

Some Words of Encouragement for Children

1. “You do a good job of”

Encourage children when they do not expect it and they are not asking for it. Pointing out some useful act or contribution, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, may have great importance to a child.

2. “You have improved in”

Growth and improvement should be expected and if there is progress there will be less chance of discouragement. Children will usually continue to try when they can see some improvement.

3. “We like (enjoy) you, but we don’t like what you do.”

A child should never think s/he is not liked after making a mistake or misbehaved. It is important to distinguish between the child and behavior – between the act and the actor.



4. “You can help me (us, the others, etc) by”

Children need and want to feel useful. We have to give them the opportunity.

5. “Let’s try it together.”

Children who think they have to do things perfectly are often afraid to attempt new things for fear of making a mistake or failing.

6. “So you did make a mistake. Now, what can you learn from your mistake.”

Nothing can be done about the past, but a person can always do something different in the future. Children can learn much from mistakes if not made to feel embarrassed.

7. “You would like us to think you can’t do it, but we think you can.”

Expectations should be consistent with the child’s ability and maturity. This approach can be used when a child hesitates to try. If s/he tries and fails, s/he has at least had the courage to try.

8. “Keep trying. Don’t give up.”

This may be helpful when a child is trying but not having much success.

9. “I’m sure you can straighten this out (solve this problem), but if you need help you know where to find me.”

Adults need to express confidence that children are able and will resolve their own conflicts, if given a chance.



10. “I can understand how you feel (not sympathy, but empathy), but I’m sure you’ll be able to handle it.”

Sympathizing with another person seldom helps; rather it conveys that life has been unfair. Understanding the situation and believing in the child’s ability to adjust to it is of much greater benefit.

Adapted from:
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