

# The Importance of Praise and Encouragement

## **Children need Praise and Encouragement:**

Children need praise, encouragement and at times a reward to help their motivation with general day to day tasks or especially when they are achieving new goals such as learning to walk, eating vegetables or sitting exams.

This does not mean that to motivate your child you need to reward them each time they do something well.

Children can become self-motivated when their natural curiosity is encouraged and supported and tend to do things simply because they enjoy doing them. Children who are self-motivated have better mental health and wellbeing than those who rely on being rewarded by others to feel good about themselves.

We need to be aware that we can negatively influence and lower children's motivation by making them feel they need a reward for everything they do and as a consequence they may avoid activities and this can lead to a reduced sense of control and lowered self-confidence.

Gaining approval from important adults in their lives becomes more important to children as they grow. Praise is more effective when it is specific and when parents and carers are mindful of how and when they praise. When praising children, it is most important to focus on their efforts and achievements. Praise that is specific and acknowledges the processes of completing an activity or solving a problem helps develop children's learning and motivation. Examples of specific praise are 'You put away your toys so nicely' or 'well done for eating your dinner' or 'thank you for coming home when you agreed that you would'.

Praise should be given mindfully and take into account a child's age and stages of development as well as their individual ability.

Children can pick up when we are not genuine, especially if we use the same words of praise over and over again. The timing of praise is also important, interrupting a child when they are concentrating can make them lose their focus and reduce their motivation to continue on with the activity.

Praise is also effective in encouraging children (especially older children) to relate to how they feel about who they are and to their achievements, praise also encourages positive self esteem and self-worth.