



## The Art of Staying Positive-Parent Rules Your Kids Will Love You For

By Kelly Nault, M.A.

When your child acts out yet again, you may find yourself at the end of your parenting patience rope. If your current approach to discipline is not giving you the results you want and your child is continuing to act out (even though you know they know better!) it may be time to alter your approach.

**You see, misbehavior is a powerful tool that actually gets children what they seek-attention, power and even a bit of drama. And some attention is always better than none at all (especially from a busy parent like you).**

When a child fails to receive encouragement through positive attention, they will look for others ways to get the attention they seek-often by whining, protesting and driving you crazy! Fortunately, by encouraging our children we can prevent the misbehavior that has us in the "parenting deep end". Sound good?

### How Knowing the Difference Between Encouragement and Praise Can Positively Transform Your Child's Behavior

Many Moms and Dads have learned how to praise their children, but the art of encouragement is a skill they've yet to master. What's the difference between the two approaches?

**Encouragement is a "gift" focusing on the internal process-the "who" our child is.** Praise is given only as a "reward" for external results-the "what" our child does and the positive results they manage to achieve.

When children are fed a constant diet of praise, they begin to focus solely on external achievement for their self-worth. The outcome? Children who are "pleasers" and "perfectionists" who constantly struggle to prove their worth. Long-term this type of low self confidence can lead to problems like anorexia, depression, promiscuous behavior (i.e. sleeping around) and alcohol or drug abuse.

When children are encouraged by their parents they learn to feel good about who they are and when this occurs very little can stop them from attaining their dreams and making you proud!

### How to Tell If You Are Using Encouragement with Your Child

Here's an easy way to remember the difference between encouragement and praise:

**Encouragement-Uses phrases and words you would say during a game or race.** Things like:

- "Way to go!"
- "You can do it."

- "Great save."
- "Thanks for doing your best."
- "You look like you are really enjoying yourself."
- "Awesome job!"
- "Look at all the effort you are putting into this."
- "I bet you were proud of that goal."

**Praise-Uses phrases and words you would use after your child's team had won a game.**

Examples are:

- "I am so proud of you, you won!"
- "You're a winner. I love you."
- "We're number one, we're number one!"
- "You're first, like your sister."
- "Finally, you won."

Does this mean praise is evil? Of course not. Praise simply does not help to develop your child's self-esteem. The more you focus on encouraging phrases (instead of just praise) the more likely your child is to feel good about "who" they are and the less likely they will act out.

## **10 Positive Parent Rules That Can Prevent Annoying Misbehavior!**

Mystery solved! The main reason your child misbehaves is because they want to be encouraged through positive means. So here are 10 simple ways you can easily encourage your child without adding a lot more to your to do list:

1. Smile and literally "light up" when they come into the room especially if you are busy on the phone. If interrupt quietly put your hand on their shoulder and continue your conversation. When finished thank them for their patience.
2. Focus on your child's strengths, rather than weaknesses. Find ways for them to use their natural talents. For instance if your child likes rhythmically banging on the walls, consider a drum set!
3. Every night, before bed, say to them something like, "I am so blessed to have a daughter/son like you in my life."
4. Ask them for their opinion on an issue or challenge you have (Note: it is never a good idea to ask them for help with your marriage!).
5. "Catch them" doing things you love and thank them. I.e. "When you played with your sister today that really helped to give me a break. Thank you."
6. Be interested in what they are passionate about by asking questions, supporting their dreams and learning more. I.e. "Tell me more about what you love about \_\_\_\_\_."

7. Hug your child often especially when they are quietly playing
8. Look for ways they can help you out and remember to thank them for it. I.e. Give your child their own shopping list, have them set the table, ask them to help you bring in the groceries etc.
9. Place surprise notes of encouragement in their lunch or under their pillow.
10. Use encouraging phrases like, "You must be proud of yourself."

If you're accustomed to praising your child making the switch to more encouraging phrases may take a bit of thought. With time and effort, you will find encouraging your child more is worth it because encouragement leads to healthy self esteem and less misbehavior you'll have to deal with in the long run.

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at [www.UltimateParenting.com](http://www.UltimateParenting.com).

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