

# Spare the praise—spoil the child

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A small child in Mumbai, with a shaved head, eating bread with her hand.  
Credit: Wen-Yan King/Wikipedia

That is the key finding of research that is being presented today, Friday 5 May 2017, by Sue Westwood from De Montfort University at the

British Psychological Society's Annual Conference in Brighton.

Sue Westwood said: "Praising a [child](#) is a simple act. Improved [behaviour](#) and wellbeing can result simply from ensuring that a child's positive actions are rewarded with praise and parents are seen to be observing their [good behaviour](#)."

Some 38 parents with children, aged between two and four years, were recruited from children's centres and universities to take part in the study over a four-week period, filling out a questionnaire to monitor behaviour and wellbeing and being given information on how to praise their child effectively.

Those parents who succeeded in offering their child five pieces of praise each day, alongside catching their child's good behaviour, saw an improvement in the child's wellbeing when compared to a [control group](#).

This in turn led to improved behaviour and reduced levels of hyperactivity and inattention.

Sue Westwood added: "Following the five praises initiative led to improved behaviour as well as reduced levels of hyperactivity across just a four week period.

"This simple, cost effective intervention shows the importance of effective parental praise and, when used on a regular basis, it has been shown to have a significant impact."

**More information:** Presentation: 'Evaluating an intervention (the 5 Praises Initiative) to improve child wellbeing and behaviour through increased parental praising' [www.bps.org.uk/ac2017](http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2017)

Provided by British Psychological Society

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