

Using Praise

positive parenting skill

Praise is a powerful tool that parents can use to encourage their child's good behaviors. Research has shown that positive reinforcement—such as praise—is far more effective than discipline. This handout describes techniques for using praise to its maximum potential.

Catch your child being good.

It's normal to focus more on unwanted behaviors, rather than good ones. Sometimes, a good behavior can be as simple as the *absence* of an unwanted behavior (for example, talking with a sibling instead of arguing). Make a point to praise your child's good behaviors, even if they seem ordinary.

"You were really good during dinner."

"Thank you for getting along with your brother."

Start with small steps.

An easy goal for adults might be a big deal for kids. Try starting small. Instead of waiting for your child to follow the rules all day, praise them when they follow the rules for 15 minutes. Focus on the *steps* toward achieving a goal, rather than the end goal itself.

"Good job bringing home your homework."

"Thank you for remembering to start your chores."

Praise effort, not outcome.

Many things in life are outside of our control. For example, your child might study for hours and still not get the grade they want. By praising the actions that are in your child's control (studying), you will teach them skills that are more likely to create good outcomes (good grades).

"You've been doing such a good job studying—I'm sorry you didn't get the grade you wanted."

"I'm proud of you for trying out for the swim team. It's great that you tried, even if you didn't make it."

Don't sweat the small stuff.

When kids don't get positive attention, they'll often settle for negative attention. If an unwanted behavior isn't dangerous or destructive, try ignoring it. After the unwanted behavior has stopped, wait a few moments, and praise your child for something good they are doing.

Be consistent.

Just like eating one apple won't make you healthy, praising your child once won't instantly improve their behavior. Giving praise *regularly* will help your child build the behavior you're looking for.

Positive Parenting



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

Positive parenting describes a set of parental behaviors that foster a child's capacity to **love, trust, explore and learn**. The goal of positive parenting is to help parents guide their children's healthy development in the context of the family's culture. Key elements of positive parenting include the ability to:

Understand or imagine the **child's point of view**, especially during challenging moments.



Respond with interest and **sensitivity** to the child's cues.



Recognize that **parenting can be stressful** and missteps are a natural part of child-rearing.



Recognize and **celebrate** the child's strengths, abilities, and capacity to learn and develop.



Provide consistent, **age-appropriate guidelines** and limits for child behavior.



Work toward a **balance** of meeting parental needs and child needs.



Delight in **moments of connection** with the child;



Recognize and **regulate their own feelings** and behaviors before they respond to the child.



Seek help, support or additional information on parenting **when needed.**





FAMILY DINNER TASKS BY AGE



Get everyone pitching in with one or more of these age-appropriate tasks!

AGES 2-5



- Fold and carry napkins and other lightweight items
- Set out unbreakable dishware and utensils
- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Scoop and stir ingredients
- Learn to pour liquids safely and wipe spills
- Help find items at the grocery store

AGES 6-12



- Set and clear the table independently
- Rinse dishes, load and unload the dishwasher
- Learn proper use of sharp or hot kitchen tools
- Wash, dry and put away sturdy dishes and glassware
- Add items to grocery list and follow a short grocery list
- Begin to cook scrambled eggs, rice and pancakes

AGES 13-18



- Learn to cook more difficult items like soups, casseroles and pasta dishes
- Help plan family meals and manage the grocery list
- Wash pots, pans and more delicate items
- Get dinner started without adult supervision
- Learn food safety such as how to manage raw meats
- Plan, budget and execute a short grocery shopping trip

20 CONVERSATION STARTERS

For talking to kids about social media

What are some of your favorite sources of information on social media?

Do you communicate differently online than in real life? Why?

Do other people ever post comments or send messages that lead to you feeling badly?

What are some examples of online communities you'd like to join?

Have you ever posted something on social media that you regretted? What did you learn?

What kind of online content do you engage with that puts you in a better mood?

How do you feel when you view images of other people? Does it make you feel better, or worse?

What do you think responsible online behavior looks like?

What's something interesting you've learned online recently?

How do you know when someone is real and trustworthy online?

Are there ways you can interact online that help you feel connected to people who support you?

How can you create or interact with more content online that makes you feel good about yourself?

Have you ever been bullied online, or do you know someone who has?

What are some examples of content you really like on social media? Show me!

Are there content creators online who manage their communities in a way you admire?

How can you fact-check information you encounter online? What are some trustworthy sources?

Have you ever stopped following an account? Why did you make that choice?

What do you think is a reasonable amount of time to spend on social media each day? Why?

How can you use social media to spread positivity?

Is it sometimes hard to set boundaries around social media? What would make it easier?

ADHD Interventions for Parents

Create a Simple List of Rules

Focus on the most important behaviors by creating a short and straight-forward list of rules. Let the small stuff slide. If your child completes their homework and chores but forgets a dirty dish, focus on the accomplishments rather than the mistake. Perfection is an unrealistic expectation.

Use Praise

Praise your child for simple good behaviors that you would like them to continue. A simple “good job” or a smile can go a long way. If you’re finding it hard to find behavior to praise, compliment your child for extended periods where they do not get into trouble.

Create a Reward System

Rewards are more effective than punishments to motivate a child to change their behavior. Reward systems can be as simple as a token for each day of the week a specific good behavior is completed, which can then be exchanged for a reward. Talk with your child to figure out what reward they want, and how many tokens it will cost.

Homework Hour

Set aside a time each school day for your child to complete homework. If there are no assignments for that evening, they can still spend the time studying or reading. This routine reduces the chance that your child will forget or avoid their homework. Additionally, homework hour reduces the reinforcement that children usually receive for completing their homework as quickly as possible.

Establish Structure

Children with ADHD do their best when they know what to expect. Establish a routine for homework, meals, playing, bedtime, and preparing for school. For example, your child may learn to brush their teeth at a specified time, get a glass of water, and then lay out their clothes for the next day. You can use a reward system to begin establishing these routines.

Use Consequences Effectively

Consequences should be explained in advance, they should occur immediately after the unwanted behavior, and you must always follow through with your stated consequence. Time out and the removal of privileges are effective. Be careful not to over punish—your child will not remember why they are grounded after 2 weeks, and you have no leverage if your child has nothing.

8 Ways to Strengthen a Parent-Child Relationship:

<https://www.familyservicesnew.org/news/8-ways-to-strengthen-a-parent-child-relationship/#:~:text=Treat%20every%20interaction%20as%20an,smile%2C%20and%20encourage%20honest%20interaction.&text=It%20is%20often%20implied%20that,matter%20what%20age%20they%20are.>

A succinct article with practical pointers