

USING PRAISE TO PROMOTE A GROWTH MINDSET IN YOUNG CHILDREN

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Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck has divided praise into two categories - content praise and process praise.

Content praise draws attention to the **end product**, for example,

"What a beautiful picture", or, "That's a fantastic block tower".

It might also focus on a **fixed quality** of the child, such as,

"You're really smart", or, "You're a great dancer".

In contrast, **process praise** draws attention to the

- **effort**
- **enthusiasm**
- **ideas**
- **concentration**
- **persistence**, and
- **problem-solving approach** taken by the child.

Dr Dweck's studies focused on the effect of each of these types of praise on children's responses to setbacks. And the findings in Dr Dweck's studies suggest that children who receive more process praise are more likely to rise to challenges, try harder and be less likely to give up.

This is now known as having a **growth mindset** which is linked with better academic outcomes at school and improved overall resilience. In contrast, children who receive predominantly content praise can develop what is known as a **fixed mindset**. These children see their abilities as being predetermined and can be less likely to try if they don't already expect to succeed.

Examples of how you might word process praise to promote a growth mindset in your child include:

"Tell me about your drawing - I can see you've put a lot of effort into it".

"Gee you're really concentrating hard - that's great". "I'm really impressed with the way you keep trying, even when it gets tricky".

"Gosh - what a lot of ideas you've had. I can tell you're feeling really proud of yourself".



Since your child is very young, it's safe to assume that many tasks will be new and at times difficult. And with new challenges come frequent setbacks along with mistakes and frustration. That's learning.

So it follows that receiving a higher proportion of process praise might help your child to develop a more resilient approach to learning.

Perhaps you have a child who needs encouragement to persist with a task when it becomes difficult or tedious. Or a child who you suspect could put more effort into tasks but chooses not to? Maybe you could try using more process praise and see for yourself whether this seems to make a difference over time.

To find out more about Dr Kaylene Henderson and her popular resources, go to: www.drkaylenehenderson.com. Or to download her online Advice Packs on a range of topics such as anxiety, resilience, school readiness and tantrums, head to A Dose of Awesomeness: www.adoseofawesomeness.com.