

# INVITATIONS FOR LEARNING

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## A Praise Addict is:

A person who needs consistent affirmation from others to feel confident in his or her ability or choices.

"I did a good job didn't I?"

"You like me don't you?"

"Are you going to give me money now that I got good grades?"

"I gave to this charity and they added my name to the brochure"

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## *Are We Raising "Praise Addicts"*

David was painting at an easel in a preschool classroom I was observing. He started to yell at the teacher, "Teacher look at my car I made." The teacher did not hear David and he yelled even louder, "Teacher look I made a car." The teacher went over and responded, "What a nice car you painted". "Good Job!" I don't remember David asking for an evaluation from the teacher, just acknowledgment....

Children are not born asking for praise but the underlying result from adults who give praise is a child who begins to need, crave and even depend on it for their motivation and the "praise addict" is formed.

At a workshop, one of the participants gave me a

handout titled, 101 ways to Praise Your Child. It included: "Good Job", "Your such a good boy/girl", "I'm so proud of you", "You're so smart" and many other examples. This was sent out to all preschool programs in the area. All of these statements are intended to make a child feel good. What it does is make a child depend on others for approval. The child will begin to need consistent affirmation from others to feel confident in their own ability or choices. Children begin to ask parents/teachers, "Do you like my painting?", "Did I do a good job eating all my food?", and later on turn to peers for approval, which might not be what we want.

# *Instead of Praise*

- *When a child asks, “Do you like my painting?” turn it back to the child and ask him/her, “What do you like about your painting?” or ask him/her to describe what they like about their painting to other children*
- *When a child asks, “Do you like my tower?” get the child to discuss the process of making it, “How did you make that tower?”*
- *Describe by stating the details you observed, for example, “You decided to use green paint”, “You started at the top of the paper”*
- *Focus on the process rather than the end result, for example letter grades, “What did you have to do to get that grade?”, “How does getting that grade make you feel?”*
- *Avoid evaluations of children’s work, for example, “Pretty”, “Smart”, “Beautiful”, “Good”*
- *Acknowledge a child by stating what they have done, “Look how you are climbing up the ladder?” “I remember when you could not kick, now you can kick. Kick this box”.*
- *Avoid rewards like stickers, food, smiley faces, toys, and money*

**Observe how often you give praise, I think you will be surprised.....**