

BEHAVIOR · ALL GRADES

Praise Script Bank

50 specific phrases

Why praise often misfires

Decades of research (Dweck, Mueller, Henderlong) suggests that the type of praise matters more than the amount. Specifically: • PRAISING INTELLIGENCE ('You're so clever!') backfires when work gets hard. Children who've been praised for being clever avoid challenge, because failure threatens their identity. • PRAISING EFFORT, STRATEGY, AND CHOICES builds resilience. Children praised for what they **CHOSE TO DO** can replicate the behavior next time. • EMPTY PRAISE ('Great job!') doesn't help children understand **WHAT** was good, so they can't repeat it. This bank gives you 50 specific phrases organised by what you're praising.

10 phrases for praising EFFORT

#	Phrase
1	I noticed how hard you worked on that
2	You didn't give up even when it got tricky
3	I can see how much effort you put into this
4	You stuck with it when most people would have stopped
5	Your concentration was really impressive
6	You kept trying after you got stuck
7	I noticed you went back and checked your work
8	You used your time really well today
9	I love how persistent you were with this



#	Phrase
10	You worked through the boring bit — that's the hard part

10 phrases for praising STRATEGY

#	Phrase
11	I like the way you tried two different methods
12	It was clever to draw a picture before you started
13	Asking for help was a smart choice there
14	You broke it into smaller steps — that worked well
15	I like how you checked your answer at the end
16	Using the word bank was a smart strategy
17	You read the question twice — that's a great habit
18	Going back to fix that mistake took confidence
19	You used what you learned yesterday — really clever
20	Looking it up when you weren't sure — that's exactly what experts do

10 phrases for praising BEHAVIOR

#	Phrase
21	Thank you for getting started straight away
22	I noticed you helped Sofia without being asked
23	You came in really calmly today
24	Thank you for listening so well to my instructions
25	You walked through school like a Year 6 — really mature
26	I saw you include Marcus at break — that was kind



#	Phrase
27	Your hand has been up all morning — you're really engaged
28	Thank you for tidying up without being reminded
29	You waited your turn beautifully there
30	You handled that disagreement so well

10 phrases for praising RESILIENCE

#	Phrase
31	It's OK to find this hard — that means you're learning
32	You took a deep breath and tried again. That's brave.
33	Mistakes are how brains grow
34	You came back from that calmly — really mature
35	I love that you asked for help — that's not easy
36	You disagreed with me without getting upset — well done
37	Yesterday this was hard, today it's easier — that's progress
38	You handled feedback brilliantly there
39	I noticed you keep going even when you're not sure
40	You walked away from that argument — that took strength

10 phrases for QUIET PRAISE (private)

#	Phrase
41	I noticed.
42	Well done.



#	Phrase
43	Good choice.
44	That was kind.
45	Nice work today.
46	I'm proud of how you handled that.
47	Quietly impressive.
48	You did the right thing.
49	I saw what you did. Thank you.
50	Good effort.

How to use this

Don't try to use all 50 in one day. Pick 5-10 that feel natural to you and rotate them. Children notice when praise is a script, so it has to feel real. **USE LOUDER** for the children who **DON'T** need it most — they hear less of it elsewhere. **USE QUIETER** for children with anxiety, autism, or who hate public attention. The quiet praise list (41-50) is gold for these children. **USE SPECIFICALLY**. 'Good work' tells the child nothing. 'I noticed you went back and checked your work' tells them exactly what you valued, so they can do it again.

