

Help Your Child To Learn: Use Praise



According to Laurence Steinberg in *The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting*, when your children master something in life, it is your job as a parent to show them that you admire the accomplishment.

It doesn't really matter what the achievement is, Steinberg says, it could be something very simple or something extremely complex, the important thing for your child's development is that you recognize it. Let your children know that you think their achievements are marvelous.

Think about your own experiences and you will probably find that some of your happiest experiences in life have been when you were recognized for something you had accomplished – and some of your most sour moments have occurred because no one recognized or seemed to care what you had accomplished, Steinberg says. Praising your children teaches them that learning and achieving are inherently valuable in life. Giving your children the

gift of feeling satisfaction at what they have accomplished by your reaction to their

efforts and successes is the right thing to do. Steinberg says. These feelings of success throughout life are inextricably linked to those early experiences with parents, when parents praise children for trying hard and reaching goals.

Steinberg says that some people worry that their children will think that their parents' love is conditional if they praise them for these outward achievements, but he says that as long as you give your child affection at other times that are not linked to worldly achievement that praising them for their accomplishments is a good thing to do.

Steinberg also says that the way you praise is also important and that you shouldn't link your praise to your affection for your child, but instead you should make it as accomplishment-specific as possible. That means you'll want to say, "You've

done a great job on your science

experiment" and not "I love it that you are so good at science." The reason is that the last statement links your affection for the child to the accomplishment and that is not something you want to do. The other thing you'll want to do is to connect your

praise to the amount of effort your child exerted rather than to some natural ability the child has. You want to reinforce the idea that hard work pays off, not that your child is a naturally gifted person who does not have to work hard. Also, when you praise your child, make sure your words reflect that you are proud of the accomplishment and not a grade or rating that someone else has given the work. So you would say that you're proud of how well he or she is doing in science, not that he or she received an A. And stay away from comparing your child to other children's accomplishments. You definitely don't want to tell your child that his or her science project was much better than the other children's'.