

# Encouragement is more effective than praise

Most parents praise their children with phrases like “Great job!” and “That looks amazing!” But experts agree that encouragement has a bigger effect than praise on a child’s motivation. So what is the difference between the two?

Praise:

- Discusses results. “Great job on the science quiz! You got an A!”
- Uses opinion words such as good, great, terrific and wonderful.
- Is typically given when your child has performed as you had hoped she would.

Encouragement:

- Notices effort and progress. “Look at that project! I can tell you’ve spent a lot of time on it! It must feel good to know you worked so hard!”
- Uses descriptive words. “You picked up your room without being asked. Look at that clean floor and organized desk!”
- Can be given regardless of your child’s performance. “That didn’t work out the way you planned, did it? I can tell you’re disappointed, but I know you’ll try again next week. What do you think you might do differently next time?”

The big difference is that words of praise lead your child to rely on your assessment of her accomplishments, while words of encouragement lead her to form her own positive assessment of herself. Encouragement makes motivation soar!

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