



**PricelessSM
Parenting**

"Online training for
the most important
job you'll ever have"

Priceless Parenting Newsletter January 2010

Dear Parents,

Do you make more critical comments or positive comments to your children? How often do you acknowledge your children's good behavior?

Although we know we get more of what we focus on, it's easy to give children more attention for misbehavior than good behavior. Unfortunately, this contributes to an increase in children's misbehavior! This month we'll look at how we can intentionally pay more attention to our children's good behavior.

Before closing, I'd like to thank the people who provided their feedback for the new training I'll be offering this year. I'll be emailing you more information about this in the near future. If you'd like to be sure to receive this information, [please add "New Parenting Solutions" to your email list preferences.](#)

Warm Regards,

Kathy Slattengren

P.S. I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Please do me a favor and forward this to a friend who also may enjoy reading it.

 Forward to a Friend

Critical Comments Flow Freely From Parents

Do you make more positive comments or negative comments to your children? If you're like most parents, you make a lot more negative comments than positive ones. In her book, [Building Moral Intelligence](#), Dr. Michele Borba writes "studies reveal that the average parent makes 18 critical comments to his child for every one positive comment."

Really? Could we really be making that many critical comments to our children? In their article, "[Why Our Kids Are Out of Control](#)", Azerrad and Change report "Glenn Latham, Ed.D., a family and educational consultant, has found that adults typically ignore 90 percent or more of the good things children do. Instead, they pay

New Products

I am working on new parent training material for 2010. If you would like to receive information about these new products, [please add "New Parenting Solutions" to your mailing list preferences.](#)

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The [Priceless Parenting Guidebook: Ideas for Handling Everyday Parenting Challenges](#) provides practical advice using real parenting stories.

attention to children when they behave badly."

Sadly the research clearly indicates that parents easily fall into the habit of paying more attention to misbehavior than good behavior.

Getting Attention for Misbehavior

Whenever you find yourself yelling at your kids or nagging them, you're focusing on the behavior you don't want. Statements like these focus on children's misbehavior:

- "Stop whining!"
- "Don't look at me that way."
- "You're wasting time - now get going on your homework."
- "Quit your fighting!"
- "Don't lie to me."

By giving attention to misbehavior, we actually increase the chance that the misbehavior will be repeated. This isn't what we want!

One example comes from a mom in one of my parenting classes who was complaining about how her 2-year-old son was driving her crazy with his screaming. Whenever he was frustrated, he would scream at the top of his lungs. Typically she would stop whatever she was working on, go find him and help him resolve the problem. She found it especially irritating when she was busy preparing dinner and he kept interrupting her with his screaming.

After reflecting on the situation, she realized the attention she was giving him for his screaming was actually encouraging him to do it more often. This was the opposite of what she wanted! Her new plan was to periodically go find him when he wasn't screaming and compliment him on his behavior. She also decided to ignore his screams of frustration. This new approach worked far better!

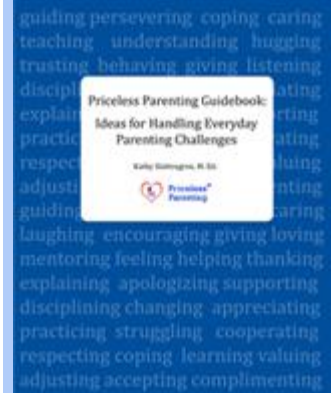
Paying Attention to Good Behavior

Since paying attention to our children's good behavior doesn't seem to come naturally to most of us, it's going to take effort to do this. We need to specifically watch for our children to behave well and then acknowledge it.

There are many ways to reward good behavior:

- A light touch on the shoulder, a quick back rub
- A smile, hug or kiss
- Saying "Thank you."
- Kind words, words of encouragement

Statements like these acknowledge children's good behavior:



- "I noticed that you put away the puzzle after you were done playing with it. That was great."
- "I heard you practicing your trumpet. It's really sounding good."
- "I appreciated how you held my hand when we crossed that busy street."
- "Thanks for helping set the table."
- "I love how well you're sharing the markers."

By pointing out our children's good behavior, we will be encouraging their appropriate behavior while filling our homes with more positive energy. This is just what we want!

Give Attention to Behaviors You Want to Increase

Children crave attention and when they can't get positive attention they will go for negative attention. Our job is to make sure we're giving them so much positive attention that they don't need to misbehave to get attention!

This Month's Challenge: Focusing on the Positive

This month's challenge is to actively watch for your children's good behavior and let them know you noticed it. You might want to keep a journal noting whenever you went out of your way to acknowledge their appropriate behavior.

Try to make more positive comments to your children about their behavior than negative ones. See if you can turn the tables on the research statistics!

Last Month's Challenge: Planning Family Gatherings

Last month you were challenged to think about what went well and not so well during your last family gathering. Did you decide to make any changes for future gatherings? [Please write to let me know what changes you implemented and how it went.](#)

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