



## PRAISE YOUR CHILD, IT IS GOOD FOR YOU

Praise works wonders. It works wonders on you. Think how you feel when your manager pulls you to one side and tells you how good the report you just produced was, or if someone you know just tells you how attractive you are. You feel different, light-headed, more confident. In that moment you are a changed person. That memory remains and in years to come you can call on it to give you a little lift.

It is the same with your child, but on a much deeper level. The child is still forming, discovering its own external and internal world. What you say counts and praise can become the building block of this new person's future confidence and self-esteem. They are learning a fundamental thing: what is right as opposed to what is wrong.

It is always quicker in the heat of the moment to be negative, to shout or just use a put-down. Praise needs a bit more thought, and creative thought at that. Notice what your child is doing well and praise it. Praise the behaviour that you want to instill in your child and praise the values you would like them to uphold. It is here that they are learning right from wrong. When your child is misbehaving find the one thing they are doing right and give them praise. This reward of praise is positive words and deeds, which are enough for the child. Do not try to buy them off with material things. Reinforcing the positive and not the negative is also very important. Be sincere in your praise, for even a very young child can spot insincerity. Remember you can never fool a four-year-old.

Also remember to spread your praise, it is like spreading happiness. If another child is doing something well, praise them too; your child can see them as examples to follow and, by doing so, get into your good books. They are learning from their peers.

Here is a really useful tip. Your child might not necessarily believe what you say to them, but they will always believe what is said about them. Tell other people what they have done well and when your child hears praise from (for them) an unbiased source, their behaviour will be reinforced. Little Ginny, having put all her toys away, will be pleased with the praise from mummy, but will be doubly pleased when she hears mummy tells auntie and trebly pleased when auntie tells her how good she has been. An adult analogy might be when you are at work and your boss says well done, you shrug it off – maybe he wants something. But when a colleague says the same thing, you think, *'Well I must be good then'*.

**WEB: [WWW.MOVINGONCOACHING.CO.UK](http://WWW.MOVINGONCOACHING.CO.UK)**

**PHONE: 020 8400 9045**

**E-MAIL: [MOVING-ON@BLUEYONDER.CO.UK](mailto:MOVING-ON@BLUEYONDER.CO.UK)**

Giving praise is like saying thank you, it is a habit and all habits can be learned. Can you learn to give praise? Well, the first step is to be aware. Be aware when you are being negative and when you are being positive. Be aware of what type of praise you are giving, how much and how often. A way to build up this awareness is to keep a Praise Diary. Use an old exercise book and, taking a few minutes at the end of the day, note down when you praised your child, how you praised them and to whom you praised them. This is an exercise for you, not your child. It is for you to learn this new habit, so be honest with yourself. After a couple of weeks look back and see what has changed. By writing your actions down you will have become more aware and a habit will begin to form. Keep the diary for a few more weeks and the habit will become embedded. As a parent you will feel happier praising than damning.

The diary is a record of what you are doing and will show you that you are praising and rewarding good behaviour more than you thought you were. If in doubt, just step back and remember how important receiving praise is to your own self-esteem. We all, adults and children, act well when people think well of us. Giving and receiving sincere praise is a way of improving all our lives.