

Giving Effective Encouragement

Teaching children to comply with directions builds pro-social behavior and self-discipline.

When giving encouragement:

1) Tell the child specifically what he or she did well:

“You folded the laundry, made your bed and vacuumed.
Your room looks so clean!”

Not

“Your room looks nice.”

2) Avoid adding in anything negative.

“You did a great job of remembering to put your bike away before coming inside”

Not

“You did a great job of remembering to put your bike away before coming inside. Why can’t you do that every day?”

3) Be brief and specific.

“Thank you for putting the food away after making your snack.”

Not

“You are the best kid there ever was. I can count on you to always do what you are supposed to do.”

4) Use words children understand.

“Thanks for remembering to rinse your dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.”

Not

“I really appreciate that you’ve taken into account my repeated requests to remove the residue from the plates before inserting them into the dishwasher.”

5) Remember to give encouragement with a friendly facial expression, eye contact, open body language and a pleasant tone of voice.

