

Constructive Feedback

The Praise Sandwich

- Begin by critiquing the team's Instant Challenge solution by pointing out 2 – 3 things they did well (take notes during the practice to help you remember, and try to be specific by recognizing the child by name in this positive section)
 - "I like how Johnny used that material – I did not think of that. Even though it didn't work like it was planned, the idea was still very innovative! Nice risk taking!"
 - "I like how Jessica encouraged everyone, even in the stressful moments."
- In the middle is where you insert the opportunities for improvement.
- Try to be as specific as possible when addressing inadequacies, WITHOUT directly criticizing the child in question. Avoid names here, and focus on how the TEAM could have improved (NOT Johnny or Jessica, or whomever was responsible for the deficiency.)
- Avoid pronouns like you, they, he, her, or the child's name. Try to always use the phrase "the team" or "we."
- Be prepared with a solution the team can learn to successfully solve the challenge, and allow them some extra time to experiment with different approaches.
- Utilize questions as opposed to statements. They always sound better, and do not discourage the team from trying again.
 - "I see that the team's bridge was not able to span the gap as planned, because it was not long enough. What could we do differently to complete the task?"
 - "Would it be possible to try using the paper and pencils to make the bridge as opposed to the string?"
 - "Do you see that ripping the paper makes the bridge longer? What else can we do to make the bridge work?"
- Conclude the Praise Sandwich with an additional 3 – 4 things the team did well. It is okay to include things you noticed in their re-attempt time as well.
- Your goal should be to recognize each child by name, and point out something they did well. Be very careful to include every child. A simple oversight on the adult's part translates into a conspicuous inadequacy for a child that the other teammates will notice. This will affect how the rest of the team treats the forgotten team member.