I behave safely

I am cooperative, I am polite and kind, I listen the first time

I use good table manners, I follow rules, I clean up after myself, I am helpful and caring

I tell the truth, I return what I borrow promptly, I go where I say I'm going