

# h Tips for parents: How to praise

## Do

- Be specific. Attach praise to a specific behaviour so children learn which behaviours are valued – e.g. ‘I like the way you put your toys away’; ‘I like the way you were helpful to your sister’.
- Notice positive behaviour and praise as soon as you see it.
- Use positive voice tone and body language, smile and be enthusiastic.
- Praise steps in the right direction. Don’t wait for perfection. Praise the effort: ‘You’re nearly there’; ‘You’ve really tried. Well done.’
- Praise what you see more than what you hear – e.g. if Jack picks his coat up off the floor when you ask him, complaining and moaning all the way, praise him for doing as you ask and ignore the protesting.

## Avoid

- *adding a criticism*. For example, don’t say, ‘Good job putting your shoes away. Why can’t you always do that?’
- *minimising*. For example, if a child is anxious, don’t respond when they succeed by saying, ‘See, it wasn’t that scary’ as it minimises their achievement.
- *missing opportunities to praise*. For example, when you make a request, stay around and pay close attention to whether or not it’s followed through. Don’t issue instructions and go on to something else.