

Praising Children and Their Behavior

Goal: To increase parents' understanding of the importance of praise.



Objectives:

- To provide parents an opportunity for giving and receiving praise.
- To increase understanding of the steps involved in praise.
- To increase understanding of the different uses of praise.



Discussion Question

- Why is praising children important?
- Write parent responses on the board.

What is Praise?

Note * The numbers in parentheses correspond to the number of the PowerPoint slide or transparency.

(2) Praise can be a compliment, gesture, facial expression, or form of gentle touch like hugs or high fives that promote feelings of self pride, worth and accomplishment in others. **Praise is a helpful parenting practice that gives children positive feedback. It increases their feelings of competence and confidence in themselves and their behavior.**



Why is Praising Children and Their Behavior Important?

- (3) When children receive praise, they learn that who they are and the things they do are pleasing to parents.
- Children who are praised for their behavior, or for their personal qualities, develop a personal sense of self-worth.
- (4) Praise is like fuel that powers the positive self-esteem of children. Children who sincerely believe they have worth treat themselves and others in positive ways.
- (5) Research shows that children with positive self-worth get better grades, are more popular in school, don't get discouraged easily, and generally live more productive lives.

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Role Play



- Divide parents into groups of two.
- Instruct parents that they will practice giving and receiving praise.
- Have one parent be “A,” and the other “B.”
- Person A will praise Person B. Person B can only say “thank you” and can not negate the praise.
- Have person A praise person B for one minute.
- Have parents reverse roles.
- Which was harder, giving or receiving praise? Why?

Roadblocks to Using Praise

- (6) There is a popular myth that if children are praised they will become conceited, or believe that they are better than others. The fact is, children who are praised develop a strong sense of self and do not need to put themselves above others to feel good about themselves. They already do.
- (7) Some parents just expect their children to do what they're told to do without having to praise them. No one, adult or child, will behave in appropriate ways without some form of recognition.
- (8) Many adults have not had the experience of receiving praise as children, so it makes it hard for them to practice the skill as parents.
- Adults who have difficulty accepting compliments from others may feel very uncomfortable in giving praise to their children.



Two Types of Praise: Praise for Being and Praise for Doing

There are two ways to use praise as a parenting practice. One way is called, “Praise for Being” and the other is called, “Praise for Doing.”

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(9) **Praise for Being** is the highest form of praise anyone can receive. It tells children that they have value and worth. **Praise for Being lets children know you value them for who they are.** It is unconditional and given freely at any time.

(10) Some Praise for Being statements are:

- "I really love you."
- "You're a beautiful person."
- "What a special child you are."
- "I am so happy you are my son."
- "You're a wonderful daughter."

(11) When you praise children for Being, they don't have to do anything to earn it. Praise for Being is a powerful parenting practice for building a positive sense of self-worth in children.

Praise for Being praises a child for whom he or she is.

(12) **Praise for Doing** lets children know you appreciate and value their efforts and behaviors. Children love to please their parents. When they hear Praise for Doing, they know they've pleased mom and dad. Praising a child's behavior can be for something they tried and completed, or tried but didn't quite succeed or finish. If you acknowledge your children's efforts, they are more likely to try again.

(13) Some Praise for Doing statements are:

- "I'm really pleased to see you try so hard."
- "You buttoned all your buttons. Good for you."
- "I'm so proud of the way you cooperated."
- "You're really doing well in school."

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Discussion

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- Cut up Worksheet #2. Put slips into a jar.
- Have parents take turns drawing slips of papers.
- Ask parents to decide whether the item on the slip of paper is Praise for Being or Praise for Doing.

Using Praise Incorrectly

(14) Many parents unknowingly use praise incorrectly by using Praise for Being and Praise for Doing together. Such statements are:

- “What a nice job cleaning your room. You really are a good girl.”
- “Daddy really loves you for cooperating with me.”

(15) Such statements tell children you only love or appreciate them when they do something that pleases you. It’s known as “conditional love,” or love that must be earned.

Children quickly begin to resent such love because they know if they don’t “do the right thing,” their parents will not love them.

Remember, do not mix Praise for Being with Praise for Doing. Keep them separate.

Promoting Self-Praise in Children

(16) Self-praise is a way children learn the habit of praising themselves and boosting their self-image. To help a child learn self-praise, parents need to describe how good the act must have made the child feel.

For example, “Tracy, I bet you feel really proud of the nice job you did in cleaning your room.” Imagine

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yourself in the child's shoes, and describe this feeling. (17) By promoting self-praise, children learn to be their own best friend and develop self-confidence.

To encourage children to use self-praise, parents should model the behavior for them. Praise yourself in the presence of your children whenever you do something well, or whenever you feel good about yourself. Modeling self-praise is an effective teaching procedure because children learn best by imitation.

Being Conceited

(18) Some parents worry about their children becoming conceited because they received praise for the people they are or the things they do. Conceit is different from self-worth. When children feel conceited, they are usually sending the message that, "I'm better than you." Contrary to popular belief, it's children who don't have a positive self-image who wind up feeling conceited.

In this sense, conceit is their effort to elevate their self-worth at the expense of others.

How to Use Praise

To praise appropriately, follow these steps:

- (19) **Focus your attention on the child and the situation** - praise deserves your undivided attention.

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- **Move close to the child** - praise feels good when given by someone close to you.
- (20) **Make eye-contact with the child on the child's level.** For example, you must bend down to be at eye level with young children.
- **Gently touch the child** - touch is a positive form of communication.
- (21) **Smile or look pleasant** - everyone likes to see a happy face.
- **Praise your child** - for Being or for Doing.
- **Offer a hug** - to "seal" the nice words.



Discussion Question

- What are three behaviors your child does that you can praise?



Discussion Question

- What are some reasons you think accepting praise is important?



Accepting Praise as an Adult

(22) Praise is fuel for our positive self-worth. When someone offers us a compliment, they're actually fueling our self-worth. Self-worth is the value we have for our self: our ideas, accomplishments, successes, as well as our appearance, personality and character. When others praise any of these qualities, they are doing us a big favor - they are recognizing us in a positive way.



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Why is Accepting Praise Important?

- (23) It sends a message to others that we are worthy of their recognition and deserving of it.
- When we accept a compliment, we are building our positive self-worth. Parents with a positive sense of self-worth can help build the positive sense of self-worth in children.
- (24) As models, parents show their children that accepting praise is the right thing to do.
- Everyone needs recognition. Accepting praise is a positive form of recognition.
- When we accept a compliment, we are more likely to send one.

Rejecting a Gift

When we were young, most of us were taught some very basic elements of courtesy: When you want something, you ask nicely with a "please!" When you're given a gift, how many times did you hear from an adult, "Now what do you say?" We were taught to respond by saying "thank you."

What ever happened to that lesson? (25) For a lot of adults, they've simply forgotten how to say thank you when they receive a gift of recognition. When someone offers us a compliment, we hide and blush and try to become the invisible man or woman- anything but a compliment! (26) Here are some

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examples of how NOT to respond when someone gives you a compliment.

Compliment: "You look nice today."

Response: "Well, I feel miserable."

Compliment: "Nice report, John."

Response: "Well, if I had more time, I could've done better."

What is wrong with this picture? (27) we would not respond in the same way if someone were trying to give us a raise.

Compliment: "You have been working very hard. Here is fifty dollars. Go have dinner with your family on the company."

Response: "No, I don't really deserve it. I'm not that good. In fact, you probably need to decrease my salary."

If that were your response, you can bet it would be the last fifty dollars you would ever get from your boss. (28) That is what happens to others who offer us a fifty-dollar compliment and we reject it. You will quit getting any compliments at all. When that happens, the fuel supply to your self-worth will be drastically cut short. In essence, you'll have to ration your self-worth because of the shortage of fuel you created.

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How to Accept a Compliment

- (29) **Look pleasant** - let the person sending the compliment see you enjoy being recognized.
- **Say, "thank you."** Do not reject or send the compliment back ("Well, you look nice/work hard too.") Be gracious and accept your gift.
- **Use gentle touch.** A touch on the arm or a handshake conveys your true appreciation.



Home Practice: Praise



- Give parents the Home Practice Praise Worksheet #3



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Closing Activity



- Give each parent a plate with strings attached.
- Have each parent write his or her name on the top of the plate.
- Have parents place the plates over their heads with the plate hanging over their back.
- Give parents a marker and ask them to write a praise statement on all the other group members' plates. Allow 2 minutes, and let parents know when they are running out of time.
- After the activity, ask parents to discuss how it felt to give and receive praise.



Evaluation/Feedback

- Give parents the evaluation and feedback sheets.

