

What Is It?

Providing positive descriptive feedback is both a universal and individual antecedent strategy. It is a planned approach in which an adult intentionally increases their positive interactions with a child. This is accomplished by frequently acknowledging a child's positive behavior.

When to Use It

- As an antecedent strategy to prevent challenging behavior that occurs to gain attention.
- To teach children what they are doing well and increase the likelihood that they will engage in the same behavior in the future.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

□	1. Identify positive behavior the child displays. Ensure all team members are aware of and communicate about the child's positive behavior so everyone is prepared to acknowledge and respond positively to the child's positive behavior (no matter how big or small).
□	2. Determine how often the child uses challenging behavior to gain attention. Provide specific, positive feedback slightly more often than the child's challenging behavior. This results in higher levels of attention for appropriate behavior, making it less likely that the child will engage in challenging behavior to get that same attention.
□	3. Minimize attention provided to challenging behavior, while still ensuring child safety.
□	4. Provide less positive descriptive feedback and a more natural, sustainable rate of encouragement (i.e., similar to what is being provided program-wide to all children) as the child's challenging behavior decreases.

Example

A preschooler in Alvaro's classroom, Sabrina, frequently gets up to touch materials during the class circle time, often attempting to take the materials and wander around the room. Alvaro collects some initial baseline data and estimates that Sabrina stands up to obtain materials approximately once every 2-minutes. Alvaro decides to provide Sabrina with opportunities to engage more frequently with materials while staying seated during circle time by bringing them directly to Sabrina when she is seated and providing positive descriptive feedback ("You are waiting so nicely to look at these materials") to Sabrina approximately once every 2-minutes for following circle time instructions. At other times, he asks Sabrina if she would like to be his circle time assistant, providing Sabrina with opportunities to get up and engage with materials in an appropriate way while still remaining at circle time. This allows him to acknowledge when she helps him during circle and when she shares the materials.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Minimize attention provided to occurrences of attention-seeking challenging behavior.
- Provide positive descriptive feedback more often than the child exhibits challenging behavior.
- As the child's challenging behavior decreases, gradually increase the amount of time between each instance of positive descriptive feedback. However, be prepared to return to higher levels of positive feedback if the challenging behavior continues.
- Acknowledging a child's positive behavior does not teach them alternative ways to appropriately gain adult attention. Therefore, if a child is engaging in challenging behavior to obtain attention, this strategy should be used with other behavioral strategies that teach the child appropriate ways to gain attention. See "Teaching a Request for Help" and/or "Teaching a Request for Attention" intervention guides
- To provide universal support see the "Acknowledging Children's Positive Behavior" intervention guide.

Resources

Timm, M., & Doubet, S. (2007). [Acknowledging children's positive behaviors](#).

Fullerton, E. K., Conroy, M. A., Correa, V. I. (2009). [Early childhood teachers' use of specific praise statements with young children at risk for behavioral disorders](#). *Behavioral Disorders*, 34(3), 118-135.

Stormont, M. A., Smith, S. C., & Lewis, T. J. (2007). [Teacher implementation of precorrection and praise statements in Head Start classrooms as a component of a program-wide system of positive behavior support](#). *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 16(3), 280-290.