Understanding Praise vs Encouragement

1. Definitions

Praise
To glorify, especially by attribution of perfection; An expression of approval; Express favorable judgment of.

Encouragement
To inspire with courage; To spur on; to stimulate.

2. The Effects of Praise
- Approval Junkies
- Afraid to take risks
- Choose easier tasks
- Need reassurance
- Lack confidence
- Dependent on others
- Only feel worthwhile when others approve
- Person feels judged
- Focus is on performance
- Fosters selfishness
- Creates quitters
- Stimulates rivalry

3. Language Used

Praise
"Your picture is so pretty."
"You’re a good helper."
"You did great!"
"I’m so proud of you."
"I like it."
"Good girl/baby."
"I like the way Johnny is sitting."
"You should be quiet like the rest of the class."
"I’m glad you listened to me."
"Great! That’s what I expected."
"You always do a wonderful job."
"You did it right."

Encouragement
"You used all those different colors."
"You straightened all the bookshelves."
"You did it!"
"You should be proud of yourself."
"What do you think?"
"Thank you for helping."
"Who can show me the proper way to sit?"
"What is an appropriate noise level for the library?"
"I trust your judgment."
"You can decide what is best for you."
"I have faith that you will do your best."
"What do you think/learn/feel?"

4. Application

Ask yourself these questions:
- Am I creating independence or dependence?
- Am I helping students discover how to act or manipulating their behavior?
- Would I make this comment to an adult or a friend?

Leave out judgments. (good, bad, perfect, nice)
Use "I notice..."
"I appreciate..."
"I know you can..."

Use phrases that demonstrate acceptance, show confidence, focus on contribution, assets, and appreciation. Also use phrases that recognize effort and improvement.

5. Encouragement Outcome

When students are encouraged instead of praised, they will become:
- Effort focused
- Deed focused
- Respectful
- Self-directed
- Concerned about what they think
- Self-confident
- Capable of self-evaluation
- Capable of choosing challenging tasks
- Independent
- Empathetic
- Courageous

6. Praise is like candy, sweet and wonderful on occasions, but not good as a steady meal.

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