



# Motivating Kids with Compliments and Time

Children need food for nourishment. If food is used to reward or punish behaviour, it can change the relationship your child has with food. Food rewards may confuse food with encouragement and love. For example, telling children that they will get dessert if they put away their toys sends the wrong message about dessert.

Let your child determine if they will eat and how much they will eat at meals and snacks at routine times. Parents can make meal times enjoyable by choosing the foods served, spacing meals and snacks at regularly scheduled times and keeping distractions to a minimum.

## Encouraging Positive Behaviour: Beyond Rewards and Punishment

Your **time** is the most powerful reward for your child. Here are some ideas for rewarding children with your time:

- Let your child choose a family game.
- A picnic lunch – eat under the kitchen table or go to a park.
- Spending time with your child on their favourite activity (except watching t.v., playing computer games or eating).
- Hugs from parents.
- Letting your child choose the story at story time.

Everyone likes to be recognized for a job well done. Children who receive these ‘rewards’ are then able to reward themselves with thoughts such as “I did a great thing.”

**Compliment** your child’s strengths, behaviour and accomplishments. Focus physical activity compliments on enjoyment and fun.

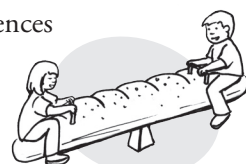
### Top ten compliments:

1. You’ve got it made.
2. You’re on the right track now!
3. Wow! That was fun.
4. I’m happy to see you enjoying that.
5. You’re doing a good job.
6. That’s the best you’ve ever done.
7. I knew you could do it.
8. Now you’ve figured it out.
9. Now you have it!
10. I sure am happy you’re my daughter or son

“Children Learn What they Live” in “98 Ways to Say Very Good” Canadian Child Federation [www.cccf-fcsge.ca](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca)

Children also enjoy **your appreciation** when you notice and comment on behaviours you like to see.

- Encourage your child to change behaviour with important but understandable consequences for the child. e.g., “When you are quiet, you can play with others”.
- Compliment your child with their good manners with the dentist or photographer rather than offering a treat if they are good. Schedule appointments when your child is at their best.



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