

Warming - up to praise your children from infancy

From around the your children's first birthday, you might find yourself getting more and more impatient with them, as they become more persists and rebellious.

You might complain, "my baby was so good before, but now . . .".

Every day you are so busy, spending so much time taking care of your children, sometimes you might just feel like screaming.

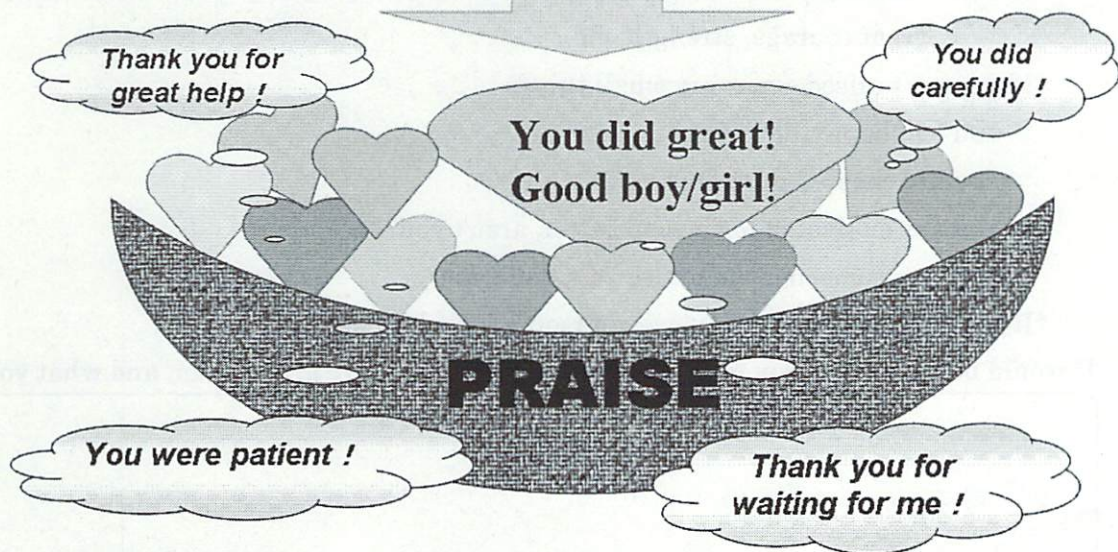
While the sleeping faces of your children are so cute, "a war" breaks out as soon as they wake up.

"It is said that to bring up children with praise is the best way, but I just can't! What shall I do?"

Dear parents, we hope that through this chapter of picture book we can give you, the key to enjoying bringing up your children with praise from the early infancy.

Won't you give it a try?

Let's your children have confidence!



Step 1

Practice to praise yourself and your family

Try to praise yourself.

For
examples

- *I did so well to finish all the housework (cooking, laundry, cleaning, tidying up etc).
- *I am glad I was able to be kind.
- *I am proud of myself that I was able to be patient and not get angry.
- *I could say "thank you!"
- *I did great to make the effort to complete even the most difficult job.
- *I am so happy to have been able to praise him/her.

Try to praise one another; your partner/ family members.

For
examples

- *Today's dinner is absolutely delicious!
- *Thank you very much for waiting.
- *Thank you very much for sharing the sweet cake with me.
- *Thank you for your great help in taking out the garbage every morning.
- *The dress suits you well.
- *I appreciate you making such an effort in bringing up our children.
- *Thank you so much for staying at home with our children.
- *You must be so tired? Please have a good rest.

This step's pointer

It is important not to take things for granted, even mundane, daily things, and to express your gratitude into words.

*You notice that there are so many things to praise, don't you?

*Your appreciation is communicated much better when you put it into words.

*The subject to be praised is the behavior, what was done.

e.g. "Thank you for doing that, you did that very well, you are so clever, you showed great courage, strength, etc.

*If you are praised even very small things.....

You feel happy, don't you?

You are cheered up, aren't you?

You are motivated to do even better, aren't you?

You love someone who praise you, don't you?

*If you praise yourself, you love yourself a little bit more, don't you?

It would be helpful for you to make a note of what you were grateful for, and what you praised.

Step 2

Finding the good and happy things about your children

Let's praise the happy things about your children.....

<During your pregnancy>

For
examples

- *I was so happy to feel you moving actively.
- *I was happy you developed so well inside me.
- *I will never forget how happy I was when I first saw you on the ultrasound.
- *I was grateful that you send me signals from inside.
- *I was a good Mum to be patient with severe morning sickness.

<Up until about one and half year of age>

For
examples

- *I am so happy that you went to sleep easily today.
- *Thank you very much for crying to let me know that you are hungry.
- *I am so happy that you suck hard on my breast.
- *You made a great effort to eat one spoonful of baby food. Well done!
- *You managed to roll for the first time. You did great!

<Up until about three years of age >

For
examples

- *You are doing so well to eat even a tiny piece of food by yourself.
- *Thank you for waiting without crying.
- *It makes me happy that you try so hard to talk to me.
- *Thank you for your help to carry the things.

If you observe your children quietly and calmly, you can find many things to be thankful for, and to praise, even in a child who seems to be difficult to deal with.

This step's pointer

At the moment when you think [My baby did well], [She /he made a great effort], [I am happy for my baby], you should come close to your child, smiling, looking directly into his/her eyes, and with words and/or action (e.g. a hug, a pat on the head, a kiss), praise them enthusiastically, making sure that they understand the behaviour which they are being praised for.

If you try to do this frequently, daily, then, your ability, and confidence, to praise your child, will increase significantly.

If, during their childhood, you write down the things about your child that made you happy, he/she will really appreciate reading these memories when he/she is grown-up.

Step 3

Enjoying your children

It is not necessary to think that you have to play with your child.

Both the parents and their child should feel that the time spent together, however short, is enjoyable.

If there are siblings, the parents should spend quality time with each one individually.

Consequently your child will feel the attention and support he/she needs from the parents to enable him/her to have confidence to enjoy their daily life.

<Changing diaper>

For
examples

When you lift up your baby's legs, swing them gently as you hum your favorite song.

Together, you and your baby can enjoy the changing of the diaper.

<Folding the laundry>

For
examples

If your child wants to help, even though it might be bothersome for you, such as peek-a-boo or by guiding your child's hands with your own, this can be an enjoyable time together.

If you are in a hurry, you could fold most of the laundry yourself, making sure that you

Do the last items together with your child.

Then, you say, "We have finished! We did a great job together! Thank you for your help."

You can both feel happy.

<When you are hurrying to prepare a meal>

For
examples

If your child comes to you for attention, even though you are busy, you should take a moment to give the child physical contact, with a hug, holding her/him tightly, before telling the child to stay out of your way for a little while.

This step's pointer

If the child is accustomed to enjoying the time spent with his/her parents, he/she will look forward to doing other things with them.

This will make it much easier for the parents to enjoy teaching and disciplining their child.

Step 4

Let's practice how to understand and sympathize with your child.

When your child is making a fuss, being difficult, or misbehaving, there is always a reason.

However, as your child is still young, he/she cannot explain the reason with words.

The practice in this step will help you to understand your child's troublesome behavior, and to work out the reason for it.

<When your child throws a block>

For
examples

Why??

While the child was building a house with blocks, the structure collapsed.

You can probably work out what happened, can't you?

Understanding your child:

It must have been so frustrating for your child when his/her building collapsed, when he/she was so close to completing it.

Although it is unacceptable for your child to throw the block, you can understand, his/her frustration can't you?

Can you imagine how sad your child would be to be scolded on such an occasion.



So how about trying it this way:

It is such a bummer that your house fell down.

You were so close to completing it! That's too bad!

Let's try again together.

Please don't throw the block any more. OK?

This step's pointer

You should be aware of your child's thought and feelings, at the moment of his/her action.

Don't focus on the bad behavior, don't immediately scold the child.

Showing your understanding of the child's feelings gives him/her the chance to calm down, and reflect on his/her behavior.

When the parents and the child can come together in understanding the situation, there is mutual sense of peace and quiet.

On the other hand, good behavior, however small it is, should always be praised.

For the child to be given attention and be accepted by their parents will be a treasure for them.

Step 5

Have fun with the challenge of discipline

For examples

Let's move on to the last challenge, of disciplining your child.

<Toilet training>

The issue of toilet training can be one of the most difficult for both the child and the parents, because of individual differences.

However, on the way to reaching your goal you will find many opportunities to praise your child.

You and your child can find a way to enjoy each step you take towards that goal. Even if mistakes are made, please don't scold, and don't be impatient; encourage and praise your child!

Let's practice!

- 1 During the period when your child does not show any sign of wanting to pee, you should observe the intervals between, and the frequency of, his/her diaper getting wet. When you find the diaper is wet, you should say to your child, "Oh, you have peed. Let's change your diaper."
If the child lets you change the diaper without trying to run away, you should praise him/her.
"You are such a good boy/girl! Now you are clean! It must feel great!"

Nb. Even if your child tries to run away, don't overreact, as this will encourage the child's excitement to escalate; change the diaper calmly.
- 2 When your child shows the sign to pee, you should say, "Thank you for letting me know that you want to pee; well done!"
- 3 When you expect that your child's bladder is full, for example, on waking in the morning, you should suggest, "Why don't you take off your clothes and sit on the pot."

If the child manages to sit on the pot you should praise him/her: "Good boy/girl! You are sitting on the pot!"

Even if the child does not sit on the pot, you should still give praise, "You made a great effort!"

When the child is unwilling to sit on the pot, you should not force the issue; you should be patient, give it some time, and wait for the next good opportunity.

It might be helpful to try to incorporate sitting on the pot during play time when child is dressed.

This step's pointer

When you are disciplining your child, it is important not to be impatient.

If you take your time, the opportunities for giving your child encouragement and praise will increase.

You can't do any harm by trying.

Don't give up!

There will always be another chance.

Nb. In some cases it is easier to begin to toilet train the child when he/she poops.

When you talk to your child, please keep in mind the following;

- *Be close to your child.

- *Be sure to look directly at him/her.

- *Be kind and gentle.

- *Be calm.

♥ After three years of age ♥

As you have grown to understand your child, you have also become skilful at praising him/her. If you feel the need to brush-up on this skill, please return to the Steps and repeat your practice.

Your practice of these 5 Steps will enable you to master the basic skill of praising your child. We hope that you also are able to find many things in your daily life, for which, however small they may be, you give yourself praise, and feel good about yourself.

Moreover, we hope that, through these practices, you have also become more familiar with recognising the reason and the emotion behind the behaviour of your partner, family, and friends, more able to understand and empathise with them, and more proficient at praising them.

As you have already realised, this skill of praising will not only bring out acceptable behaviour in your child, but also build confidence and self-esteem in them. Furthermore, this skill will be very useful for you as an integral part of your daily life, to nurture yourself, and to foster favourable relationships with others. Please continue to polish this skill every day.

As your child grows up there will be more and more situations when you need to discipline and teach your child. However, since you already have the basic skill of praising your child, you will be fine, so don't worry. Using this picture book to improve your skill, you will find much delight and happiness in bringing up your child.

Nonetheless, bringing up your child is usually accompanied by various difficulties and anxieties. Please don't worry by yourself; you are not alone; there are many people around you who can give you advice. Please consult with your partner, your family, your friends, your neighbours, the kindergarten teacher, public health or health centre professionals, or your family doctor.

Please don't forget that you have many people watching over you, who are always ready to help and support you.