

12 More Effective Ways to Praise Children Other Than Saying "You're Amazing!"

Celebrate Their Uniqueness

1. Make simple observations, not extravagant evaluations: "I see how you blended the greens and the blues when making the ocean" is more meaningful to kids when looking at their art than something over-the-top like "That looks awesome!"
2. Embrace their imperfections and humanness so they know that you love them unconditionally: "You're grouchy in the morning until you get some food in you. I'm that way, too!"
3. Emphasize that their differences are a plus, not a liability: "That green dress really pops with your red hair...your freckled-face makes me smile...as an introvert, you think before you speak and that makes what you say more powerful."

Recognize Their Effort

4. Recognize hard work: "I see the time and thought that you're putting into writing that essay. Using that thesaurus will really expand your vocabulary and make your writing more descriptive."
5. Connect improvement with effort: "Your free throw percentage is much higher this season. Your daily practice has paid off in a big way!"
6. Celebrate learning, not awards and achievements: "You worked on that science fair project for days and learned a whole lot about photosynthesis" is far more significant in the long-haul compared to "I'm so proud that you got a blue ribbon at the science fair!"

Make It About Them, Not You

7. Zero-in on their feelings, not yours: Instead of "I'm so proud of you," say "You should feel good about what you achieved."
8. Ask about their learning, not their grades: "What's most fascinating to you about biology?" is more motivating than "What grade did you get on your biology final?"
9. Promote self-care: "You've been working on that project for hours. Why don't you get outside and take a bike ride?"

Don't Label Them

10. Empower them: When they ask, "How did I do in the soccer game?" don't answer. Instead, get them to analyze their own performance by asking, "How do you think you did? What were your strengths and weaknesses?"
11. Keep in mind that less is more. Some psychologists believe that young people get too many kudos from moms and dads while growing up and now expect the same from their teachers and bosses.
12. Be genuine: Even little kids can tell when moms and dads are over doing it with the praise.

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Parents, take this weekend to read these suggestions for praise. During the week, catch your child doing some great things. Log one praise you gave them in each category below. Return the paper to your child's teacher by Thursday at pick-up. We will share these with the class during circle or small group time on Friday. I know the children will LOVE to hear all the good things their friends are doing. 😊

Celebrating Uniqueness. Example: *Jesse, the way you picked your striped shirt to wear with your polka dot shorts makes me smile.*

Recognizing Effort. Example: *Kendra, you have been practicing your writing so much lately that I can read all your letters.*

Making It About Them. Example: *Tyron, you should feel proud about learning to ride your bike. That is a big deal.*

Empowering Them. Example: *Shona, what would you like to do first when we get home, have a snack or play outside?*
