Refrigerator Notes & Handouts
Effective Praise and Encouragement
Effective Ways to Praise and Encourage Your Child

“Bringing out the Best in Your Child”

HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

**To Do:**

- **CONTINUE PLAYING** with your child every day for at least 10 minutes.

- **PRACTICE** increasing your praise during play time.

- **CHOOSE ONE BEHAVIOR** you would like to see your child engage in more frequently, and systematically PRAISE it every time it occurs during the following week; for example: playing quietly, following your directions, picking up toys, and sharing with others.

- **DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF PRAISES** you give and observe what effect this has on your child.

- **KEEP TRACK** of the results on the “Record Sheet: Praises” handout.

- **LIST** the behaviors you want to see more of on the Behavior Record handout.

- **CALL YOUR BUDDY** from the group.

**READ**

- Handouts and Chapter Three, *Tangible Rewards*, in *The Incredible Years*.

- **REMEMBER** to praise someone who is important to you!
REFRIGERATOR NOTES ABOUT PRAISING YOUR CHILD

- Catch your child being good—don’t save praise for perfect behavior.
- Don’t worry about spoiling your children with praise.
- Increase praise for difficult children.
- Model self-praise.
- Give labeled and specific praise.
- Make praise contingent on behavior.
- Praise with smiles, eye contact, and enthusiasm.
- Give positive praise.
- Praise immediately.
- Give pats and hugs and kisses along with praise.
- Use praise consistently.
- Praise in front of other people.
Praise Handout

EXAMPLES OF WAYS TO GIVE PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

“You do a good job of . . .”
“You have improved in . . .”
“I like it when you . . .”
“Good for you for . . .”
“Good idea for . . .”
“You’ve done a good job of . . .”
“See how _____________ has improved in . . .”
“You’re doing very well.”
“Look how well he/she did . . .”
“That’s a perfect way of . . .”
“Wow, what a wonderful job you’ve done of . . .”
“That’s correct, that’s the perfect way to . . .”
“I’m so happy you . . .”
“It really pleases me when you . . .”
“You’re such a big girl for . . .”
“Good boy for . . .”
“Thank you for . . .”
“What a nice job of . . .”
“Hey, you are really sharp; you . . .”
“That’s great, it really looks like . . .”
“You’re doing just what Mommy wants you to do.”
“My, you are minding Daddy so well.”
“My! That . . . was so nice.”
“That’s very nice (or good) for . . .”
“Mommy’s very proud of you for . . .”
“Beautiful! Fine! Great! Gorgeous! Tremendous!”
“How thoughtful of you to . . .”

Some Physical Rewards
A pat on the arm or shoulder
A hug
Head rubbing
Squeezing the arm or waist
EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORS TO PRAISE AND ENCOURAGE

- Sharing
- Talking nicely
- Complying with requests
- Good eating behavior at dinner
- Going to bed after the first request
- Playing quietly
- Solving a problem
- Turning down the television
- Doing chores
- Coming home from school on time
- Getting up promptly in the morning
- Making it through the night without wetting the bed
- Making the bed
- Picking up clothes
- Putting toys away
- Walking slowly
- Doing homework
- Getting dressed
- Being thoughtful
- Being patient
- Being kind to another child or adult
**RECORD SHEET: PRAISE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Number of Praises</th>
<th>Types of Child Behaviors Praised</th>
<th>Examples of Praise Statements</th>
<th>Child's Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Handout

BEHAVIOR RECORD

Behaviors I want to see more of:

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________
6. ____________________________________________________________
7. ____________________________________________________________
Write Your Own Personal Praise Statements
Part 1: Effective Praise and Encouragement

Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account with Your Child
Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account With Other Family Members

Part 1: Effective Praise and Encouragement

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Brainstorm/Buzz

Brainstorm possible self-praise you can use to encourage yourself as a parent. Write these statements on your note pad.

Positive Self-Praise

I can stay calm...he's just testing
I am working hard as a parent...

Goal:

I will commit to stopping my self-criticism and looking at something I did well each day as a parent.
**Brainstorm/Buzz**

Brainstorm words you use to praise your child to increase behavior you want to see more of. Write them below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Behaviors I want to see more of</strong></th>
<th><strong>Labeled Praise Statements</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I like it when you...</em></td>
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<td><em>Good for you! for...</em></td>
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<td><em>Wow! What a wonderful job you’ve done setting the table!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:**

I will commit to increasing the number of praises I give my child to ____________ per hour. The behaviors I will praise include: (e.g., sharing) ________________
Handout
BEHAVIOR RECORD
Praise “Positive Opposites”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors I want to see less of: (e.g., yelling)</th>
<th>Positive opposite behavior I want to see more of: (e.g., polite voice)</th>
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<tbody>
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EXAMPLES OF TEACHER BEHAVIORS TO PRAISE

• Being kind to my child
• Being kind to me, especially when I’ve had a bad day
• Helping me get my child into or out of the classroom when I’m running late
• Sending a note home saying that my child had a good day
• Helping my child learn new things
• Helping my child get along with other children
• Giving me suggestions about how to help my child learn
• Making the classroom a friendly place to come to
• Proudly putting my child’s pictures up on the wall
• Helping my child feel good about himself or herself
• Teaching my child social skills
• Setting up an incentive program for my child
• Calling me at home to tell me about my child’s progress
• Inviting me to participate in the class
• Keeping me informed about the curriculum
Refrigerator Notes & Handouts
Motivating Through Incentives
HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

To Do:

• CONTINUE PLAYING with your child every day for at least 10 minutes, and INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PRAISES given to your child.

• TRY giving a spontaneous sticker or special treat for a social behavior you want to encourage.

• From your list of behaviors you want to see more of (The Behavior Record handout) SELECT ONE BEHAVIOR TO WORK ON WITH A STICKER CHART OR REWARD SYSTEM.

• EXPLAIN the sticker system to your child for the behavior you want to encourage; MAKE the chart together and BRING the chart to the next meeting.

• Call your buddy from the group and share your ideas about incentives.

READ:

• Handouts and review Chapter Three, Tangible Rewards, in The Incredible Years

Handout 2A
HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

To Do:

• CONTINUE PLAYING with your child every day for at least 10 minutes, and INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PRAISES given to your child.

• KEEP WORKING on your chart or sticker program.

• If your child is having problems at school, set up a program that includes tangibles for “good-behavior” notes from teachers. (Talk to your child’s teachers about sending these home.)

• Share with teachers what activities motivate your child. (And praise her efforts to work with your child.)

READ:  
Handouts and Part 3, Problem 1, Taking Charge of Your Child’s Screen Time, in The Incredible Years
• Define appropriate child behavior clearly.
• Make the steps small.
• Gradually increase the challenge.
• Don’t make programs too complex—choose one or two behaviors to start.
• Focus on positive behaviors.
• Choose inexpensive rewards.
• Have daily rewards.
• Involve your child in choosing rewards.
• Get the appropriate behavior first, then reward.
• Reward everyday achievements.
• Gradually replace rewards with social approval.
• Be clear and specific about rewards.
• Have a varied menu.
• Show your child you expect success.
• Don’t mix rewards with punishment.
• Consistently monitor the reward program.
Toilet Training

Some children are trained by three years but don’t worry if your 3-year-old isn’t trained; many children aren’t ready until they are four years old. If your child shows signs of readiness you can begin toilet training about 2½ years. Avoid rushing or getting into power struggles over this. Do this training when you have the time and patience and don’t have too many other family pressures.

**Signs of Readiness**
- your child can stay dry for 3 hours or more
- your child recognizes the signs that she has to go
- your child can pull down her pants down and up by herself
- your child seems interested or motivated to become potty trained
- your child is imitating others going to the bathroom
- your child can follow simple instructions
Refrigerator Notes

Starting Toilet Training

- Dress your child in clothes that are easy to get undone such as elastic-wasted pants
- Use a child-sized potty chair or special adaptor seat with a stool
- Create a routine for sitting on potty—start by seating your child fully clothed once day, whenever s/he is most likely to have a bowel movement
- Progress to sitting your child on the potty bare-bottomed. Don’t restrain or force your child to sit there
- Let your child watch you or older siblings go to the bathroom
- Show your child how you use the toilet paper, flush the toilet and wash your hands
- Praise your child every time she uses the potty seat, or you check and she has dry pants
- Set up a schedule for going to the bathroom
- Make sure your child knows it’s okay to ask for help to go to the potty anytime
- Teach your child how to clean and wash hands after going to the potty
- Expect set backs; don’t make a big deal out of mistakes such as wet beds or accidents—stay calm and positive, “it’s okay, next time I bet you will use the potty chair”
- Once training is established, consider using training pants as this allows toddler to undress by himself; introduce them gradually maybe for a few hours at a time
- Keep using diapers at night; even though your child is dry during the day, it can take months or years before children are dry at night
Write in your favorite no cost/low cost incentives
Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account
With Support and Encouragement
EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORS TO REWARD WITH STARS AND STICKERS:

- Getting dressed by him/herself before the timer goes off
- Eating politely with spoon
- Making it through the night without wetting the bed
- Making the bed in the morning
- Not teasing siblings for 30 minutes
- Going to bed when asked
- Complying with a parent’s request
- Sharing with sibling
- Doing homework
- Reading a book quietly
- Turning off the TV
- Watching only 1 hour of TV
- Helping set the table
- Staying calm when frustrated
- Putting dirty clothes in hamper
- Use friendly words
- Using toilet
- Washing hands before dinner
- Brushing teeth
- Staying by side of grocery cart
- Using words to state needs
- Sleeping in own bed all night
PRACTICE

PRAISING YOURSELF AND OTHERS!

- Send a note to your child’s teacher telling what you like about your child’s classroom and learning experiences.

AND/OR

- Praise another parent or family member.
- Give yourself a compliment.
Strengthening Support Between Partners

Marital discord can make it very difficult for parents to be effective in managing their children’s behavior. The following exercise is designed to strengthen your relationship.

Identify 10 to 20 “caring” behaviors that your spouse could do that you would enjoy. Ask your spouse to do this also. List these behaviors on a piece of paper and post them. Each day you and your spouse should try to select one or two items from the list and do them for one another. These caring behaviors should be (a) positive, (b) specific, (c) small, and (d) something that is not the subject of a recent conflict.

Examples: 
- Ask how I spent the day and listen.
- Offer to get the cream or sugar for me.
- Listen to “mood music” when we set the clock radio to go to sleep.
- Hold my hand when we go for walks.
- Massage my back.
- Arrange for a baby-sitter and go out.
- Let me work late one night without a hassle.
- Have a quiet dinner without the children.
- Offer to watch the children while I make dinner, read the newspaper, etc.
- Allow me to sleep in one morning on the weekend.

By doing this exercise, you will obtain a record of each other’s efforts and become more observant of how the other person tries to please. We have noticed that parents are often quite willing to please their partner if they understand precisely what their partner wants and know that their efforts will be recognized.

Support for Single Parents

If you do not have a partner, it is important to arrange some “caring days” for yourself. You could do this by developing a list of pleasurable things you would like to do for yourself. Each week pick some of the items from your list to give yourself.

Examples: 
- Have dinner with a friend.
- Go to a movie.
- Arrange for a back rub.
- Take a piano lesson.
- Walk to the park.
- Have a bubble bath.
- Buy and read a fun magazine.

It is also important for single parents to set up a support system. This might be done by meeting regularly with other parents, close friends, or family members. Organizations such as Parents Without Partners, church groups, recreational groups, and political groups can be sources of support and stimulation.
Brainstorm/Buzz

Write down in the space below some no-cost or surprise rewards to use with your child.

**No-cost or Spontaneous Tangible Rewards to Use With My Child**

- Playing soccer with my child
- Child has a friend over to play
- Child decides what to have for dessert
- Parent has extra reading time with child
- Child has extra half hour of TV time

**Goal:**

I will commit to giving a surprise reward for ____________________________

______________________________

behavior.
Brainstorm/Buzz

Reward yourself!

Think about rewarding yourself. Have you ever used an incentive system to reward yourself for accomplishing difficult tasks or goals, like completing a difficult project, or working hard as a parent? Think about ways you could reward yourself for your hard work as a parent.

Good Incentives for Me

A walk in the park

Tea/coffee with a friend

Warm bubble bath

Buy myself a good book

Goal:

I will commit to doing something positive for myself this week. This will include:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
## My Sticker Chart

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Day</th>
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*Part 2: Motivating Through Incentives*  
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