

FAMILY TIMES

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Power of Praise

Anna Marie Lowe, single parent of 7-year-old Colby, recently attended a parenting class where she learned about the importance of praising her son.

"At first I was not so sure about the class, but it really made a difference, especially learning about praise. Now, Colby is more confident. He pats himself on the back for doing things. He is proud of doing things for himself, not just for mom or dad."

Charles Boylston, father of 10-year-old Hannah, has found that using praise has helped his relationship with his daughter. "She appreciates the way I treat her. She listens more now. She wants me to be more involved." He says that the communication in his family has opened up since he began to use praise every day. "Praising is communicating."

What is Praise?

Praise is shown by using kind words, actions, facial expressions, or a gentle touch like hugs or high-fives, which promote feelings of self-pride, worth and accomplishment in others. When parents praise children, they let children know that who they are, what they can do, and what they have done is good and worthwhile.

Why Praise is so Important

It lets children know that who they are and/or what they do pleases you. It helps them develop positive self-worth. Children with positive self-worth treat themselves and others well, get better grades, are more popular in school, discourage less easily and live more productive lives.

Praise for Being and Praise for Doing

There are two types of praise: praise for "being" and praise for "doing." Praise for being praises a child for who she is. This kind of praise lets her know that she is worthwhile no matter what, and that you love her no matter what. This type of praise can be used any time.

Praise for doing praises a child for something he has done. This type of praise lets him know that you are pleased with his behavior and efforts. Children love to please their parents.

● What you can say to praise for doing: "Thank you for cleaning up." "You worked really hard on that project." "You did a great job washing the dishes."



● What you can say to praise for being: "I love you." "I'm so glad you are my daughter." "You are so special."

● Caution: Both types of praise are important, but it is important not to use them together. Anna Marie makes sure she doesn't mix the two types of praise. "I stop and think before I praise Colby. 'Is it for being or for doing?' You have to know what you are praising your child for."

● Instead of saying: "Daddy really loves you for cooperating with me," say this: "Daddy really loves you." The first statement tells the child that Daddy loves him only at certain times, like when he behaves in a certain way. The second statement is praise just for being; this love is unconditional.

● Then add: "I really like it when you cooperate with me." (This is healthy praise for doing.)

Your child's feelings about himself and his behavior greatly depend on receiving praise for being and doing from you each day. Both Anna Marie and Charles see a big difference in their children's behavior—and in their families—since they started using praise each day. "It has strengthened my son," Anna Marie says.

Reward What You Want Repeated



A reward is something positive you do for your child when he behaves the way you want.

There are many types of rewards. Praise is one of the most powerful ways to reward a child. Children love to please their parents, and praise lets them know you are pleased with them. And, it doesn't cost you a cent.

When you see your child doing something you like, be sure to let him know. Children often give you more of what you pay the most attention to. If he gets the most attention from you when he is misbehaving, he may continue to misbe-

have to keep your attention. If you are consistently praising your child for a good behavior, he will probably repeat that behavior. Let's look at the steps to praise:

Steps to Using Praise

- Focus your attention on the child and the situation—praise deserves your total attention.
- Move close to the child—praise feels good from someone close to you.
- Make eye contact with the child on the child's level—bend down to make eye contact with a 5-year-old. She will feel even more special.
- Gently touch the child—touch is a positive form of communication.
- Smile—everyone likes to see a happy face.
- Praise your child for being or for doing.
- Offer a hug to back up the nice words.

What *Family Times* is About

Welcome to the first issue of *Family Times*!

Our goal in this parenting newsletter is to provide information and ideas that will help you better nurture yourself and your child. We believe that nurturing yourself is a very important part of being a good parent.

Family Times is written with many family types and children's ages in mind. Whether you are a single parent, part of a couple, a teen parent, expecting your first child, or have children ready to move out on their own, you should find useful information here.



Each newsletter will have a theme such as praise, discipline,

or communication. This issue's theme is praise. Regular sections in each newsletter will cover: nurturing your child, nurturing yourself, specific situations such as teen or divorced parenting, parenting children of different ages such as preschoolers or teens, activities for you and your child to do together, life skills such as managing credit cards or preparing for a job interview and nutrition and health. A "Couples' Corner" will discuss a relationship issue, and a "Resource Corner" will provide suggestions for easy-to-find books, pamphlets or web sites. We'll also include a Question & Answer section and information on what 4-H can mean for your child and you.

Family Times will be printed several times a year. Look for the next issue in the spring!

Please note: This newsletter takes turns referring to children as "he" or "she" so that both sexes get equal time and space. When we use he or she, we include all children.

Nurturing Yourself: How To Take a Compliment

Praise is just as important for adults as it is for children. We need praise from others and from ourselves to fuel our own self-worth. Praise energizes our self-worth like gas fuels a car. For some reason, though, when adults receive praise we often try to reject it or prove the other person wrong.

For Example:

Compliment: "You look very nice today."

Rejection: "What? This dress is so old."

Acceptance: "Thank you. I feel good, too."

Praise and compliments are like gifts people give to us. How do you like your child to respond when given a gift? Probably by saying, "Thank you." As adults, we should try to do the same. Accepting praise is not only polite, but it benefits us and our children.

How Compliments Benefit You

Accepting praise with a thank you helps you believe the compliment you just heard. You really do look great. That report really was well done. You really are funny.

We need praise to fuel our self-worth. If you reject praise, you may run out of fuel, and people may not bother complimenting you. But if you accept praise, more is sure to come. This helps your self-worth improve and continue growing.

How Compliments Benefit Your Child

Children learn much of their behavior from their parents. Think what that means. If your daughter watches you accept praise gratefully, she learns to do the same.

How To Praise Yourself

We need praise and recognition in order to keep up our sense of self-worth. Sometimes though, there is no one else around, or there may be a day when no one says anything about your positive qualities. Then it's up to you to recognize them and fuel your own self-worth. Praise yourself and reward yourself. Remember, your child will benefit from seeing you take care of yourself.



Single Parents:

Getting Your Needs Met and Letting Children Be Children

A 13-year-old boy comes home from school. He finds his mom sitting at the kitchen table, crying. Mom tells him about her problems at work, and how they don't have much money left. The child tries to offer comfort with kind words and a hug. He tells his mother that she is doing her best and that she is a good employee and a great mom.

Does this situation seem backward to you? It is, because the son is taking care of his mother. The parent and the child have reversed roles. It's easy for this to happen when things get stressful or there's no other adult in the house to talk to. But remember, it's not a child's job to give emotional support to a parent. Kids should not feel the need to take care of Mom or Dad. Parents must find other adults to help them get their needs met.

How To Fulfill Your Needs (Without Making Your Child Be the Adult)

Emotional Needs

- Don't rely on your child to tell you that you are a good parent.
- Find an adult to talk with—a parent, neighbor, a good friend.
- Don't tell your problems to your son or daughter.
- Don't let your child sleep in your bed because you are lonely.

Social Needs

- Make friends with other adults, especially parents.
- Talk with another adult every day.
- Don't try to be your child's best friend. You're the parent.

Physical Needs

- Hug friends and relatives whenever you see them.
- Hug and kiss your child each day.
- When you feel down, don't insist that your child sit in your lap or hug you to make you feel better. Let her have a choice.

Praising without Pushing: Activities



Your elementary or middle school student may be trying new things: the basketball team, Girl Scouts, an instrument. She'll need praise as she explores her talents. Just be careful that your praise doesn't turn into pressure. These activities will help her learn what she enjoys, gain experience and learn about herself.

How To Praise Your Child's Effort

- "You've been practicing that jump shot every day for weeks. I'm very proud."
- "I'm really pleased to see you try so hard."



Have Reasonable Expectations

Remember to keep your expectations reasonable. There will be lost games, dropped balls, unearned badges and tears. After trying something out, your child may decide that the activity is not for her. That's OK. It was not a waste of time. By trying something new, she learned more about herself, which is what childhood's all about.

Kids in the Kitchen

The kitchen is a place where you can practice praising your child. Children enjoy helping in the kitchen and often are more willing to eat foods they help prepare.

Let Me Help, Mom!

Here are some food preparation skills that young children can handle. Be sure to wash hands first.

2-year-olds can:

- Bring ingredients to work space
- Wipe tabletops
- Snap green beans

3-year-olds can:

- Wrap potatoes in foil for baking
- Knead and shape dough
- Mix ingredients

4-year-olds can:

- Use hands to form round shapes such as cookie dough
- Mash bananas using fork
- Set the table

5-year-olds can:

- Measure ingredients
- Cut with blunt knife and supervision
- Use a wire whisk to beat eggs

Family Times Recipe: "Almost Pyramid" Parfait

- 1 cup apples or bananas, chopped
- 1 cup strawberries, chopped
- 1 cup lowfat vanilla or fruit-flavored yogurt
- 1 cup lowfat granola (or other favorite cereal)

Using four clear glasses, layer ingredients starting with fruit, adding yogurt, then some granola. Repeat layers until all ingredients are distributed among the glasses.

Adapted from Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service

Activity: Power Stories

A power story is a summary of all the wonderful things your child did or tried to do in a day. Bedtime is a great time to tell this story, which you can name after your son or daughter: "This is Liz's power story." Make sure you tell her the wonderful things she did that day. Or, you can just tell her how much you love her.

"Today, Liz woke up and put her pants on all by herself. She worked really hard to learn how to button her shirt. At the park, Liz shared her toys with the other kids. They were very happy. Liz was angry when one of the kids grabbed her toy, but she didn't scream or hit. Instead, she let him know she wasn't done with it and that she wanted it back. Great job Liz! Liz is my daughter. I'm so glad you are my daughter, Liz! I love you."

After the story's finished, give your child a hug and kiss and wish her sweet dreams. She will fall asleep knowing that she is loved by the most important person in her life.



Couples' Corner



Praise in Your Relationship

"Tell Me Somethin' Good" was a popular song in the '70s, but it's also one of the most important things that can keep any relationship strong and healthy. Couples who focus on—and talk about—what is good about their partner enjoy each other more and generally lead happier lives. What's an example of something good you can say to your partner? It can be anything you choose such as, "Thanks for pouring my coffee for me this morning," or "You really helped me out last night when you listened to how hard my day was."

What if you can't think of anything good to say to your partner because you believe she never does anything right? This happens often when people get caught up in the stress of everyday living. You can teach yourself to be positive. When you begin to say something negative, take a deep breath and think to yourself, STOP. The negative thing I am about to say is not going to help our relationship. What can I say that will help, not hurt, my partner? Then say something positive about the other person. You can just smile if you can't think of anything to say right away.

Once you start being more positive, your brain will start thinking more positively and you will say good things without even trying. It will make you and your partner feel good. Your relationship is worth it.

Praise Through Action: Become a 4-H Volunteer



Praise is demonstrated through words and actions.

One way to help your child is to volunteer to support your child's interests and activities.

Volunteering in an organization especially for kids will not only help you feel good about yourself, it will also allow you to nurture your child. It also gives you both the chance to make new friends.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is the largest youth organization in the world. It exists in all 50 states and more than 80 countries. In New

Mexico we have more than 61,000 members from ages 5-19. Kids learn through projects in rocketry, wildlife, small pets, family life, crafts and leadership, with more than 200 projects to choose from. Adult leaders organize groups, supervise events and help with projects and community service. We know we have a project that you and your child will like.

Find out more about becoming a 4-H volunteer leader, or about getting your child involved in a 4-H club. Contact your local County Extension Office for information on 4-H in your area; see the box at the bottom of the following page.

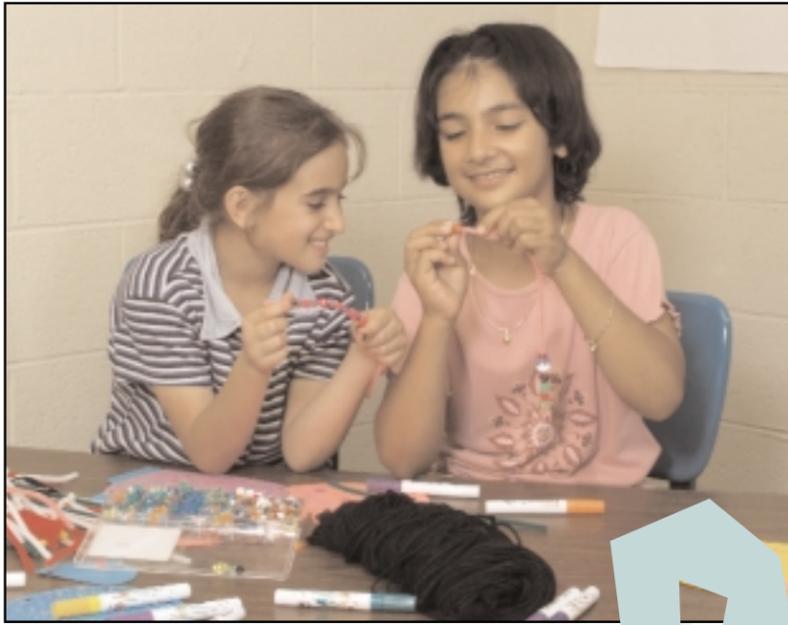
Praising Yourself on Paper: Creating a Resume

One of the most important parts of looking for a job is creating your resume. This is a tough job but well worth the effort. Your resume is a chance to praise yourself on paper and put your best foot forward for employers to see. Here's how:

1. Make a list of all the skills you have that can be used on the job. Even if you've been unemployed for a while, you have skills such as planning, problem solving, budgeting and managing time.
2. List your previous employers. Include the positions you've held, dates of employment, and the name, address and phone number of each employer.
3. Now you're ready to get the information on paper. At the top of the page, type your name, address and telephone number.
4. Next, list your education. Always put your most recent schooling first, followed by previous education.
5. Next, list your previous jobs. Place your current or most recent job first, then work backward until you've listed all jobs.
6. If you are bilingual, be sure to list that special ability.
7. Finally, list the name, address and phone number of three or four people you will use as references. As a rule, don't list relatives in this section.



A resume should be truthful and accurate. After reading your resume several times, ask a friend to read it. Now you're ready not only to apply for a job but also to school, for scholarships and a variety of other things.



Question and Answer

Can I praise my child too much? She might get spoiled or conceited with so much praise.

That is unlikely, as long as your praise is sincere and about something real. If a school report she did was really a disaster, don't tell her, "You did a great job on that report." You can praise her effort if you saw that she really did work hard. "I'm proud of how hard you worked on that report. All that work will pay off eventually." Also, praise shouldn't be given for every little thing such as picking up a book, walking into the room or breathing, since this will make the rest of your praise meaningless.

If your praise is given for either doing something real or for being (praise for being is always appropriate if it is sincere), it will not spoil your child or make him conceited.

Coming Up Next in *Family Times*

The theme for the next edition of *Family Times* is communication. You'll learn how to express your feelings, how to communicate with your children when you are away or not living with them, the benefits of families eating together and more! See you then!

Resource Corner

Books for Parents

Peaceful Parents, Peaceful Kids: Practical Ways to Build a Happy Home, by Naomi Drew, Kensington Publishing, 2000.
Magic Tools for Raising Kids, by Elizabeth Crary, Parenting Press, 1995.
The Single Mother's Book: A Practical Guide to Managing Your Children, Career, Home, Finances, and Everything Else, by Joan Anderson, Peachtree Publishers, 1990.
Family Rules: Helping Stepfamilies and Single Parents Build Happy Homes, by Jeannette Lofas, Kensington Publishing, 1998.

Books for Children

Birth to 3

Disney's I Believe In Me, by Mary Lea Floden, Mouse Works, 1998.

Ages 3 to 8

I Like Me, I Like You, by Laurence Anholt, Turtleback Books, 2001.
Quick as a Cricket, by Audrey Wook, Child's Play International, Ltd., 1998.

Ages 8 to 12

Stick Up For Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem, by Gershen Kaufman, Free Spirit Publishing, 1999.

Teens

Bringing Up Parents: The Teenager's Handbook, by Alex J. Packer, Ph.D, Free Spirit Publishing, 1992.
Through My Eyes: A Journal for Teens, by Linda Kranz, Rising Moon Publishing, 1998.

Web sites

<http://www.keepkidshealthy.com> (Tips for using praise, as well as links related to discipline)
<http://www.parenting.org> (Praise and encouragement Q & A and general information)
<http://www.partnershipforlearning.org/article.asp?ArticleID=123> (30 ways to build a child's self-esteem)
<http://www.thinkport.org/familycommunity/interstitials/praise.tp> (Article about praise with links to self-esteem, praise sites)
<http://www.workingparents.com/101ways.htm> (101 ways to praise a child)
<http://www.nmcycfar.org/bfw.html> (*Baby's First Wish*, bilingual parenting educational newsletter)

FAMILY TIMES

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*The Family and Consumer Sciences Department offers bachelor's and master's degree programs with academic programs in family and child science; human foods and nutrition; family and consumer sciences education; and clothing, textiles and fashion merchandising.

Contact our county Extension offices about local parenting and nutrition education programs.

Alamogordo	401 Fairgrounds Road	437-0231	•	Los Lunas	319 Hwy. 314	865-9561
Albuquerque	1510 Menaul NW	243-1386	•	Los Ojos	72 State Road 162	588-7423
Aztec	213-A S. Oliver	334-9496	•	Lovington	100 N. Main, Suite 10-C	396-2819
Bernalillo	811 Camino del Pueblo	867-2582/2951	•	Mora	County Courthouse	387-2856
Carlsbad	1304 W. Stevens	887-6595	•	Mosquero	County Courthouse	673-2341
Carrizozo	County Courthouse	648-2311/2312	•	Portales	705 E. Lime St.	356-4417
Clayton	County Courthouse	374-9361	•	Raton	County Courthouse	445-8071
Clovis	818 N. Main	763-6505	•	Reserve	County Courthouse	533-6430
Deming	County Courthouse	546-8806	•	Roswell	200 E. Chisum	622-3210/3211
Dulce	Hawks Dr.	759-3530	•	Santa Fe	3229 Rodeo Rd.	471-4711
Espanola	1122 Industrial Park Rd.	753-3405	•	Santa Rosa	450 Parker Ave.	472-3652
Estancia	County Courthouse	384-2416	•	Shiprock	E. Highway 64	368-1029
Fort Sumner	County Courthouse	355-2381	•	Silver City	2610 N. Silver St.	388-1559
Gallup	5002 W. Historic 66	863-3432	•	Socorro	214 Neel Avenue, NW	835-0610
Grants	515 W. High St.	287-9266	•	Taos	202 Chamisa Rd.	758-3982
Las Cruces	808 N. Alameda	525-6649	•	T or C	2101 S. Broadway	894-2375
Las Vegas	County Courthouse Annex	454-1497	•	Tucumcari	County Courthouse	461-0562
Lordsburg	300 Shakespeare	542-9291	•	Window Rock	P.O. Box 1339, AZ 86511	(928) 871-7406
Los Alamos	475 20th St.	662-2656	•	Zuni	02 Route 301 North	782-4495/4491

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