

## Words of Encouragement

Did you know encouragement helps your children develop pride in their achievements and acquire a positive attitude toward learning?

While encouragement is not a new idea, most people tend to give their children non-specific praise instead of encouragement. By understanding the difference between praise and encouragement and how to use each appropriately, parents can help their children gain a sense of self-awareness and confidence.

Children who are encouraged tend to develop stronger self-motivation skills for their work and attain greater gratification from their work. They learn to take pride in the process as well as the final outcome. Encouragement gives children hope that they can succeed and builds their confidence by helping them recognize their own self-worth.

Different forms of praise have different effects on children. Praise is an expression of approval or admiration and can be non-specific, exaggerated, and is often in the form of a compliment. Encouragement, also known as specific praise, is detailed, non-judgmental, valid, and sincere. Praise can be given when good results are achieved, like winning a race or contest, but it should be used sparingly to retain its value. Encouragement can be given more often, even when activities don't go as planned. When children feel discouraged and lose hope, encouragement is needed. Simply praising a child for doing a "good job" may not be as effective as encouraging them by commenting on their "commitment to getting the job done."

The following are a few examples of non-specific praise vs. encouragement:

<b>Non-specific Praise</b>	<b>Encouragement – Specific Praise</b>
Non-specific praise focuses on the outcome rather than the effort. <b><i>"You did it!"</i></b>	Encouragement focuses on the effort. <b><i>"You worked hard on that assignment."</i></b>
Non-specific praise is often more about the feelings of the one giving the praise, rather than the one receiving it. <b><i>"You make me proud!"</i></b>	Encouragement is focused on the feelings of the recipient. <b><i>"You must be proud of yourself for working through that problem."</i></b>
Non-specific praise is vague and can be meaningless when said repeatedly. <b><i>"Good job!"</i></b>	Encouragement is specific. <b><i>"You followed all the directions on your worksheet and got a good score."</i></b>
Non-specific praise is often exaggerated for effect. <b><i>"You are the best student I have ever seen!"</i></b>	Encouragement is based on realistic achievements. <b><i>"You have come a long way. You're reading more difficult books than you used to."</i></b>

By encouraging children, they realize that they are capable. They will be able to take on new challenges with confidence and gain a sense of self-awareness, making it more likely that they will succeed.