

How to praise your child



Praise motivates children to work hard, learn, explore their own abilities and encourages children to take on challenges. Praise is communicating to your child that you noticed their effort or positive behaviour. Using phrases such as 'I can see how hard you have been working on your drawing' or 'well done for using your manners' help your child to understand you appreciate when they work hard and cooperate.

When to praise your child:

For hard work or trying new activities, instead of things they find easier

This will encourage your child to accept challenges, to have a go and know that it's okay if they don't complete a task perfectly. Praise needs to be sincere and should mirror the effort the child puts in.

To encourage them to keep going

Praise your child more often when you notice the activity is particularly challenging for them. If your child is already engaged and motivated to complete the activity, you can use less praise.

We recommend:

Using positive body language

Smile, look directly at your child, stand close to them, listen and assist when needed.

Being careful about praising after a mistake

Acknowledge your child's effort and suggest how they can improve next time. For example: "I can see you are really trying hard. Next time, try to throw it harder."

Using the 6:1 ratio

Try to give six examples of praise for every one correction. Focus on what your child does well, as opposed to what they are not doing well. This will help build their confidence and encourage positive behaviour.

Here are some examples:

- You're trying really hard
- I can see how carefully you are colouring
- That's really good waiting
- That's a really beautiful drawing - I like the way you're holding your pencil.
- That was a really nice ssssssss sound
- You're waiting so patiently
- Wow! That was tricky and you tried so hard
- Look how well you did that
- That's great jumping
- Good listening
- Thanks for helping, you did a great job
- I like the way you're sharing your pencils with John

It's always best to praise the effort or behaviour specifically, rather than simply saying 'good girl/boy'.

Adapted from: How to Praise Your Child so They Grow up Happy, Confident and Capable (2013). <http://www.loveplayandlearn.com/2013/03/praise.html>. Lowry, Lauren. (2012). "Good job!" Is Praising Young Children a Good idea?. Hanen Early Language Program



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