

**June George**

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## **What's More Powerful than "Good Job?"**

Pretend you're sitting in the corner of a classroom of 30 children, ages 3-6. Everyone is working contentedly at their own tables. There is a buzz in the air, but not one of chaos.

Instead, it's the quiet energy of independent children, picking their own tasks and following their interests. You're so entranced, you might be inspired to pronounce "Good job!" to every child who passes by!

But that's one phrase you'll never hear in this classroom.

Why? What's so bad about saying "Good Job?"

The reason adults in the Montessori classroom don't say "Good Job" is because it casts judgement upon a child's work. But those children aren't going about their day in search of an adult's praise. They are choosing activities ranging from washing dishes to multiplication work because it interests them. They want to do it!

When we place a label like "good" or "bad" upon a task that a child is doing in order to satisfy their own developmental needs, we take the ownership away from them. All of a sudden their work is about us and what WE think.

Here's Ms. Wood:

"When a new milestone is reached, the first reaction is often, 'Good Job! That's amazing! I'm so proud of you.' These are really positive things to say, but what do they do to your child's development?"

How can we respond to a child's work in a way that acknowledges them, but doesn't get in the way of their ownership over a task? What's more powerful than "Good Job?"

How about, "You did it."

This simple phrase says so much. When spoken warmly and with a smile, a simple "You did it" allows the child to reflect upon their own accomplishments: "I did do it, didn't I!"

And that sense of accomplishment and pride allows the child to move on to bigger things with a confidence in themselves that no "good job" could ever impart.