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## Parenting Tips

### Approximately Right is Worth a Compliment

It's easy to focus on how far children need to go instead of how far they've come. One way to keep a positive focus in your discipline is to look for approximately right behavior and affirm it. Don't wait until things are absolutely right.

If you ask your child to clean up the toys but find that he's only put away two things and left six out, you might say, "Oh, I see you put the blocks away, that's great! and I like the way you lined up your trucks, now let me see you put the balls in the box where they belong."

You're encouraging steps in the right direction. One little boy was learning to dress himself and Mom had a rule that he needed to be dressed before coming to the breakfast table. When he came downstairs with his shirt on backwards and his shoes missing, she still praised him. He was trying. Pointing out his shortcomings would have been discouraging. He had tried and was feeling good. Mom wanted to encourage his efforts.

If your child is having as hard time finishing a homework assignment, you could be encouraging and point out how much she's done, rather than focusing on how much is left.

Paul affirmed approximately right behavior when he recognized that we're all in process. He encouraged the Philippians with these words, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Paul was saying, "Be encouraged in the process because God is still working in you." We give a gift to our children as we affirm them in process, not just completion.

*This parenting tip is from the CD series [Eight Secrets to Highly Effective Parenting](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.*