

Positive Phrases

Replace common phrases such as “good job” or “awesome work” with phrases that are more specific and meaningful.



Positive Phrase Guidelines

Be specific about what you are praising

- How creative that you found a different way to organize your dolls and their blankets.
- Becky, you are so responsible for picking up the books when they fell off the shelf. Thank you for keeping our classroom clean and safe.

Use choice phrase questions that are of equal weight and both acceptable

- It is snack time. Would you like to help pass out the plates or the napkins?
- It is snack time. Would you like to sit next to Anna or Mike?
- It is circle time. Would you like to sit on the floor or in your chair?
- It is time to do art. Do you need one or two minutes to clean up your toys?
- Jimmy, it is time to work on our art project. Would you rather work with Sandy or by yourself?

Praise children during neutral and positive times

- John, you are so kind to your friends. Thank you for giving Jack the ball. This made him so happy.
- Sandy, how thoughtful for you to fit the trains tracks together inside of the tube! That will make a terrific tunnel.
- Thomas, how kind! You helped George zip his coat, even when you wanted to run and play.
- How wonderful that you and Trisha decided how to share the dolls. You are good problem solvers.
- Thank you Jen, for coming to tell me and using your words instead of hitting or hurting someone.

Key Points to Keep in Mind

- ✓ Validate a child
- ✓ Give respect to children
- ✓ Give choices
- ✓ Use redirection when needed
- ✓ Model the behavior and skills you want the child to perform
- ✓ Be sure you have child’s attention
- ✓ Replace “don’t” with “do”
- ✓ Be clear, calm and consistent
- ✓ Be realistic
- ✓ Plan ahead, but be flexible
- ✓ Keep instructions simple
- ✓ Make the task fun
- ✓ Use when/then statements
- ✓ Guidance is proactive, discipline is reactive
- ✓ Listen attentively and reflect