



Tip sheet 2 Feedback

Positive feedback and using the right words

Praise and encouragement

- Praise is when you tell children you like the way they are doing something.
- Praise works best to describe the action you like.
- Encouragement is praise for effort.
- Praise and encouragement work at any age.
- Rewards reinforce the action/ behaviour you want but it is best not to overuse them.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/connecting-communicating/connecting/praise>



- Descriptive praise is specifically telling children what you like. It helps your child understand what it is that they have done so well.
- Things to note after watching the video:
 - The praise is not given as a big deal - the adults are either turned away or pass comment rather than focusing on the praise
 - Parents do not expect a response
 - It's just part of the day-to-day engagement with kids
 - You can also praise children by bragging about them to others in their hearing, so that they know that you are proud of them



Tips for using praise and encouragement

Say what you see

When you feel good about your child, say so. See whether you can give your child some words of encouragement every day. The small things you say can build up over time to have a big effect on your child.

Don't SAY what you see

Look for nonverbal ways to praise or encourage your child. A thumbs up, smile or high five can be powerful ways to show your child you're impressed by their behaviour or efforts.

Take the small wins

Look for little changes and successes. Rather than waiting until your child has done something perfectly to give a compliment, try to praise any effort or improvement.

Encourage individuality

Praise your child for their strengths and encourage your child to feel excited about their own interests. This will help your child develop a sense of pride and self-confidence.

Keep it in proportion

Try to make your praise appropriate to the behaviour. If your praise is exaggerated, your child might not believe it.

Make it age appropriate

Use praise and rewards in age-appropriate ways. For example, teenagers might not want to be praised publicly for their efforts, whereas toddlers might love being singled out for praise.



Growth Mindset

<https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents/learn-about-growth-mindset/research-how-mindset-affects-learning>

When thinking about how to give good/ appropriate feedback to our children, it's helpful to understand something we are trying to cultivate at school - a growth mindset.

So, what is a growth mindset/ fixed mindset?

- Children who have a growth mindset do better because they have an empowering perspective.
- They focus on improvements and see effort as a way to build their abilities.
- Children who have a fixed mindset tend to focus on judgement.
- They are more concerned with proving that they are smart or hiding that they're not so they try to avoid situations in which they might fail or might have to work hard.

[Video 1](#) - the video from the session

[Video 2](#) - another video explaining growth mindset

Just telling kids to "have a growth mindset" doesn't work. As you saw, a growth mindset develops in children in the way that we feedback to them and react to their successes and failures.

It's also about modelling for ourselves. If you are interested in learning more about growth mindset, there is a great website with information for parents [here](#).

It means that we praise kids for the process, rather than being smart, for example. Praise them when they work hard to achieve something difficult.

Be willing to fail and learn from setbacks, and model this to kids. When parents talk positively about making mistakes, kids start to think of mistakes as a natural part of the learning process.

Action Ideas

- Make mistakes in front of your kids, have a positive reaction to those mistakes, and openly reflect on what could be learned from the mistake. Try to show that *it's all about learning*, not about *being right*.
- At the dinner table, talk about a time that you struggled with something and how hard it is and how you overcame it. Then ask your kids if there's anything they struggled with, how they overcome it, and what they learned from the experience.
- Get excited when your child makes a mistake and help her think through what could be learned from it. Even mistakes that seem careless can be good learning opportunities. For example, if your child forgot to study enough for an important test, it might be an opportunity to learn about prioritization and to-do-lists.

Further reading

[12 parenting phrases that make talking to kids easier](#)