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*Listening, learning,  
and living together:  
it's the science of life.*

## **Reacting to Your Child's Report Card<sup>1</sup>**

*Diana Converse<sup>2</sup>*

Whether your children bring home "perfect" report cards or ones with room for improvement, many parents find it difficult to react in a manner that will encourage their child to achieve in school.

It's helpful to have an understanding of what grades really mean. Grades reflect a teacher's judgment of a child's performance at a particular time. They are one way for you, the teacher, and your child to understand your child's strengths and weaknesses. They also give teachers an opportunity to evaluate and restructure the learning experience for each child.

When reacting to grades, the first question to ask your children is how they feel about their grades. Then, ask if they think they did their best. Remember, these are your children's grades, not yours. Educators suggest that you neither reward nor punish for grades: the grade itself should be the reward or punishment. Encouragement suggests you have faith in your child and his or her ability to do better. Praising for some part of their performance, even if it is the "best of the worst," builds their motivation and self-esteem.

1. This document is FAR1704, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published December 2007. In the interest of time or clarity, the broadcast version of this script may have been modified. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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## Reacting to Your Child's Report Card

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If you feel there is room for improvement, talk with your child and teachers to work out a plan that will help your child achieve in school. Grades have more meaning if they are part of an overall communication with teachers.

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