

WAYS TO GIVE POSITIVE ATTENTION

SPECIAL TIME

Set aside a Special Time each day to spend alone with each child.

The time should be regular enough for the child to count on it.

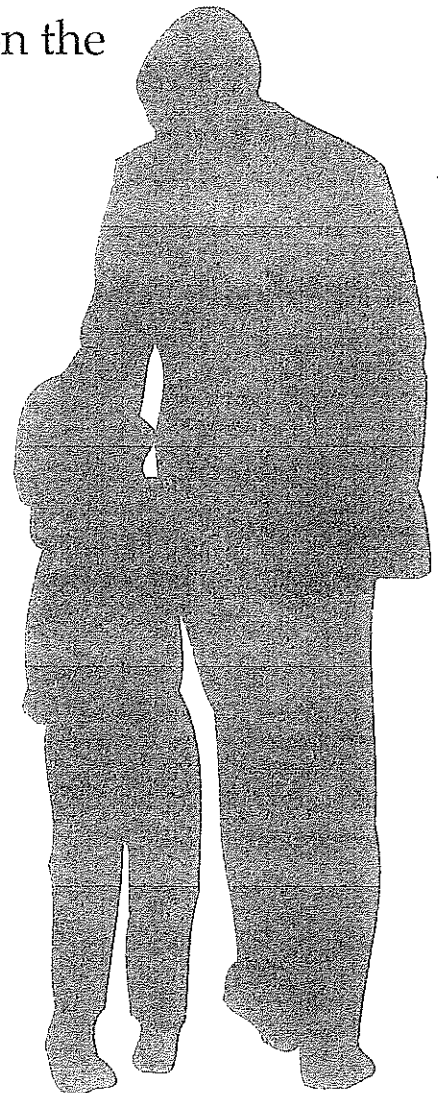
The time needs to be centered on the child's wants or needs.

SHOWING APPROVAL

Catch children doing something good and show approval.

Give the reason why the behavior is important.

The purpose of showing approval is to encourage your child to continue a particular behavior.



The Language Of Encouragement

With children old enough to understand, there is a language of encouragement you can develop even further by using phrases that...

...are supportive

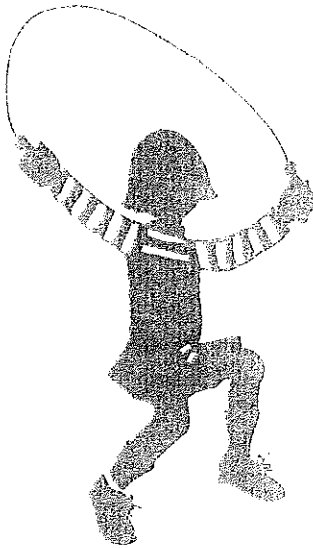
"Knowing you, I'm sure you'll do fine."

"You'll make it."

"I have confidence in your judgment."

"I'm sure you'll figure it out."

"I think you can handle..."



...recognize effort and improvement

This encouragement helps children develop their own sense of accomplishment.

"It looks as if you really worked hard on..."

"It looks as if you spent a lot of time thinking that through."

"What did you learn from...?"

"I see that you're moving along."

"Look at the progress you have made."
(Be specific how.)

"You're improving in..." *(Be specific.)*

...focus on contributions, assets,
and appreciation

"Thanks. *(action)*...helped a lot."

"It was thoughtful of you to..."

"Thanks. I really appreciate...
because it makes my job easier."

"I need your help on..."

"...needs to be done."

"You have skill in...
Would you do it for the family?"

"You can help by..."

"Let's do it together."

"It was useful when..."

To a family group:

"I really enjoyed... Thanks."

...recognize pleasure and success

"You're really having fun with that painting."

"You finished it all by yourself."

"I can see that you really like the castle
that you built."

...demonstrate acceptance

"You handled..."

"You tackled..."

"I'm glad you're satisfied with..."

"If you're not satisfied,
what do you think you can do so that
you will be pleased with it?"

"It looks as if you enjoyed..."

"How do you feel about it?"

Seven Steps To Encouraging Positive Behavior

1

Notice.

If we really want to encourage positive behavior, we have to start by noticing it. When you recognize positive behavior, it is more likely it will continue.

2

Give attention up close.

Physical closeness shows that the approval is personal. Even something as simple as a “thank-you” is enhanced by physical proximity.

Try this experiment at home: Have your partner or a friend sit across the room from you and say something nice. Then ask him or her to come up close and repeat those same words. You’ll be able to feel the difference. A good rule of thumb is to position yourself within three feet of your child as you speak to her. This may mean that you’ll have to track her down in the other room or out in the yard. But do it—it’s worth the extra effort.

3

Make good eye contact.

This is really basic, but it’s surprising how often we forget. Let your child know you’re talking to HIM in particular. Face your child directly, even turn your entire body toward him, if possible. This action tells your child that he is special and what you have to say is special and important and just for him.

4

Smile!

Our facial expressions often give the most important message. It’s important to reinforce what we are saying with an appropriate facial message—like a smile.

5

Compliment the behavior, not the child.

Show approval for what your child has done. Children need to know why they are being acknowledged, what they have done to deserve this attention. For example, “I liked the way you picked up the toys and put them in the basket,” rather than, “You are a good boy.”

Important Note: This is very different from your child’s need to know that you unconditionally accept and love her for who she is regardless of her behavior.

6

Be affectionate.

Your child will feel acknowledged, appreciated, and rewarded when you give him a friendly pat on the back, a hug, or a kiss.

7

Repeat the message in a different way.

Repeating the message in a different way helps keep the message fresh, new and clear.

The Four Questions

What do I want my child
to learn from this experience,
situation, or opportunity?

Is what I'm doing helping
my child to learn that?

Are there any negative effects
from my behavior?

If so,
what can I do differently?