



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR  
2004 PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>Name(s)</b> <b>Emma M. Carson</b>	<b>Project Number</b> <b>J1703</b>
<b>Project Title</b> <b>Praise vs. Prize</b>	
<b>Abstract</b> <b>Objectives/Goals</b> My objective was to find out what promotes the cooperation of four-year-olds in completing a task, praise or a prize. My hypothesis was that praise would be more effective. <b>Methods/Materials</b> Two groups of four-year-olds were tested in their familiar preschool environment to see how quickly each child individually could complete a given task. The task was to match different shaped blocks (square, circle, rectangle, and triangle) on a board that had those shapes outlined in black. Each child was timed and the time recorded on a form. One group was given only praise during the task assignment while the second group was told in advance that they would receive a prize (stickers) in return for completing the task quickly. The praise group was not informed about the prize group nor was a prize discussed with them at any point during the orientation or the task timing. The groups were both tested in the same location, outside the classroom door at a quiet table with minimal distraction. There were sixteen children in each group. Participation was voluntary. The teacher asked for volunteers after the task was described. The children took turns completing the task but no child watched any other children during the task testing. All the children were in the same level class with the same birthdate cutoff for the four-year-old room. The birthdays were recorded as well to rule out age as a prime factor in speed of task performance. <b>Results</b> Praise ended up being a more effective motivation tool than prizes. The praise group's average was one minute (1:00) while the prize group's average was one minute fifteen seconds (1:15). Age did not prove to be a major factor. Male and female times only differed by a few seconds, not significant enough to be a determining factor. <b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> The results of my research supported my hypothesis that praise would be more effective at motivating the children and promoting cooperating with respect to the given task.	
<b>Summary Statement</b> My project was to find out if praise or prize was a better motivator in promoting cooperation in four-year-olds.	
<b>Help Received</b> Diane Claridge, Director of Growing Place Preschool, allowed use of facility and gave reading material. My mother helped contact the preschool and transported me to the preschool so I could test the four-year-olds.	