

## **How can I effectively praise my child?**

Praise comes in many forms, including verbal expression, a hug, or a pat on the back. Praise is often a powerful motivator in children and can increase their self-esteem. Parents are encouraged to praise their children's behavior often and within 5-10 seconds after they comply with directions. The more behaviors that are acknowledged and validated, the more likely children will be to comply. It's recommended that the praise given be as specific as possible. Statements such as "good job" are not as effective as when telling a child "good job on putting the toys away." With this approach, children are less likely to become confused about what is expected of them and will feel appreciated. Children with behavioral issues oftentimes have difficulty accepting praise. This typically is a result of them internalizing a negative self-concept due to critical statements and rejection from peers. Parents are encouraged to consistently praise to replace their negative view with a positive one. Parents will also need to attend to their child's learning process and praise the steps they make toward a goal. Children will be less likely to give up before completing their tasks.

Self-praise is important for parents who are quick to criticize themselves for parenting mistakes. Parents who verbalize positive statements about their ability to handle tough situations with their children and construct incentives and rewards for themselves are more likely to do the same for their children.