The 4 C’s of Encouragement

Separate the deed from the doer.
There are no “good” or “bad” children; only “encouraged” or “discouraged” children whose behavior is more or less useful.
A misbehaving child is a discouraged child.

Rudolf Dreikurs

Children are encouraged when they:

Connect
They experience unconditional love
They get lots of friendly, loving eye contact
They get lots of affectionate touching and hugs
(appropriate touching is non-sexual)
Adults spend focused time with them – playing, working, and sharing conversation
Their feelings are listened to and validated
They share fun with the adults in their life

Feel Capable
They learn skills
They are given training in social skills and appropriate behavior
Mistakes are treated like opportunities to learn
They are allowed and expected to do for themselves everything they are able to do
Adults refrain from criticism and focus on the positive parts of children’s efforts
Adults have confidence in the children’s abilities

Count
Their ideas and opinions are respected and accepted
Adults express interest in their interests and knowledge
They are accepted as individuals of equal value
They participate in family/classroom meetings

Contribute
They do household chores
Their help is accepted and appreciated
(Even when the adults can do it faster and better)
Their efforts are appreciated, even when they don’t achieve perfection
They are given responsibility

Belonging

The fundamental desire of every human being is to belong, to have status in the group of which he is a part.

Rudolf Dreikurs

Beth Johnson  Revised 2006/08/28  Adapted from a variety of Adlerian sources
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