

Prompting

How can you set your child up for daily success? One of the most effective ways to do this is to focus on prompting instead of punishment. Here's what you need about prompting your child toward good behavior and decisions:

1. Friendly Competition

One of the ways to prompt your child toward good behavior is to create a simple competition where you dare them to turn a negative behavior to a positive one. If your child is fidgety and doesn't sit still or tends to be disruptive, for instance, create a friendly competition or prompt that steers them to better behavior.

To have them sit still, you may ask "Let's see if you can sit better than me!" This puts their focus on trying to do better than you. They learn how to sit still without even realizing it.

2. A Dose of Praise

If your child wins the friendly little competition, or they do something well, give them a good dose of praise. A few encouraging words such as, "Look at how good you are at this!" are positive reinforcement that makes them feel good about themselves and their accomplishments.

3. Set Your Child Up for Success.

The whole goal behind prompting is to catch your child doing good things. How often do you catch them doing something good rather than bad behavior? Every time you catch your child doing something good, let them know. Along with praise, setting your child up for success means you recognize and reward their good behaviors. In fact, the more you catch them doing good things, the more their brain tells them "I like this!" which gives them a good reason to continue.

4. Brain Power

The more you punish your child's behavior, the more cortisol (stress hormone) is released and goes to your child's brain. So, what kind of brain do you want your child to have? A brain that is excited about doing good things, or a brain that anticipates getting in trouble? I know my choice. I want my child to be constantly excited about doing good things.

5. Redirect

Helping your child improve their behaviors involves more than prompting them, setting them up for success, and catching them do good things. Sometimes prompting involves redirection. Redirection is simply redirecting their attention in a different direction when they are upset, worried or anxious. Completely change the subject to something positive and engaging. If they are upset, redirect them to look out the window at something interesting, or ask about a favorite toy. This type of prompting helps divert their attention to a positive experience which supersedes their other difficult emotions.

The final questions to ask yourself is how well you prompt your child for successful interactions and behaviors. I think we can all agree that children will not have the very best discipline all the time. To improve their level of discipline, it is important that we prompt them all the time. Then, catch your child doing good things and set them up for success.