

What do you say when you praise your child? What behaviours do you notice most often? What message does your child receive?

If your child does well on a test or scores a goal in a hockey game, of course you will praise them if your focus is too often on their achievement of abilities, they may not get the right message. Why not? A Columbia University research project compared the impact of praise for effort and praise for abilities. At the completion of a puzzle solving exercise the kids were told either, *"You must be very smart to do this or You must have worked really hard."* What the psychologists observed was that the kids who were praised for their effort went to work on harder, more complex puzzles while the other "smart" ones chose puzzles they knew they could succeed at." By challenging themselves the first group improved their scores by 25% while the "Smart" kids became discouraged and gave up with the harder puzzles. Their score declined by 20%. Psychologist, Carol Dweck, concluded that when we praise kids by telling them, they are smart we give the message *"Look smart, don't risk making a mistake"*. Kids need a recipe for responding to failure, by emphasizing effort kids can control what happens.

Kids with learning disabili-

ties and ADHD all have gifts and talents to share with the world. However, their gifts are wrapped in difficult packages. It is up to the adults in their lives to help them figure what their strengths are. Focus on their natural talents and follow their interests. Try to temper your negative remarks with encouragement and praise for everything your child does well. I don't know of anyone who has gotten ahead by attempting to eliminate their weaknesses. The direction forward is by emphasizing strengths and effort.

Look at things from a different perspective. Be a bit unconventional!

These ideas may help:

1. **Believe** that your child will be successful.
2. **"Dance around their weaknesses"**. Turn the weakness inside out and look for its gift. (high energy is multi-tasking)
3. **"Strengthen the strengths"**. Keep trying lots of different things. Analyze what works and what doesn't.

Inspiration for this article was taken from a recent article in Readers Digest. Carol Dweck is now a professor of Psychology at Stanford University.

Tax Benefits for Tutoring Services

The Medical Expense Tax Credit (METC) of the Income Tax Form recognizes the burden of above-average medical expenses by providing tax relief for eligible medical expenses. Announced in the 1999 federal budget is:

Tutoring Services for persons with learning disabilities

For persons with learning disabilities, the 1999 federal budget expanded the list of expenses eligible for the METC to include tutoring for persons with learning disabilities.

1. *to remedy basic academic skills notably reading, spelling, written expression and mathematics when the delay in acquisition of basic academic skills is secondary to specific learning disabilities.*

2. *to remedy deficits and maximize strengths in the learning disabilities profile including organizational strategies, study skills, time management, coordination activities, social skills training, strategies to improve attention, memory, reasoning, logic, communication, and non-verbal visual-perceptual abilities.*

To be eligible, the following conditions must be met:

1. tutoring services are supplemented to the individual's primary education;
2. a medical practitioner certifies in writing that the individual is a person who because of a learning disability requires the tutoring services to supplement the individual's primary education
3. a letter from the school principal/resource teacher confirming the diagnosis of learning disabilities, and the need for tutoring services to supplement the child's education.
4. a letter from the tutoring business certifying that the child is in receipt of tutoring services because of the learning disability.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. The yearly plans for your child's work with me will be sent out by e-mail the week of Nov 10. Hopefully you will be able to discuss these with your child's teacher during the upcoming interviews. My hope is that some ideas and strategies may be helpful as well as the guide for our weekly sessions. I am always teaching the students learning strategies whether they bring homework or not.
2. Weekly tutoring sessions will follow the same calendar as the school your child attends.
3. The last week of scheduled tutoring classes school will be the week of Dec. 15th (kids in private schools end 1 week earlier)