



Tips for using praise

Making small changes to when and how we praise children can make a big difference. Please use the following tips when praising your children. See if you can praise them at least five times a day and record your progress on the back page.

Here are some examples:

Catch your child doing something good

Look out for when they do something good and say so. *“You are sharing your toys with your sister. That is really kind!”*

When children get praise for behaving well, they are likely to want to keep behaving well.

Describe the good behaviour

Describing what it is that you like is called ‘descriptive praise’. When you say exactly what you’re happy about, your child knows what you mean and is more likely to repeat the behaviour. For example, *“You took all your shoes off and put them away in the hall cupboard all by yourself. Thank you”*.

Praise effort

It is easy to fall into the trap of praising achievements and making comparisons with others but research shows that children respond much better when their effort is recognised. It’s much better to say something like *“I can see you worked really hard on that painting”* instead of *“What a fantastic painting - the best in the class!”*

Praise hard work as well as achievement

Over-inflated and unrealistic praise can be confusing and affect self-esteem. All praise must be honest and sincere. So instead of *“You were brilliant at football today, fantastic!”*, a more genuine response would be *“You played well today”*.

Make the praise relevant

Praise needs to be appropriate to the child being praised: for example you might praise a two year old for leaving the park when asked, and a four year old for getting their school bag ready.

Look for little changes and successes

Don’t wait until your child has done something perfectly to praise them. Use it to encourage positive behaviour, for example: *“You have tidied some of your toys away, thank you!”*

Have you remembered to praise your child today?



5 Praises a day

Common sense, as well as a great deal of international research, tells us that we all enjoy being praised and appreciated. But sometimes we forget this.

So a small team of researchers at De Montfort University have developed the 5 Praises a Day initiative, which encourages parents to praise their children (at least) five times a day.

Making small changes to when and how we praise our children has been shown to improve behaviour and help develop more positive relationships.