



## **ADMIRING CHILDREN TO SAVE CHILDREN**

*Many divorcing parents make a most tragic mistake: caught in their own hurt, they fail to notice that their children's needs actually skyrocket during these trying times. Some careful and excellent studies, in fact, have concluded that one of the most important tasks for parents wishing to survive these times—and help their children survive these times—is to admire their children.*



*Our backgrounds in family counseling and in defending children charged with criminal and delinquent offenses convince us that this is a critical moment to notice all the ways we can regularly admire our children.*

*Here are ideas on eight of those ways.*

*Charlie and Barb Asher  
UpToParents.org*

### **1. Gratitude just for the chance to know you and be with you**

- ✚ "Everything is better when I get to do something with you."
- ✚ "I'm so glad you're in my life."
- ✚ "I like you. I *really, really* like you."
- ✚ "You come too—it's always better with you."
- ✚ "I'm so glad you are with us."
- ✚ "You mean a lot to me. I'm happy just to know someone like you."
- ✚ "You make me laugh. Lordy, you make me laugh!"
- ✚ "You brighten my day."
- ✚ "You're a joy. I love all our times together."
- ✚ "You're a treasure."
- ✚ "You made my day. You make every day."

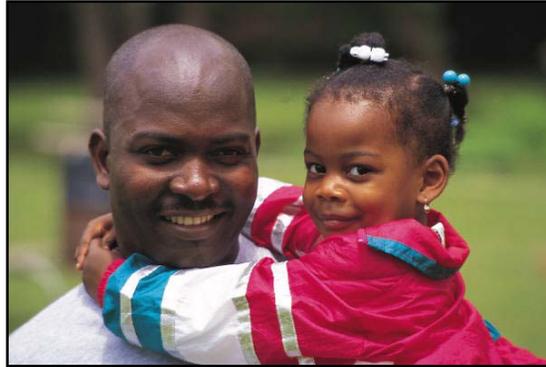
## 2. Admiring qualities in you

- ✚ "You're about the kindest person I know."
- ✚ "You have so much energy—I just love that."
- ✚ "I love how you watch out for your little brother and sister. You're so kind."
- ✚ "You are a winner. And you are humble like a winner."
- ✚ "I love imagining all the great things you'll do with your life."
- ✚ "You're special. People just want to be with you."
- ✚ "You are growing up."
- ✚ "You care."
- ✚ "Nothing can stop you now."
- ✚ "You're a winner. Look at all you've done."
- ✚ "You're spectacular."
- ✚ "You're darling."
- ✚ "You're so precious."
- ✚ "You're important."
- ✚ "You're beautiful."
- ✚ "You are a good friend."
- ✚ "What a good listener."
- ✚ "You're incredible. Who else could do that so well?"
- ✚ "You are exciting. What a joy to be with someone so full of life."
- ✚ "What an imagination! Maybe you'll make movies one day."
- ✚ "You are fun. You know that? Everybody has more fun with you."
- ✚ "You are responsible. You will do wonderful things in your life."
- ✚ "You're unique. You don't have to color inside the lines."



## 3. Admiring something you did

- ✚ "Nice game, you really played well!"
- ✚ "Super! Awesome—you did so well!"
- ✚ "Fantastic! Can you show me how you do that?"
- ✚ "Looking good—the best I've ever seen!"
- ✚ "You're on top of it!"
- ✚ "Now you're flying! You're catching on!"
- ✚ "Now you've got it! Good for you!"
- ✚ "You're on your way! That's incredible!"
- ✚ "You've discovered the secret! You figured it out!"
- ✚ "Fantastic job! Phenomenal!"



#### 4. Letting you know what I say about you to others

- ✚ "Grandma, see this little guy here? He means the world to us, doesn't he?"
- ✚ "I'm glad to hear she did so well in your class—she's special at home, too."
- ✚ "Pastor, do you want to know who's on the Honor Roll?"
- ✚ "Men, I brought my little man to our meeting: I think you should meet him."
- ✚ "Hey, everybody. Look whose award is in the Church Bulletin!"
- ✚ "Ladies, guess what young lady has learned how to bake the cookies with us."

#### 5. Physical demonstrations

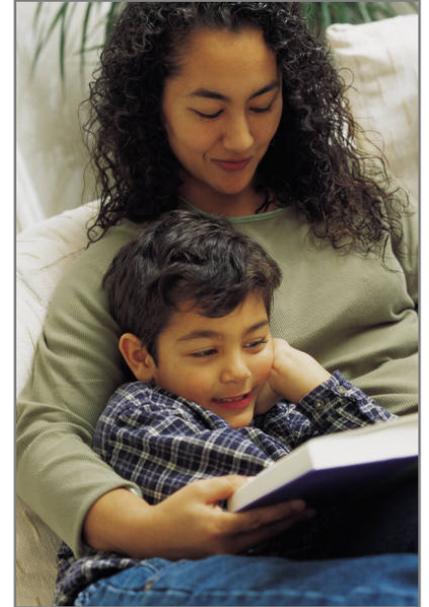
- ✚ A huge smile and shout of your name as soon as I see you.
- ✚ Calling, writing, and leaving notes for you.
- ✚ A big excited gasp when you call on the phone.
- ✚ A big hug—especially on meeting or parting.
- ✚ A big kiss, lap time, smiles, high fives, pats on the back, holding hands.
- ✚ Loads of eye contact *whenever* we talk.
- ✚ Demanding a "Kid Fix"—a hug I can ask for at any time.
- ✚ Dancing with you—to the stereo or just our own humming.
- ✚ Putting up your good papers, report cards, and artwork.
- ✚ Leaving surprise messages for you.
- ✚ Eating together—with no TV or other distractions from the chance to just talk.
- ✚ Picking out a favorite song that will always be ours together.
- ✚ Taping congratulations notes on your desk at school conferences.
- ✚ Keeping a picture album of your life and showing it to you every so often
- ✚ Chasing you, pretending to be a dangerous elephant or runaway train—just being totally ridiculous for you.

## 6. Being totally there when we're together

- ✚ "Wow, you need to tell that story again!"
- ✚ "What happened next?"
- ✚ "Which do you like better, Saturdays or Sundays?"
- ✚ "How do you think people could solve that problem?"
- ✚ "What do you think you'll be like when you're as old as Dad and Mom?"
- ✚ "Do you think the project is on the right track?"
- ✚ "What would you do if you were president?"

## 7. Saying what you get from Dad/Mom

- ✚ "You have the most beautiful eyes—just like Mom's."
- ✚ "You work so hard to finish things—you get that from Dad."
- ✚ "Wow! I think you're going to be a track star, just like Mommy was."
- ✚ "Daddy is so smart with numbers: I love how you do homework together."
- ✚ "You're kind—just like Mommy. When we met she had a kitten like Smokey."
- ✚ "You and Daddy are so much alike. I love how you care for each other."
- ✚ "Nobody knows how to write like you and Mommy! What a great job!"
- ✚ "I'll never forget the time you and Daddy went riding on that horse: I was so scared, but you guys weren't."



## 8. Assembling a team of at least 6 adults to admire you

Our daughter called once, completely depleted from a day of watching over 16 kindergarten children. Her observation, we think, could be a remarkable help to parents. "Now I know why children are made so cute, Dad," she told me. "It's so we don't strangle them."

Your children are indeed cute. Consider finding others to help in admiring them. They could be a blessing to your children, you, and themselves.