

Help Your Child Learn From Mistakes

All kids experience defeat. They hope for the lead in the play...but instead, they're invited to paint the scenery. They tryout for the basketball team...but sit on the bench. They think they're ready for the test...but do poorly.

Now, experts tell us that students' mistakes and defeats can be a powerful step in helping them learn. The secret is turning children's mistakes into learning opportunities. Here's how:

- Praise your child's efforts. Remind your child that he or she really tried. Let your child know that you're proud of him/her for giving it his/her best shot.
- Find something he/she can learn. Sit down with your child and draw up a list of things he/she already learned, or can learn, from this experience. What new skills did your child develop? Has your child gained the determination to try harder next time? What does your child think he/she might do differently next time? Did your child meet a new friend? Help your child see that what he/she thought of as a defeat is also a great chance to learn.
- Focus on areas where she did succeed. Even though he/she was disappointed this time, help your child see all the things he/she did right. Remind your child that he/she is a great writer or a wonderful brother or sister. Remind your child that you love him/her.

Choose Your Words Carefully!

Successful people in any field rarely use the word "failure." They may talk about a "glitch," a "problem" or a "snag." But even when something they try doesn't work out as they'd planned, successful people try to learn from the experience.

When your child is having difficulties, don't let him/her use words like "failure" and "dumb". Instead, help your child see the positive side of the experience and use constructive words to describe it.

Are You Putting Too Much Pressure on Your Child

A recent study by the Girl Scouts of America asked kids about their biggest worry. The largest number said they were worried about the intense pressure to do well in school and sports.

Are you putting too much pressure on your child? Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- ✓ When you watch your child at an athletic event, do you mainly criticize his/her performance afterwards? Or, do you try to focus on the fun of participating?

- ✓ What happens when your child brings home a test? Do you first talk about the questions he/she got wrong? Or do you look for your child got right?
- ✓ What do you do when your child helps you with a household chore? Do you emphasize the things he/she needs to do better? Or do you thank your child for his/her help and talk about what he/she did especially well?
- ✓ Does most of your conversation with your child focus on the things he hasn't done? Try to say something positive as often as possible.

There is nothing wrong with being critical of children's actions. The question is one of balance. Experts say to get the best results, we should praise children for what they do correctly more than we criticize them for what they do wrong.