

ADMIRING CHILDREN TO SAVE CHILDREN

There's every reason to believe that children need more admiration than ever when their family is going through a difficult time.

Here are some quick hints on ways to admire children well—and in the process to protect them from many of life's hardest knocks.



1. Gratitude just for the chance to know you and be with you

- ✚ Reading and discussing books, seeing movies, dinner with no TV.
- ✚ Doing puzzles.
- ✚ Volunteering together.
- ✚ Making errands fun by doing them together.
- ✚ "Everything is better when I get to do something with you."
- ✚ "I'm so glad you're in my life."
- ✚ "I like you. I *really, really* like you."
- ✚ "You come too—it's always better with you."
- ✚ "I'm so glad you are with us."
- ✚ "You mean a lot to me. I'm happy just to know someone like you."
- ✚ "You make me laugh. Lordy, you make me laugh!"
- ✚ "You brighten my day."
- ✚ "You're a joy. I love all our times together."
- ✚ "You're a treasure."
- ✚ "You made my day. You make every day."

2. Admiring qualities in you

- ✚ "You're about the kindest person I know."
- ✚ "You have so much energy—I just love that."
- ✚ "I love how you watch out for your little brother and sister. You're so kind."
- ✚ "I love imagining all the great things you'll do with your life."
- ✚ "You're special. People just want to be with you."
- ✚ "You care."
- ✚ "Look at all you've done."
- ✚ "You're spectacular, darling, precious, important, and beautiful."
- ✚ "You are a good friend, a good listener, and a joy to know."
- ✚ "You're incredible. Who else could do that so well?"
- ✚ "You are exciting. What a joy to be with someone so full of life."
- ✚ "What an imagination! Maybe you'll make movies one day."
- ✚ "You are fun. You know that? Everybody has more fun with you."
- ✚ "You're unique. You don't have to color inside the lines."

3. Admiring something you did

- ✚ "Nice game, you really played well!"
- ✚ "Super! Awesome—you did so well!"
- ✚ "Fantastic! Can you show me how you do that?"
- ✚ "Looking good—the best I've ever seen!"
- ✚ "Now you're flying! You're catching on!"
- ✚ "Now you've got it! Good for you!"
- ✚ "You're on your way! That's incredible!"
- ✚ "You've discovered the secret! You figured it out!"
- ✚ "You made a very wise decision. You're really growing up."
- ✚ "You've taken the first steps toward independence.
I'm so proud of you."

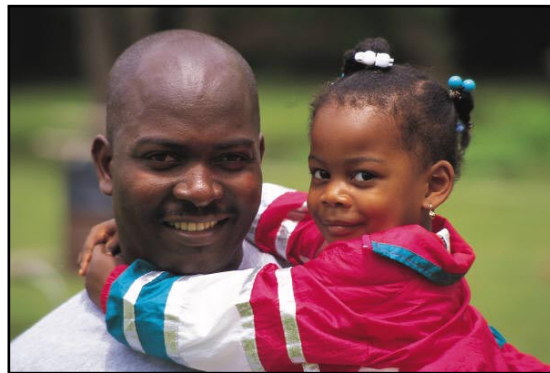


4. Letting you hear what I say about you to others

- ✚ "Grandma, see this little guy here? He means the world to us, doesn't he?"
- ✚ "I'm glad to hear she did so well in your class—she's special at home, too."
- ✚ "Pastor, do you want to know who's on the Honor Roll?"
- ✚ "Men, I brought my little man to our meeting. I think you should meet him."
- ✚ "Hey, everybody. Look whose award is in the Church Bulletin!"
- ✚ "Ladies, guess which young lady has learned how to bake the cookies with us."
- ✚ Putting your accomplishments in the church bulletin and letters to family.

5. Physical demonstrations

- ✚ A huge smile and shout of your name as soon as I see you.
- ✚ Calling, writing, and leaving notes for you.
- ✚ A big excited gasp when you call on the phone.
- ✚ A big hug—especially on meeting or parting.
- ✚ A big kiss, lap time, smiles, high fives, pats on the back, holding hands.
- ✚ Loads of eye contact *whenever* we talk.
- ✚ Demanding a “Kid Fix”—a hug I can ask for at any time.
- ✚ Dancing with you—to the stereo or just our own humming.
- ✚ Chasing you, pretending to be a dangerous elephant or runaway train—just being totally ridiculous for you.
- ✚ Teaching you everyday things such as how to make a bed (and then being patient and tolerant while you learn to do it yourself—your way!).



6. Being totally there when we're together

- ✚ “Wow, you need to tell that story again!”
- ✚ “What happened next?”
- ✚ “Which do you like better, Saturdays or Sundays?”
- ✚ “How do you think people could solve that problem?”
- ✚ “What do you think you'll be like when you're as old as Dad and Mom?”
- ✚ “Do you think the project is on the right track?”
- ✚ “What would you do if you were president?”
- ✚ “I would really value your opinion.”
- ✚ “I would love for you go with me on my errands.”
- ✚ “Let's sit down together and work on your homework.”

7. Saying what you get from Dad/Mom

- ✚ “You have the most beautiful eyes—just like Mom's.”
- ✚ “You work so hard to finish things—you get that from Dad.”
- ✚ “Wow! I think you're going to be a track star, just like Mommy was.”

- ✚ "Daddy is so smart with numbers. I love how you do homework together."
- ✚ "You're kind—just like Mommy. When we met she had a kitten like Smokey."
- ✚ "You and Daddy are so much alike. I love how you care for each other."
- ✚ "Nobody knows how to write like you and Mommy! What a great job!"
- ✚ "I'll never forget the time you and Daddy went riding on that horse. I was so scared, but you guys weren't."

8. Special avenues of expressions

- ✚ Eating together—with no TV or other distractions from the chance to just talk.
- ✚ Taping congratulations notes on your desk at school conferences.
- ✚ Keeping a picture album of your life and showing it to you every so often.
- ✚ Supporting you by attending school events and even visiting you at work (like dropping by the McDonald's where you work).
- ✚ Wearing your name, number, jersey, or button to sporting and academic events so everyone knows you're my child.
- ✚ Placing an ad in your yearbook or school newspaper to say how proud I am of you.
- ✚ Just hanging out with you and your best friend; welcoming your friends.
- ✚ "Let me share with you our family's history."
- ✚ Describing all the exceptional people in your family (grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.).
- ✚ Disciplining with love and confidence in you—"I'm disappointed only because I know you're better than that; you're a caring/responsible/giving person."



9. Assembling a team of at least 6 adults to admire you

Our daughter called once, completely depleted from a day of watching over 16 kindergarten children. Her observation, we think, could be a remarkable help to parents. "Now I know why children are made so cute, Dad," she told me. "It's so we don't strangle them."

Your children are indeed cute. Consider finding others to help in admiring them. They could be a blessing to your children, you, and themselves.