

Using the Magic Formula to Teach Specific Praise (Example)



Steps

1. Provide a rationale
2. Explain the skill
3. Demonstrate the skill
4. Engage in practice
5. Plan for additional practice
6. Coach through practice

How the 6 Steps Might Look in Session

1. "I want to talk with you about Specific Praise. This skill gets you the most bang for your buck, is the least painful one to do, and is the foundation for a positive relationship with your child. Then you can have greater influence."

2. "What we attend to grows, just like a plant that we water consistently and give the right sunlight and nutrients. When we give a behavior our attention, it grows, too."

3. "I was really impressed with the way you did X in the waiting area. Did you see your child's face light up? You really got through to them! What I just did there was specific praise. Notice it was purely positive and it was genuine. What did you notice about my facial expression, tone of voice, enthusiasm, etc? How did you know exactly what you did that I liked?"

4. "How do you show your child purely positive attention? Might be with your facial expression, words you use, tone of voice, enthusiasm? Now, let's think of something your kid is doing that is driving you crazy. What if your child were doing the opposite of that? What would that look like? When would you see that?"

"Show me what your child looks like doing the thing you like. If I were you and I saw that, I might say, 'I'm really proud of you for x.'"

- Is that how you would say it, or would you use different words?
- Do you think that behavior will grow if you don't say anything at all? How do you imagine that happening if you don't comment on it? Is there some other way you're making sure you see that more often?
- I'm going to be your kid doing that thing. You say what you just planned with me.

5. "How can you practice doing that this week. When do you think this might come up? How can we set it up so you have a chance to experiment with this some more this week? I'm cheering you on and I can't wait to hear how it goes!"

6. Next session: "We planned X. How did it go? Where did you get stuck? What did you notice?" Trouble shoot and plan for more practice.