



The Power of Praise

Every day kids should get messages from parents that they are good and loved. When kids get the message that they are loved and seen as good through their parents' eyes, they feel better about themselves, and it strengthens the parent child bond. To watch a video about this topic, click this [link](#) or scanning the above QR code with your mobile device.

The more kids hear about their good behavior, the less they will want to misbehave. Plus, it feels better for parents and kids to be hearing more about good behavior. Following the tips below will help your praise be the best it can be.

Be excited and enthusiastic

- To help kids notice the praise, parents should show excitement through tone and gestures.
 - *Example:* A flat, monotone "Good job!" is very different to a kid than an excited "Way to go! You listened right away!" with a high-five.
- Giving a more noticeable response helps show to the child your praise and how much their good behavior means to you. It's important that praise for good behavior is more energetic and stimulating for kids than responses to misbehavior.

Be specific by using "Labeled Praise"

- The more specific your praise is, the easier it is for kids to know what you want to see from them, so it's good to label exactly what you like.
 - *Example:* Instead of using a general praise like, "Good job!" label specific behaviors like, "I really like how you are using a nice quiet voice like I asked you to!"

Be Immediate

- Parents should be on alert to "catch them being good" and praise appropriate behavior right away. This helps kids understand the connection between their behavior and your reaction.
- Especially for younger kids, the longer parents wait to praise, the harder it is for them to remember their good behavior and learn to do it again.

What to do if kids misbehave a lot?

- When kids are acting up often, it can be hard for parents to think about what good behaviors they want to praise. One good way to identify targets for praise is to think about the "positive opposite" of misbehavior. What would you like your child to do instead?
 - *Example:* "Bad" behavior like hitting other kids can be switched for praise when child does "good" opposite behavior like playing nicely

Example Misbehaviors	Example Positive Opposites
Being too rough or aggressive with peers Running off Whining or demanding	Playing nicely or gently Walking patiently with parent Asking nicely

Prep for Success

On the left, make a list of problem behaviors. Be as specific as possible. For example, instead of writing “tantrums,” write down exactly what your child does during tantrums (e.g., cries, drops to the ground, runs off). Then, on the right, write down positive behaviors you wish to see instead. Once this has been done, focus on praise and physical positives (e.g., hugs, high-fives) when the positive behaviors happen.

Misbehavior	Positive Opposites
Back-talk—swearing, arguing, saying, “No, I don’t want to!”	Using nice words, stating ideas in a calm voice
Tantrum—yelling, crying, throwing objects, falling to the floor	Taking deep breath, self-calming, walking away, asking for time
Not listening/minding—saying, “No;” walking away from task, not doing task in expected time	Doing what they are told within a short time.