**The Power of Praise in Positive Parenting**

**For Parents and Caregivers**

Praise is a powerful tool for shaping behaviour, building confidence, and strengthening the bond with your child. Positive parenting focuses on encouragement and support to nurture your child’s emotional and social development. This fact sheet offers practical tips for using praise effectively.

**Why is Praise Important?**

* Builds self-esteem and confidence in children.
* Reinforces positive behaviours, making them more likely to be repeated.
* Strengthens the parent-child relationship.
* Encourages a growth mindset, helping children feel motivated to try new things and overcome challenges.

**Types of Praise**

1. **Descriptive Praise**:
   * Focus on what your child did specifically.
   * Example: Instead of “Good job,” say, “You worked really hard to solve that puzzle. I’m so proud of your effort!”
2. **Effort-Based Praise**:
   * Highlight the effort, not just the outcome. This encourages persistence and resilience.
   * Example: “I noticed how hard you practised your spelling words. That effort really paid off!”
3. **Behaviour-Focused Praise**:
   * Reinforce positive behaviours you want to see more often.
   * Example: “Thank you for sharing your toys with your sister. That was very kind of you.”
4. **Praise for Character**:
   * Acknowledge traits like kindness, patience, or honesty to build their sense of identity.
   * Example: “You showed so much patience waiting your turn. That was really thoughtful!”

**How to Use Praise Effectively**

1. **Be Specific and Genuine**:
   * Instead of general praise like “Good job,” describe exactly what they did. This shows you’re paying attention and makes the praise meaningful.
   * Example: “I love how carefully you coloured inside the lines!”
2. **Praise Effort Over Results**:
   * Focus on the process, not just the outcome. This teaches children to value hard work and persistence.
   * Example: “You kept trying even when it was hard—that’s amazing!”
3. **Balance Praise**:
   * Use praise regularly, but don’t overdo it. Overpraising can make it feel less genuine or create pressure to always succeed.
   * Example: Instead of praising every small action, focus on moments of effort or kindness.
4. **Use Nonverbal Praise Too**:
   * A smile, a thumbs-up, or a hug can reinforce positive behaviours just as effectively as words.

**What to Avoid**

1. **Generalised or Empty Praise**:
   * Avoid vague phrases like “You’re the best!” or “Good job!” without context. Children might not understand what they did well.
2. **Comparison Praise**:
   * Avoid comparing your child to others (e.g., “You’re the best in the class!”). This can create unnecessary competition and stress.
3. **Overpraising**:
   * Constant praise for every small task can make it less meaningful. Instead, focus on praising significant efforts or achievements.

**Examples of Praise for Everyday Moments**

* **Morning Routine**: “You got dressed all by yourself today. That shows how responsible you are!”
* **Chores**: “Thank you for helping set the table. You made dinner time so much easier!”
* **School Work**: “I saw how much time you spent on your math homework. That effort is really paying off.”
* **Kindness**: “It was so thoughtful of you to help your friend when they fell down.”

**Benefits of Praise in Positive Parenting**

1. **Encourages Emotional Development**:
   * Praised children feel valued and are more likely to develop emotional resilience.
2. **Fosters Independence**:
   * Praising efforts helps children feel confident to try new things on their own.
3. **Strengthens Parent-Child Relationships**:
   * Genuine praise shows children that you see and appreciate them, building trust and connection.

**Balancing Praise with Guidance**

* While praise is important, balance it with constructive feedback when needed. Use a positive tone and offer suggestions for improvement.
  + Example: “You did great solving that problem. Next time, try double-checking your work to make sure everything’s correct!”

**Tips for Parents**

1. **Model Positive Self-Talk**:
   * Show your child how to celebrate their own successes by modelling positive self-praise.
   * Example: “I’m proud of myself for finishing that big project today!”
2. **Involve the Whole Family**:
   * Encourage siblings and other family members to give praise, creating a positive and supportive home environment.
3. **Celebrate Small Wins**:
   * Everyday achievements, like tying their shoes or helping a sibling, are great opportunities for encouragement.

**When to Seek Extra Support**

If your child doesn’t seem to respond to praise or struggles with self-esteem despite your efforts, consider:

* Speaking with a teacher or school counsellor to understand underlying challenges.
* Seeking support from a child psychologist or therapist.

**Final Thoughts**

Praise is a powerful tool in positive parenting when used thoughtfully and intentionally. It helps children feel seen, valued, and motivated to grow into confident, capable individuals. Remember, it’s not about perfection—it’s about making progress and celebrating the journey together.

For more resources or guidance, connect with local parenting groups, schools, or family counselling services. Your efforts make a difference!

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