

Behavior Bits

Volume 2: The Power of Your Words

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The Use of Positive Verbal Reinforcement

We know that it is important to provide children with positive comments and feedback for their performance and behavior, but how frequently do we need to do so? Research supports that we should strive for a **4:1 ratio**: 4 positive statements for every 1 reprimand or correction.

While it is natural to only comment on the inappropriate behavior of your children ("Stop that!, Don't throw that in the house!, etc.), it is so important that most of our interactions are based on positive praise. Creating this high ratio of praise to reprimands has benefits for your child's self-esteem and your relationship with him or her.

Tips to keep in mind when delivering praise:

- Deliver praise immediately after the desired behavior
- Praise effort or attitude over ability
- Pair the verbal praise with a high-five, fist bump, pat on the back, hug, etc.
- Use positive body language (smile, upbeat voice, eye contact, being near, etc.)



Labeled Praise

When thinking about behavior, the general rule is that behavior that is rewarded will increase. Verbal praise is often a powerful reward. Taking this into consideration, praise should be specific. **Labeled praise** can be used to tell your child specifically what you like about what he or she is doing or saying.

In addition to increasing desirable behaviors, labeled praise has many other benefits, including:

- Teaching your child very clearly what behavior is expected.
- Increasing your child's self-esteem.
- Reducing any emotional distress felt by your child.
- Supporting positive relationships with your child.

Examples of labeled praise can include:

- Wow, you're doing a great job working on your activity from school.
- Thank you for using your inside voice.
- I really like how you are playing so gently with your toys.

For additional examples of labeled praise, please see the second page.

Modeling Positive Language

"I'm watching you Wazowskie. Always watching."

Monsters Inc. says it best that our children are always watching, listening to, and learning from the language that we model! It is important that we, as parents and older siblings, model appropriate language because children repeat what they hear.

When should I model appropriate language?

Always! It is important to model positive responses to stressful, hurtful, or negative situations. If your child or younger sibling has a habit of using mean or inappropriate words, model what he or she should say instead!

How do I model positive language?

Regularly and frequently words that you would like your child to say. Explain to your child what words are not appropriate and teach them replacement words. When teaching and practicing these words, provide positive verbal praise for appropriate language.

pbisworld.com/tier-1/model-appropriate-language/https://www



Clear Expectations

When verbally communicating your expectations to your child, it is important to use **clear, concise, consistent, and positively stated** language.

Listed here are a few useful tips to help at home:

- Incorporate age-appropriate visuals to support your verbal expectations
- Using a calm voice, state "First (task), Then (preferred activity or item)"
- State a behavior that you want to see rather than the absence of a negative behavior (Ex. Please sit down rather than Stop standing on the couch).
- Avoid over explaining your expectation and do not change your original expectations without clarifying it with your child first
- Don't worry about your expectations being perfect the first time. You can make them better as time goes by.



List Of Labeled Praise Examples To Use At Home

Behavior	Example of Labeled Praise
Academic Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good job completing all of your math problems!• You are working so quietly. Thank you for trying so hard!• You are learning your numbers so quickly. I am proud of you!• Terrific counting!• Thank you for helping your brother read his book.
Chores	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great job picking up all of your toys!• I love how you completed all of your chores without being asked.• Way to go, you did your chore all by yourself!• I love how you are helping me wash the dishes.
Following Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for following my direction the first time.• Thank you for turning the TV off when I asked you.• I am so happy that you are staying in your seat at the dinner table.
Leisure Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I love how creative you are at drawing!• Look how fast you are running! Good job!
Manners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for asking before you did that.• Thank you for waiting while I talked on the phone.• I am proud of you for using your manners and saying “thank you.”• Thank you for listening to what I said and not interrupting.
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I love the way that you shared the Legos with your brother.• Great job waiting your turn.
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wow, you’re doing a great job staying by my side in the store.• You’re doing awesome keeping your hands and feet to yourself.• Thank you for stopping and looking both ways before you crossed the street.
Self-help skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yay! You tied your shoe all by yourself!• I am proud of you for washing your hands with soap and water.
Social Emotional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for having a good attitude today.• I really like how you took a deep breath when you were mad.• Thank you for telling me that you are upset.• Thank you for using a calm voice.• Thank you for being a good role model for your sister by talking in a calm voice.