

## It's Not the Reward, It's How You Use It

Yesterday Mother drove several children to the park to play. On the way her son, Arthur, began to poke his friend. She requested that Arthur stop, but he didn't. The situation got worse — more hurting, and then anger, and finally crying. Everyone arrived at the park unhappy.

Today, Mother wants to avoid trouble again. So on this trip to the park she has brought granola bars to use as a reward. She could use them in one of these four ways.

### Option 1

Mother waits until the trouble starts. She stops the car and says, "You may each have a granola bar if you calm down and leave each other alone." It works. The calm down and she gives them their granola bars.

What did the children learn?

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### Option 2

As the children get into the car Mother announces, "I have some granola bars for you if you all are pleasant and calm all the way to the park." It works. The children get the granola bars in the parking lot at the park.

What did the children learn?

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### Option 3

Mother keeps the bars secret at first. Then halfway through the ride, before the children have made any trouble, she hands out the granola bars. She says, "It is so pleasant riding with you this trip."

What did the children learn?

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### Option 4

Mother keeps the bars secret at first. The children start making trouble again. She stops the car, shows the children the granola bars, and says, "Look what I brought. You could have had them if you had not started this trouble. Now you can't have them."

What did the children learn?

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