



# Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. IV, No. 4

## 10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ **Provide positive guidance**
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

## This Month's Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

Provide Positive Guidance

### Fostering a Growth Mindset with Appropriate Praise

The word "praise" has gained a lot of attention in recent years, mostly due to the research by Dr. Carol Dweck of Stanford University. She found that the way we praise or compliment children plays a big role in how motivated they will be as a learner.

According to Dweck's research, children who were praised for their **effort** (e.g., "You must've worked hard on that!") were more motivated as learners than those who were praised for their **abilities/qualities** (e.g., "You are smart."). It turns out that praising children for their effort, also known as process-praise, leads to a growth mindset.

**What is a mindset and why is it important?** A mindset is a mental attitude or belief that predetermines a person's responses to situations. According to Dr. Dweck, our mindset plays a big role in our success. Dweck describes two basic mindsets behind our motivation to learn -- a fixed mindset or a growth mindset (see the enclosed insert from West Ed's project Doing What Works for more information).

- Those with a fixed mindset believe that their basic qualities like their intelligence or talent are fixed traits. They believe they have a certain amount of brains and talents and nothing can change that.
- Those with a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be developed, and they can accomplish anything if they work hard at it.

Dweck's research has significant effects on behavior and performance, particularly in the face of challenging tasks. Her research suggests that children with a growth mindset are more likely to continue to persist when they struggle, understanding that failure is a natural part of the learning process and an opportunity to improve.

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**It starts early.** According to a study by Dweck, how parents and caregivers praised children at 1, 2, and 3 years of age predicted that child's desire for challenge five years later. "And that desire for challenge, in turn, predicts behavior in middle school and high school. So it starts early."

This newsletter will focus on strategies, tips and examples for promoting a growth mindset in young children by:

- using process-praise,
- paying attention to what children are doing, and
- using questioning strategies.

## Process-praise

Process praise is focusing your praise on children's effort, strategies, and persistence – the *manner* in which they accomplished a task. By doing this, you make it clear to children that you value their effort; they will be less concerned with looking smart and keeping your admiration, instead, they will be more focused on the process of learning and be motivated to continue to seek knowledge.

On the other hand, researchers have found that acknowledging children for their ability (or a quality) – also known as "person praise," can limit their thinking or foster a fear of failing and may cause children to give up when tasks get harder.

### Try this:

*Change your focus.* We are accustomed to seeing a child's ability and commenting on it, for example, "You are good at puzzles!" However, instead of focusing on and praising ability, focus on how hard the child worked at it.



For example, *"I like the way you worked hard to find the piece that goes here,"* or *"You kept turning that piece until it fit...good job working hard!"* By focusing on their efforts, you will be able to give children useful feedback that will help them develop a growth mindset.

Here are some specific examples for turning "person praise" into "process praise":

Instead of saying... (person praise)	Say this... (process praise)
"You are so smart!"	"Wow, you figured out how to turn the container upside down to get the cube out!"
"You're such a big boy!"	"I know it's hard to carry the dog's bowl without spilling but you tried hard."
"Good girl!"	"Thank you for sitting patiently while waiting for a story."
"Good helper!"	"Thank you for putting the toys away without being asked!"
"You are a good artist!"	"You used many colors. I like it!"
"You are so kind."	"You thought of an awesome way to help Maya. You made her feel happy."
"Great job! You must be smart!"	"Great job! You must've worked really hard on this!"

## Paying attention and being specific

In order to praise a child's process, you must pay attention to what he is doing. It is easy to see a child's outcome (for example, a completed puzzle, a finished block tower, a drawing, etc.) and comment on it, but process praise requires that we pay attention to a child's actions, attempts, and methods in getting to the outcome.

### Here are some ideas to try:

*Scan the environment.* What do you see a child working hard at? Go to that child and comment on his hard work.

*Be specific in your praise.* Comment on the specific action the child did. Did he try hard at balancing 10 cubes? Did he go further in a broad jump than the last time? Did he make the sand wheel turn faster when he poured the sand a certain way? What about his strategies? Did the child try different strategies? Did he focus? Make progress?

*Document what you are seeing.* When you write down short observations of what children are doing daily or even weekly, both the process and the outcome, you can start to see trends of what they are learning and how they are developing in all areas.



## Questioning strategies

Asking a child questions as he is engaged in an activity helps him think about his efforts and persistence, and at the same time, conveys a sense of wonder, curiosity, and inquiry.

### Here are some questions you can try:

- "How did you do that?"
- "How did you know that would work?"
- "Can you think of a different way to do it?" or "What else can you try?"
- "How did you know how important it would be to (name of child) to invite her to play with you?"

When the child responds, repeat what he said. This lets the child know that you heard and that you are interested in what he said. For example, "Oh, you made it balance by putting the bigger blocks on the bottom and the smaller ones on top. Great thinking!"

As a final note, you can give hope that future efforts may produce the intended outcome. If a child tried hard but fails despite his efforts, Dr. Dweck says that there is power in the word, "yet." Using this simple word conveys to the child that you saw his effort, and even if he didn't accomplish what he set out to do, you believe that if he continues to try, he will be able to do it one day.

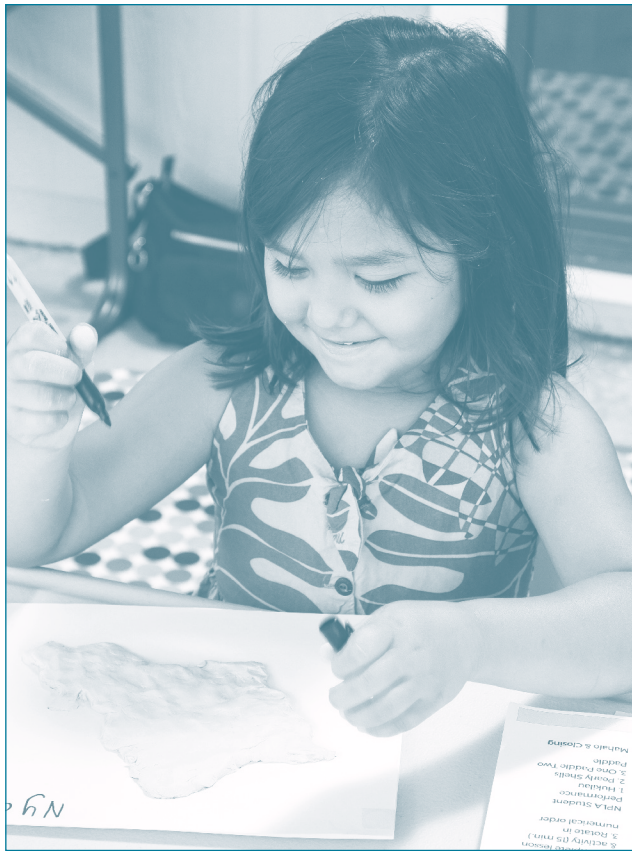
For example:

"You can't do it by yourself yet."

"You didn't skip yet."

"You didn't open the milk carton by yourself yet."





## Citations:

Dweck, Carol S. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House.

Dweck, Carol S. (2007). The Perils and Promises of Praise. *Educational Leadership*, 65, 34-39.

Gunderson, Elizabeth A, Gripshover, Sarah J., Romero, Carissa, Dweck, Carol S., Goldin-Meadow, Susan, Levine, Susan C. *Parent Praise to 1- to 3-Year-Olds Predicts Children's Motivational Framework 5 Years Later*. Child Development, 2013; DOI: 10.1111/cdev.12064

Video: A Study on Praise and Mindsets. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY>

Video: Ted Talk: Carol Dweck on The power of Yet. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2lc>

## Training Certificates, Book Awards, Technical Support

- **Certificates.** Providers who return reflection sheets will receive a certificate for one hour of professional development completed. These certificates will be aligned with the Attitudes, Skills, & Knowledge (ASK) Core Areas, which are recognized by the Hawaii State Department of Human Services to support improvement of quality in early childhood programs. There is no specific due date required to earn this certificate but please note: **the reflection sheet must be completed in full and you must thoughtfully answer question # 5 on the reflection sheet in order to earn the certificate.**
- **Free books.** Free children's books will continue to be given for reflection sheets returned by the posted due date. However, if there are any additional books left over, they will be given to the providers who submit the reflection sheets past the due date. These books will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until the supply runs out.
- **Free technical assistance and support** related to child care issues can be requested by answering question #8 on the reflection sheet.



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