

Encouraging your Child to be a better Student

Your praise of your child's work has a profound effect on his or her performance. It is natural to "gush" over your child, and every parent wants to encourage a repeat quality performance. However, research has shown that your praise, when improperly applied, can have the opposite effect of what was intended. It can cause your child to give up (because they feel they cannot live up to your praise) or to not function without your input (they feel they need your praise and input at every step). So, what can you say that won't backfire?

A good tip is to **describe** rather than **praise**. A student who is struggling to solve his math homework will not believe you when you say, "You are so smart!" He will, however, keep working when you say something like, "I see that you are sticking with those math questions. You are determined to solve them." If your daughter lacks stick-to-it-tiveness, then praise her effort. "You have worked hard on this display" will get a repeat performance. "It's beautiful!" may be true, but won't encourage her to work hard on the next project.

The list below will give you some ideas. Add to it any positive observation you can make about their thinking and reasoning processes. This will show them that they have the meta-cognitive skills that all good students have.

You're on the right track now!
You are good at that
That's much better
I'm happy to see you working like that
You're doing a good job
Now you've figured it out
Now you have it
Keep working on it, you are getting better
You're a great help
You're getting better everyday
Nice going (enthusiastically, not sarcastically!)
That's the way to do it
That's a kind (thoughtful, co-operative, helpful) thing you did
You've just about mastered that
You did that very well
You're really improving
You've got that down-pat
Good thinking
Keep on trying
I like that
I think you've got it now
You figured that out fast
I'm proud of the way you worked today
Now that's what I call a fine job

You must have been practising/doing your homework
Good remembering
You did a lot of work today
You certainly did well
You're doing fine
You are really learning a lot
You out-did yourself today
Good going
You remembered
You've just about got it
That's quite an improvement
You are doing that much better today
You are learning fast
Good for you
One more time and you'll have it
You did it that time
That's the way
Now you've figured it out
You haven't missed a thing
You've got your brain in gear
I'm pleased with how you worked today
You're really working hard today

