

Other Ways to Say "Good Job!"

One of the quickest ways to get children to "tune you out" is to continually use the same words of recognition to encourage them. Many of us get into the bad habit of saying "Good Job!" far too often. Rather than getting stuck in that rut, try varying the words you use. The best thing is to acknowledge the child's success (even if it is a small step towards a larger goal) with a specific statement of what they did successfully. Acknowledgement is about what the child did well or successfully, not about you. When you bring what you like into it, it becomes praise and is external motivation, acknowledgement helps the child understand what success looks like and can internalize what success looks like, even when no adult is around.

Praise: I like it when you hang your jacket up. OR I'm so happy when you get an "A".

Acknowledgement: I see you're taking responsibility and hanging up your jacket in the closet as soon as you get home. That helps keeping the house organized. OR Wow! I see you earned an "A" on your math test, how do you feel about that?

The following examples are variations on the phrase "Good Job!" See if you can further modify them to acknowledgement statements being more specific to the child and situation without turning them into praise (about you the adult):

1. Outstanding!
2. You've got it!
3. Look at all your hard work.
4. You're learning fast.
5. You did it!
6. Keep up the good work.
7. This time is better than last time.
8. Your practice has made a real difference.
9. Congratulations!
10. You are making great steps forward.
11. That's much better.
12. You make that look easy.
13. How impressive.
14. Look at you!
15. Very creative.

On a separate paper type the original statements and then your revised specific acknowledgment. Each correct revision is worth 1 point. Acknowledgement should be focused on the child's success, and I should be able to visualize what the child has done well or successfully with your acknowledgement if it is done correctly.