

### Providing Descriptive Feedback to Young Children

Descriptive Feedback can help children remain interested and motivated. Descriptive feedback focuses on effort, thinking and problem solving. It can be a difficult skill for adults to master and may take some planning to use. Descriptive feedback differs from praise. Praise is often generic, includes evaluative language or comments on the person or personality.



The table below outlines skills to target descriptive feedback to children. The table includes comparisons between praise and descriptive feedback.

Skills to target for descriptive feedback	Descriptive Feedback example (increase use)	Praise examples (avoid use)
Transitioning between activities or environments	<i>"You heard the whistle and remembered to line up....way to go!"</i>	"Nice job"
Engaging in activities	<i>"You are putting lots of detail in your picture; it is interesting how you put the red on top of the yellow."</i>	"That is a beautiful picture you painted"
Meeting classroom/home expectations	<i>."I see that you pushed the chairs in. That sure helps make our room look picked up after we play."</i>	"You are helpful!"
Following directions	<i>Wow, when the bell rang, you followed directions and cleaned up the blocks just like we practiced."</i>	"Good job!"
Using social skills	<i>"You shared your play dough with Elliott. Look at his face. YOU made him pretty happy."</i>	"You are a very generous person"
Expressing emotions	<i>"Hunter stopped pushing you. Thanks for using your words to tell him to stop, it worked!"</i>	"You were smart"
Becoming re-regulated enough to begin engaging in expected behavior	<i>"You thought like a turtle and calmed yourself. It looks like you are ready to look at books with us"</i>	"Way to go!"

Some descriptive feedback starters include:



- "I see that you are....."
- "I appreciate how you....."
- "You thought hard and then you..."
- "Thank you for....."
- "I saw how you...."
- "I heard you....."